



**Subject:** *Summary of Uniacke Business Park meeting and security concerns*  
**To:** Corporate and Residential Services Committee  
**Date Prepared:** May 6, 2024  
**Related Motions:** C24(100)  
**Prepared by:** Graham Scott, Manager Economic and Business Development  
**Approved by:** Adam Clarkson, Director Corporate Services

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### Summary

In March 2024, the Economic and Business Development Division, RCMP, and local Municipal Councillors met with Uniacke Business Park owners and tenants to discuss security concerns in the Park that the local businesses had raised. These issues, and concerns about Municipal infrastructure and service levels in the Business Park, were discussed. This report provides a summary of the meeting and discussions.

### Financial Impact Statement

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

### Recommendation

Staff are recommending that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend to Council to continue with crime prevention and proactive patrols as a priority area for the RCMP, and that crime statistics specific to the three Business Parks be included in the RCMP quarterly Report to Council.

### Recommended Motion

*The Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that crime prevention and proactive patrols continue to be a priority for the RCMP, and that crime statistics specific to the three Business Parks be included in the RCMP quarterly Report to Council.*

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### Background

During 2022 and 2023, Economic and Business Development received multiple reports of theft in the Business Parks from business owners. In addition, antidotally more incidents were mentioned by business owners as not being reported to RCMP or Municipal Staff. Based on these reports, property crime, theft, and break-and-enter incidents, appear to be increasing in frequency and are not being consistently reported to law enforcement. In conversations with local business owners, there has been a growing sentiment that East Hants should be involved in managing and finding solutions to crime issues in the park, beyond crime prevention measures that individual property owners can implement.

In October 2023, Economic and Business Development completed an information report for Council highlighting that the RCMP responded to 24 incidents of crime in the Elmsdale Business Park and 20 incidents in the Uniacke Business Park during the past two years. For that report, the Milford Industrial Park was not included in the Analysis.

In March 2024, Economic and Business Development, RCMP, and local Municipal Councillors met with a group of 10 Uniacke Business Park owners and tenants to discuss security concerns in the Park that the local businesses had raised. These issues and additional concerns about Municipal service levels in the Business Park were discussed.

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## Discussion

### Security and crime

During the March 2024 public meeting, 10 businesses from the Unaicke Business Park attended and shared concerns about crime incidents in the Park. Two additional businesses were unable to attend but sent in letters after the meeting in April, outlining their concerns. A meeting with the Elmsdale Business Park businesses has not yet been held.

RCMP representatives attended the March 2024 meeting with Municipal Councillors and Staff to discuss the theft concerns with the businesses. The RCMP shared that business owners should take individual precautions to protect their property from these events. They also shared the importance of reporting these events to the RCMP, even if business owners don't report these events to their insurance provider. The RCMP indicated Council's new commitment to the 24-hour policing model and their priority for 2024 on crime prevention may help with a more timely response to such incidents in the Park, but it is unlikely to prevent or stop them. The RCMP further shared that on-site lighting, cameras, and security personnel are all preventative measures that can help to reduce the incidence and frequency of crimes, but it is unlikely that they will ever be completely eliminated.

During the meeting, businesses suggested that East Hants should provide security personnel for the Business Park after hours. Various models of security were discussed including gating access to the Park, mobile security patrols, and on-site security personnel who would remain in the park after hours. Economic and Business Development staff shared with the businesses that they had recently gathered high-level information from security companies about potential services and costs for the Park. One security company EBD staff spoke to, suggested that mobile patrols would do little to prevent incidents of crime, as the individuals committing the crimes would work around the timing of the patrols entering and leaving the Park. This was also reinforced by the RCMP during the meeting. On-site security personnel were also discussed. Economic and Business Development staff shared that from researching costs, on-site security would likely cost in the range of \$100,000 to 125,000 annually per Business Park. Some business park tenants felt that East Hants should hire employees to perform security in the Park and that this cost would be much less than outsourcing it to a security company. Economic and Business Development has completed a jurisdictional scan of other Business and Industrial Parks in Nova Scotia, and none of the Parks surveyed offer a municipally contracted or operated security service.

Previously, in 2015, Council explored the option of an area rate in the Elmsdale Business Park to implement a security service(C15(138)). A petition vote was conducted and at the time it did not have the majority of support from the business owners.

### Infrastructure and municipal service levels

Additional discussion during the meeting led to concerns around Municipal service levels within the Unaicke Business Park and the availability of off-site advertising signage for businesses in the Park. Concerns around Municipal service levels were specific to infrastructure-type issues. Repair and maintenance of streetlights, overgrown vegetation in ditches, and problems with the Highway 1 and James Boyle Drive intersection were specifically discussed.

In October 2023, businesses raised concerns that numerous streetlights were out in the Uniacke Business Park. The Roads and Streets division investigated and discovered that 16 lights needed to be replaced. These were replaced in February of 2024.

Truck turning at Highway 1 was also cited as a concern, with transport trucks needing to enter the northbound lane of Highway 1 to turn south towards the Irving Service Station. Roads and Streets have reviewed this concern and indicated that this intersection is within the Provincial right-of-way. Further study is required to understand the intersection, limitations, and traffic requirements. This study has been identified for completion in 2024.

An additional concern with this intersection area was raised during the meeting. Erosion of the shoulder of the road around the cross culvert that runs underneath James Boyle Drive at this intersection was discussed. This issue was raised in 2023 by the business. Roads and Streets reviewed this culvert when the concern was raised last year and believes that there are deficiencies in the design and construction of this cross culvert. They believe these deficiencies are contributing to the erosion along the side of the road right away. The Infrastructure and Operations Department temporarily repaired this erosion in July of 2023 after the concerns were raised, and then again performed additional repairs caused by the July rain storm event. Infrastructure and Operations are continuing to work with the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works to find a long-term solution to both the intersection and the culvert.

Overall, the response time for fixing infrastructure-related issues was an underlining theme throughout the meeting. Infrastructure and Operations have indicated that staffing levels played a role in delayed response in the past however staff have made significant improvements since then.

Economic and Business Development staff visited a number of the businesses in April that had attended the meeting to follow up and learn more about their experiences with crime in the park. Staff received general feedback that while there had not been reports of any recent incidents, the businesses felt that crime would continue in the parks without additional preventative measures. A number of the businesses did express that they were happy with the Park operations overall.

Through the course of the meeting in March, Businesses in the Uniacke Business Park articulated a desire for an after-hours security service in the Park. If Council wishes to explore the option of a security service further, they could request a report outlining a business case proposal for this service in the Business Parks. This report would examine service models, costs, and funding mechanisms for Council's consideration.

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## Alternatives

1. Due to the discussion around Business Park infrastructure, the Corporate and Residential Services Committee could recommend to Council that the Infrastructure and Operations Department prepare a report on current issues and levels of service in the Business Parks.
2. The Corporate and Residential Services Committee could recommend to Council to request a report outlining a business case proposal for after-hours security service in the Business Parks.
3. The Corporate and Residential Services Committee could recommend to Council to provide additional direction to Staff.

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## Attachments

Crime Report on East Hants Business Parks.pdf