

Downtown Courtenay Improvement Area Bylaw Review



July 2023

Prepared by Urban Systems

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area	2
2.1	Current Conditions.....	3
3.0	Enabling Provincial Legislation and City Bylaw	4
4.0	How does the DCBIA Compare?	6
4.1	National Scan of BIA Best Practices.....	6
4.2	Comparative Communities.....	7
4.3	Comparative Service Offerings	8
4.4	Finances.....	13
5.0	Community Feedback	15
5.1	Outreach Efforts	15
5.2	Board of Directors Workshop	17
5.3	Information Session	20
5.4	Online Survey.....	21
5.5	Key Findings	31
6.0	Recommendations	32
6.1	Service Delivery.....	32
6.2	Finances.....	33
6.3	Boundary Expansion	33
7.0	Recommended Next Steps	35

Appendices

Appendix A – Communication and Engagement Report

Appendix B – Verbatim Engagement Results

Appendix C – DCBIA AGM Meeting Minutes

1.0 Introduction

In 2022, the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area (DCBIA) with support from the City of Courtenay, began the process of reviewing service levels, fees and operating budget. The goal of this project is ultimately to update the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 2264, 2002 to better serve the Downtown Courtenay business community.

The DCBIA contracted Urban Systems to support with outreach efforts, best practice review and to conduct a strategic analysis to provide recommendations for improvement. This report is a result of this work and details the project background, methodology, best practice research, and the results of outreach efforts. Section 6.0 provides specific recommendations based on this information to build on the success of the DCBIA to continue to serve the Courtenay community in the years to come.



2.0 Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area

The Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area (DCBIA) is one of 70 Business Improvement Areas in BC. It has been in existence since 1995 and aims to provide support for downtown Courtenay businesses and enhance a vibrant business community through leadership and advocacy. The DCBIA currently has a membership of approximately 200 businesses. This number fluctuates from year to year as businesses come and go. It has operated with annual budget of \$60,000 since 1995, which is collected from the member businesses as part of their property taxes. The rate per \$1000 of assessed value changes based on the total assessed value for that year. Table 1 below lays out the DCBIA tax rate over the last 5 years.

Table 1: DCBIA tax rate over the last 5 years

Year	Tax Rate	Total Assessed Value	Total Levy
2018	1.1201	\$53,566,646	\$60,000
2019	1.0140	\$59,171,598	\$60,000
2020	0.9257	\$64,815,815	\$60,000
2021	0.9608	\$62,447,960	\$60,000
2022	0.8371	\$71,676,024	\$60,000

The DCBIA service levels are dependent on staff capacity and annual operating budget. The DCBIA is currently run by a part-time Executive Director and supported by a working Board of Directors. Board members volunteer their time to contribute to various DCBIA committees. Currently, the primary services that are offered are as follows:



Marketing and promotion which includes social media, signage and targeted marketing campaigns.



Beautification and revitalization which includes wayfinding signs, banners, lights, and working with the City to provide amenities such as parklets and garbage cans.



Safety and security which includes lighting dark areas, resources, surveillance and working with the RCMP to identify areas of concern.

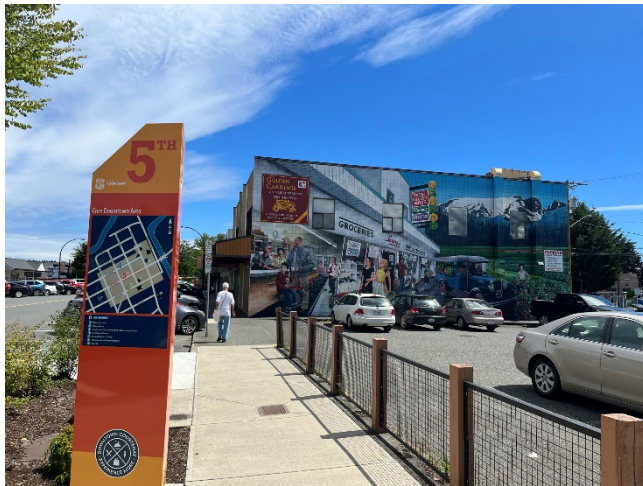


Advocacy for downtown businesses to external organizations which includes external funders, City of Courtenay, the Comox Valley Regional District, provincial and federal governments, Chamber of Commerce, and other Business Improvement Areas throughout BC.

2.1 Current Conditions

As it stands, the current bylaw does not contain a sunset or renewal clause. As well, it does not include an annual levy increase to ensure the annual operating budget keeps up with inflation. Therefore, the DCBIA has had the same operating budget for the last 20 years.

As such, the DCBIA's financial capacity to serve the community is increasingly limited. One example of this is the ability to retain staff. With operating costs increasing every year, the DCBIA is limited in what they are able to pay an Executive Director. The DCBIA has had four Executive Directors within the last 5 years, with staff leaving for higher paid roles with more support.



3.0 Enabling Provincial Legislation and City Bylaw

All municipalities in British Columbia¹ are legislated under the *Community Charter*. The *Community Charter* provides municipalities with broad powers and a legal framework to address existing and future community needs. Part 7, Division 5 of the *Community Charter* provides municipalities the authority to establish a “local service areas”, which include BIAs.

Business Improvement Areas are considered local service areas that carry out “business promotion schemes,” which include:

- Carrying out studies or making reports respecting one or more areas in the municipality where business or commerce is carried on.
- Improving, beautifying or maintaining streets, sidewalks or municipally owned land, buildings or other structures in one or more business improvement areas.
- The removal of graffiti from buildings and other structures in one or more business improvement areas.
- Conserving heritage property in one or more business improvement areas.
- Encouraging business in one or more business improvement areas.

It has been noted that the language around the nature of business promotion schemes is deliberately vague, allowing for a broad range of interpretations.

The *Community Charter* indicates that, to establish a local service area (including a BIA), a municipality must adopt a bylaw that outlines the proposed service and cost recovery methods. The local service area bylaw must describe the service, define the boundaries, identify the cost of service and recovery methods, including form and portion of the service to be covered by the local service tax. Establishing bylaws for BIAs are required to identify the business promotion scheme and the organization that will receive and expend the funds, the term of the grant and the maximum amount of money to be granted, and any conditions and limitations on receipt and expenditure of the funds.

In the case of the DCBIA, Courtenay City Council would need to amend or replace the current Bylaw which establishes the DCBIA local area service in order to set new funding and taxation arrangements, as well as confirm the boundaries of the local service area. Section 137 (1)(b) of the *Community Charter* states that... “*the included power to amend or repeal must be exercised by bylaw and is subject to the same approval and other requirements, if any, as the power to adopt a new bylaw under that authority...*”.

Note: According to staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, this means amending the bylaw requires the same process and same approval requirements as establishing a new BIA.

¹ With the exception of the City of Vancouver which is governed by the *Vancouver Charter*

The establishment Bylaw must be preceded by a process in which property owners within the proposed local service area have the opportunity to indicate whether they favour or oppose its establishment. This process can occur in one of two ways:

- Petition for Service – this is generally initiated by business owners within the proposed local service area. The petition document must indicate the boundaries and estimated costs, and be signed by the owners of at least 50% of the parcels subject to the proposed tax, with those parcels representing at least 50% of the assessed value of land and improvements within the proposed area.
- Council Initiative: Subject to Petition Against – this process would be initiated by City Council who could give notice of a petition against in accordance with Section 94 of the *Community Charter*. This notice, which must indicate the proposed boundaries and estimated costs, would be mailed to the owners of parcels that would be subject to the DCBIA local area service tax. Unless City Council receives a sufficient petition against this initiative within 30 days, the Bylaw establishment process can proceed. Similar to the 'Petition for Service' noted above, a sufficient petition against would have to be signed by the owners of at least 50% of the parcels subject to the proposed tax representing at least 50% of the assessed value of land and improvements within the proposed area.

Once established, it is also possible to enlarge or reduce the size of a local service area through a simplified process, with an amending Bylaw, in accordance with Section 218 of the *Community Charter*. The ability to use this simplified process is limited to changing the size of an existing local service area.

4.0 How does the DCBIA Compare?

4.1 National Scan of BIA Best Practices

A high-level review of best practices was conducted, looking at BIAs in municipalities across Canada. Several themes emerged from the research and are detailed below.

Capacity and Resources

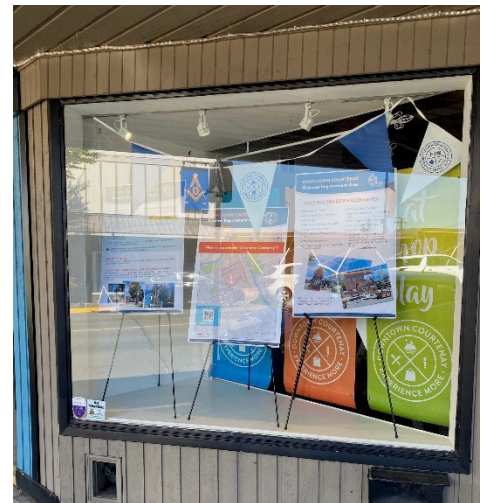
It was found that the BIAs that have higher assessment rates and associated levies, tend to have higher annual operating budget. This leads to increased capacity to tackle large scale issues and hire additional staff members as needed. BIAs with higher operating budgets often have the ability to hire full time staff to focus on BIA operations and initiatives. This allows the Board of Directors to focus on high-level strategy, oversight, and accountability versus the day-to-day operations.

Municipal Support

Successful BIAs have both financial and political support from the municipality. This can be accomplished by having a City staff member dedicated to BIA relations, and/or having regular meetings between the municipality and the BIA. Maintaining open communication channels between the BIA and the municipality can lead to additional resources and collaboration on important projects.

Size

Many municipalities noted that the most successful BIAs tend to be larger in size with a greater number of commercial properties that are contributing to the levy.



4.2 Comparative Communities

To dig deeper into best practices, several community's BIAs were selected to be examined more closely. These communities were chosen for their proximity to Courtenay, similar population and demographics, and the BIA's perceived success (i.e. BIA BC award winning). The communities chosen and their populations in 2021 are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Comparable Communities

Community	Population²
Chilliwack	100,580
Kamloops ³	97,902
Prince George	76,708
Vernon	44,519
Campbell River	35,519
Squamish	23,819
Comox	14,828
Parksville	13,642
Duncan	5,047

² Statistics Canada 2021 Canadian Census

³ Both the Downtown Kamloops Business Improvement Association and the North Shore Business Improvement Area Association were reviewed

4.3 Comparative Service Offerings

A BIA provides an area in the community with the means to improve local economic development and also achieve positive social outcomes, such as a revitalized downtown core.⁴ BIAs are able to serve their community in a variety of different ways. As such, a review of the comparable community’s BIA’s service offerings was conducted to understand how the DCBIA equates. The review was also used to research unique and creative ideas for services that could be employed by the DCBIA with an increased annual operating budget. The “core services” offered by the BIAs from comparative communities are demonstrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Comparable Communities – Core Service Offerings

Communities	Number of Members (approx.)	Services Offered ⁵
Chilliwack	350	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Support & advocacy Business resources Investments in safety & cleanliness initiatives Members Health Benefits program
Prince George ⁶	500	Marketing and promotion activities Micro-grants & business resources Undertaking a beautification project Community safety, health & well-being
Vernon	400	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Regularly updated news page Business resources through a member’s portal Downtown dollars initiative

⁴ Province of British Columbia (n.d.)

⁵ All information regarding services offered was determined from information available on each BIA’s website and may not be an exhaustive list.

⁶ Won the BC BIA Excellence Award in 2022 for Marketing for Local Businesses & Safety and Security

Communities	Number of Members (approx.)	Services Offered ⁵
Campbell River	80	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning News portal Business resources & links to community resources
Squamish	200	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Resources for economic development Community maintenance & beautification projects
Duncan	250	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Video marketing Conduct façade improvement projects Downtown Dollars program
Kamloops (Downtown)	850	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Preparation of studies, surveys & reports Improvement, maintenance & beautification of streets Substantial community resources
Kamloops (North Shore)	460	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Improvement, maintenance & beautification of the areas, particularly through their arts and community mural initiative Provide community resources for businesses Conduct advocacy work on behalf of members
Parksville	230	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Develop wayfinding information Youth ambassador program Area beautification projects

Communities	Number of Members (approx.)	Services Offered ⁵
		Business resources & links to community resources
Comox	200	Marketing and promotion activities Special event hosting/ planning Conduct advocacy work on behalf of members Marine advocacy Member Business Resources page

4.3.1 Unique Service Offerings

Across BC, there are several BIAs that are piloting innovative projects that expand the role and impact of the organization. A summary of some unique initiatives are outlined below. Note that the DCBIA may already employ some of these initiatives, however, it is still valuable to see how other jurisdictions employ similar techniques.

Downtown Prince George BIA - Multi-Media Marketing Campaign

Over eight months, the project created consistent messaging, images and graphics across the BIAs social media, and digital platforms. The BIAs website was also updated.

Tasks involved:

- *Photo Library*
 - Developing stock photos depicting downtown business components for all seasons
 - Business Components: SHOP-EAT-EXPLORE-THRIVE
- *Design Library*
 - Developing design/graphic library to use for social, digital & print
- *Social Media Management*
 - Building tool kit for creating, scheduling, and implementing social media campaign
 - Providing social media implementation for Downtown Prince George
- *Print Promotions & Advertising*
 - Increasing consistent image in all print & electronic materials

Project Cost: The project’s final cost was \$18,505.94. The project was partially funded by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Downtown Prince George BIA - Clean and Safe Program

Downtown Prince George partnered with several social enterprises to address the increase in litter, needles, drug paraphernalia, biohazards, and graffiti in the downtown area. It also created meaningful and stable employment opportunities for those who might be underemployed or unemployed.

