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CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

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**Date:** August 15, 2007  
**File No.:** 0920-20-004  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Director of Corporate Service  
& Acting Director of Planning & Development Services  
**Subject:** Downtown Revitalization and Redevelopment Initiative

Report Prepared by: David L. Shipclark

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** staff be instructed to prepare the necessary zoning and related bylaws and accompanying policies and agreements, in order to implement a comprehensive development plan within the four (4) city blocks bounded on the north by Queensway Avenue and on the south by Harvey Avenue on the east by Water Street and on the west by Abbott Street;

**AND THAT** the said plan be constructed so as to meet the key principles for downtown redevelopment as outlined in the report from the Director of Corporate Services dated August 15, 2007 and supported by the Spaxman Report of June 2007 on the Downtown Plan;

**AND THAT** the said bylaws, policies and agreements, as applicable, define and specify all required development regulations, including but not limited to the footprint, form, character, height, density and use, and all amenities and servicing requirements for all future development within the zone;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the said bylaws, policies and agreements be developed and implemented to ensure equal sharing of both development rights and cost, including provision of amenities, amongst all property owners, including the City of Kelowna, within the zone.

**BACKGROUND:**

**History**

The City's historical downtown has seen very little redevelopment in the past twenty-five years. The downtown plan adopted in 1999 identifies the Downtown as being bordered by Doyle Avenue, the lake, Richter Street and Highway 97. While a portion of this area is seeing some minor improvements much of it remains the focus of economic, transportation and public safety concerns for the community. The most westerly blocks of both Leon Avenue and Lawrence Avenue have over the past years become the focus of much of what is viewed

by the community as negative in our downtown. These negative issues included a concentration of nightclubs and social agencies, a number of property vacancies, lack of density and a poor mix of uses including minimal residential use. All of these factors have led to a perception of only vagrants on the street during the day and no activity on the street after business hours until the rowdy crowd from the nightclubs emptied out late at night.

Also, the entire area of Kelowna's downtown has a high water table, which makes for very limited underground parking opportunities. In addition, the lot depth between street and lane way for most of the downtown provides a very limited opportunity for street level development with above ground parking behind.

The lot widths in the historical downtown were also created for development of one and two storey frame buildings. Separate title lots as narrow as 2.5 meters do not encourage redevelopment.

These factors seem to be encouraging properties to remain underdeveloped, empty lots are fenced for fear of vandalism, criminal activities continue, empty storefronts remain vacant and the general public avoids the area.

### **Previous City Action**

As far back as the summer riots in the 1980s, the City of Kelowna has tried virtually every avenue available to it to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown. These initiatives have included a tax relief incentive, a parking incentive, a way finding sign program, a back alley dumpster removal program in partnership with the Downtown Kelowna Association, the Downtown Taskforce, the Downtown Plan, the Streetscape Plan, a relocation and/or operational improvement partnership with the Gospel Mission, increased RCMP and private security patrols and the bike storage facility program. None of these initiatives have produced any tangible results. During the same time period, the majority of new office space in the community was being developed outside of the downtown core and this led to a further deterioration of the downtown economy.

In late 2005, early 2006 City Council instructed staff to negotiate a land assembly in the Lawrence/Leon area and offer 10,000 square feet of city office space as an incentive to develop a new quality office building in the downtown.

Staff proceeded to contact numerous property owners in the area with a view towards either purchasing their properties or entering into a partnership for new development of their properties. As a result of these meetings, staff learned that there were a number of private sector interests also investigating land assembly and development opportunities in this area of our historic downtown.

### **The Opportunity**

A Comprehensive Development Plan provides the opportunity to insure redevelopment that will impact and shape the downtown community's future for the next 50 to 100 years. These four blocks will remain both the entrance to and the heart of Kelowna's Downtown for the foreseeable future. By the City taking a proactive role and developing a comprehensive plan for the area we have the opportunity to achieve all community goals for our City center and achieve a standard of development which in its architecture and quality of public spaces will be internationally recognized. A comprehensive plan for the area can best deal with the

parking challenges by incorporating closure of existing lanes and allowing for internal block parking development. Planning the “right” building development without being bound by existing lot sizes will also help accommodate increased density in an acceptable manner. The City has the opportunity to show leadership by establishing the context for redevelopment that will achieve the Communities vision for the future of our downtown.

