

DATE OF MEETING OCTOBER 24, 2022

AUTHORED BY DAVID LABERGE, MANAGER, BYLAW SERVICES

SUBJECT DOWNTOWN VANDALISM RELIEF GRANT

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To seek Council’s approval to implement a grant program to assist downtown businesses with the cost of work required to repair damage to, and remove graffiti from their premises arising from incidents of break-in or vandalism in accordance with the recommendations of the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan. |

Recommendation

That Council authorize Staff to enter into a service agreement with the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce to formalize the Vandalism Relief Grant program to assist downtown businesses with the cost of work required to repair damage to, and remove graffiti from their premises arising from incidents of break-in or vandalism.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan was presented to the Finance and Audit Committee on 2022-APR-20 and was approved by Council on 2022-APR-25. The Plan recommendations include hiring Community Safety Officers, adding two more Community Clean Teams, adding Park Attendants and Downtown Ambassadors, increasing cleaning initiatives, and creation of a Vandalism Relief Grant.

The Vandalism Relief Grant is intended to provide quick relief to downtown storefront businesses or commercial property owners to assist with the cost of work required to repair damages or remove graffiti arising from incidents of break-in or vandalism.

The report recommends that the City of Nanaimo develop and implement a grant program in collaboration with downtown business associations. The \$50,000 funding was approved for 2022, and \$30,000 annually in successive years. |

DISCUSSION

It is Staff’s recommendation that the Vandalism Relief Grant program be managed by the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is a not-for-profit organization that works collectively with businesses, residents and community groups to ensure a healthy business base and positive socio-economic structure, and can represent the interests of all downtown business improvement and community associations.

Program guidance to be provided to the Chamber would include the following;

1. Purpose

The Vandalism Relief Grant will assist property owners in Downtown Nanaimo with the cost of work required to repair damage to, and remove graffiti from their premises arising from incidents of break-in or vandalism.

2. Objectives

- Support storefront businesses & property owners that experience vandalism.
- Expedite repairs to businesses' windows, doors and locks following incidents of vandalism or break-in.
- Assist in removal of graffiti.

3. Eligibility

- Must be storefront businesses or commercial properties located in the Program Area (Service Agreement Schedule 'A').
- Must be in good standing with the City of Nanaimo (business licence, etc.).
- Have been damaged in a break-in or act of vandalism on or after the date of the commencement of the grant program.
- Not for any expenses covered through insurance.
- Acceptable proof of damage required, confirmed by;
 - Receipts for repairs of damage;
 - Photographs of damage;
 - Police file number (except graffiti).
- In case of multiple incidents, a maximum of two claims per property will be accepted within a calendar year.

4. Decisions Making

- Funding will be available on a first-come, first-served basis based on availability of funds.
- A maximum of \$1,000 in financial relief will be provided to restore and repair damages from vandalism per incident.
- A completed application must be submitted and include;
 - Name of business and business licence number
 - Physical address
 - ⊖ Property representative and contact information
 - Date and time of incident
 - Acceptable proof of damage and expenses
 - Confirmation of any expense to be recovered through insurance
- Applications will be reviewed by Chamber staff and approval will be based on eligibility requirements.

5. Services and Reports

- The City will provide the Chamber with annual funding to administer this program on the City's behalf. An administrative fee of 15% will be provided, based on the amount of Grant Funding that is used to award the Grants for the costs associated with GNCC's administration of the Vandalism Relief Grant Program, and will be disbursed from the annual grant funding.
- The Chamber will provide a report to the City with an overview of the program and usage by December 31 each year.
- The program and all related documentation will be subject to the requirements of FOIPPA.
- The City will provide an initial payment of 50% of the grant amount to the Chamber, and the remaining amount will be transferred upon their request.
- Grant funding will be available for the calendar year, and unused amounts must be returned to the City.

OPTIONS

1. That Council authorize Staff to enter into a service agreement with the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce to formalize the Vandalism Relief Grant program to assist Downtown businesses with the cost of work required to repair damage to, and remove graffiti from their premises arising from incidents of break in or vandalism.
 - The advantages of this option: The proposed plan fulfills the recommendations in the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan to create a Vandalism Relief Grant program.
 - The disadvantages of this option: None
 - Financial Implications: Funding has been authorized to operate the grant program until 2024 and will be considered as part of the upcoming 2023-2027 Financial Plan.
2. That Council provide alternative direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan recommends the creation of a Vandalism Relief Grant to assist businesses in repairs arising from incidents of vandalism.
- A proposed Grant Program would be administered by the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce and funded by the City through a service agreement.
- The program to be developed will be based on criteria outlined in this report.
- An annual report will be forwarded to the City from the Chamber with an overview of the program and usage.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Service Agreement for Vandalism Relief Grant Program

ATTACHMENT B: Draft Vandalism Relief Grant Application Form

Submitted by:

David LaBerge
Manager, Bylaw Services

Concurrence by:

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services /
Deputy CAO