

CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 17, 2004
File No.: 6530-19
To: City Manager
From: Director of Planning and Development Services
Subject: KELOWNA DOWNTOWN ALLEY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Report Prepared by Patrick McCormick

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the information outlined herein,

AND THAT Council authorize staff to provide assistance to the DKA in issuing an RFP for alternate waste removal services,

AND FURTHER THAT Council give favourable consideration to supporting enforcement of existing prohibitions against dumpsters within public roadways should such enforcement be requested as an outcome of the RFP process.

BACKGROUND

The *Kelowna Downtown Plan*, endorsed by City Council in 2000, envisions Downtown as a highly pedestrian-oriented environment. To this end the Plan encourages development of retail frontages within Downtown alleys. Removal of the dumpsters that currently serve Downtown merchants would facilitate such development. The reason for this is that the dumpsters are unsightly. More significantly, they facilitate inappropriate social activity and contribute to perceptions that Downtown is unsafe.

DISCUSSION

A steering committee of pertinent staff was formed to become familiar with the logistics of commercial garbage collection, and to strategize on means to help make alleys more friendly, consistent with the objectives of the Downtown Plan.

The Committee consists of the Drainage Manager, the Community Planning Manager, and the Urban Design Planner. The committee also includes the Executive Director of the Downtown Kelowna Association, and the Waste Management Coordinator from the Regional District of the Central Okanagan.

Initial committee discussions acknowledged a number of changes will be necessary to create an atmosphere that encourages pedestrians to make more use of the alleys. The most critical of these changes will be to remove the dumpsters and replace them with an alternate collection service.

A meeting with Downtown business and property owners, organized by the DKA, was held shortly after formation of the steering committee. The attendees supported removal of dumpsters. The implications for cleaner and safer alleys and the potential ability to improve the aesthetics of Downtown alleys were appreciated. However, business owners indicated they were not likely to support a program that wasn't cost competitive with the dumpster service, or that didn't have the flexibility dumpsters provide.

Businesses on the 200 blocks of Bernard and Lawrence Avenues, and the 1500 blocks of Water and Abbott Streets were also surveyed to solicit their preferences. The businesses on these streets were surveyed because they were felt to be a representative sample of Downtown businesses. The results of this informal survey reinforced the message from the earlier meeting with business owners for a cost-efficient and flexible collection service. Information gathered also indicated the existing contracts with contractors for dumpster service are almost all of a short-term nature, i.e., no more than 6 months with most on a week-to-week or month-to-month basis.

Independent discussions with two of the garbage contractors serving Downtown (Canadian Waste Management and BFI), also took place. These discussions gave the committee insight into the logistics of an alternate service. The contractors each expressed a willingness to see dumpsters removed and replaced with an alternate service tailored to meet the needs of individual customers. These discussions also indicated it would probably make sense from an economic point of view, for one contractor to serve the entire commercial area.

However, this approach would mean all but one of the contractors currently serving the area would no longer be providing service. As the City does not want to negatively impact existing contractors, it would be appropriate for Downtown businesses, as potentially the direct beneficiaries, to initiate their own program; a program that would best serve their logistical needs as well as achieve economies of scale that provide a price competitive with the cost of the existing service.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the DKA set up a committee of business owners to spearhead the transition to a new program. With the City's help, the committee could draft a Terms of Reference for a proposal call to provide a service to replace the current dumpsters.

The proposal call would set out minimum requirements to meet the needs of Downtown merchants and put the onus on contractors to set out the particulars of a program to meet those needs, including method, frequency, times of collection, price, etc. Any proposal would be expected to set out the minimum number of participants in the program necessary to make it cost competitive with the current service. It is expected the boundaries for the purposes of the RFP would coincide with those of the DKA.

The Terms of Reference for the RFP would stipulate the DKA would be under no obligation to accept any proposal. The Terms of Reference would further stipulate that the DKA would be free to negotiate the terms of a program with any of the firms submitting a proposal.

However, even assuming that an alternate program could be provided for approximately the same cost as the current service, there would still be no guarantee merchants would sign on to the new program. Based on information gathered from discussions with contractors, failure to have significant numbers of merchants switch to the new program would likely compromise the ability to get the new program up and running.

Almost all dumpsters are located on the public right-of-way and remain in place at the City's discretion. To help assure merchants subscribe to an alternate service such that there would be sufficient subscribers to make any program economically viable, the City may need to set a deadline for prohibiting dumpsters within roadways.

City staff therefore propose that once the particulars of an alternate program are agreed upon by the DKA, that it would be presented to City Council in conjunction with a request that removal of dumpsters within the public right-of-way be enforced by the City. A grace period for removal by business owners could be determined at that time.

Anticipated Provincial Government legislation is expected to encourage greater recycling of materials and impose greater restrictions on materials going to the land fill. Recycling will be imperative to achieving this goal. The role of recycling and the means of collecting recyclable materials will be part of the overall discussion aimed at providing an alternate collection service. Public education would therefore be a key component of the proposed strategy. This component would be coordinated by the Waste Management Coordinator of the Regional

District of the Central Okanagan. This component could take the form of mail-outs and/or workshops with Downtown business owners.

The above-noted approach has been endorsed by the DKA (see Attachment 1). The strategy has also been supported by the Downtown Plan Committee and the Urban Centres Implementation Committee.

Once an alternate collection service is in place and dumpsters have been removed, consideration can be given to improving the aesthetics of Downtown alleys including possible signage and landscaping. Consideration could also be given at that time to measures that would further enhance alley safety. This would be a longer term initiative to encourage development of retail frontage along alleys.

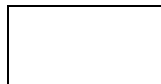
SUMMARY

The removal of dumpsters within Downtown's alleys is imperative to ensuring a more pedestrian-friendly Downtown. To help achieve this goal, staff propose a strategy to replace the current dumpster service with an alternate collection program.

This program would be arrived at through an RFP issued by the DKA in conjunction with enforcement by the City to remove dumpsters within the public right-of-way. It would also include an education program to highlight the merits of recycling.

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Approved for inclusion



R.L. (Ron) Mattiussi, ACP, MCIP
Director of Development & Corporate Services

PM/SB/pjm

Attachment