### **The Vision**

In discussing development proposals with the various interested parties it became obvious the City’s desire for our downtown to redevelop into a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable community would not be achieved without a higher level of planning for the area. Public feed back during many community discussions and projects involving our downtown have identified the following as being key principles for downtown redevelopment;

1. Enhance Kelowna’s identity nationally and internationally and enhance the identity of downtown as Kelowna’s Principle Centre.
2. Develop a viable mixed use community that supports live, work and play opportunities for both residents and visitors.
3. Develop safe streets by providing more eyes and ears on the streets to reduce demand for law enforcement in the area.
4. Incorporate sustainable design principles by making efficient use of existing infrastructure, provide a stronger tax base, create an urban environment that facilitates pedestrian movement, incorporate a mixture of uses at densities that are economically viable and that will support public transit and incorporate green building technologies.
5. Expand community amenities by enhancing public use of City, Kerry and Stuart Parks, developing a major pier and enhanced short term public moorage, ensuring continuous public access along the lake, preserving identified view corridors, developing streetscape improvements consistent with a world class urban centre, increasing public open space and providing for a range of other amenities including eventual daycare facilities and school facilities in appropriate locations in the downtown.
6. Create a community feel that integrates well with adjoining areas including the identified parks and Culture District.
7. Incorporate housing diversity in the downtown by providing a range of housing types and tenures including affordable and special needs housing.
8. Respect the areas Heritage assets.
9. Provide for downtown amenity contributions as a condition of development shared equally by all benefiting lands, including future downtown redevelopment where appropriate and where possible (i.e. daycare facilities, schools, offsite affordable housing)
10. Honour the City’s agreement with the Province for movement of vehicles into and out of Kelowna for the new Bill Bennett Bridge.
11. Act as a catalyst for redevelopment for the remainder of downtown.

These eleven key principles are consistent with and supported by the recommendations of the June 2007 Spaxman Report on the Downtown Plan.

### **The Future**

Staff believe these community identified goals will not be achieved without a strong enforceable plan for the area. Choosing these four (4) blocks of our downtown and developing a comprehensive plan that allows all property owners within the area to share in both the economic benefit and cost of redeveloping is the only way that staff believe the City's stated goals for our downtown future will be achieved.

### **INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO:**

Planning & Development Services, Works & Utilities, Recreation Parks & Cultural Services, Financial Services.

### **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:**

A Comprehensive Development Plan of this magnitude requires significant staff resources to complete. The City has contracted the professional services of Mr. Graham McGarva of Via Architecture to assist in developing the Plan.

### **FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:**

Financial Services has provided the funding source for the required expenditure.

### **EXISTING POLICY:**

The preparation of a Comprehensive Development Zone for the area noted in this report would help achieve two specific objectives included in the City's Strategic Plan, namely:

- Aid in the growth and progress of Kelowna as a desirable place to visit, shop and tour. (Goal 2, Objective 2)
- Achieve accessible, high quality living and working environments. (Goal 3, Objective 5)

### **LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY:**

Local Government Act, Community Charter

### **LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Kelowna Official Community Plan Bylaw 7600,  
Development Application Procedure Bylaw 8140

Considerations that were not applicable to this report:

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

### **EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

### **ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION:**

In light of the above, Corporate Services would request Council's support of this recommendation.