Current programs include a five-day (morning and afternoon) litter cleanup, a daily biohazard clean-up, and a daily alley needle clean up. Community members can also report issues for cleanup through the City's 311 number.

Project Cost: \$175,000 in 2022. Funded in partnership with the City of Prince George and Canada's Reaching Home Program.

Downtown Vernon Association - Downtown Dollars

The Downtown Dollars project allows people to load up to \$500 for gifts that can only be used at participating downtown stores. They can be used both online and in person.

Under their current system, merchants don't have to wait for the BIA to come and exchange the voucher for cash. Each month the BIA is sent a report on what store the money was spent in, how much was spent, the balance of the remaining cards, total value of all cards in the marketplace, and other data.

Project Cost: The BIA signed a 3-year contract for \$3000 with a gift card company and spent an additional \$1000 on the physical cards.

Downtown Squamish BIA - Squamish Mural Walk and Festival

The Squamish Mural Walk is a free, year-round self-guided tour of the murals in Downtown Squamish. A map of the murals with information about the piece and the artist is available year-round.

During the Mural Festival, which runs for a week in June, new murals are added. The festival runs the same weekend as the Beer Festival and includes live music, art, and family entertainment. Murals are selected via a Request for Proposal (RFP) system.

Project Cost: For 2022, they spent \$25,000 across 11 murals (eight permanent and three temporary). This did not include travel costs and accommodation.

Downtown Kamloops BIA - Sustainability & Coffee Initiative

The project involved research on the importance of using non-disposable cups, offering free or discounted coffee to people who brought in a reusable mug, developing a communication strategy that encourages individuals to sign a pledge, and social media ads to raise awareness about the project.

Project Cost: One of the team members applied for a community grant and received funding to purchase reusable to-go cups. The City of Kamloops offered knowledge on the subject, an iPad to get pledges, and some display items.

Parksville Downtown Business Association - Downtown Youth Ambassadors

The Parksville BIA hires two students for the summer months to help tourist and residents explore what the city has to offer and act as outreach for the BIA members. The team of two are equipped with uniforms and an iPad to track where visitors were from. They submit a weekly report to their supervisor about their finding from the week and if there were any concerns to flag for the BIA or the City.

At the end of the summer, the team puts together an end-of-season report that monitors pedestrian traffic patterns, noting any problem areas that either the City or BIA needs to address, and any gaps in services and retail opportunities provided downtown.

Project Cost: The wages were funded in part by the Canada Summer Jobs program.

4.4 Finances

Under the *Community Charter*, municipal Councils are permitted to grant money for the planning and implementation of a BIA, all or part of which must be recovered through a local service tax. Most municipalities use a fixed annual operating budget and collected taxes based on assessed property value. This provides more certainty in their annual operating budget, allowing BIA's to plan for the long-term. For the DCBIA, their entire operating budget from taxes applied to the members which is based on property assessed value. Table 4 below outlines each BIA's annual operating budget for 2022, the dollar amount allocated per member, annual levy increase per community.⁷

In addition to the funds collected the local service tax, some municipalities listed below have additional funding sources including grants, municipal funding, or joint partnerships with private organizations. While it is allowed through the *Community Charter*, it is not common for BIA's to include a specific amount of funding from the municipality in the bylaw.

Table 4: Comparable Communities - Annual Operating Budget

Comparable Communities (2021 Pop)	Members ⁸	Annual Operating Budget (2022)	\$ Amount Allocated Per Member	Levy Increase Per Year
Courtenay (28,420)	200	\$60,000	\$300.00	0%
Chilliwack (100,580)	350	\$349,349	\$998.14	2.8%
Prince George (76,708)	500	\$337,653	\$675.31	3%
Vernon (44,519)	400	\$297,457	\$743.64	3.6%
Campbell River (35,519)	80	\$53,870	\$673.38	2.9%
Squamish (23,819)	200	\$93,824	\$494.12	0% but will increase after 2025
Duncan (5,047)	250	\$112,500	\$450	2.5%

⁷ This is calculated as if the annual operating budget were allocated evenly among all BIA members. This is used only as a comparison among BIA's, this is not realistic to how BIA's allocate their funding.

⁸ This number is approximate.

Comparable Communities (2021 Pop)	Members ⁸	Annual Operating Budget (2022)	\$ Amount Allocated Per Member	Levy Increase Per Year
Downtown Kamloops (97,902)	850	\$296,096	\$348.35	5-6.5%
Northshore Kamloops (97,902)	460	\$222,870	\$484.50	4%
Parksville (13,642)	230	\$190,000	\$826.10	2.7%
Comox (14,806)	130	\$72,900	\$560.77	0%

Using the information provided in the table above, the average annual levy increase among comparative communities is 3%. The following table shows the potential DCBIA annual operating budget if they had observed a 3% levy increase per year since creation in 1995.

Table 5: DCBIA annual operating budget when observing a 3% annual increase

Year	DCBIA Unrealized Annual Operating Budget
1995	\$60,000
2000	\$69,556
2005	\$80,635
2010	\$93,478
2015	\$108,367
2020	\$125,627
2025	\$145,636

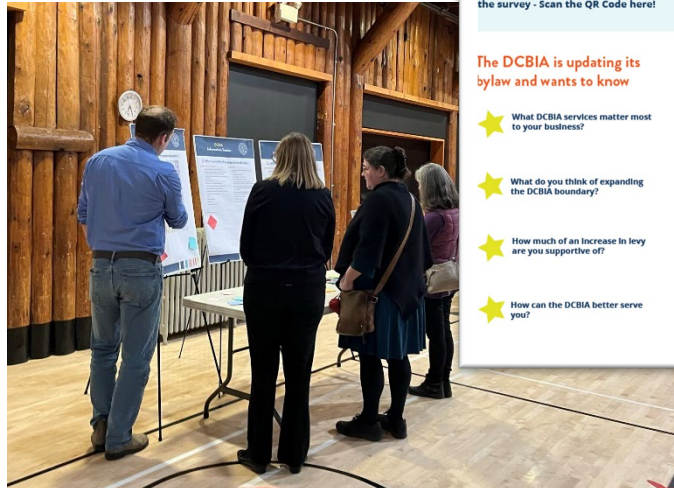
5.0 Community Feedback

5.1 Outreach Efforts

As it has been 20 years since the DCBIA bylaw was last renewed, it was important to facilitate an extensive outreach and engagement process that aimed to reach as many members and prospective members as possible. The goals for this process are outlined in the Communication and Engagement Strategy which can be found in Appendix A.

BIAs are permitted to determine how they fulfill their requirement to conduct member outreach based on their understanding of how their membership operates. This project employed the following methods to engage with current and prospective members:

- Booth at Market Days
- Email Newsletters
- Mailouts to Property Owners
- Informational Handouts
- Public Information Session
- Newspaper Promotion
- Hot Chocolate’s Window Display
- Digital Survey
- Door to Door Canvassing
- Social Media Campaign
- Board of Directors Workshop



5.1.1 Outreach by the Numbers

Through the methods listed above, we were able to reach a significant amount of current and prospective members about the process, the importance of the DCBIA, and better understand what they would like to see moving forward. The graphic below outlines the extent of the outreach undertaken through this project.⁹



⁹ Note that there were several rounds of mailouts and handouts completed, so some recipients may have been contacted multiple times.

5.2 Board of Directors Workshop

A workshop with DCBIA's board was held on September 28, 2022 in the Comox Valley Art Gallery Board Room. The workshop included three main activities: discussing potential new services with an increased budget, reviewing reasonable annual operating budgets and rate increases, and outlining the an expanded DCBIA boundary.

The feedback from those discussions is summarised below and organized by those three main workshop activities.

What existing services/initiatives are working well and could be expanded upon? And what new services/initiatives could be included with an increased operating budget?

Administration

Discussion surrounded the need to increase staffing at the DCBIA including paid roles for social media, events management, and bookkeeping. There was a significant amount of support for the current Executive Director and a desire to provide additional support for the role wherever possible.

Marketing and Promotion

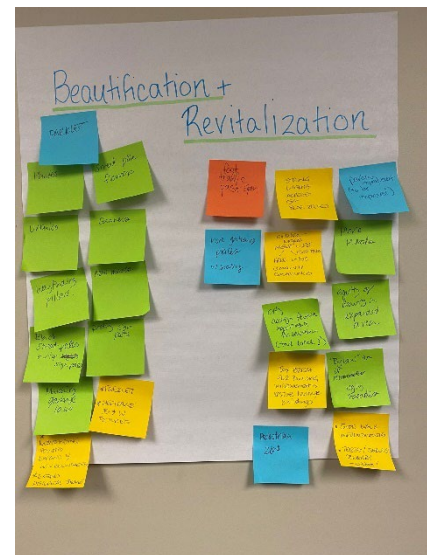
Discussion focused on small business owners. Ideas for new events included a mural festival, free music downtown, winter night light-ups, and late-night activities downtown. There were also several ideas to run co-promotion with hotels and the local airport, increase staffing for marketing, and focus on elevating the arts.

Beautification and Revitalization

Discussion surrounded overarching goals of revitalization and the need for more public gathering spaces and programming. A key theme emerged surrounding night life including ways to increase foot traffic past 5pm, more nighttime events.

There was also discussion of collaborating with the City of Courtenay to include design feature requirements for downtown that is incentivized by tax breaks, a tax break for building improvements to restore heritage buildings, sidewalk improvements, and a bylaw on the look of facades.

There was also discussion on the level of service provided by area of the DCBIA. This involved discussion surrounding a boundary expansion, and what level of beautification and



revitalization these areas would be able to expect. The Board recognized the need for equal services across the entire DCBIA.

Safety and Security

The Board’s feedback regarding safety and security generally focused on improvements to existing initiatives. Feedback included the need for consistent communication with the City of Courtenay and the RCMP, increased morning cleanup services, and initiating reporting from the Footprints security guard.

Advocacy

The Board’s feedback included a need to improve existing advocacy channels and finding new opportunities. Feedback included working with local politicians and the Provincial government for communications, partnering with non-profits, and deepening existing relating with RCMP, Homelessness Coalition, Chamber of Commerce, and other BIAs. The Board also noted a need to advocate for different types of member businesses needs (i.e. merchants vs professionals) and pursuing sponsorships and grants.

What is a reasonable annual operating budget and annual rate increase?

As an icebreaker to this topic, the Board was asked to submit what they thought would be a reasonable operating budget for the DCBIA. Answers ranged from \$320,000 on the high end, to \$80,000 on the low end.

Then using these numbers as examples, board members worked through several scenarios of potential operating budgets and annual rate increases. Through this budgeting exercise, participants were able to discuss what the priorities would be while keeping in mind services and initiatives discussed in the first activity. The table below is an example of the budgeting exercise employed during the workshop.

What is a realistic budget operating budget?			
Indicate on this scale a realistic budget range			
BUDGET	\$	130,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
			Current
Based off the prioritizing exercise; assign a percent of the budget to each service area.			
The below is based on the budget HIGH END number above			
	% of the Budget	Service Area Budget	
Safety and Security (i.e. lighting, resources, evening patrol)	13%	\$ 16,900.00	
Marketing and Promotion (i.e. Events, signage and marketing campaigns)	23%	\$ 29,900.00	
Beautification and Revitalization (i.e. parklets, wayfinding, amenities, banners)	9%	\$ 11,700.00	
Advocacy (i.e. external funders, City of Courtenay, CVRD, provincial and federal governments, Chamber of Commerce etc.)	8%	\$ 10,400.00	
Administration (i.e. ED set contract, ED increase hours, staffing support)	47%	\$ 61,100.00	Fixed costs
TOTAL	100%	\$ 130,000.00	

Figure 1 - Board of Directors Workshop Budgeting Exercise

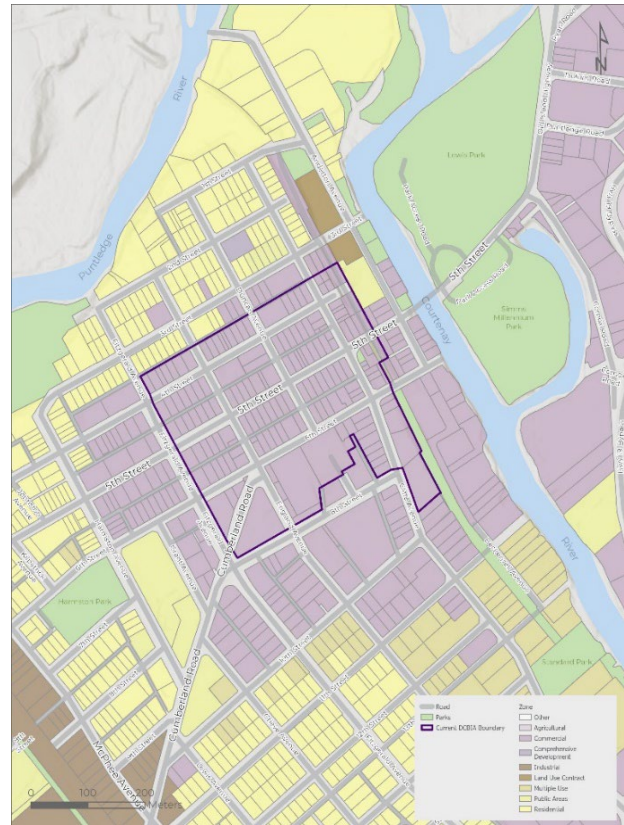
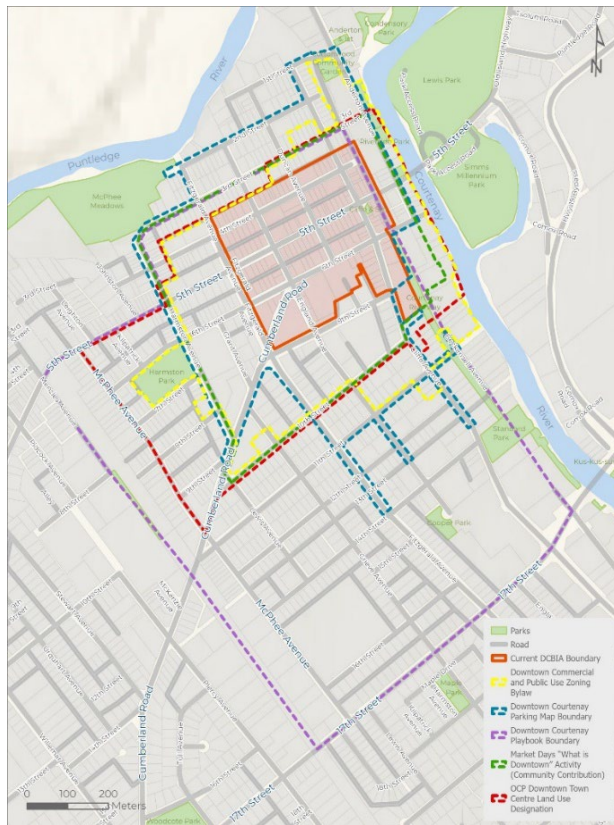
However, board members noted that the size of the increase should be determined after feedback from the member survey was released that better showed what members would be most comfortable with. The photo of the spreadsheet on the previous page shows the budgeting activity and how board members allocated available funds.

