
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 28, 2008
File No.: 1700-20
To: City Manager
From: Manager, Policy/Research/Strategic Planning
Subject: Budget Funding for Downtown Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Council receive the April 28, 2008 report from Planning and Development Services Department for information.

BACKGROUND:

During the 2008 preliminary budget discussions, Council passed a motion to have staff report back to Council on the Downtown Plan (Priority 2), with information on how it can be funded and the staffing requirements to go along with consulting services. The report was requested to be submitted prior to Final Budget.

EXISTING POLICY:

The City's current "Kelowna Downtown Plan" was endorsed in October 1999. A consultant reviewed that Downtown Plan in 2007 and recommended that it be updated.

The Downtown Centre Strategy Task Force endorsed updating the Downtown Plan and this was communicated to Council.

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:

In July 2007, Council directed staff to forward a submission for consideration as part of 2008 budget deliberations, for completion of a new Downtown Plan based on the recommendations contained in the consultant's Downtown Plan review.

In response to Council's direction, staff forwarded a 2008 budget submission for the Downtown Plan update. The budget request was for \$50,000 in 2008 and \$50,000 in 2009. The request was submitted as a "Priority 2". The funding requested was intended to supplement funds available through carry-overs. In reality, it is unlikely that a new Downtown Plan could be created for \$100,000. Initial research has suggested that comprehensive Downtown Plans for small to medium-sized communities can cost between \$250,000 to \$500,000. For the



Downtown Plan update to proceed, additional resources will be needed – there are not sufficient funds available in Planning Department carry-overs to fund the total costs of an update. The exact amount of additional funds required will be dependent on the scope of the update and the resources required for the OCP Review (as carry-over funding is also being used in part to offset the costs of the OCP review).

During preliminary budget discussions, Council inquired as to the practicalities of undertaking the Downtown Plan update in 2008 and staff advised that even if financial resources were identified, staff resources, in light of other assigned priorities, would likely be insufficient to allow for the update to proceed in 2008.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

One-third into 2008, staff resources are no greater than they were at the beginning of the year. Although the Planning Department is currently recruiting, it is unlikely that sufficient staff will be on board to allow the Downtown Plan update to proceed in 2008. It will take time before newly hired staff will be in a position to assume responsibility for managing a project as complex as an update of the Downtown Plan. It is expected that the update will be undertaken by consultants, but even with consultants involved, it is anticipated that a project of this magnitude will require hundreds of staff hours, likely spread over an 18 to 24 month timeframe. A project such as the Downtown Plan update involves multiple departments -- not just the Planning Department. Transportation, Parks, Community Development and Real Estate, and many other staff would also need to be heavily involved. Required staff are committed to other projects that would severely challenge their ability to support an update to the Downtown Plan. It is anticipated that staff will be in a better position to support an update of the Downtown Plan after the Official Community Plan review is completed.

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The City has received a number of letters urging the City to immediately proceed with an update of the Downtown Plan. The City has also received a petition with 649 names asking that Council discontinue pursuing the current Downtown Revitalization Initiative until an updated Downtown Plan is in place.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO:

Financial Planning Manager
Communications Manager
Community Development and Real Estate Manager

CONSIDERATIONS THAT WERE NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS REPORT:


TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY
LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS
COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION:

AND THAT Council direct staff to engage consultant resources to allow for further exploration of densities and building heights within the Downtown area covered by C7 zoning.

It should be noted that endorsement of the alternate recommendation will require the redirection of staff resources from currently assigned priorities.

Submitted by:



S. Bagh, MCIP

Manager, Policy/Research/Strategic Planning

Approved for Inclusion:



Paul Macklem

Director, Planning and Development Services (Acting)