



P.O. Box 1749  
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**Item No. 9.1.10**  
**Grants Committee**  
**November 18, 2019**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Grants Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** -Original Signed-  
Jane Fraser, CFO/Director of Finance, Asset Management & ICT

-Original Signed-  
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** October 3, 2019

**SUBJECT:** BID Contribution Fund 2019-2020 Recommended Awards

**ORIGIN**

October 4th, 2011- BID Contributions Fund Policy approved by Regional Council effective April 1, 2012. This program provides discretionary matching funding to Business Improvement Districts formally recognized by HRM.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, as amended*

70 (1) The Municipality may;

(b) pay grants to a body corporate for the purpose of promoting or beautifying a business district and for airport, wharf or waterfront development.

Business Improvement District (BID) Contributions Fund Policy, Regional Council October 4, 2011, Amended January 14, 2014.

Terms of Reference, HRM Grants Committee:

The HRM Grants Committee shall review, evaluate and make recommendations to Regional Council regarding annual cash grants, rent subsidies, property tax exemptions, less than market value property sales and leases to registered non-profit organizations and charities managed by a duly appointed Grants Committee.

The duties of the HRM Grants Committee are to:

4.1 Advise Regional Council on all matters related to the allocation of grants, as defined by Regional Council;

**RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2**

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the HRM Grants Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the eight (8) awards detailed in Attachment 1 of this report for a combined total of \$107,000 from operating account C771 – 6919.

**BACKGROUND**

The *Halifax Charter* (2008) Section 70 permits an area rate on all properties assessed as Commercial located within a designated Business Improvement District (BID) for the purpose of promoting or beautifying a business improvement district. Historically, HRM has partnered with local BIDs through the provision of discretionary funding for specific projects conditional upon matching non-municipal funding provided by the BID; these matching contributions of cash, not in-kind, may be derived from the annual tax levy, grants from government or foundations, corporate sponsorship etc. (BID Contributions Fund Policy, Item, 11).

**DISCUSSION**

Currently, there are eight (8) BIDs that are eligible to apply for funding from the 2019 *BID Contributions Fund*.<sup>1</sup> The value of award is determined on an annual basis as a proportional share (%) of the combined value of the current year’s BID levies, excluding any grant-in-lieu of taxes paid by the provincial or federal government. The 2019 BID levies are listed below in Table 1.

<b>Table 1. Levy Revenues per BID and Corresponding Proportional Share (%) of HRM Discretionary Funding 2019</b>			
<b>Business Improvement District</b>	<b>Total BID Levy</b>	<b>Percent of Combined Total Levy</b>	<b>Proposed HRM Funding</b>
Downtown Halifax Business Commission	\$1,208,418.76	44.52%	\$47,634.37
Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission	\$318,459.00	11.73%	\$12,553.26
Main Street Dartmouth Business Improvement Association	\$127,655.41	4.70%	\$5,032.02
North End Business Association	\$193,458.72	7.13%	\$7,625.90
Quinpool Road & Mainstreet District Association	\$140,759.00	5.19%	\$5,548.54
Sackville Business Association	\$205,198.15	7.56%	\$8,088.66
Spring Garden Area Business Association	\$419,732.88	15.46%	\$16,545.35
Spryfield & District Business Commission	\$100,761.58	3.71%	\$3,971.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,714,443.50</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$107,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> The most recently formed BID recognized by Regional Council, The Porters Lake Business Association, will be eligible to apply to the 2020-2021 BID Contribution Fund

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The combined value of recommended awards conforms to the program budget of \$107,000 for operating account C771 (BIDs Contributions - Special Projects Account).

2019 BID Contributions Fund	\$107,000
Less Combined Value of Recommended Awards	<u>(\$107,000)</u>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Grants Committee is comprised of a voting membership of one elected member of Regional Council from each Community Council, the Chair appointed from the membership of the Audit & Finance Standing Committee (also an elected member of Regional Council) and six (6) citizens-at-large from the community. Grant Committee meetings are open to the public, unless otherwise indicated. Agendas, minutes and reports are available on the HRM website.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

**ALTERNATIVES**

The Grants Committee could recommend against, or amend a staff recommendation, or request further information prior to making a committee recommendation to Regional Council.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 List of Recommended Awards by Business Improvement District.