What are the boundaries of the future DCBIA?

Board members were shown the maps below to centre discussion around current boundaries, commercial properties and what the City of Courtenay considers to be “downtown.” Board members noted a clear boundary expansion area when looking at these maps.

Map 1: Various boundaries outlined in City of Courtenay planning documents

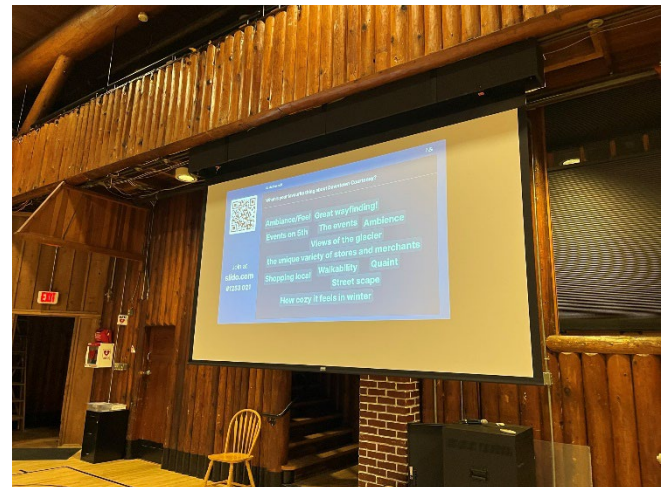
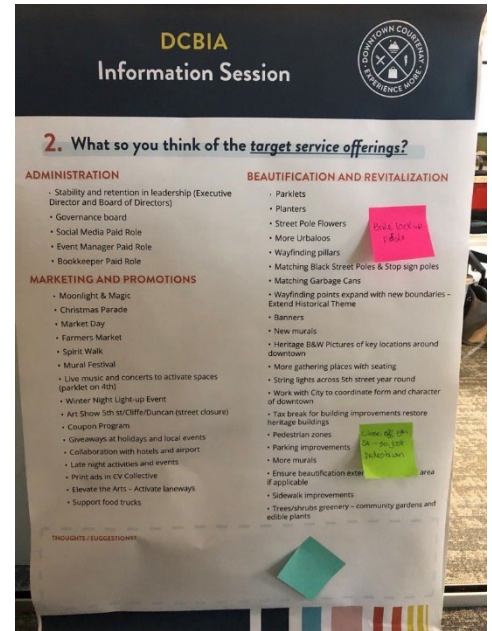
Map 2: City of Courtenay commercial zoning map



5.3 Information Session

The information session was held on November 15, 2022 at the Native Sons Hall in Downtown Courtenay. The event was promoted using the Hot Chocolate's window display, email newsletter, door-to-door handouts and social media. Attendees represented a variety of groups including long-time members, the general public and current DCBIA board members. The format of the event included a presentation, discussion, and posters board throughout the room for people to engage with the subject matter anonymously.

Attendees were in agreement that the current operating budget was not adequate to continue to serve the downtown business community. Attendees identified some concerns with a potential boundary expansion, noting that it can be difficult to garner support when proposing big changes.



5.4 Online Survey

The DCBIA launched a virtual survey in August 2022. The survey was available for both property owners and business owners that are located in the Downtown Courtenay area. This included both current members and businesses outside the current boundary. The survey closed on February 6th, 2023, and received 95 number of responses which is approximately a 24% response rate. The feedback from this survey is summarized in the section below.

Breakdown of Survey Respondents

A majority of the survey respondents (61%) were existing BIA members. About half of the respondents were from Area A (18%) and Area B (31%).

Figure 2. Are you a Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area Member?

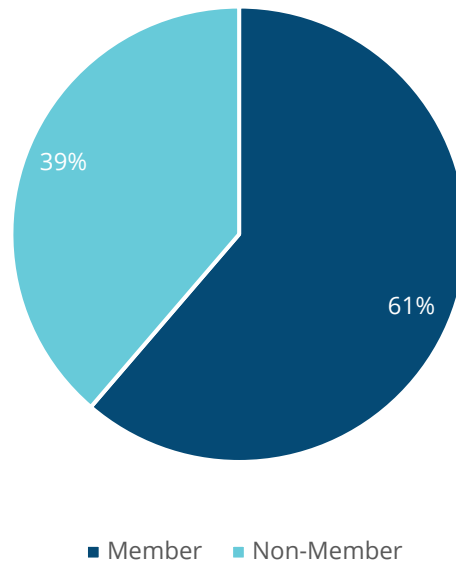
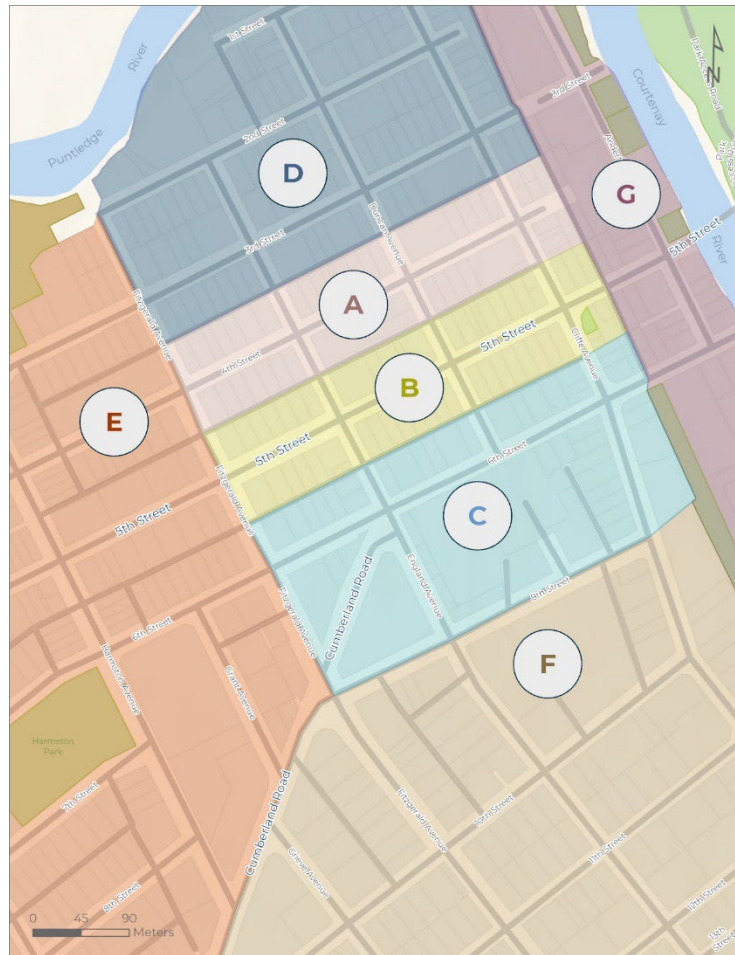
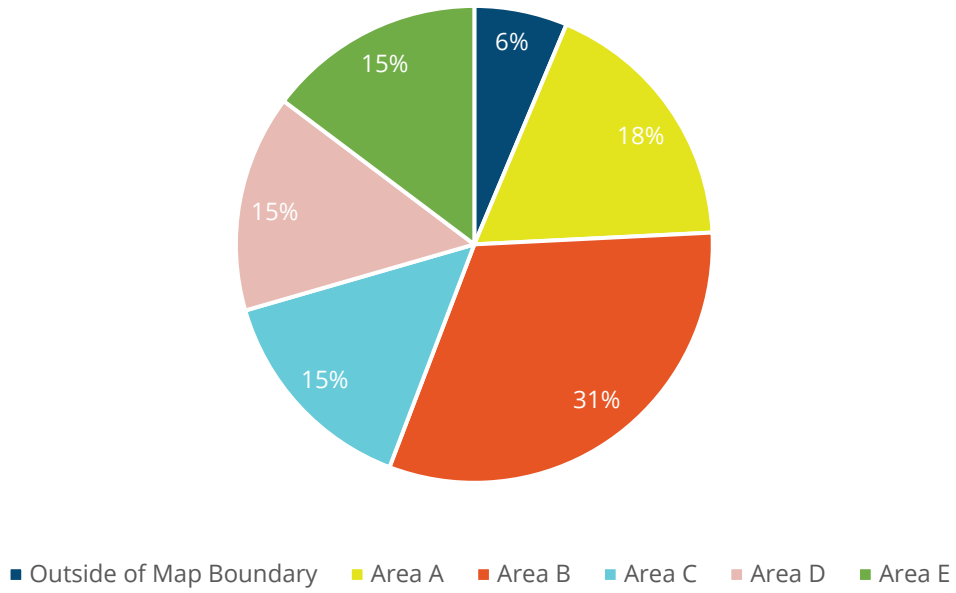


Figure 3. Location of Respondents



Many of the respondent members (71%) had been members for 10+ years. Most of the survey respondents (45%) represented businesses that offer some type of service (i.e. engineering, medical, lawyer etc.).

Figure 4. How long have you been a member?
(Member Respondents Only)

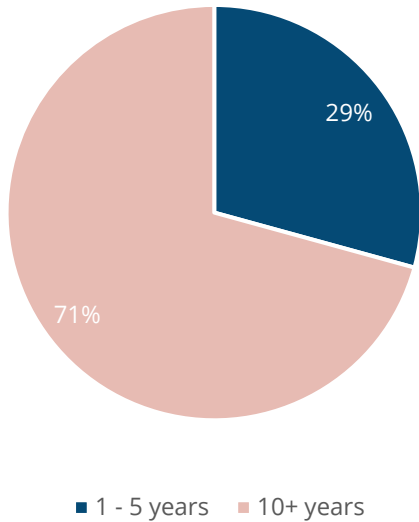
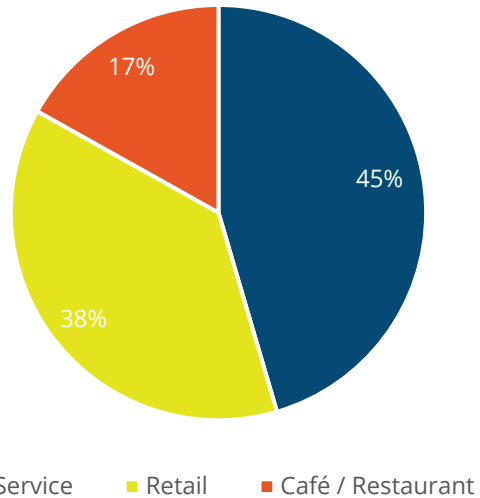


Figure 5. Business Type

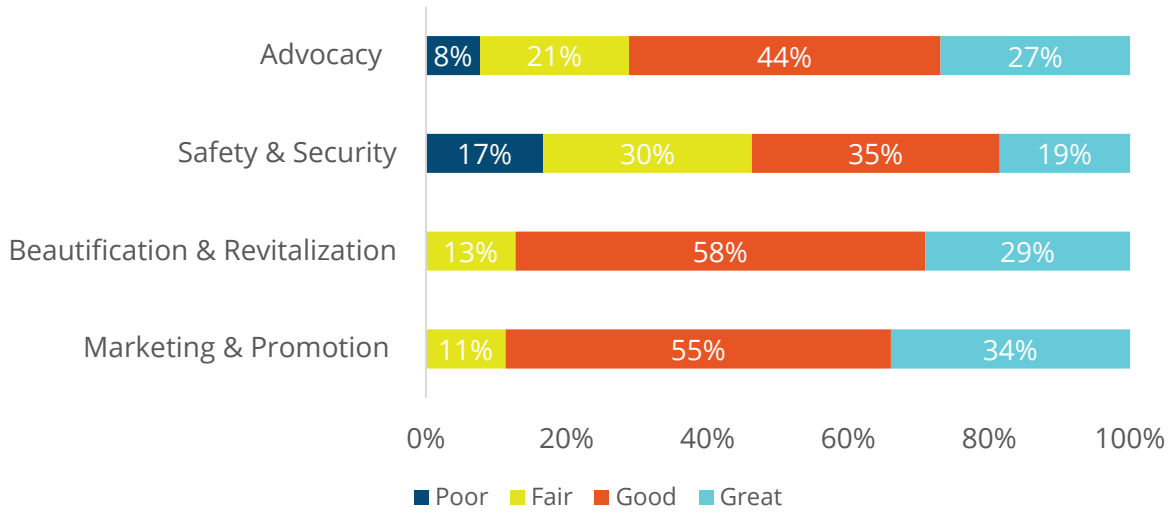


Member Opinions

Members responded most favourably to the effectiveness of the DCBIA in providing beautification, revitalization, marketing, and promotional services. Approximately (87%) had a good or great rating for DCBIA’s beautification and revitalization services and approximately (89%) had a good or great rating for DCBIA’s marketing and promotion services.

