



REQUEST FOR DECISION

File # 6130-05

Report To: Mayor and Council
From: Director of Community Services
Presenter: Karin Carlson
Subject: Administration Report No. 0021/24
2023 Vandalism Review
Meeting: Regular Council
Meeting Date: 26 Feb 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

"THAT, Council receive Administration Report No. 0021/24 - 2023 Vandalism Review for information."

CAO'S COMMENTS:

This report provides insight into the actual costs of vandalism in City facilities, as well as some mitigation strategies in use to deter and prevent vandalism.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

n/a

KEY ISSUES(S)/ CONCEPTS DEFINED:

Council asked that staff report back on the vandalism incidents at City owned buildings and parks. Administration Report No. 0021/24 is providing Council with a partial review of 2023. Staff started tracking incidents part way through the year in 2023 so the statistics do not represent the full year.

RELEVANT POLICY: n/a

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PILLARS:

Vibrant Community – Invest in community safety, social, cultural, and recreational programs.

Managing Assets – Build and manage assets that support the current and future needs of the community.

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

GENERAL:

The City of Fort St. John has made significant investments in many outdoor amenities since 2017 and invests annually in recreation assets. For a community the size of Fort St. John, there is a wide range of venues. Use of these indoor and outdoor facilities is significant from the community. Unfortunately, there has also been an increase in vandalism in the recreation facilities and parks.

During the community engagement in 2016 that led to the 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the number one request from the community was public washrooms in the parks. The City responded by installing public washrooms at Festival Plaza, the Rotary Spray Park, Matthews Park, the Dog Park/Rotary Skate Park, and most recently, new washrooms have been installed at Kin Park.

The washrooms in the park spaces have experienced the most repeat damage. In 2023, 23 incidents were reported between March and December. Approximately 30 percent of those were related to indoor vandalism and 70 percent related to outdoor vandalism. Twenty-seven (27) percent of the incidents were specific to vandalism in the washrooms located in parks.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

When these incidents occur, different departments respond to fix the damage and make the spaces safe and useable again. Parks, Public Works, Civic Properties, Bylaw, and Facilities respond to different incidents.

In order to deter and reduce the amount of vandalism and number of incidents, staff hire security in the summer which includes patrolling Centennial Park Rec Campus (CPRC), Matthews Park, the Skate Park, and Dog Park, and likely this year will include Kin Park. This patrol is 8 hours per day, usually from 9pm to 5am, 7 days a week for 20 weeks. Security is also hired during peak events like High on Ice with patrols

focusing on the outdoor spaces at CPRC for an additional 2 weeks.

The City is currently leading an initiative that is working to reduce violent youth crime. While this Committee is not working directly to reduce vandalism, it may be an associated outcome. Building Safer Communities is a three-year program with financial support from the federal government.

In 2023, Citizens on Patrol started in Fort St. John. It is a community led volunteer organization who patrol areas in the community. Again, this organization is not working directly to reduce vandalism in the community but hopefully a reduction in vandalism will be an outcome.

FINANCIAL:

Vandalism has a financial cost to the City. Since staff started to monitor vandalism incidents in March 2023, the cost for replacement and repair was approximately \$8,100 for 2023. This does not include staff time required to investigate, make spaces temporarily safe, or staff time to complete or coordinate to have the repairs done. In some instances, staff are able to do the repair / remediation and in other cases staff have been required to hire a contractors to repair different amenities.

The costs have not been tracked the same across various departments and therefore it was not possible to estimate the staffing costs associated with repair and remediation for 2023. Staff groups have been working with IT to track these costs and therefore future reports should be able to provide better quality information.

The cost for security is approximately \$30,000 per year.

FOLLOW UP ACTION:

- | Staff will continue to collect incident and financial data related to vandalism
- | Tracking reports continue to be improved and standardized across departments so that staff can capture better and more consistent data for future reporting and analysis

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

n/a

COMMUNICATION:

n/a

DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED ON THIS REPORT:

- | Facilities
- | Civic Properties
- | Parks
- | Bylaw

Attachments:

- | None

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Karin Carlson, Director of Community Services

26 Jan 2024