Attachment 2 Business Improvement District Contribution Fund Policy.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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### List of Recommended Awards by Business Improvement District

In alphabetical order, the following lists the projects submitted for funding by eligible BID associations in 2019. In accordance with Section 11 of the program's policy the dollar amount requested for each project represents a maximum of 50% of the actual project costs. If the actual costs are lower the value of HRM's grant shall be adjusted accordingly.

#### 1. Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission - (Proposed award amount (\$12,553.26))

Incorporated as a non-profit society in 2002, the Downtown Dartmouth BID represents ~350 businesses including retail, government institutions, corporate offices and predominantly medium to low-rise residential holdings. The Commission's catchment area is in part bounded by the Dartmouth waterfront, extending North West to Shore Road and North East to encompass Prince Albert Road.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$12,553.26) Neon Mural Project: The project involved the construction of a mural which combines art work and LED lighting to create a large mural located in Downtown Dartmouth. During the daylight hours the public will view the painted elements of the mural and in the evening, the display will include the LED lights as an intricate element of the mural. The Commission has stated that this is one of the largest artistic displays of this type in the world. The total project cost is estimated to be \$39,000.

#### 2. Downtown Halifax Business Commission - (Proposed award amount \$47,634.37)

The Downtown Halifax BID incorporated as a non-profit society in 1996 and represents ~ 1,800 businesses that includes small sole proprietorships and retailers, government institutions, corporate offices, medical facilities, entertainment and hospitality industries, the non-profit sector, and predominantly high-density residential holdings. The Commission's catchment area is bounded by the Halifax waterfront, Cogswell Interchange, and the southern portion of Brunswick Street and Barrington Street.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$19,125.12) Downtown Placemaking Project: The Commission is working in collaboration with individuals, businesses, and the artistic community to create public art in various locations throughout the District. The total project cost is estimated to be \$65,000.
- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$18,509.25) Holiday Lighting: The project involves the installation of a larger scale interactive seasonal LED lighting display during the late fall and winter season. The display is very accessible and free to view. The holiday display will also play an important element of the *Halifax Lights Festival*. The total project cost is estimated to be \$89,818.50
- Marketing and Promotions. (\$10,000) Art of City Building Conference: The 2019 Conference was hosted in Halifax and themed "Moving People". The conference focussed on the many aspects of mobility, including but not limited to: safety and enjoyment of public streets, active transportation, uses of technology, preservation of history, accessibility, public spaces, and density. The Commission was one of the co-founders of the conference as well as a key sponsor for the event. The total project cost is estimated to be \$20,000.

**3. Main Street Dartmouth Business Improvement Association - (Proposed award amount \$5,032.02)**

The Main Street & Area Business Improvement District was incorporated as a non-profit society in July 2008. The Association represents ~ 175 businesses that include a variety of retail amenities including restaurants, health services, automotive sales and services. The Association's district encompasses the Main Street/Tacoma Drive area including Lakecrest Drive, Gordon Avenue, Hartlen Street, and a portion of Major Street, Dartmouth.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$1,455.02) Community Banners: The project involves the design and installation of community banners designed to promote the Association's brand and the overall District as well beautifying the area. The estimated project cost is \$3,500.44
- Marketing and Promotions. (\$1,600) Web Site Redesign: The project involves the redesign of the Association's web site including but not limited to a "membership portal" and other enhancements designed to increase access to information pertaining the to the District. The total project cost is estimated to be \$3,200.
- Business Recruitment and Retention. (\$500) Age Friendly Community Planning Project: The Association in collaboration with its membership and the local NSCC, will be hosting a "community asset mapping project" in a desire to identify intergenerational entrepreneurial opportunities. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,000.
- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$477) Memorial Garden Project: The Association plans to enhance and beautify a small memorial garden/community greenspace. Some of the enhancements will include the planting of a tree. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,000.
- Governance and Membership. (\$1,000) Strategic Planning: The Association will be undertaking a strategic planning exercise with its membership with a particular focuss on the "development of infrastructure to facilitate the vision of the District". The total project cost is estimated to be \$2,000.