Member respondents had a lower perception of DCBIA’s advocacy, safety, and security services. Approximately (29%) had a poor or fair rating of the DCBIA’s advocacy services and approximately (47%) had a poor rating of DCBIA’s safety and security services.

Figure 6. Rating the Effectiveness of the DCBIA in Providing Services (Members Only)



Most member respondents (63%) were in support of an annual levy increase. Most member respondents were supportive of a 2-4% increase (55%).

Figure 7. With the understanding that the operating budget needs to be increased, which of the following best describes your opinion regarding an annual levy increase? (Members Only)

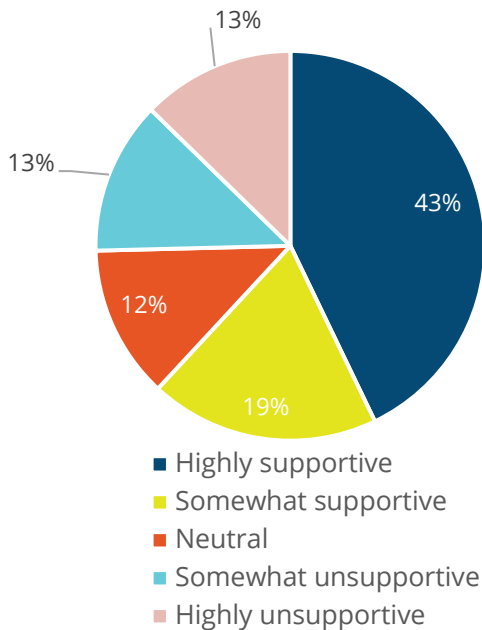
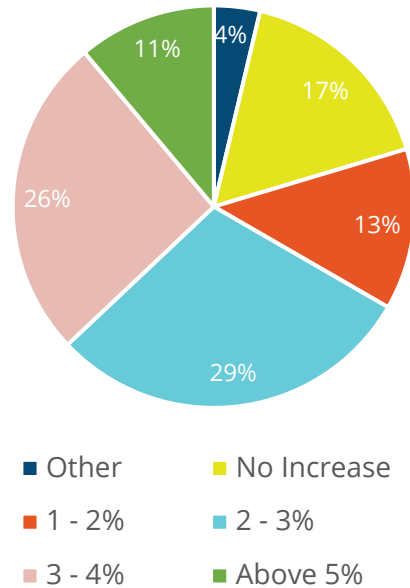


Figure 8. With the understanding that a 3% annual levy increase is the average for similar sized communities, what percentage increase would you be supportive of? (Members Only)



A majority of member respondents (72%) believed that a levy increase would not impact their decision to remain within the DCBIA. Most member respondents (78%) were also supportive of a boundary expansion to include more businesses.

Figure 9. Would a levy increase impact your decision to remain within the DCBIA boundaries? (Members Only)

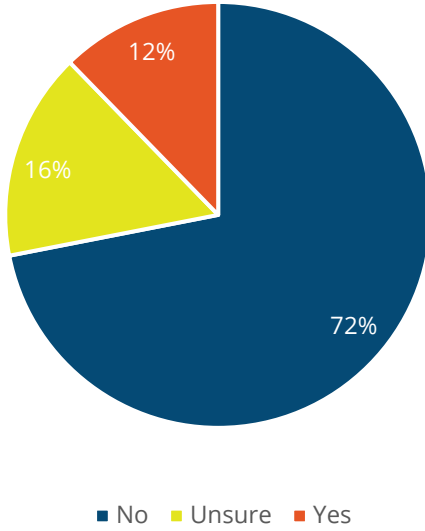
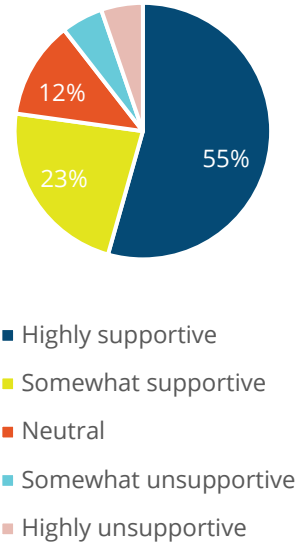
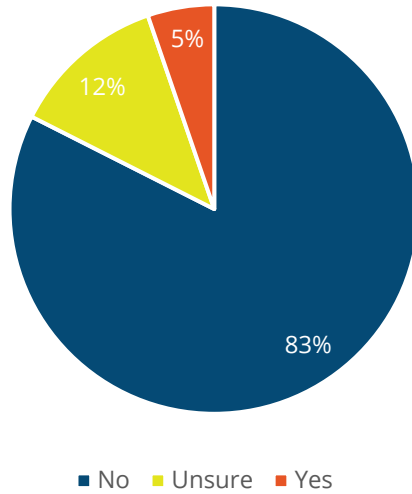


Figure 10. Would you be supportive of a DCBIA boundary expansion to include more businesses (Members Only)



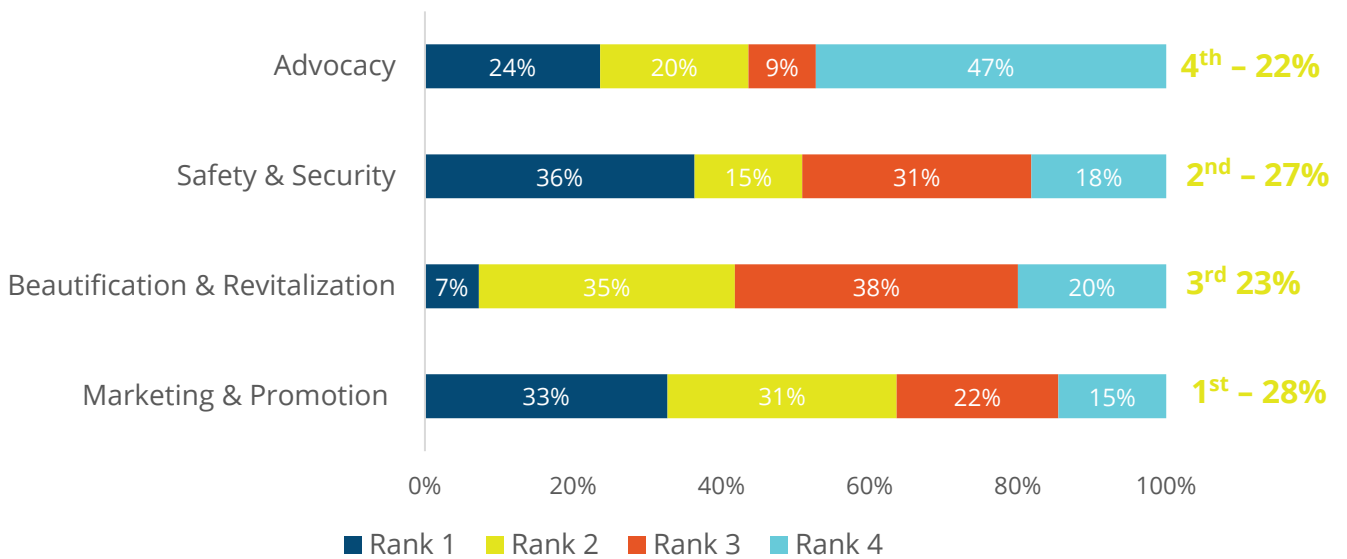
Most of the member respondents (83%) believed that a DCBIA expansion would not impact their decision to remain with in the DCBIA.

Figure 11. Would a boundary expansion impact your decision to remain within the DCBIA boundaries? (Members Only)



The priority service for member respondents was marketing and promotion, with over (64%) ranking it as their first or second priority. The lowest priority for member respondents was advocacy services, with (47%) of members ranking it as their last priority.

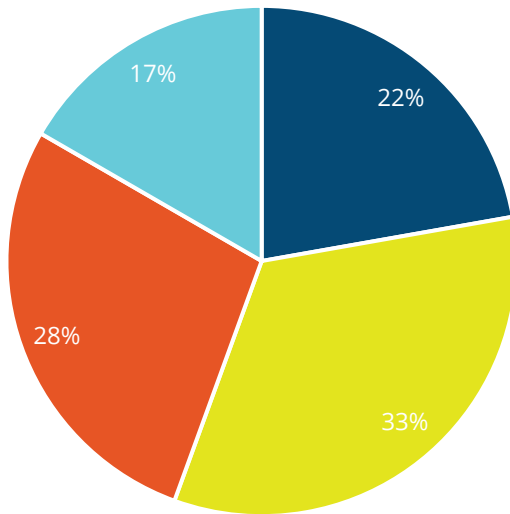
Figure 12. Please prioritize the services offered by the DCBIA from 1-4 in order of importance to you and your business (1 being the highest priority, 4 being the lowest) [Members Only]



Non-Member Opinions

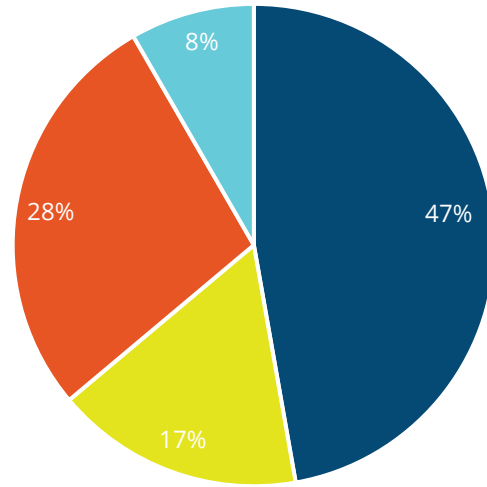
There were very few non-member respondents that understands well what the DCBIA does (17%). Only 28% of non-member respondents were associate members or had an interest in becoming one. The majority (47%) of non-member respondents did not understand what an associate member was.

Figure 13. How well do you understand what the DCBIA does? (Non-members)



- Not at all
- Not very well
- Somewhat well
- Very well

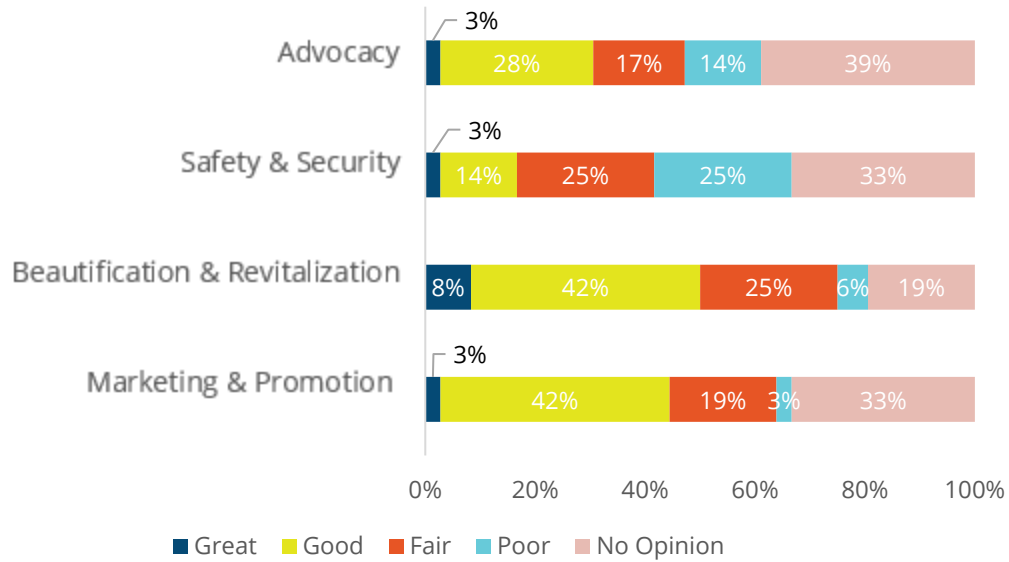
Figure 14. Are you currently an associate member? (Non-Member)



- I do not know what an associate is
- I have no interest in being an associate
- No, but I would like to be an associate
- Yes, I am an associate member

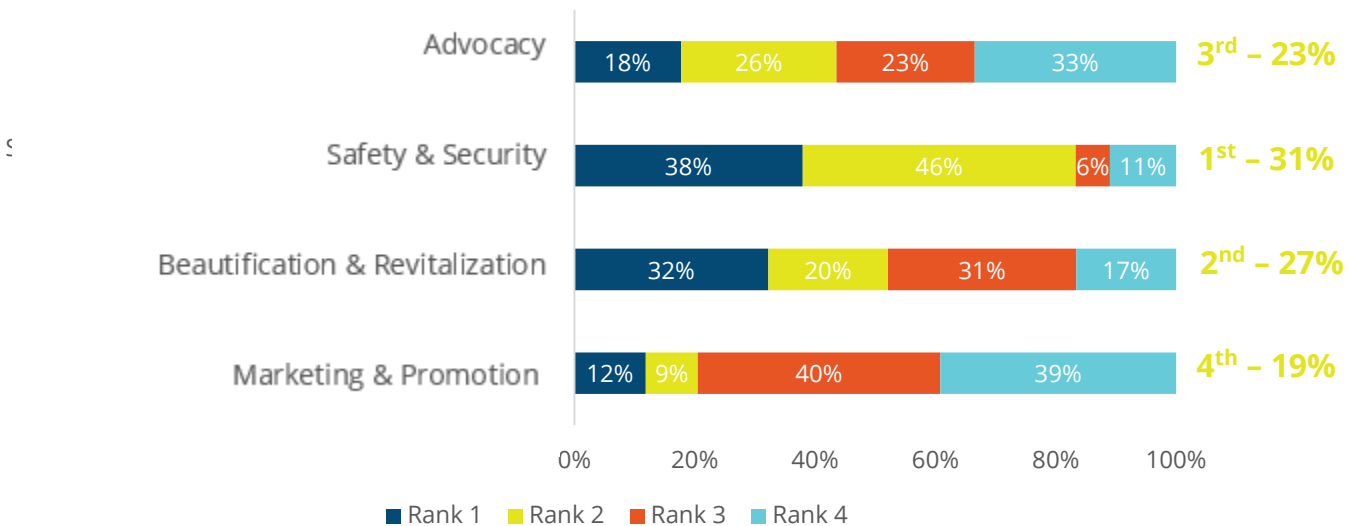
Overall, the non-member respondents did not have very favourable views of the DCBIA's effectiveness at providing services. The highest rated services were beautification, revitalization, marketing, and promotion. The lowest rated services were advocacy, which 14% rated poor, and security which 25% rated poor.

