



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: June 20th, 2025

To: Mayor and Council

From: Councillor Kyle Sampson, Councillor Tim Bennett

Subject: Business & Retail Crime Response Forum

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council **DIRECTS** Administration to coordinate and facilitate a Business & Retail Crime Response Forum, with requested participation from the RCMP, and invited representatives from the retail and business community, including organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Prince George to represent local and small-scale retailers, and an invitation for staff from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to participate.
2. That **DIRECTS** Administration to report back to Council with a summary of outcomes and next steps identified by participants, recognizing that the City's role is to help facilitate stronger collaboration between the RCMP and local business community to address ongoing crime and safety concerns.

DISCUSSION:

This isn't about stepping into the RCMP's role or directing their work, or about stepping into the private sectors individual challenges, it's about making sure the City is doing what it can, within its lane, to support a safer business environment, and in turn, a safer community. We won't solve crime overnight, but this initiative is something we can do to help build the partnerships that make smarter, faster responses possible in their own respective lanes. We have the tools to help form the needed partnerships.

Council has received consistent and increasing concern from retailers and business leaders across Prince George regarding the frequency and severity of property crime, theft, vandalism, and safety concerns within their operations. These challenges not only affect bottom lines, but also create a demoralizing and sometimes dangerous environment for frontline workers, customers, and the broader community.

During recent meetings with a major employer and retail sector leaders, I, along with some Council colleagues committed to exploring the possibility of the City facilitating a meaningful dialogue between the RCMP and the business community. The goal is to help build shared understanding, identify targeted opportunities for support, and foster an open channel for ongoing engagement and problem-solving.

While I recognize that the City and Council have limited jurisdiction and direct mandate when it comes to policing and prosecution, that doesn't mean we sit on the sidelines. This initiative is about exploring every opportunity where we can help, through facilitation, collaboration, partnership, or other supports. By creating a place for

dialogue and information-sharing between local retailers, RCMP, and other organizations, we can strengthen coordination and ensure everyone is better equipped to tackle this nationwide challenge.

Even where our role is indirect, we can help connect the dots, whether it's accessing programs, voicing shared concerns to higher levels of government, or simply creating a more united front in facing the prolific offenders, the small number of folks, responsible for a disproportionate amount of the challenges.

Improving information-sharing in a format supported by the RCMP can help connect patterns, highlight trends, and allow for faster, more coordinated responses across the business community. The intent is to bring people to the table and help the whole system work better, including in the City's limited, but important, roles. This should also help inform our further advocacy work in Victoria and Ottawa where we are fighting for real solutions, such as bail reform for repeat property offenders, and more.

This proposed Business & Retail Crime Response Forum would:

- Create a forum for dialogue between police leadership and the business sector, as well as City staff.
- Allow for a variety of retailers the opportunity to participate and benefit.
- Enable organizations like the Chamber and Downtown PG to represent smaller businesses so that no matter an organizations size or capacity, they can benefit from the learnings and collaboration.
- Provide space for collaboration on new or expanded community policing programs relevant to the retail sector.
- Provide an opportunity for future collaboration and direct connection between participating bodies, particularly the RCMP and individual businesses, as well as the provincial government.

In addition to the forum, Council had also expressed interest in participating in store tours with local retail loss prevention teams to better understand the current challenges from a ground-level perspective. Administration should liaise with interested partners to organize these tour opportunities for Council to get a closer, firsthand look at the challenges.

This motion supports a collaborative, practical, and community-rooted approach to retail crime and public safety, ensuring Council follows through on its stated commitments and remains proactive in supporting one of our city's largest employment sectors, retail.

This motion builds upon recent discussions and reports brought before Council regarding enhancements to public safety programming, including the Citizens on Patrol and Block Watch initiatives, as well as our recent \$40k investment into CCTV downtown. As outlined in those reports, there are already several low-cost, high-impact opportunities to increase community visibility, improve collaboration, and better connect with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown PG. This proposed Forum complements that work by creating space for broader dialogue and partnership across the public and private sectors, without duplicating or overstepping the role of RCMP or existing safety programs. It helps carry forward Council's stated interest in supporting business safety, and ensures we continue moving from discussion to coordination and action.

This motion also aligns with Council's 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan by directly supporting the goal of enhancing community safety under the Social Health and Well-Being pillar, and strengthening economic resilience under Economic Diversity and Growth. This proactive collaboration reflects the strategic emphasis on a safe, inclusive, and thriving local economy.

Any minimal costs associated with facilitating the forum or coordinating related activities would be absorbed within the existing administrative operating budget.

It is intended that this motion be considered by Council at the July 28th Regular Council Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Councillor Kyle Sampson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tim Bennett', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Tim Bennett