**4. North End Business Association - (Proposed award amount \$7,625.90)**

Incorporated as a non-profit society in 2011, the North End Business Association is Halifax's newest Business Improvement District association. Representing ~ 450 commercial accounts that include approximately 400 businesses, the NEBA's catchment area includes Gottingen Street and Agricola Street, extending south to Cogswell Street and North to Kaye Street.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$3,500) Enhanced Sanitation Services: The project involves on going neighbourhood "clean-ups", includes activities to remove items discarded illegally within the District, activities that discourage illegal dumping of waste (e.g. household waste, used furniture, etc.), street and sidewalk cleaning, as well as graffiti and decal removal as required. The total project cost is estimated to be \$7,000.
- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$1,326.09) Seasonal Planters and Flowers: The project involves the purchase and installation of planters and flowers throughout the District. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$2,676.09
- Marketing and Promotions. (\$2,799.81) North by North Market: This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year the Association has hosted the *North By North Market*. The event includes the participation of over forty (40) local vendors, live music, vendor "giveaways", local artists, among other activities. The event does receive support through HRM Event Grants Program but HRM's financial support from all sources, including the BID Contribution Fund, does not exceed the 50% maximum threshold as indicated in the Program policy. The total project cost is estimated to be \$8,250.

**5. Quinpool Road and Mainstreet District Association - (Proposed award amount \$5,548.54)**

The Quinpool Road BID incorporated as a non-profit society in 2001 and represents ~120 retail and professional businesses located on Quinpool Road between Robie Street and Connaught Avenue.

- Marketing and Promotions. (\$5,445.66) *Association Rebranding*: The Association is undergoing a substantial rebranding. The rebranding activities consist of a completely new web site, development of “social media assets”, photographed calendar; among other elements involved with the rebranding project. The total project cost is estimated to be \$11,591.63.
- Marketing and Promotions. (\$102.88) *Quinpool Maps*: The project involves the updating of the new “Quinpool Maps” maps containing the location and name of all businesses located within the District. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,283.

**6. Sackville Business Association - (Proposed award amount \$8,088.66)**

Incorporated as a non-profit society in 2003, the Sackville Business Association represents ~ 300 business and commercial property owners located within the Sackville Drive Secondary Planning area, in addition to a portion of Sackville Drive between Beaver Bank Road and Millwood Drive.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$700). *Seasonal Decorations*: The project involves the installation and maintenance in the fall and winter of thirty-four (34) LED holiday lights to enhance the aesthetics of this major arterial route. The total project cost is estimated to be \$3,225.
- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$7,388.66). *Decorative Flower Baskets*: The project involves the installation and maintenance of seventy-three (73) hanging flower baskets along Sackville Drive. The total project cost is estimated to be \$27,437.

**7. Spring Garden Area Business Commission - (Proposed award amount \$16,545.35)**

Incorporated as a non-profit in 1984, the Spring Garden Area BID represents ~380 businesses comprising predominantly retail, entertainment and hospitality industries. The BID’s catchment area includes Spring Garden Road from Summer Street to Brunswick Street and smaller side streets including Queen, Clyde, Birmingham, College, and a portion of University Avenue.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$9,271) *Seasonal Decorations*: The project involves the purchase, installation (e.g. electrical work) and maintenance of “holiday lighting” throughout the District. The total project cost is estimated to be \$18,542.82.
- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$7,274.35) *Decorative Flower Planters*. The project involves the beautification of the District through the installation of twenty-nine (29) planters with summer and fall planting, the associated ongoing maintenance, as well as storage of planters in the winter months. The planters are owned by the Association. The total project cost is estimated to be \$17,605.

**8. Spryfield and District Business Commission - (Proposed award amount \$3,971.90)**

The Spryfield BID incorporated as a non-profit society in 2000. The Commission represents ~175 predominantly small to medium- sized businesses located on and adjacent to Herring Cove Road and extending to Northwest Arm Drive.