Figure 15. Rating the Effectiveness of the DCBIA in Providing Services (Non-members)



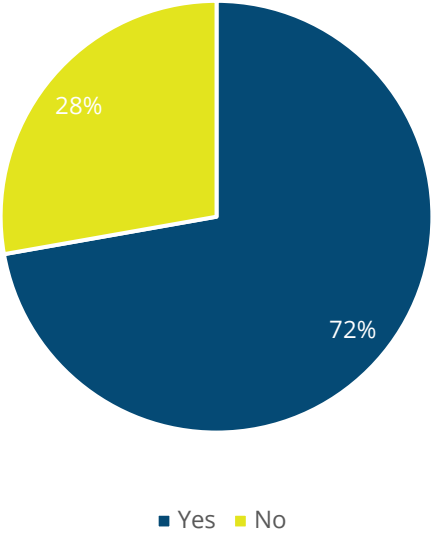
Non-member respondents top priorities were security, safety, beautification, and revitalization if the DCBIA’s boundary was expanded. Over 84% of non-member respondents had security and safety as their first or second priority. Approximately 52% of non-member respondents had beautification and revitalization as their first or second priority.

Figure 16. If the boundary was expanded, what level of service would you prioritize in your area? (Non-members)



Approximately 72% of non-member survey respondents supported a DCBIA boundary expansion.

Figure 17. With an understanding of the services offered by the DCBIA (supplied in the attached info sheet), would you support a DCBIA boundary expansion that includes your business? (Non-members)



5.5 Key Findings

Through analysis of responses to outreach activities several key themes emerged that have been used to formulate recommendations.



Participants of the board workshop discussed several ideas for a potential budget and boundary increase. These ideas included increased paid staffing, new events and programming to improve the vibrancy of downtown, improving existing safety and security initiatives, and strengthening existing partnership.



A majority of member respondents to the survey had favorable views of DCBIA's existing services for beautification, revitalization, marketing, and promotion.



A majority of survey respondents think the DCBIA's can do a better job at security, safety, and advocacy.



Majority of current member respondents to the survey were supportive of an increase in operating budget. And majority of member respondents were supportive of an annual levy increase between 2% and 4%.



Survey respondents who are not currently members do not have a good understanding of what the DCBIA does or how it can help their business.



Majority of non-member respondents support a DCBIA boundary expansion to include their business.



Survey respondents indicated that they if they are going to be paying more, they expect higher levels of service.

6.0 Recommendations

As mentioned in Section 3.0, the *Community Charter* outlines that a local service area bylaw (which includes BIAs) must contain certain information. This includes the following:

- a) The bylaw must identify the business promotion scheme (services) for which and the organization to which the money will be granted.
- b) The bylaw must establish the maximum amount of money to be granted and the maximum term over which it may be granted.
- c) The bylaw must identify the methods of cost recovery for the service, including the form of local service tax and the portion of the costs of the service that are to be recovered by the local service tax.
- d) The bylaw must define the boundaries of the local service area using a map.

As per the list above, the following section provides recommendations based on the information provided in this report.

6.1 Service Delivery

The DCBIA has the opportunity to reimagine how they will serve the downtown business community and continue to make downtown Courtenay a vibrant place to visit. Services offered by the DCBIA are very much dependent on available resources, therefore budgeting will need to be completed to prioritize services.

The DCBIA should consider the results of the survey to focus resources. Prioritizing marketing and promotion and safety and security for the area that are currently members. And prioritizing safety and security and beautification and revitalization for areas outside the current boundary if the boundary is expanded. The Board should consider the exercise completed during the Board of Directors workshop to implement new initiatives and expand existing successful initiatives. This input can be found in Appendix B.

To limit staff turnover and increase capacity, it is recommended that the Executive Director position become a fulltime position. This will allow the board to move towards a governance model and focus more closely on strategic decision-making. The DCBIA should also consider hiring additional support such as a bookkeeper in the short-term and marketing/events support in the long-term.

6.2 Finances

With consideration of the support from survey respondents, a modest increase in the annual operating budget is recommended. The recommended annual operating budget would be at minimum \$120,000 potentially expanding to \$240,000. The DCBIA board will need to conduct a more fulsome budgeting exercise to determine where in that range they need to be, to increase to costs and service levels.

Based on the best practices research and feedback from the survey, we recommend an annual increase of approximately 3%. A 3% annual increase is the average amongst BC BIAs. This may be implemented after year 2 or 3 so as to allow members to adjust to the increase.

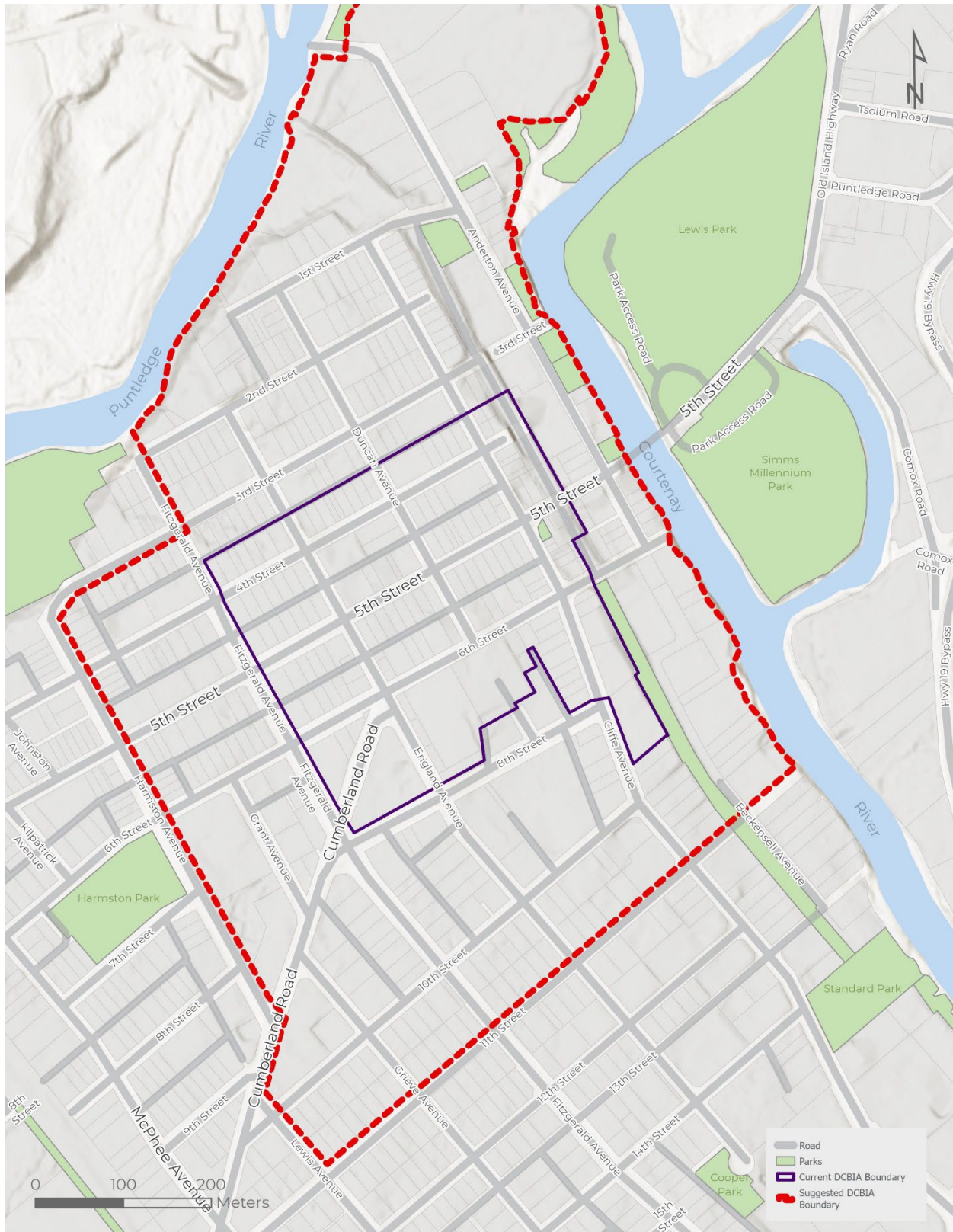


The term of renewal may depend on if an annual levy increase is employed. With an increase, the Bylaw may not need to be renewed for a longer period of time. Therefore, it is recommended that the term of renewal for the DCBIA Bylaw be between five and eight years.

6.3 Boundary Expansion

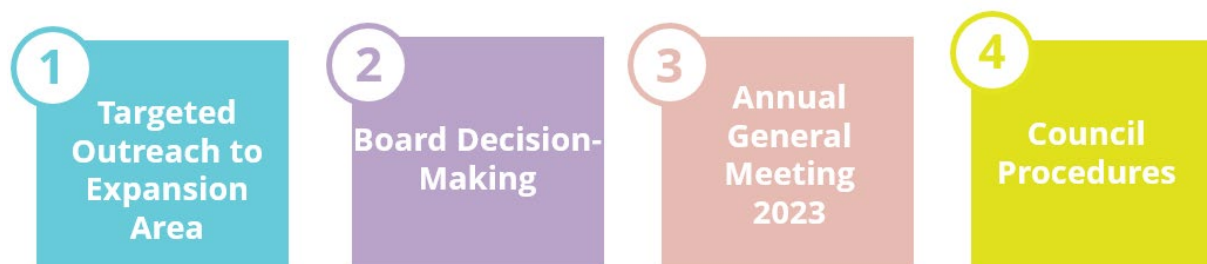
In consideration of the support from survey respondents, both within the current boundary and within the affected area, it is recommended to pursue a boundary expansion. The boundary expansion will help to level economic development and revitalization efforts throughout downtown Courtenay and bolster the annual operating budget with a wider tax base.

The proposed boundary in the map below incorporates all commercially zoned properties and utilizes the natural boundary of the river. This boundary also accommodates for future growth of the downtown area.



7.0 Proposed Next Steps

To complete this project and make changes to the bylaw, it is recommended that the DCBIA complete the next steps outlined in the graphic below.



Step 1 – Targeted Outreach to Expansion Area

It is recommended that outreach continue over the next few months with a more targeted approach. It may be helpful to reach out to properties with a high assessment value outside the current boundary as they will be most impacted by the changes.

Similarly, many non-member respondents of the survey indicated they did not fully understand what the DCBIA does. It may be useful to reach out to any survey respondents who indicated this and do not want a boundary expansion to be able to communicate what the DCBIA can offer them.

Step 2 – Board Decision-Making

While this report provides general recommendations about changes to the Bylaw, the DCBIA Board of Directors will need to come to a decision about what they are presenting to the larger membership. This includes the annual operating budget, annual levy increase, service levels, and a potential boundary expansion.

As a first step before making this decision, it is recommended the DCBIA discuss with the City of Courtenay any potential municipal contributions they may consider. These may be laid out in the Bylaw, or they may be more focused towards infrastructure and regular City operations.

Step 3 – Annual General Meeting 2023

Once the Board has come to a decision, they will present the proposed changes at the AGM in June. Members will vote to pass these changes and vote in principle on a boundary expansion (if applicable). The AGM resolution to formally request the City to consider the BIA renewal.

Update: The DCBIA held its Annual General Meeting on June 7, 2023. At that meeting, a proposed bylaw was presented as an example to consider. At the end of the meeting a motion was passed to support moving forward with a new bylaw in accordance with the key elements outlined in the proposed bylaw. A copy of the meeting notes and the proposed bylaw presented during the meeting are included in Appendix C of this report.

