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City considering options to reduce downtown disturbances

City Council is considering a range of options to reduce the number of downtown disturbances in Campbell River.

“While RCMP statistics indicate a reduction in calls related to illegal activity and inappropriate behaviour, we are hearing that downtown disturbances continue to be an ongoing frustration for members of our community, particularly downtown businesses,” says Mayor Andy Adams. “City Council and the RCMP share these frustrations and are looking at a range of options to create a more dynamic, clean, safe and welcoming downtown core.”

The Mayor adds, *“we all agree that this is a concern best addressed by everyone working together, and that all community members have a responsibility and a role to play in keeping downtown a place for everyone. We urge community members to assist by reporting issues as soon as they see them. This will help ensure that we have an accurate picture of problems and can provide immediate attention where it’s needed.”*

Problems can be reported to the RCMP, local security or the City bylaw department.

“RCMP statistics indicate that the number of downtown disturbances dropped for the first time in several years last year, to reach the lowest level since 2008,” says RCMP officer in charge Jeff Preston. “Still, we want to encourage anyone who sees illegal or unwanted behaviour taking place downtown to call the RCMP immediately so we can attend and address the situation.”

Preston adds, *“working with social service agencies, we can also help people get the services they need.”*

Those services include counselling and shelter at the Sobering Assessment Centre. Crime analysis statistics indicate that 400 fewer people were detained in jail cells last year thanks to the availability of this downtown service.

“Staff are preparing a report on options available to Council to further enhance our downtown core, and improve the situation for community members, visitors and for people on the street,” says city manager Deborah Sargent. “We’ll be looking at what is helping now, what has been successful in other communities, and changes we can make in the short-term and over a longer period to reduce the number of downtown disturbances.”

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