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**Date:** May 5, 2021

**To:** Mayor and Council

**Author:** Shaun Martinho, Manager of Public Works and Environmental Services

**RE:** Public Works Support for Enhancements in the BIA District

**Report No.:** IED 2021- 25

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## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

That Council approves allotting up to a maximum of 350 person-hours per annum in the Public Works Department to support enhanced beautification and streetscape works in the BIA district.

## **BACKGROUND**

As stated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, one of the primary functions of a Business Improvement Area ("BIA") is to oversee the improvement, beautification, and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings, and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality. Their primary purpose is to provide enhancements in a business area to create a more pleasant atmosphere for local businesses and neighbouring residential areas.

The Town works to foster a strong partnership with the BIA to help achieve the common goal of creating a vibrant and robust business community. For this reason, the Town provides both financial and technical resource assistance in support of BIA beautification initiatives. This includes enhanced weed spraying and removal, maintaining street furniture and fixtures, winter decorating, and various other works.

It is recognized that some, but not all, of the beautification works and purchases made by the BIA would have to be made by the Town if the BIA ceased to exist. This provides a benefit to the Town and all the residents of Kingsville. The Town is grateful for the BIA's efforts.

Over the last several years administration has noticed a rise in the number of requests from the BIA for in-kind labour from public works. For example, assistance was requested to support an additional autumn mum flower planting, installing new hanging

basket supports, and replacing the decorative banners on downtown light standards. Most recently, the Town received a request for additional labour in support of improved holiday décor, including:

- Unlit Garland and bow installations at the four main intersections along Main St.
- Set-up and takedown of large ornaments and decorative statues at the clock garden at 1 Main St.
- Letters that spell JOY at the intersections of Main St & Division St and Heritage Rd & Main St W.

## **DISCUSSION**

There are several things administration and Council need to consider when receiving these requests.

### **Staffing Levels**

Staffing levels in the Public Works Department have not changed since amalgamation in 1999. Since staffing resources are limited, committing staff to one initiative will detract from another. Therefore, when adding or improving services, it is essential to consider existing operations. Committing staff resources to specific user groups and organizations dilutes the level of service received by the average ratepayer. The core function of the Public Works Department is the maintenance of publicly owned infrastructure. Administration recognizes the benefit of having a beautified downtown, but it is important to ensure that Kingsville residents have a sustainable well-maintained road network.

### **Asset Management**

Committing staff for beautification works means they are not maintaining municipal infrastructure. Kingsville has an extensive road network, and redeploying staff may not immediately impact infrastructure conditions. However, insufficient maintenance typically leads to underperforming assets that cause increased risks, potential service disruptions, and premature failure of the asset. Proactive maintenance helps assets, such as roads, reach their full-service life potential. Regular maintenance will extend the life of an asset, reducing the average annual capital investment costs required to replace it in the future.

### **Legislative Requirements**

*O. Reg. 366/18: Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS)* provides municipalities with a defense against liability from actions concerning the level of care provided on roads and bridges. It outlines prescribed activities and response times for routine patrolling, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, road maintenance, and sign inspections. To use this defense in court, the Town must show that it met the standards defined by the regulation through documentation. As such, other services must not impede the department's ability to meet these requirements. Given the finite

amount of human resources in Public Works, careful consideration must be given before expanding services in other areas.

### **Other Commitments**

Public Works also supports several other user groups, community programs, and local events. This includes, but is not limited to, the Veteran Banner program, Open Streets, the Highland Games, Folk Fest, and numerous other SERT-approved special events. A significant amount of staff time is devoted to setting up barricades and installing signage for these events. Expanding a service in one specific area may hinder the department's ability to support future SERT applications.

Given current resource constraints and the competing demands placed on the Public Works Department, administration set out to define a base level of service the Town can provide in support of BIA programs and projects. Developing a clear and concise plan will help determine the roles of each of the parties, improve lines of communication, and help set expectations. As such, it is recommended that a set limit of person-hours be made available each year to the BIA to support enhanced beautification works within the business district.

### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.

Support growth of the business community.

Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

### **Link to Council 2021-2022 Priorities**

- ☐ COVID-19 and the health and safety of the community
- ☒ Customer Service: Training, Technology, Staff, Review Standards/Level of service
- ☐ Housing: Affordability (lot sizes, developer incentives, second dwellings, density, etc.)
- ☐ Greenhouse: lights & dark sky, odours (site plan compliance, bylaws, other tools)
- ☐ Programming Increase: Youth and Seniors
- ☐ A development plan for Downtown Kingsville / Main Street
- ☐ Financial savings: Schools closings, Migration Hall
- ☒ Economic Development: strengthen tourism/hospitality
- ☐ COVID - economic recovery
- ☐ Communications: Strategy – Policy (social media), Website refresh and other tools, Public engagement
- ☐ Housing: Migrant Worker Housing – Inspections (Building/Fire), regulate, reduce, or increase
- ☐ Committees / Boards: Review and Report

- ☐ Policy Update: Procedural Bylaw
- ☐ Economic Development: diversify the economy, create local jobs, industrial, Cottam
- ☐ Infrastructure (non-Municipal): Union Water expansion & governance
- ☐ Infrastructure (Municipal): Asset Management Plan update, the infrastructure funding deficit
- ☐ No direct link to Council priorities

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Starting in 2019, Infrastructure and Engineering began tracking the number of hours staff devoted to beautification and streetscape initiatives in the BIA district. The following is a breakdown of the time and associated costs:

Activity	2019	2020
Flower Program	141	132.5
Garland	32	16
Snowflakes	105	78.5
Painting Street Furniture	10.5	30
Miscellaneous Requests	65	23
Total Hours	353.5	280
Staffing Costs	\$ 14, 638.44	\$ 11,796.40

The totals costs mentioned above do not include contracted services, equipment costs, or administrative expenses. For example, in 2021, the downtown winter cleanup cost an additional \$9384.81 in contracted services. Furthermore, according to the Ministry of Transportation, the recommended billable rate for the Towns truck-mounted aerial device is \$144.70 per hour. Using this rate, equipment costs to install the snowflakes in 2020 would have been \$9003.95. Considering all ancillary costs, based on the services provided in the table, in 2020, the BIA received over \$35,000.00 in in-kind services from the Town. Given that the BIA's total expenses in 2020 were \$150,731.00, these programs would require almost 25% of their budget if these services were contracted out.

So far in 2021, staff have spent an estimated 77 hours on BIA-related work, including removing the winter greens from the ground planters and installing brackets for the new self-watering hanging flower baskets.

Based on historical practices and current resources, administration proposes a limit of an additional 350 person-hours above the Towns base level of service for beautification works in the BIA district. This would include the time spent administering the flower program, installing garland, decorative snowflakes, painting outdoor furniture, weed removal, banner installations, and other streetscape activities.

In total, this amounts to in-kind labour services of \$14,493.50 in staffing resources. It is suggested that should the BIA require additional servicing above 350 hours, they would

explore other options such a contracted services or volunteers. Alternatively, the BIA could request that Council increase the hours above 350 at which time Administration will be seeking direction from Council on how to provide the additional labour and whether other public works services will be reduced.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Kingsville BIA Coordinator  
Ontario Good Roads Association  
Legislative Services Department

Respectfully Submitted,

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