Step 4 – Council Procedures

The DCBIA respectfully requests that City of Courtenay Council move forward with the Council Initiative – Subject to Petition Against process to consider a refreshed DCBIA within the same boundaries as are currently in place, and with an annual budget starting at \$120,000 and increasing to \$175,000 over a period of 5 years as outlined below.

Year	Annual Budget
2024	\$120,000
2025	\$130,000
2026	\$145,000
2027	\$160,000
2028	\$175,000

Update: the budget amounts and timeline presented above were prepared proposed by the DCBIA and presented to members at its Annual General Meeting on June 7, 2023. At the end of the meeting a motion was passed to support moving forward with a new bylaw in accordance with these numbers and this timeline.

The DCBIA also respectfully requests that City of Courtenay Council be open to considering enlargement of the DCBIA local service area through a future Bylaw amendment. The DCBIA will lead the initial consideration of this boundary enlargement, and keep the City apprised of its findings. It is anticipated that this will occur in 2025.



APPENDIX A

Communications and Engagement Strategy



Communications & Engagement Strategy

Prepared for the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area – Bylaw Review.

SETTING THE STAGE

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The DCBIA has been in existence since 1995, with a goal to provide support for downtown Courtenay Businesses and enhance a vibrant business community through leadership and advocacy. It currently has more than 200 members.

The bylaw that establishes the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association (DCBIA) has not been reviewed since the DCBIA's inception. As such, the DCBIA is undertaking a fulsome review of the bylaw. In order to prepare for the bylaw update, the DCBIA is conducting a planning process that focuses on engaging with local businesses and property owners to explore opportunities for an improved and expanded BIA. Key items to be investigated through this process include:

- Reviewing the boundaries of the DCBIA
- Service offerings and member benefits
- Budget and tax implications
- An overview of best practices and trends

STAKEHOLDERS

The project involves extensive consultation with interested and invested parties listed in the table below. The table shows perceived interest levels and targeted involvement for each stakeholder group.

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Interest</i>	<i>Involvement</i>
DCBIA Board Members	High	High
DCBIA Members	High	Medium
Prospective Members (both inside and outside the current boundary)	Medium	Medium
City of Courtenay	Medium	Medium
Public	Low	Low

RISKS

The following table present any perceived communication or engagement risks to the project and associated mitigation measures to ensure the project runs smoothly:

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation Measure</i>
1. Lack of participation from members	Effective communication and marketing
	Selection of appropriate engagement techniques
	Leveraging board member connections
2. Off topic/out of scope commentary (i.e. airing grievances that do not relate to the bylaw review)	Effective facilitation during engagement activities
	Clear communication about the scope of the project
3. Condensed project timeline (i.e. how can we involve all stakeholders in a meaningful way and meet our deadline)	Effective project management techniques
	Support from staff and board
4. COVID-19 public health orders	Continue to monitor case numbers and public health order
	Observe Urban Systems health and safety principles
	Utilize virtual engagement techniques as necessary

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The following communication objectives have been developed to guide communication efforts for each stakeholder groups. A targeted approach will ensure efficient and effective communication techniques are applied and tailored to each groups level of interest and involvement.

- **DCBIA Board Members:** They are consistently engaged and have ownership over the resulting bylaw
- **DCBIA General Members:** Well informed and consulted throughout the process and to ensure their views are incorporated
- **Prospective Members (outside the current boundary):** They are informed on the planning process and provided with opportunities to give feedback as it impacts them
- **Public:** They gain an understanding of the project and what the BIA offers
- **City of Courtenay:** They are kept up to date throughout the process and provided opportunities to share expertise
-

KEY MESSAGES

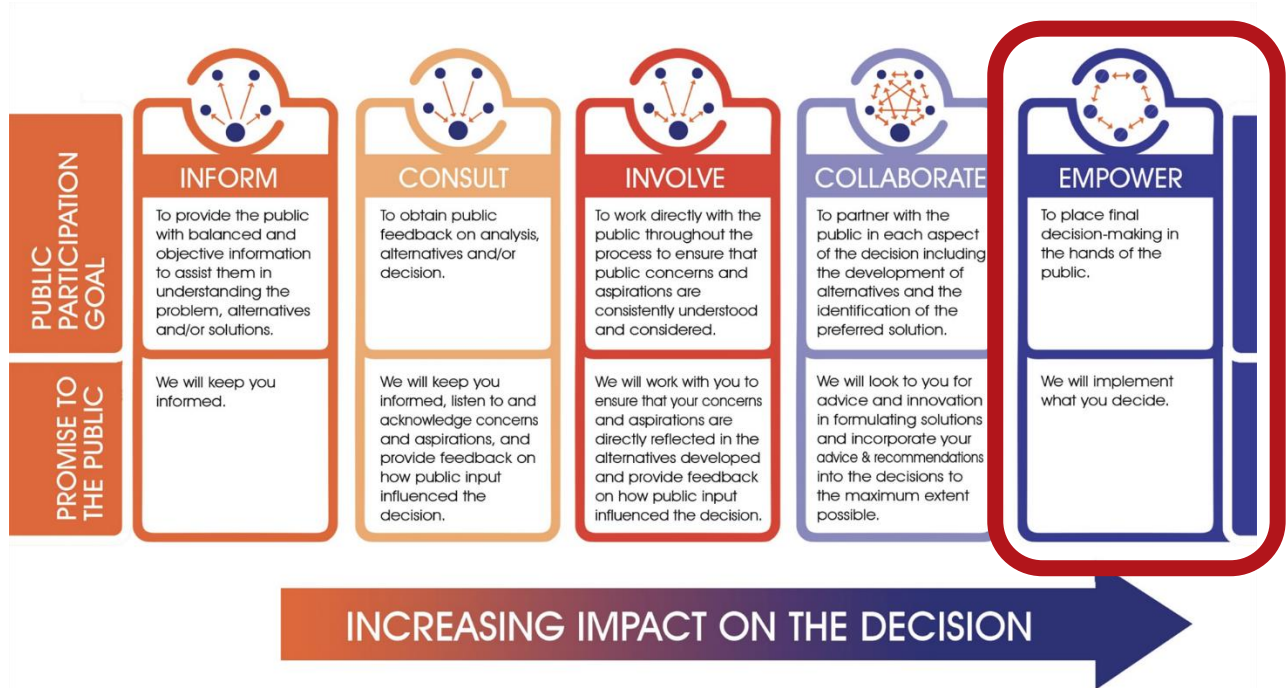
Key messages focus the development of communications and engagement materials. They allow the project team to speak collectively – presenting a “big picture” overview of the Bylaw Renewal. The following key messages are categorized by internal (i.e. DCBIA members, staff and the City of Courtenay) and external (i.e. the public and prospective members.”

Internal Message: *Be a part of creating an improved Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area bylaw that focuses on safety, economic development, and area revitalization.*

External Message: *The Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area is updating their bylaw with the goal of increasing revenue streams, examining levels of service and expanding the boundaries.*

ENGAGEMENT

The IAP2 Spectrum (featured below) is designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the stakeholder’s role and the formulation of the participation goal that will drive the engagement process.



For this project, we will **EMPOWER** the DCBIA members to make the final decision while the project team will work to implement what they decide. We will do so by utilizing techniques that bring people together to formulate a direction and implement that direction within the resulting bylaw.

Understanding the impact on the decision has helped to develop the following engagement objective:

Engagement Objective: *To facilitate a process for DCBIA members to make thoughtful and informed decision regarding the DCBIA Bylaw Renewal.*

4.1 TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE
Market Days	Booth set up at the annual Market Days with informational posters and an interactive activity	Gain a preliminary understanding of the public's level of interest in the project.
Promotional Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Window display • Social media 	Provide information about what the DCBIA does, and inform them of the project process
Survey Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted email • Informational handout • Online survey 	Provide information about best practices, comparative review, service levels and gain feedback about boundary expansion and fee structure.
Workshop	Structured session for Board of Directors to share thoughts.	Present our findings and facilitate a collaborative decision making process
Regular Board Meetings	Present to the DCBIA Board and share information about progress to date	Keep the DCBIA Board informed and involved in the project and leverage their knowledge of the BIA in future endeavours
Interviews	We will provide an opportunity for members to schedule a one on one interview with the project team to dig deeper into their thoughts about the project	Gain additional feedback from interested parties, and provide an opportunity to interact with the project team.

<p>Information Session</p>	<p>A mid-way meeting with all stakeholders to present findings to date and update them on process</p>	<p>Gain feedback on the draft bylaw</p>
<p>Review Meeting</p>	<p>Meet with relevant City staff to review information</p>	<p>Review proposed process and gain an understanding of the City's role. Better understanding of the adoption process.</p>
<p>Door-to-Door Canvassing</p>	<p>Pass out flyers door-to-door to inform all businesses within the study area of the process and potential changes.</p>	<p>Ensure everyone that may be affected by the change is informed of the process</p>
<p>Mailouts</p>	<p>Send informational package via mail to property owners as many of them may live out of town.</p>	<p>Ensure everyone that may be affected by the change is informed of the process</p>



APPENDIX B

Verbatim Engagement Results

SURVEY FINDINGS

VERBATIM INPUT

With the understanding that the operating budget needs to be increased, which of the following best describes your opinion regarding an annual levy increase? Please explain your response below (*Member Question*)

- A levy increase would improve the prospects and benefits of being within the boundary.
- I believe that pooling resources to pay for services is well worth it
- There are limited areas to run a retail (foot traffic based business)
- Own my building
- As with any funding if it's going to be used to improve the conditions then I support. If we are going to pay a larger amount that is just used up in administrative then no.
- I have no idea what the percentage means in real dollars so it's a bit of guess.
- I'm in support of the levy being increased assuming that the funds are used to increase the DCBIA's market exposure.
- I am content to stay where I am regardless of the decision.
- We are proud members of downtown and understand the importance of this levy and the implications moving forward
- I'd stay regardless.
- I do not think there is an opt out situation for this program
- Keep everybody the same ,expand to get More businesses in
- Building cannot be moved!
- With covid closure, bridge construction, being closed another 6 months from flooding and interest rates & the cost of living going up 📈📈📈
- DCBIA does a phenomenal job. So happy to be a part of it. Thank you.
- That is where my store is and moving would be detrimental to my business
- It would depend on the increase, and what we were directly benefiting from it. Not a simple yes or no.
- Covid closure bridge construction now. High interest rates. Small businesses are maxed out.
- It would reflect an increase in expenses that we are all experiencing and provide more working dollars for all aspects of the services provided by the DCBIA.
- As a cultural Amenity I don't think we pay a levy. But we would be willing to pay a membership. The theatre's location downtown is part of what makes it special.
- I do not think it is optional to not be part of the DCBIA if you're inside the boundaries. We have to try and make the best use of increases. Increases to everything is putting lots of pressure on business in general.
- I'm supportive of an increase
- Fabulous job! The ED is just amazing.
- I would still remain
- How much is 3%? If I'm already just breaking even, how could the DCBIA help offset the loss of business due to illness, snow, difficulty in parking.
- We're already in it and we support the increase
- My business is not portable
- On a 5-year lease, will choose future leases based on best location options available.

With the understanding that a 3% annual levy increase is the average for similar sized communities, what percentage increase would you be supportive of? Answered "other"
(Member Question)

- May not need to increase if we expand our boundaries which would give us a larger amount of memberships to work with
- I'm confused on what the rate increase is being proposed. Are you asking us what the rate should be? I would prefer to see a proposed budget with the rate increase.

Would you be supportive of a DCBIA boundary expansion to include more businesses? Please explain your response below (Member Question)

- Our business is already operating at capacity and we have no desire for growth. I know it sounds strange but it's true.
- Anything that helps beautify and unify the downtown core would be great
- I am always happy to join these types of associations. Even though we're on 3rd street we have the same issues as those a block or so over.
- I would need to understand what the boundary expansion would entail, but I would be open to expanded support for Courtenay's small local businesses and the downtown environment.
- Continue to focus on grow the core downtown before expanding
- I've been a member of other BIA's and believe firmly in their value
- Not sure how it would benefit my business
- Community should be connected, downtown is a small area but the issues it faces are the same for all commercial areas in town.
- The more the merrier
- We are outside city limits, I feel that keeping business in the downtown central core is important. I don't want to see any housing or business destroy any current park or greenspace. Part of keeping the charm is keeping things contained and smaller.
- It would be very advantageous to have the boundaries expanded so the legion could be included in any promotions.
- While I am simply an associate at my clinic and I don't own the property or business, I support a vibrant, safe, and beautiful downtown.
- I feel that area F businesses (we're on 10th street) are part of the downtown core. We would benefit from being part of discussions on how to keep the downtown core vital, by keeping it safe, accessible and vibrant for our customers.
- Owner of 2 properties. 362 10th, and 495 6th. I think that you do a good job with a limited budget. Courtenay has a vibrant downtown, and would like to keep it that way. I have safety and security concerns. Would like to see more foot traffic promoted by banners, flowers etc.
- Not likely to experience any direct financial gain from this service as the idea of "downtown" has been locally institutionalized as 5th and 6th Street. They stand to benefit the most. Expanding the jurisdiction to simply cover the costs to serve those it most benefits historically doesn't seem like a justification to require me to be a member or pay any increased cost. As a leasee, the business is already required to pay the property tax for the landowner. Financially beneficial opportunities to incurring this cost would be have to be made on a case basis.
- This question is a bit confusing. The boundary already includes my business. We are an associate member because we are a city owned cultural amenity, not because of our location. I would support a limited boundary expansion on the basis of more members would offer more resources to the DCBIA. But too large a boundary extension would make the marketing of downtown (the downtown experience) much more challenging.
- I would want to have a better understanding of all of the services offered by the DCBIA and what the membership fees are before making a final decision but can see potential value in being included in marketing of events that bring people downtown.