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David L. Shipclark  
Director of Corporate Services

Attachments

cc. Directors of Planning & Development Services, Works & Utilities, Recreation Parks & Cultural Services, Financial Services (via e-mail)



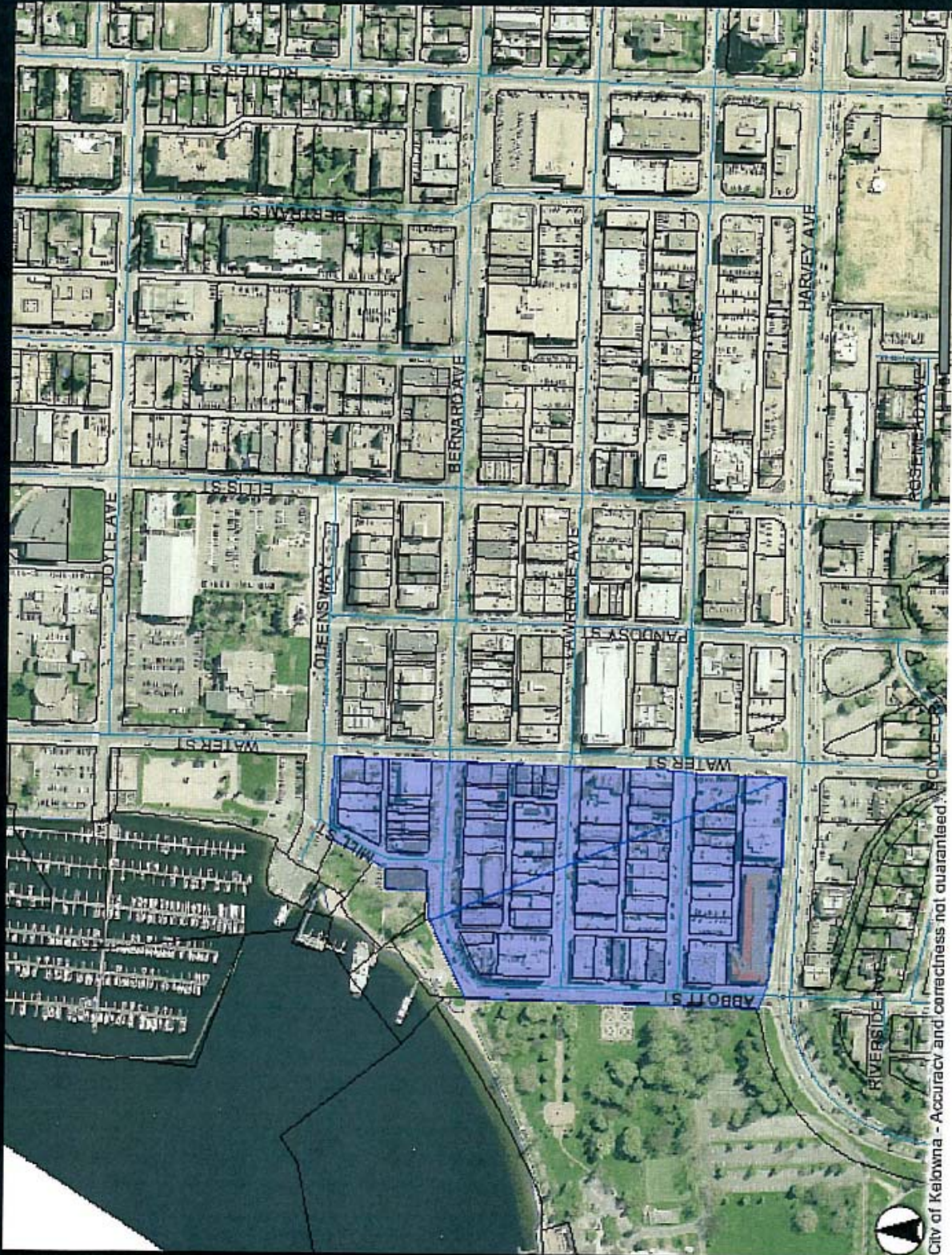
SUBJECT AREA



City of Kelowna - Accuracy and correctness not guaranteed.



THE SUBJECT AREA



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