

DATE: September 20 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: WALTER BABICZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: Partnering Agreement with Downtown Prince George

ATTACHMENTS: Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council:
 - a. APPROVES \$20,000 from the Council contingency fund to be allocated toward a Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative to be delivered and administered by the Prince George Downtown Business Improvement Association (“Downtown Prince George”) on behalf of the City;
 - b. AUTHORIZES public notice to be posted of the proposed partnering agreement with Downtown Prince George for the purposes of the Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative; and
 - c. following posting of the public notice, AUTHORIZES the City Manager to execute a partnering agreement with Downtown Prince George to provide services on behalf of the City for the Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative, on the terms outlined in the report dated September 20, 2023 from the City Manager titled “Partnering Agreement with Downtown Prince George”, and in the form otherwise satisfactory to the City Manager.

PURPOSE:

For Council decision.

BACKGROUND:

At the August 28, 2023 regular Council meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

That Council DIRECTS Administration to return a report to Council with options to work with Downtown Prince George to establish a grant in the amount of up to \$20,000 from the Council Contingency Fund to provide one-time emergency relief to merchants impacted by the explosion that occurred at 4th and Dominion on August 22, 2023.

The resolution was passed by Council in response to a letter from Downtown Prince George requesting that Council consider additional support to its downtown members affected by the explosion.

DISCUSSION:

Downtown Prince George is a non-profit society that serves all the property owners and all the businesses/tenants in the C1 Zone in Prince George. The goal of Downtown Prince George is to create a downtown that is vibrant, safe, and attractive to citizens, businesses, and visitors. That goal aligns with

Council's Vision, Mission and Values set out in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan for the City to be "a diverse, progressive, and vibrant provincial centre", with values that include "civic pride", "resilience" and "vitality".

The importance of Prince George's downtown core to the city and the region as a centre for business, shopping, dining, and entertainment is reliant on its vibrancy and vitality. Council proceeding with the initiative described below would support its strategic priorities and help promote the downtown as welcoming, safe, and attractive for residents, visitors and those that live and work downtown, and would support our local economy.

The proposed Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative would assist downtown businesses affected by the August 22 explosion to expedite repairs. This would help avoid potential delays with windows boarded by plywood, and will promote the aesthetic appearance of the downtown as a vibrant and vital commercial core of the city and the region. It would also support the safety of our downtown.

The Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative would be a service administered and managed for the City by Downtown Prince George. The service would be established through a partnering agreement involving the allocation of \$20,000 towards a micro grant program to support any business to facilitate repairing damage sustained to their storefront caused by the August 22, 2023 explosion at 4th Avenue and Dominion St., including damage to street-facing windows, doors, locks and fascia, as described in more detail on the attached document titled "Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative".

This Downtown Vibrancy and Vitality Initiative funding program would be in place until December 31, 2023. The program would be administered by Downtown Prince George based on a first-come, first-served basis, up to \$1,000 per business, and the business would be required to provide receipts. No part of the funds would be allocated towards administrative costs, and any of the funds remaining unspent at the end of the program term would be returned to the City.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

As directed by Council, this report presents an option for Council's consideration to establish a one-time grant program with Downtown Prince George to address damage caused by the explosion that occurred at 4th and Dominion on August 22, 2023.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz

Meeting Date: 2023-09-25