



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of April 15, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** March 22, 2021
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business & Community Relations
Subject: Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative – Clean & Safe Committee Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the February 25, 2021 meeting, Council passed the following motions regarding the Support Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Report:

That Council:

- 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 staff report to Council with an update on the block watch and downtown ambassador component of this expenditure when the information is available.*

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.

The proposed Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative (\$40,000), would be administered for the City by the DVBA under a partnering agreement and begin the process of initiating a Downtown Clean & Safe Committee. The primary focus of this initial phase would be to extend the DVBA's Clean Team services over the weekends, to improve communication and build relationships amongst business owners and residents, and to initiate a scrub up event.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the details for the \$40,000 expenditure component for a downtown clean and safe committee.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

A meeting was held by the DVBA on March 19 and included City staff, DRA President and downtown businesses to discuss the initial details for a Downtown Clean & Safe Committee. In advance of forming the committee, the following initiatives were outlined to support the immediate need for increased vibrancy of downtown utilizing the \$40,000 expenditure:

Weekend Clean Team – allocate \$20,000 for 3 new staff and supplies.

The DVBA will expand its Clean Team service during the summer months to ensure the cleanliness of downtown that will include weekend coverage on Saturday and Sunday from May through to September. This pilot will add 3 new staff members to the DVBA Clean Team to provide additional cleaning and support to existing City services within the DVBA boundary.

Good Neighbour Program (GNP) – allocate \$20,000 for a co-op student, collateral production, creation of website landing page, and database management.

The DVBA will hire a co-op student to manage the program start-up. The GNP would be multifaceted, where business owners and downtown residents alongside VicPD, the City, and other community partners will work together with the common goal of making downtown a healthy, safe, liveable, inclusive, and vibrant neighbourhood for everyone. The program will focus on beautification and safety, as follows:

- Beautification – create a Scrub Up Event that brings together VicPD, the City, Victoria Fire Department, community organizations, business owners, landlords, residents, and other interested community members to work together to clean streets, buildings, windows, parking meters, and anything in the public realm. The Scrub Up could be expanded into a quarterly program.
- Safety – working with VicPD, community organizations and block captains to introduce clear on how, what, and who to report various issues, such as a crack in the sidewalk, graffiti, broken windows, stolen items, etc. This would also include the Safe Harbour Program and staff training on inclusion in our community.

The co-op student would arrange committee meetings, work to identify the block captains, produce and disseminate material to support the GNP, create a dedicated landing page on the DVBA and DRA websites, create a comprehensive database of business owners and residents contact information to provide regular communication and updates. The DVBA and DRA believe that improving communications and building stronger relationships amongst residents and business owners will provide cost-effective benefits for improving business vitality and vibrancy.

Accessibility Impact Statement

No impacts to accessibility contained within this report.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiatives focused on beautification and safety as the launch of a downtown clean and safe committee will immediately provide a visible, welcoming presence and contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the downtown.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerri Moore
Head of Business & Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager