

# Report to Council



**Date:** February 26, 2024  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** URBA On-Call pilot project and Business Improvement Area grant programs  
**Department:** Community Safety | Corporate and Protective Services Division

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**Recommendation:**

**THAT** Council approves a one-time grant of \$130,000 to the Uptown Rutland Business Association (URBA) for the URBA On-Call pilot project.

**AND THAT** the 2024 Financial Plan be amended to include grant funding.

**AND THAT** Council directs staff to draft a Council policy as a framework for a new Business Improvement Area (BIA) grant program.

**Purpose:**

To establish an Uptown Rutland Business Association On-Call Team to enhance safety, cleanliness, and overall appeal of Uptown Rutland while also directing staff to draft a Council policy outlining how future BIA grants will be assessed and awarded.

**Council Priority Alignment:**

**Crime & Safety**

To provide local Business Improvement Areas support for urban center safety issues.

**Background:**

Since 2008 the City has provided an annual grant of \$70,000 to support the Downtown Kelowna Association (DKA) for its Downtown On Call Program (DOC). In 2023, this funding was increased to \$100,000. DKA funding is otherwise generated through the Business Improvement Area (BIA) Bylaw #12575. DOC, also known as the Red Shirt Program, operates within the one square kilometer that comprise the Downtown BIA with the primary goal of enhancing the safety, cleanliness, and overall appeal in Kelowna’s downtown area. Annually, DOC conducts an average of 7,000 proactive interactions and calls for services from businesses. These calls range from addressing loitering to rendering first aid, and it is well understood that many of these calls might otherwise have required responses from Bylaw Services and/or RCMP.

The City's annual grant accounts for approximately 20 per cent of total DOC operating costs. Additionally, the City provides an annual grant of \$56,000 to support the DKA "Clean Team."

In summer 2023, the Mayor's Task Force on Crime Reduction was constituted, bringing together the voices and expertise of people from business, Indigenous, and social service communities, as well as the community at-large. Consistent with City Council's Crime and Safety Priority and its objective to "provide local BIAs support for urban center safety issues," the Task Force recommended replication of the DOC program in other BIAs.

The Uptown Rutland Business Association (URBA), which comprises an estimated 0.52 square kilometres, proposes replicating the DOC program in its BIA. The Program will be tailored to address specific challenges in Uptown Rutland and contribute to its economic and social revitalization. Statistical data from police and bylaw provide evidence for an increasing impact of social issues in the URBA BIA for which the DOC model has proven to be an effective mitigation strategy. RCMP, the City's Community Safety Department, including Bylaw Services, and the Social Development Department support this initiative.

**Discussion:**

Currently, URBA's BIA does not receive any grant funding from the City of Kelowna specifically allocated to an On-Call team. A one-time grant to URBA of \$130,000 is recommended to support the creation and operation of a one-year URBA On-Call pilot project. The Pilot will enable four full-time staff and a supervisor to provide patrols and response 15 hours daily in the summer and 12 hours daily in the winter. First year costs, including start-up expenditures, are projected at \$305,000 for which URBA has committed \$50,000 and is seeking \$125,000 through alternate grants and community sponsorship.

The absence of current policy or guidelines as it relates to BIA grants for such activities leaves new or prospective On-Call projects without a clear understanding of what, if any, pilot or ongoing financial assistance may be available from the City of Kelowna.

By directing staff to draft Council policy as a framework for BIA grant programs, staff will propose a policy and funding model that is scalable for any BIA seeking City funding for such BIA patrol programs. This will formalize the City's approach and provide a model that is fair, transparent, and accessible to existing and emerging BIAs.

**Conclusion:**

Approving a one time, \$130,000 grant to the Uptown Rutland Business Association (URBA) for the URBA On-Call pilot project aligns with Council's priority on Crime & Safety and advances a recommendation from the Mayor's Task Force on Crime Reduction.

Further, a future Council policy outlining a framework for BIA grant programs will standardize the process and procedure of awarding grants to BIAs. Drafting policy will identify fair, transparent, and proportional methods to allocate grant funds to BIAs for the future.

**Internal Circulation:**

Financial Services Department  
Social Development Branch  
Communications Department

**Considerations applicable to this report:**

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:** City of Kelowna 2024 Financial Plan is to be amended by \$130,000 if grant is approved.

**Existing Policy:** [Kelowna Downtown Business Improvement Area](#)

**Communications Comments:**

URBA will have social media campaign, community engagement, & e-newsletters in mid-late February 2024 with "Official Launch" in April 2024, anticipated media coverage. URBA campaign to be amplified on City channels.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

**Legal/Statutory Authority:**

**Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:**

Submitted by: Darren Caul, Community Safety Director

Approved for inclusion:



S. Leatherdale, Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services

cc:

Supt. Triance, RCMP Officer in Charge – Kelowna Region

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