-
- The Old Church Theatre would love to be considered as part of the Downtown Area and to share in helping to improve awareness and safety for everyone in that area.
 - In boundary

Would a boundary expansion impact your decision to remain within the DCBIA boundaries?

Please explain your response below (*Member Question*)

- Would not be likely to move due to this.
- I think if you're going to expand the boundaries then all of the properties that are inside of the expansion need to be included if you're going to just add one property from an expanded area they're going to be lots of properties that are going to reap the rewards of downtown business association efforts and not pay into it. I respect that part of it trying to get a cohesive entering of the boundaries with the taxes in different opinions of property owners would never be all that easy.
- The community is growing, the downtown core is growing and filling in and that should be acknowledged by new and larger boundaries.
- I would likely only support the boundary extension if there was a significant increase to the DCBIA budget for marketing. I'm not in favour expanding the boundary to increase the DCBIA's involvement with unhoused (is that PC?) issues. By this I mean that I would only be in favour of increasing the budget and boundaries if the focus of the DCBIA was on revenue generating businesses. If the budget was increased and a portion of the budget was dedicated to social issues, I would not support a budget increase.
- I am content to stay where I am regardless of the decision.
- The current boundary was established 20 years ago...a lot has changed, and we need to be more inclusive to the businesses that are located downtown that have been not included due to the original footprint
- I'd stay regardless.
- If you could generate more revenue by adding a larger base. But again, I do not think we can just opt out.
- As above and my business suits a downtown location
- If the boundary gets expanded, the current fund amount wouldn't be enough, if we increase it, the money won't go as far and the other businesses in the expansion area would not get the same benefits and exposure as the current BIA area.
- There are other businesses, like the cheese factory and shoppers, that could help out financially and benefit from what we have going on.
- Again, until I saw what changes were made, and how it would impact by business, I cant answer that.
- In the interests of densifying the downtown core and reflecting the population growth in our valley I think it is important that the DCBIA be part of that growth. I'm especially interested in developing towards the river where the city already owns chunks of property.
- More resources for the DCBIA would come from more members. This is an overdue good idea.
- I do not feel it is an option to leave the DCBIA if you're inside the boundaries. That would not work nor be fair.
- I'm supportive of an expansion.
- Would stay regardless
- Would the expansion decrease the size of the levy increase as more businesses would be contributing?
- We support a strong downtown core

Have you seen examples of initiatives other BIA's have undertaken that you think would work well in Courtenay?

- The markets are nice to have
- Taken from other DCBIA: Fall market events Business features on the website. Music done with non profit groups as fund raisers
- Closing 5th street to through traffic. 4th is wider for flow. Roundabouts at top of 4th 5th 6th to keep traffic flow. They don't have to be huge. Look at European style roundabouts. Street scape art such as sculpture
- Public art.
- Campbell River has more "street closure" events that are a huge hit, during the summer. They also have more downtown entertainment.
- Just signage and beautification - provides a good feeling to return and spend time in area.
- Close off a main shopping area such as 5th from Cliffe to England and the make 4th and 6th one-way streets...with roundabout traffic circles to prevent smog.
- Ladysmith Society (different from their BIA) creating the light event that has made Ladysmith a go to spot for Christmas displays on Vancouver Island
- I wanted to say above that the 1 through 4 - I feel are all so very important. I cannot choose.
- Some communities have clearly established their cultural precinct. E.g., Kelowna
- Garbage collection is an issue with the configuration of the area maybe some common areas like they have done in Duncan for bins.
- Yes, have business open on Sundays. This initiative would bring back more life to the down town core
- Canopy lighting of the streets
- I think any increase in funding should go towards decreasing the homeless population in Courtenay by purchasing and advocating for the purchase and establishment of mini homes such as those manufactured from shipping containers. The increasing homeless population contributes to people feeling less safe. More importantly this initiative would help alleviate a desperate situation and be the best advertising any business in the city could dream of. It would make international news!

What do you like most about being a DCBIA member? (Member Question)

- Attract more people downtown
- Having a say
- The communication and support
- For the most part most business owners are friendly and helpful, and all want our downtown to thrive
- Honestly?? As a member with business not on 5th street we rarely see anything happening. Seems as if we don't exist.
- Connecting to other businesses
- I do like the fact that we have events and the organization of those events I respect that we need to have employees to be able to do that the business owners have enough on their plate without having to try and organize parades and events etc.
- Having a say in what happens in Downtown Courtenay
- That the directors are amazing people with a clear vision of our future that also includes surveys such as this.
- The various market events
- Advocacy DCBIA provides with multiple levels of gov'n't, marketing events
- Feeling connected to the downtown community.
- Being kept in the knowing and support to the downtown business community.
- DCBIA does an amazing job working with promotions and works closely with the stores. Great with passing along any relevant information and with anything that might affect the downtown area.
- being connected to our community

-
- Support. Marketing. Safety.
 - Having a voice - keeping abreast of what is going on, meeting people.
 - Being part of what makes downtown work
 - Make member aware of what is happening downtown
 - United campaigns for marketing promotions.
 - Community, supporting each other's business
 - It's good for downtown
 - Seeing improvements
 - The community
 - Networking and events
 - Keeping aware and involved in my business community and investments in our Downtown
 - Security
 - Too new to know
 - Don't know. Think I pay the tax so I must be in it.
 - The community updates from other businesses in the Facebook page
 - Security. Advertising. Advocacy.
 - I like knowing that the area I do business in is handled by people who work and care about the area
 - We are a strong downtown, We come together with many events, We communicate and work together if our neighbors need help, We are independent and together at the same time"
 - Lobby City Council
 - Marketing and joint ads in CVC
 - That the board is so dedicated to making good decisions for us as a group.
 - Community within community. Walking around and feeling part of the energy.
 - The people in the community
 - It is like being in a group that we all support and share with events to try and create and larger exposure and reason for people to come to the downtown.
 - Helping guild positive change.
 - Help with homelessness problems. Marketing and events.
 - Getting to know other businesses, feeling like I have a support system, knowing they teamwork benefits us all.
 - The advocacy for safe streets
 - Communication and the gathering of information to make some sound decisions
 - Community
 - Being aware of what is going on where my lodges work and investment occurs
 - Bringing together the local businesses and owned, keeping us all connected.
 - We belong to a larger community with a larger voice. Lots of restaurants, variety of services (tea store, clothing), places are in walking distance.
 - I like the idea that we could act together as responsible business owners.
 - I didn't know I was one until this survey

What areas do you think the DCBIA could improve upon with a larger operating budget?

- So many. Is quite low in comparison to others. Longer term projects with retention.
- Id like to see parking increased and sidewalk patios taken down
- Shut down 4,5,6th street during summer months. Have more food trucks live music weekly.
- More promotion of our downtown merchants and not just the few on 5th street. Talking with many other business owners that we (businesses) England Avenue to the top of fifth street are not feeling included. This must change!
- Security cameras in lanes and at intersections. Executive Director one more day a week. Weekly page in the newspaper to highlight groups of businesses- professionals as well as retail. And a what's

happening news spot within the page. Monthly business get-togethers. Another public toilet at 4th street parking area.

- I think the ability to retain staff and have a little bit larger employee range to help organize events contribute to beautification of the area and safety the increase budget would go along way
- Marketing and security
- I would like to see added financial support for the Wednesday Market and additional events that would bring people downtown and provide them with good memories.
- Pedestrian-only days. This is something our downtown core DESPERATELY needs to do. When I drive down 5th, I'm not looking in windows. I'm trying not to hit pedestrians!!
- We need more garbage cans and cigarette butt collection containers
- Increased capacity for marketing and advocacy, increased grant programs to members. Pay staff more competitively/more staff time
- I do think a lot of emphasis is directly on the two block strip of 5th street, especially regarding events. I also hear a lot of complaints from customers about stores not being open later than 5 and on Sundays. Not directly a DCBIA thing but it does impact us. Lighting for dark places at night."
- More hours on advocacy, and safety as well as marketing.
- More larger events. It would be nice to have the car show back. It could be used towards advertising and promotions.
- Safety and security. The remuneration value to the Executive Director. The need for her to pay for staffing who will spearhead the events, in addition to honoring the true value of her time to do the job that is required. Current volunteer board members are burnt out and it is the same active members being asked to step up which is exhausting them to want to be on the board. In theme to our ethos of being vibrant we need to entice more community events in the downtown core.
- Events are great, more would be super.
- Do a better job everywhere... we are severely limited by budget.
- Marketing promotions
- Marketing. Security
- marketing & promotion
- Staffing
- Parking stickers got full time employees for sage parking in proximity to their offices or stores.
- Marketing and advocacy
- Safety after the city to lower property taxes for commercial buildings.
- New parking alternatives.
- Walkability, parklets, street closures,
- Install CCTV in laneways, corners or where RCMP suggest. More events. Full time executive director. Another Portland Loo. If area is expanded, then Street scape upgrades on those to match the present area. Paint BC Hydro poles all the same to show streets are a part of BIA. Use money that was for façade improvement grants for this. Street sculpture installations like other towns.
- Expanded advocacy, safety and security and mural development / execution
- Security of store fronts during the nights and daytime. my larges concern with the increase of homelessness individuals. The DCBIA does a good job currently. but more is required. This concern effects my tenants greatly.
- Advocacy with the city of Courtenay And other levels of government that gives support to the business owners.
- Environmental standards. Too much recyclable items go in the garbage no composting in Courtenay. Weather proofing old buildings renewable energy.
- Already doing a great job. Would love more festivals like moonlight and magic.
- Safety & security for sure. More marketing
- Marketing
- Parking is still an issue. Staff and business owners taking up limited parking. The customers could be parking in for easier access to shop in their stores. Perhaps it's time for paid parking in some areas of downtown and or looking at a Parkade.

-
- Beautification, security. Maybe a parkade (with other funders).
 - Safety
 - Admin, marketing, giveaways, events, advocacy, professional development workshops for staff and members
 - The ability to market and operate the events that we have in place. We know costs keep going up which means we do less and less each year which isn't the right path.
 - Beautification, security, removal of homeless shelters (to other areas of town)
 - More security
 - Lighting is becoming an issue. I'd like to see more presence of people downtown. I realize we don't have many actual residents, and into the evening it's quite quiet.
 - I believe less marketing is required going forward.
 - Security/ safety and policing for the downtown core with the homeless
 - We're in desperate need of better security and a response to vagrancy, vandalism, and open drug use.
 - Retention of our ED, Increased street amenities such as lighting, murals, waste containers,
 - Safety, revitalization
 - Garbage pickup

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the DCBIA?

- Definitely happy with the current boundaries as it relates to my business.
- Our parking enforcement is still nonexistent. Where is the enforcement on this?
- Kudos for doing so well with limited budget. This survey would be difficult for some businesses to do as doing it on a phone was challenging.
- I would love to see downtown Courtenay model itself after Nelson, its colorful, vibrant, and has tons of food options (highest per capita restaurants). Downtown could be a cultural hub with some retail and services. How would we encourage a nice wine bar or a late night dessert and coffee with music type places? I would love to see the store frontage be painted some very bold colors much like the theatre.
- Please do everything possible to work with the City to develop parking passes for downtown business owners and employees. In my work, I see clients one after another and am not able to move my car every couple of hours to stay within the parking limits. If I happen to have extra time to be able to move my car, I have concerns that it will take me too long between clients to find another parking spot nearby (very busy area). I understand that there is a parking lot available for downtown workers (I am on 4th St.), however it is much too far to walk with all of the bags I need to transport back and forth to work every day, and if I am leaving the office after 7pm, I will not feel completely safe walking all of that way to my car, especially in the winter. I usually work 10am-7pm or 9am-4pm and am concerned about being charged for parking too long in one place. I have discussed this with my colleagues, and they feel the same way, having the same needs as I do. Please help!"
- I don't think it should expand hence the non detailed area drawn in the previous map.
- I would mention how important the work is that you do and how much it is appreciated.
- The traffic situation is frustrating but IMO that's because downtowns are not meant to be a main artery through a town. We should really be focusing on creating downtown as a community hub by shutting down 5th street to car traffic, re-routing cars down 4th and 6th, and having cute picnic tables and markets out on the street.
- New director woman (paid position) is super
- Ways to deal with rude neighbouring businesses
- Omit street side eateries Oct 1
- Keep up the good work.
- Parking is still an issue business owners and staff still parking all day in the core streets and the 4th parking lot (this would be an ideal lot for a parkade). This discourages customers coming to shop downtown. We need a parkade. Work with property owners maybe with new buildings the city could fund a floor of underground parking. The palace and too good to be through could have been great spots. Or adding paid parking system. Making money. Or make certain areas for parking longer times

and others 15 minutes or 30 minutes. Some clients can be in spas/salons for 3-4 hours. The are spending money seems wrong they are the ones that would be paying the tickets when tickets are reinstated.

