

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: April 15, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Tracey Arthur, Director of Corporate Administration

SUBJECT: Business Improvement Association (BIA) Survey Information and Process

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT Council:

1. Receive the April 15, 2024 corporate report titled "Business Improvement Association (BIA) Survey Information and Process";
2. Approve staff utilizing TheWGroup to conduct a BIA Member Survey at the cost of \$8,875; and
3. Approve the proposed objectives, methodology, timeline and draft survey outlined in the corporate report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This corporate report is provided in follow-up to the March 25, 2024 regular Council meeting (March 25, 2024 report is attached as Appendix A), where Council was advised that the current Business Improvement Association (BIA) bylaw will expire at the end of 2024. Staff are seeking direction regarding the continuance of the BIA, whereby a new bylaw will be provided for Council consideration.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2024-099, Mar 25/24	<i>THAT Council:</i> Direct there be a survey conducted by the City regarding the Business Improvement Association (BIA): ○ Staff and the BIA are to meet to discuss survey questions ○ The commercial property owners and the retail business within the BIA Area are to be surveyed ○ To be conducted within the next 60-day period ○ To be conducted not solely through email, would like to see door-to-door component ○ Draft survey provided On-Table at the March 25, 2024 meeting can be a starting point for discussion between staff and the BIA ○ Results are to come back to the City

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The BIA Bylaw, 2019, No. 2311 (Attachment B) will remain in effect until December 31, 2024. For the BIA to continue to exist following the end of 2024 a new bylaw must be established. On March 25, 2024 a corporate report was provided to Council seeking direction in regard to bringing forward a new Bylaw for a further five (5) years and establishment of a mandate and levies for each year for the City to collect from those businesses with a Class 5 (Light Industry) and Class 6 (Business Properties) assessment designation (those designated within the BIA area / boundary).

Staff were requested to meet with the BIA regarding possible survey questions and then provide a proposed survey to Council for consideration that will be distributed to hear from both property owners and retail businesses within the designated BIA area. The Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Corporate Administration met with Alex Nixon, BIA Executive Director, on Thursday, March 28, 2024 where the On-Table proposed survey was reviewed as a starting point and comments provided by Mr. Nixon were taken under advisement.

The Chief Administrative Officer contacted TheWGroup (Group), who specialize in local government works. The contact at the Group has noted extensive experience in the area of Business Improvement Associations. The Group was provided the On-Table proposed survey from the March 25, 2024 regular Council meeting and the new proposed questions following the meeting held with the BIA Executive Director and was asked to review the newly formatted questions to ensure they were concise, the context would be understood and how the questions were to be placed within the survey (ensuring they can be built upon each other efficiently) and sought suggestions of other possible areas that may be helpful.

The proposal by the Group includes survey research program objectives whereby the survey research program will be established to satisfy the following objectives:

- Measure how well the BIA delivered on its mandated activities
- Understand the perceived level of benefit members gained from the BIA activities
- Identify levels of participation in activities among the BIA members
- Determine the level of engagement/communication the BIA members have had with the BIA during the past year; and
- Gather general feedback on how the BIA can provide its members with even greater support.

In order to satisfy the research objective of the BIA member survey, the survey methodology will:

- Review and confirm the proposed research objectives with the City;
- Craft a survey questionnaire to satisfy each of the five (5) noted objectives above;
- Design and program the project survey considering invitation methods where it is proposed to hand deliver survey invitations to all BIA businesses and to mail survey invitations to all property owners. The invitation is expected to both use a QR Code and survey link leading to the responsive web survey. Individual business/property tracking may be used to enable participation stats and reminders will be sent and technical support for the survey will be provided;
- Field survey of approximately 282 properties and 360 businesses which exist within the BIA boundaries;

- Monitor survey performance and manage data quality, provide advice on and prepare reminders to be sent to ensure as high a response rate as possible; and
- Complete data analysis of collected responses, and prepare a comprehensive report which will include overall findings from the BIA members

Attached as Appendix C is the draft survey content following discussions with the White Rock BIA Executive Director and utilizing the expertise of the Group.

The proposed timeline from initial review, acceptance, and project kick-off meeting to final report delivery is eight (8) weeks. Mr. Nixon requested the survey not be started until he was back from a planned leave on May 16, 2024, due to concern that once the survey was started the BIA office would be contacted and they do not have additional staff to cover the leave in order to be able to respond to questions. Staff noted this would be workable within the timeframe to begin the survey mid-May.

This will result in the survey commencing May 17, 2024, where it will be available for a three (3) week period until June 7th. Results will then be compiled and a report to Council can be brought forward to the June 24th regular Council meeting. Council will then give staff direction as to how they want to proceed with a BIA bylaw. If Council were to proceed with a petition process through Council initiative this can be conducted through July / August; however, staff recommend the mailout and newspaper notification do not begin until September ensuring as much awareness as possible of the petition process rather than conducting it during summer break.

This would permit time for final consideration of a bylaw to occur at the end of October.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to a tight timeline staff will hire a consultant to conduct the survey at an approximate cost of \$8,900 to produce, conduct and prepare a final report of a BIA member survey for both property owners and retail businesses included within the BIA area / boundary.

CONCLUSION

The current BIA bylaw encompassed a five (5) year period and will expire December 31, 2024. A corporate report seeking direction in regard to potentially bringing a new bylaw forward was considered by Council at their March 25, 2024 regular Council meeting. Following discussion at that meeting staff were directed to complete a survey of the property owners and retail businesses within the BIA boundary. The responses to the survey would then help Council ensure the new bylaw included the current needs and expectations of the retail businesses. For this additional step, due to a tight timeline to carry out the legislated process for a bylaw of this type, staff propose to utilize a consultant who specializes in local government processes to carry out the survey. The consultant, experienced in this area, would be able to put in the required time and effort to ensure the maximum number of responses are received. It is expected that the results of the survey will enable Council to direct staff regarding the bylaw mandate and the process that it will undertake to complete.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracey Arthur
Director of Corporate Administration

Comments from the Acting Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation(s) of this corporate report.



Anne Berry
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: March 25, 2024 Corporate Report White Rock Business Improvement Area Bylaw
Appendix B: White Rock Business Improvement Area Bylaw, 2019 No. 2311 (current)
Appendix C: Proposed Survey Content