



City of New Westminster

Report to Council

To: New Westminster City Council
in Regular Council

Meeting Date: October 20, 2025

From: Blair Fryer, Director, Community
Services

Report No.: 2025-292

Re: **Downtown BIA Renewal 2026 - 2029**

Staff Recommendation

1. *THAT the Council Initiative process be commenced as the means by which to measure property owner support for a four-year renewal term of the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2029; and*
 2. *THAT the following bylaws be introduced and given first, second, and third readings:*
 - a. *Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area (Primary Area) Bylaw No. 8548, 2025; and*
 - b. *Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area (Secondary Area) Bylaw No. 8549, 2025.*
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Purpose

To obtain approval to initiate the renewal of the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area for a four-year term from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2029 by means of the Council Initiative process.

Background

The *Community Charter* provides the authority for a municipality to create a business improvement area (BIA) by bylaw, and establishes the rules for the establishment and operation of such a service. A BIA is a Local Service Area where business and light industry property owners finance activities to promote a business promotion scheme. The *Community Charter* requires that the business promotion scheme must include one or more of the following:

- Carrying out studies or developing reports
- Improving, beautifying or maintaining streets, sidewalks or municipally-owned land, buildings or other structures
- Removing graffiti from buildings and other structures

- Conserving heritage property
- And generally encouraging business

In New Westminster, there are currently two BIAs: Downtown New Westminster BIA and Uptown Business Association. The Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society is requesting the City initiate the process that will formally assess the level of support for the renewal of the Downtown New Westminster BIA.

In 1989, Council approved the initial Downtown New Westminster BIA Bylaw. The current Downtown BIA Bylaw expires on December 31, 2025 and the Downtown BIA has proposed a new term of four years from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2029. The area covered by the Downtown BIA is illustrated in Attachment 1. The Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society is not seeking to expand their boundaries during this term.

Analysis

At the September 10, 2025 Downtown New Westminster BIA board meeting, the members unanimously passed a resolution to request a four-year renewal term for the Downtown Business Improvement Areas.

Renewal of the Downtown New Westminster BIA requires adoption of a bylaw by Council (Attachments 2 and 3). Subsequent to a BIA Bylaw being adopted by Council, BIA revenues are collected by the City through an annual tax levy on each property within the BIA area and are transferred to the Downtown New Westminster BIA. As requested by the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society, the proposed Downtown New Westminster BIA levy structure would have an initial increase of 39.23% from 2025 to 2026, followed by an annual increase of 3% over the period of 2027 to 2029. Table 1 below shows examples of the proposed 2026 levy.

Table 1: Example of Proposed 2026 Levy

Example Property	2024 Levy	2025 Levy	2026 Levy	Difference 2025-2026
Property A	\$281.36	\$294.94	\$410.66	\$115.72
Property B	\$533.61	\$560.81	\$780.84	\$220.03
Property C	\$950.18	\$977.15	\$1,360.53	\$383.38
Property D	\$19,958.89	\$21,205.51	\$29,295.00	\$8,089.49

The proposed annual schedule of the levy structure for the duration of the term is provided in Table 2 below. The Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society has outlined that the additional resources will be invested in human resource capacity and adjusting staff responsibilities to better align with the priorities outlined in their new strategic plan. They have also identified having a greater focus on beautification, clean and safe initiatives, as outlined by their members. Per the Downtown New Westminster BIA Bylaw, the proposed annual budget of Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society is submitted annually to the City. The 2026

proposed budget is included to this report as *Attachment 4*.

Table 2: Proposed Annual Levy Amount, by BIA area, including past 2025 year

Year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2025	\$176,926.06	\$146,269.73	\$323,195.79
2026	\$247,500.00	\$202,500.00	\$450,000.00
2027	\$254,925.00	\$208,575.00	\$463,500.00
2028	\$262,572.75	\$214,832.25	\$477,405.00
2029	\$270,449.93	\$221,277.22	\$491,727.15

Outreach

The Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Society conducted member outreach over spring – summer 2025, as part of its new strategic plan process, by using various methods to gauge support for the renewal and to determine priority areas for the four-year term as reflected in their letter to Mayor and Council (*Attachment 1*).

The Downtown New Westminster BIA has been broadly supported during past renewal processes.

- The 2007 renewal recorded 4 of 77 opposed in the primary area, and 7 of 89 opposed in the secondary area.
- The 2018 renewal recorded 3 of 85 opposed in the primary area, and 1 of 122 opposed in the secondary area.
- The 2021/2022 renewal recorded 0 of 124 opposed in the primary area, and 2 of 127 opposed in the secondary area.

Past Council policy has been to support the Downtown New Westminster BIA process when requested to do so. It is therefore recommended that the process be initiated for proposed renewal of the Downtown New Westminster BIA for a four year term.

Renewal Process

The process of renewal under the initiative plan is outlined in the *Community Charter* and is summarized by the following steps:

1	BIA establishing bylaws delineating primary and secondary area, and establishing total dollar amount for each area, presented for 3 readings only.	October 20, 2025
2	Notice mailed to all property owners and first notice published in Citypage and posted on Public Notice board at City Hall of the intention to establish BIA for a four-year period commencing January 1, 2026.	October 23, 2025
3	Second notice printed and posted on information boards at both Public Libraries; property owners are given 30 days following the second notice to petition against the proposed service.	October 31, 2025
4	Documentation of responses by property owners (report on sufficiency of petition against) collected by the Corporate Officer. The petition against must be signed by property owners representing at least 50% of the number of property owners and 50% of the assessed values in the designated areas in order to be successful.	December 1, 2025

5	BIA establishing bylaws presented for adoption if petition against is not successful.	December 15, 2025
6	Council bylaw directing staff to prepare BIA Assessment Roll and set time of Assessment Roll Review Panel.	Spring 2026
7	Parcel Tax Roll Review Panel advertised, and notices mailed to all property owners.	Spring 2026
8	Review Panel held to confirm Parcel Tax Roll.	Spring 2026
9	Local Service Parcel Tax bylaws prepared and presented for Council-consideration.	Spring 2026
10	Levy calculated and billed with property tax notices.	Spring 2026

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 grant provided by the municipality for the business promotion schemes of the business improvement area is recovered. Since BIAs are funded through a special property levy on commercial properties within the designated BIA boundaries, there are no financial implications to the City of New Westminster.

Interdepartmental Liaison

This report has been prepared by Community Services with input from the Finance and Legislative Services Departments.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Downtown New Westminster BIA Letter Dated September 19, 2025
- Re: Downtown New West BIA Renewal
- Attachment 2 – Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area (Primary Area) Bylaw No. 8548, 2025
- Attachment 3 – Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Area (Secondary Area) Bylaw No. 8549, 2025
- Attachment 4 – 2026 proposed Downtown New Westminster BIA Budget

Submitted By
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