



The city's economic action plan *Victoria 3.0 - Recovery Reinvention Resilience* under 'Recovery – Our Small Businesses are the Lifeblood of our Community' outlines actions to ensure downtown is safe and welcoming for all. This includes creation of a downtown clean and safe committee and a downtown ambassador program that will help provide a visible, welcoming presence for all. These improvements will not only contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the downtown but, over time, it is hoped they can be expected to reduce front-line resource requirements for VicPD.

The proposed Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative would be administered for the City by the DVBA under a partnering agreement and provide the following services:

- Allocate \$60,000 towards a funding program to support any Victoria business that sustained damage to their windows, doors or locks due to vandalism or break-in to facilitate quick repairs.
  - This one-time funding would be approved based on a first-come, first-served basis, up to \$1,000 per business, and the business would be required to provide receipts and a police file number.
  - To ensure vibrancy and vitality the repair work must be initiated within 10 days.
- Allocate \$40,000 to establish a downtown business/resident block watch program in partnership with the Downtown Residents Association (DRA) and other partners to support and deliver the Victoria 3.0 actions to: Create a Downtown Clean and Safe Committee and Create a Downtown Ambassador Program.

## **OPTIONS & IMPACTS**

### **Option 1: (Recommended)**

1. Approve \$100,000 from the 2021 Financial Plan contingency budget to be allocated toward a Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative to be administered by the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) as outlined in this report.
2. Authorize a partnership agreement, on the terms satisfactory to the Head of Business and Community Relations and in the form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, with the DVBA to provide services on behalf of the City for the Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative.
3. That the above motions be forwarded to the daytime meeting of February 25, 2021 for ratification.

This option will help to address the impacts of vandalism and maintain vibrancy and viability of the downtown and deliver on actions outlined in the city's economic action plan *Victoria 3.0 Recovery Reinvention Resilience*.

### **Option 2:**

1. **Direct staff with alternative options.**

#### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

There are no impacts to accessibility.

#### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

Should Council approve Option 1, the \$100,000 would be allocated from the contingency budget within 2021 Financial Plan. The contingency budget is typically used to fund unforeseen or emergency expenditures.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In addition to other City initiatives to support business, such as the Build Back Victoria program, the proposed partner agreement with the DVBA will further help to maintain Victoria's downtown vibrancy and vitality. The City of Victoria will continue to listen to the business community to explore initiatives and programs to provide further relief and support during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerri Moore  
Head of Business & Community Relations

**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager**