

Date: January 9, 2025

To: **Standing Committee on Public Safety**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director of Administrative Services

Subject: Street Lighting

Attachment(s): None

Recommendation(s):

That the Committee RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated January 9, 2025 from the Director of Administrative Services, titled "Street Lighting".

Purpose:

This report is prepared to support the committee work plan item "Impact of Street Lighting" scheduled for January of 2025.

Background:

The Committee's interest in lighting is understood to be connected to the crime prevention framework of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which proposes that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life.

Within this model lighting supports the concept of natural surveillance which is a design strategy that is directed at keeping intruders under observation. It is based on the premise that a person inclined to engage in criminality will be less likely to act on their impulse if they can be seen. Lighting may also support witness reporting, perceptions of safety and the effectiveness of camera footage as other tangible benefits.

The City of Prince George invests significant resources in street lighting infrastructure. The City has a proactive replacement program for streetlights, scheduled around the maximum usable service life of a street light lamp. This helps minimize maintenance costs and light outages. We repair, and are responsible, for failed lights, leaning or damaged poles and other safety and community concerns as example and work to address these deficiencies when they are detected or reported.

In 2022 BC Hydro began upgrading roughly 2,675 streetlights in Prince George to energy-efficient LED bulbs. BC Hydro operates streetlights on wooden power poles throughout the city. At the time BC Hydro commented that "these new streetlights will help improve public safety . . . by increasing the visibility of sidewalks and roads at night, as well as help reduce light pollution".

At this time there are no significant street lighting enhancements proposed in the capital plan. The federal government set regulations, requiring all street light ballasts containing poly-chlorinated biphenyles (PCBs) to be removed by the end of 2025 and the City is working to ensure we meet these and other regulatory obligations.

Infrastructure enhancements are generally targeted in areas where there is community benefit, civic facilities and roadways are an example. Where an individual street or neighborhood (commercial or residential) is interested in having upgrades made it is likely that a Local Area Service (LAS) project would be proposed.

Under a LAS agreement, a neighborhood improvement is paid for by the owners of the benefiting properties in order to deliver specific engineering infrastructure. Typical services accommodated under the LAS program are curb and gutters, sidewalks, streetlights, water mains, storm sewers or sanitary sewers. A LAS project can be initiated either by petition or by Council initiative and must be approved by the benefiting properties and City Council. LAS projects are carried out on actual cost basis, which is determined at the completion of the project. The individual property's share is determined and then added to the property tax. Owners can choose to either pay in full at once or choose to pay for it over several years.

For conversation, a potential action that may be considered would be the review of infrastructure and crime mapping to determine any areas that would likely benefit from such infrastructure. Depending on the location(s) identified this could trigger interest in discussing a LAS, further partnership with partner agencies, or inform a future capital project recommendation.

Strategic Priorities:

Enhancements to street lighting can be viewed in relation to the strategic pillars of "City Government and Infrastructure" and "Social Health and Well Being". Energy efficient upgrades may also be viewed in relation to the pillar of "Environmental Stewardship".

Summary and conclusion:

This report provides a vehicle for conversation on the committee work plan item "Impact of Street Lighting".

Respectfully submitted:

Eric Depenau, Director of Administrative Services

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/01/21