

MOTION

5. Improving Street Lighting in Vancouver (Member's Motion B.3)

At the Council meeting on December 8 and 10, 2020, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on January 20, 2021, in order to hear from speakers.

Submitted by: Councillor Dominato

WHEREAS

1. The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee is appointed by Vancouver City Council to provide advice on enhancing access and inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, and queer communities so they may participate fully in civic life;
2. Numerous local and international reports emphasize the importance of street and sidewalk lighting for maintaining personal safety (real and perceived), reducing pedestrian collisions, and promoting use of public spaces;
3. Poorly maintained and inadequate street lighting is especially problematic for vulnerable groups such as 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, women, seniors, and persons with disabilities;
4. The City of Vancouver website states that "keeping our streets, sidewalks, and green spaces safe and clean for everyone to enjoy is a City priority";
5. The City of Vancouver is seeking 'Global Age-Friendly City' status from the World Health Organization, which requires cities to ensure an increased standard of safety in all public spaces;
6. In October 2019, City Council passed a motion regarding the prioritization of public realm maintenance;
7. In 2013, the Seniors Advisory Committee' passed a motion calling for improvements to identification and repair of non-functioning streetlights, as well as the addition of lighting in poorly lit areas;
8. This motion was supported by the 2SLGBTQ+, Women's, and Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committees;
9. City Council, in response to this motion, called on staff to report on the current level of service for non-functioning lights and any progress made on installing additional lighting for pedestrian safety;
10. In response, staff committed to reducing repair time from an average of 21 days to 7 days;

11. The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee's examination of data reveals that lights are repaired in accordance with this new standard, but only if/when they are brought to the attention of City staff;
12. The City largely relies on citizens to identify non-functioning lights and report them using 311 or VanConnect;
13. Members of our communities have observed that many lights are in disrepair for several months, especially those near commercial areas, parks, or 'dead zones' (e.g., between buildings);
14. Our examination of 311 incident reports confirms that some lights are in disrepair for long periods, but are repaired shortly after a first report is made;
15. Many people are unaware of the 311 and VanConnect systems, or experience difficulty using them (e.g., requirement for too much information, disappearance of service requests); and
16. Members of our communities remain concerned that there is insufficient or obstructed lighting in several areas throughout the city, which affects their sense of safety and curtails their nighttime activities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report on the feasibility of the following:

1. An analysis of the effectiveness of relying on 311/VanConnect to report lighting outages (e.g., percentage of citizens that know 311/VanConnect can be used for reporting and, of those, percentage that are actually willing to use it; the percentage of citizens who would need to be knowledgeable about 311/VanConnect and willing to use it in order for this tool to be sufficiently effective in identifying outages in a timely manner);
2. A renewed public education campaign, based on the analysis above, to encourage citizens to report lighting outages using 311 or VanConnect (e.g., ads on social media, bus shelters, and TV/radio);
3. Encouraging 311 staff to streamline the reporting process as much as possible (i.e., do not request too much information);
4. Encouraging city crews (e.g., sanitation workers) to report outages during nightly shifts, especially in areas where citizens may be unlikely to report (e.g., commercial areas, parks, and 'dead zones' between buildings);
5. Installing new lighting in poorly lit areas, especially sidewalk-level and alleyway lighting in areas identified by residents as being at higher risk for public safety concerns; and

6. Reducing the obstruction of lighting (e.g., from overhanging tree cover);

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to consult the relevant advisory committees on these matters including the Seniors' Advisory Committee, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, Active Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Women's Advisory Committee.

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