

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: November 27, 2023

From: Lisa Spitale,
Chief Administrative Officer
File: 2393325

Item #: 2023-762

Subject: **Uptown Business Association and Downtown New Westminster BIA – 2024 Business Promotion Scheme Budget Approvals**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the Uptown Business Association's 2024 Business Promotion Scheme Budget;

THAT Council approve the Downtown New Westminster BIA's 2024 Business Promotion Scheme Budgets for the Primary Area and Secondary Area.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with the Uptown Business Association and Downtown Business Improvement Area's 2024 Business Promotion Scheme budgets for approval.

BACKGROUND

A business improvement area (BIA) is a local service area established by a municipal council where business and light industry property owners finance activities to promote business. Activities can include graffiti removal, planning and holding events, and conserving heritage property which can improve the local economy and advance the social well-being of the community.

The *Community Charter* provides the authority for a municipality to create a business improvement area by bylaw, and establishes the rules for the establishment and operation of such a service. Business promotion activities in a business improvement service area are financed through a local service property tax scheme.

In New Westminster, there are two formal Business Improvement Associations as defined under the Community Charter; Uptown Business Association (UBA) and Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA). As part of the requirements outlined in the BIA bylaws, Council must approve each BIA's annual Business Promotion Scheme budget ahead of every fiscal year.

Uptown Business Association (UBA)

The UBA was initiated in 2014 and is currently in the process of seeking renewal for a new 5-year term (2024 to 2028). On October 16, 2023, Council endorsed that Uptown Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 8424, 2023 be forwarded for Council's consideration of three readings and that staff proceed with the notice requirements under the Community Charter. See Attachment 1 for the proposed Uptown Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 8424, 2023. If successful and the renewal of the BIA area approved by Council, the annual local service tax amounts granted to the UBA by the City would be as follows:

Year	Total
2024	\$150,000
2025	\$154,000
2026	\$158,000
2027	\$162,000
2028	\$166,000

Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA)

The DBIA has been in existence since December of 1989 and was renewed for a four-year term spanning 2022 to 2025. See Attachment 2 for the two bylaws establishing the DBIA, comprised of a primary area and secondary area.

Year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2022	161,912.41	133,857.52	\$295,769.93
2023	166,769.78	137,873.25	\$304,643.03
2024	171,772.87	142,009.45	\$313,782.32
2025	176,926.06	146,269.73	\$323,195.79

ANALYSIS

The two BIA's have submitted their 2024 Business Promotion Scheme budgets, see *Attachment 3 for UBA and Attachment 4 for DBIA*. As outlined in their respective establishing bylaws, the Business Promotion Schemes are to include the following activities:

UBA

1. Street Beautification - Initiatives consisting of tangible aesthetic improvements to the streetscape. These may include street banners, Christmas lighting, hanging baskets, and various street improvements such as bike racks, banner brackets and street furniture.
2. Street Activation Support for various events/activities in the public realm that feature the Uptown area and attract visitors, such as Uptown Live and Recovery Day, and partnering with community organizations, including the Arts Council, in funding Uptown Unplugged and other events and markets.
3. Promotion & Marketing - Various programs to market and promote the Uptown area and the retailers and restaurant businesses located Uptown.
4. Outreach - Partnering with community organizations to help fund programs that are mutually beneficial, such as I's on the Street, providing opportunities for people that are homeless or at risk of being homeless, while enhancing the Uptown area through additional street cleaning.

DBIA

1. The encouragement of business in the Business Improvement Area in order to complement and expand the present business mix;
2. The strengthening of businesses in the Business Improvement Area by undertaking beautification projects and promotional initiatives including special events and by advertising and promoting existing businesses;
3. The carrying out of research and the preparation of reports including measures to enhance the economic vitality of the Business Improvement Area; and
4. The improvement, beautification or maintenance of streets, sidewalks or municipally owned land, buildings or structures in the Business Improvement Area

Staff recommend approval of both BIA's budgets on the basis that it meets the bylaw objectives outlined above. Staff note that due to staffing resources the submission of this report is after the time specified in the bylaws of October 15, however the UBA is going through a bylaw renewal process and a new interim Executive Director now secured through the DBIA.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Annual BIA budgets are funded through a local area service property tax on business and light industry properties (BC Assessment Class 5 and Class 6 properties) within the boundaries established by the BIA bylaw. Through that tax, the monies provided by the municipality for the business promotion schemes of the business improvement area is recovered. Since BIAs are funded through property taxes levied on Class 5 and 6 within the designated BIA boundaries, there are no financial implications to the City of New Westminster.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report has been prepared by staff in the Office of the CAO with review by Finance Department staff.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. THAT Council approve the Uptown Business Association's 2024 Business Promotion Scheme Budget;
2. THAT Council approve the Downtown New Westminster BIA's 2024 Business Promotion Scheme Budgets for the Primary Area and Secondary Area.
3. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Option 1 and 2.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Uptown Business Association BIA Bylaw

Attachment 2: Downtown New Westminster BIA Bylaw (Primary) and (Secondary)

Attachment 3: 2024 UBA Business Promotion Scheme Budget

Attachment 4: 2024 DBIA Business Promotion Scheme Budget: Primary & Secondary Areas

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