- Continue to ask city for more parking
- Thanks for what you do!
- We need to be careful of how fast we expand with the sensitive ecosystem of the lamprey behind us and the puntlege and Morrison creek. Putting in frisbee golf at Laketrail school, changed and trampled a beautiful eco-system and made more paths and more access to disturbance.
- Nelson BC has a similar vibe. And their lakefront access from downtown is amazing. More opening of the river for pedestrians and reducing the industrial feel of that area would be a game changer.
- The homelessness and associated garbage/feces problems are affecting everyone. There should be a city line to call to get your local property cleaned up. Also, the city keeps preaching about being green and enacting water restrictions. Meanwhile, they plant gardens every year that is expensive to plant, maintain and uses a lot of water even during times that it is restricted for everyone else. These gardens should be changed to other types of greenspaces that require less water and maintenance so resources can be used elsewhere.
- Great job. More festivals and possibly larger footprint for events (not just 5th)?
- Open more stores on sundays
- Safety and security are the most important issues. with the increasing homeless population and increasing poverty industry going on in the downtown core it is becoming less safe for our staff to be at the office. We are considering moving/relocating our business outside of the downtown core.
- We need more access to hand washing facilities, public bathrooms, easily available sharp disposable units. Stores are not offering public bathrooms and we need more infrastructure offered in more reasonable distribution to support both the houses and unhoused population. More harm reduction focus and perhaps needle injection site downtown rather than simply blocking out individuals may be places that we can start addressing the opiate pandemic. As uncomfortable as it is to see the unhoused population growth in the core, we could be at the forefront of community engagement in addressing this issue.
- Transportation and Parking are major issues for downtown businesses, especially facility operators with high seating capacity/occupancies. Either transit has to improve significantly (especially at night), or a parkade needs to be built to facilitate better transportation to and from downtown, for both patrons and workers. From an environmental and affordability standpoint (and a safety standpoint) more frequent transit service (maybe smaller busses running more often) and transit service, especially at night.
- As someone who works on behalf of The Old Church Theatre (755 Harmston) and MusicFest (2440 Cliffe Ave) we are seeing many of the same issues in both areas. It would be great to include more businesses in Courtenay in the DCBIA and would only help to strengthen all involved. I have already been speaking with Tracey so no need to reach out otherwise but you are welcome to if I can be of service. Thank You
- Appreciate security patrols, ensuring area is kept from of trash and debris, ongoing beautification.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP

TRANSCRIBED NOTES

Administration

- Tracey <3
- Kristy <3
- Our E.D. is a gift
- Passionate Leadership Giving Stability
- Stability in leadership (Board long term members)
- Social Media Paid Role
- Event Manager Paid Role
- Accounting: Change from Review to Compilation
- *Bookkeeper
- *Move to Governance Board
- Increased Staff → marketing → admin → events
- Paid bookkeeper

Marketing and Promotion

- Moonlight & Magic
- Christmas Parade
- Market Day
- Third Party Events
- Farmers Market
- Spirit Walk
- Mural Fest
- Print ads in CV Collective → Trio Mag → Music Fest Program
- Art Show Close 5th St/Cliffe/Duncan
- Winter night Light-ups
- Using tech
- Bicycle Race Criterion
- More Community Spirit Focused Events
- Coupon Program for Downtown B12
- Win gift boxes for special holiday or special events
- Giveaways at local events
- Free music downtown lunchtime in parklet
- We need a strong committee with strong leadership
- Feature written in local paper 'Behind the Counter'
- Co-promo with hotels/airport
- Late night activities downtown
- Staffing for marketing
- More elevate the Arts – Activate events Laneways
- More concerts Downtown

Beautification and Revitalization

- Parklet
- Planters
- Street Pole Flowers
- Urbaloo
- Wayfinding pillars
- Black Street Poles & Stop sign poles
- Matching Garbage Cans
- Wayfinding points expand with new boundaries – Extend Historical Theme
- Banners
- New murals
- Pretty signposts
- Heritage B&W Pictures
- Foot traffic past 5pm
- More gathering places with seating
- String lights across 5th year round
- Revitalize more night life → free music → food trucks – community gatherings
- City design feature requirements for downtown (tax break)
- Tax break for building improvements restore heritage buildings
- Pedestrian zone
- Parking improvement (to be improved)
- More murals
- Equity or beauty in expanded area
- “Bylaw” or recommendations – ugly facades
- Sidewalk improvements
- Trees/shrubs greenery – edible?

Safety and Security

- Connect Centre – draws people over there – increased security has helped
- Crime going down – RCMP
- CPTED by city (Fence behind city hall)
- Solid communication with city and RCMP
- Patrol RCMP
- Cleaning Crew
- Liaison with City & RCMP
- Sticker program – good that it is happening – But needs more uptake
- Footprints security patrol funded by City
- Footprints security guard all night → driving around → would be nice to get reports
- Morning cleanup → could use more
- S&S Quick glance resource sheet
- Member workshop for diversity or inclusion
- Telus initiative with BIABC
- Morning crew stays forever! Does nights or afternoons
- CCTV
- Better lighting
- Lighting
- Bike Patrol
- Cameras
- Nalaxone Training

Advocacy

- Support for S&S initiatives – security patrol – lighting audit
- Working with local politicians & provincial government for comm. Wellness
- Partnerships with non-profits
- Deepening Relationships with: RCMP, Homelessness Coalition, Chamber, Other BIA's
- Advocating for all the different types of city member business needs (merchant vs professional)
- RCMP downtown
- Fundraising Collaboration – sport groups – truth & reconciliation & repairing restoring relationships
- Pursuing Sponsorship
- Pursuing Grants
- Commercial Taxation Advocacy



APPENDIX C

DCBIA AGM Meeting Minutes



DCBIA AGM

Date: June 7, 2023

In attendance:

Bob Wells, (Mayor), Sandra Viney (President), Heather Ney, Tracey Clarke (Executive Director), Steve Stewart (Secretary) – Jordan Marshall, Kirsten Wood, Sheila Toni, Angie Carlyle, Alex Clarke, Michele Henry, Doug Hillian, Fiona McQuillan, Alyson Schmidt, Jenny Deters, Dave Frisch, Heather Ney, Charity Newnes, Cathy Newnes, Derek Newnes, Evan Jolicouer, Kristy Rowbotham, Daniel Sharratt, Greg Chadwick, Leanne Rathje, Erika Nessman, Brody-Abbatt-Slater, Megan Trumble, Erin Dunsire, Mackenzie Gartside, Jay Schindle

Regrets:

Start 5:59pm

- 1) Welcome & Intro – Viney/Clarke/Marshall
 - a. Welcome from Sandra
 - b. Land Acknowledgement - Tracey
- 2) Call to order
 - a. Tracey
- 3) Approval of Agenda
 - a. First: Jenny Deters/ Second: Mackenzie Gartside
- 4) Approval of 2022 AGM Minutes (Clarke)
 - a. First: Derek Newnes/ Second: Bob Wells
- 5) 2022 Year in Review
 - a. Introduction of current President – Sandra
 - b. Appreciation of Jordan
 - c. And rest of board...
 - d. Tracey's presentation: **See Handout: 2022 Year in Review**
 - i. DCBIA 28 years Old!
 - ii. 70 BIA's in BC
 - iii. Our Work
 1. Marketing
 2. Safety and Security

- a. – currently poll out trying to ascertain the increased cost born by downtown businesses re Safety and Security.
 - b. Reminder to report all crime/incidents – important to get funding for police/emergency services.
 - 3. Beautification and Placemaking
 - 4. Advocacy and Community Engagement
 - iv. Lots of new businesses
 - 1. Welcome!
 - 2. Lots of Business Milestones – Searles Shoes 90 years downtown!
-
- 6) Board Election (Derek Newnes)
 - a. 13 Spaces for directors
 - b. New Nominations
 - i. Brody Abbatt-Slater
 - ii. Alex Clarke – Co-Valley Co Working
 - c. Thanks to Sheila Toni AND Sean Ferguson
 - d. Nominations from the floor 3X. (Room for 2)
 - i. Greg Chadwick nominated by Jenny Deters
-
- 7) Financial Statement (Kirsty Rowbotham)
 - a. A/R , A/P – difference is timing of payment both receiving and paying
 - b. Downtown Bucks. 12K have been redeemed... 10K outstanding.
 - c. Currently looking good Assets vs Liabilities
 - d. Sponsorships down – Banners ~5K less than last year as we only renewed the winter banners. There are less due to LED snowflake light placement.
 - e. City granted ~20K for bylaw renewal
 - f. Event revenues were up.
 - g. Marketing expenses down due to need re. bridge closure.
 - h. Admin expenses up slightly mostly due to inflation.
 - i. Operating at a deficit – which does have an impact on the services we can offer members.
 - i. New disclosure added to end Re. board members businesses purchasing sponsorships like banners.

 - j. Motion to accept: Bob Wells/Derek Newnes
-
- 8) Bylaw Review Summary – ***See Handout: Downtown Courtenay Improvement Area Bylaw Review***
 - a. Current bylaw was from 2002 and was funded in 1995 at 60K.
 - b. 60K was sufficient then, but not now.
 - c. 60K had no method of increasing over the years.
 - d. Review was required to plan the future.
 - i. Questions from floor

1. Daniel – we've done LOTS with the amount we have
2. We compete for tourist \$ with Parksville – and they charge WAY more than us!
3. Sandra- When Tracey was hired she was the 4th Executive Director in 5 years. We've expected too much for too little (\$)... We need a fulltime ED, at fulltime hours to compete with the likes of Campbell River/Parksville/Duncan/Nanaimo
4. Levy applied to all businesses within boundary

9) Bylaw Amendment Vote

- a. Motion to amend Bylaw; First: Jenny Deters/Second: Derek Newnes, All in favour
- b. Motion Accepted

10) Motion to explore increasing boundary (expansion) in principle

- First: Jenny Deters/Second: Derek Newnes
Motion accepted

11) (Further) Business from the Floor

- a. None

12) Adjournment (Clarke)

- a. Motion to Adjourn – First: Jenny Deters/Second: CathyNewnes?

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BYLAW NO.2264, 2023

A bylaw to establish the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area

WHEREAS a municipal council may under the *Community Charter* grant money to an organization that has as one of its aims, functions and purposes, the planning and implementation of Business Promotion Scheme;

AND WHEREAS Council of the City of Courtenay has previously adopted Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 2264, 2002;

AND WHEREAS Council, at the request of the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area, wishes to amend the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Bylaw, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Applicant" means the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Applicant.

"Business Improvement Area" means the area of the City designated in Schedule "A" of this Bylaw.

"Business Promotion Scheme" means:

- (a) carrying out studies and making reports respecting the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area;

- (b) the improvement, beautification or maintenance of streets and sidewalks in the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Areas; and
- (c) the encouragement and promotion of commercial business development within the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area both directly, and indirectly through the encouragement of entertainment, sports and cultural activities.

“Taxable Property” means land and improvements that fall within Class 5 and 6 under the Assessment Act – Prescribed Class of Property Regulation, B.C. Reg. 438/81.

2. DESIGNATION OF AREA

- 2.1 Council designates the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area boundary to include the lands within the outlined area as identified in Schedule “A”.

3. GRANT

- 3.1 The Council may, in the calendar years 2024 through 2028, grant to the Applicant, in the aggregate, funds not to exceed \$730,000 over the five-year term and not to exceed in any calendar year the amount collected by property value tax imposed under this Bylaw for that year. These monies shall be paid to the Applicant on or before the 1st day of September in each year. Funds will be broken down into annual amounts as follows:

2024 - \$120,000
2025 - \$130,000
2026 - \$145,000
2027 - \$160,000
2028 - \$175,000

- 3.2 The Applicant shall submit, annually on or before March 1st, a budget for the purpose of the Business Promotion Scheme as in section 1.

(a) The budget for the Business Promotion Scheme which is based on a fiscal year commencing January 1st, must contain sufficient information to describe all anticipated expenses and revenues, and has been approved by a majority of the members present at the Annual General Meeting of the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area.

- 3.3 Monies granted to the Applicant under this Bylaw must be expended only by the Applicant and in accordance with the conditions and limitations set out in this Bylaw and for the planning and implementation of a Business Promotion Scheme set out in Schedule B of this Bylaw.
- 3.4 Monies granted pursuant to Section 4.1 of this Bylaw shall be expended only for

projects provided for in the annual budget submitted and approved by the Financial Officer pursuant to Section 4.2.

4. RECOVERY OF FUNDS

- 4.1 All of the money granted to the Applicant pursuant to this Bylaw shall be recovered within the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area from the owners of Taxable Property.
- 4.2 For the purpose of recovering the monies granted to the Applicant, an annual property value tax shall be imposed on Taxable Property within the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area, and such tax shall be based on the assessed value of the land and improvements.

5. CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- 5.1 The Applicant shall not carry out any borrowing, which results in an indebtedness or other obligation as to money granted to it by the Council pursuant to this Bylaw, which extends beyond the fiscal year in which that money was granted.
- 5.2 Any money granted to the Applicant by the Council pursuant to this Bylaw shall, if not required for immediate use, be invested only in securities in which trustees are authorized by law to invest.
- 5.3 The Applicant shall not alter or approve amendments to its Constitution or Bylaws without providing the Corporate Officer of the City with two months' notice of its intention to make such alteration or amendment, and if any alteration or amendment is made without such notice the City may withhold any payments under this Bylaw.
- 5.4 The Applicant shall account for the money granted by the Council for the previous year by submitting to the City on or before March 1 in each of the year 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028 a compiled financial statement for the previous calendar year which shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and shall include a balance sheet and a Statement of Revenue and Expenditure.

6. INSURANCE

- 6.1 The Applicant shall at all times carry a policy of comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 with the City as an additional named insured. .

7. EXPIRATION DATE

- 7.1 This bylaw shall be in effect until December 31, 2028 but the lapsing of the term over which money may be granted under this Bylaw shall not affect the obligations of the Applicant as to the expenditure of and accounting for monies granted under the Bylaw.

READ A FIRST, SECOND and THIRD time this

ADOPTED this

Bob Wells, Mayor

City of Courtenay Corporate Officer