- Enhanced Maintenance and Beautification. (\$3,971.90) *Decorative Flower Baskets and Seasonal Banners/Wreaths*: The project involves the purchase, installation, and maintenance of hanging flower baskets, holiday wreaths, and seasonal banners located throughout the district. The total project cost is estimated to be \$22,117.

## **Business Improvement District (BID) Contributions Fund**

Original Implementation Date: October 4, 2011      Approved by: Regional Council

Date of Last Revision: January 14, 2014      Approved by: Regional Council

### **1. BID Contributions Fund Policy and Procedures**

#### **2. Overview**

##### **Business Improvement District Concept**

A business Improvement District (BID) is a special assessment district where business people join together to promote and improve the economic vitality of the area. The establishment of a BID provides a unique opportunity for business owners, and commercial property owners, to promote their mutual goals of creating safe, attractive and interesting commercial places aimed at stimulating business.

##### **Rationale for Public Investment**

HRM is committed to supporting BIDs because they strengthen the business community, create new jobs, attract new businesses, expand the commercial tax base and revitalize commercial districts across the municipality. A BID provides a business area with the resources to develop marketing campaigns, increase awareness and advocacy efforts, secure additional funding and undertake improvement and beautification projects. An organized business community can work more effectively to create positive change and increase support for businesses in the area. In HRM, BIDs work closely with elected officials and municipal staff to voice their collective concerns, monitors business regulations, and obtain support for their business development projects.

##### **HRM Discretionary Funding**

Funds raised by a BID through an area rate may be supplemented by discretionary municipal financial support in the form of grants, project-specific contracts, fee-for-service agreements, incentives, or concessions. HRM may also initiate or partner with BIDs in the development and execution of submissions to non-municipal funding sources, for example provincial or federal government programs, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, or corporate initiatives.



The source of discretionary funding shapes decision-making authority and permissible expenses. Hence, this policy has two categories:

- ***HRM BID Investment Fund***

Designated discretionary contributions funded through the region's general tax rate and distributed to eligible BIDs in proportion to their area rate revenue. The Fund is a recurring annual program, subject to approval of HRM's annual operating budget, and requires matching (non-municipal) funds from the recipient BID.

- ***Special Projects Funding***

An internal transfer of funds from an HRM departmental operating or capital account, or reserve, for a designated project or type of program, subject to approval of HRM's annual budget. Or, a flow-through of funds received by HRM from a non-municipal source for a designated project, program or service. Matching funds or cost-sharing may or may not be required and applicant/project eligibility will be case-specific.

## **BID Contributions Policy**

The purpose of formal policy is to guide public investment in accordance with provincial legislation, municipal goals and financial capacity. The BID Contributions Policy supports the principles of self-sufficiency, public accountability for the expenditure of public money, and measurable outcomes resulting from specific initiatives undertaken to promote a BID as a business, employment, tourist and/or shopping area.

## **HRM BID Investment Fund**

### **1. Objectives**

The *BID Investment Fund* has the following primary objectives:

- Support local economic development through investment in business districts to enhance their attractiveness to citizens, prospective investors, entrepreneurs, and employees thereby enhancing the municipality's reputation as a vibrant place to live and work.
- Facilitate projects and collaborative partnerships that realize measurable outcomes aligned with HRM's economic development interests and/or strategic priorities.
- Enhance HRM's connectedness to the local business community.

Public investment shall leverage, to the greatest extent possible, private sector, philanthropic, or government investment, to contribute to the revitalization and growth of local business districts.

## **2. Source of Funds**

The *BID Investment Fund* is financed through the municipal general tax rate. The availability and value of the Fund shall be determined annually through the regular HRM budget process.

## **3. Fiscal Year**

HRM's fiscal year is April 1st to March 31st.

## **4. Applicant Eligibility Criteria**

Eligibility for discretionary funding under the *BID Investment Fund* shall be restricted to a business improvement association, defined as an organization incorporated to carry out business improvement activities within a designated geographic BID

- 4.1. *Initial Year.*** The BID association shall have been recognized, by Regional Council, at least one (1) year prior to the date of application to the *BID Contributions Fund*. Delayed eligibility affords Regional Council time to consider any increase in the value of the Fund if a new business improvement district is formed during the course of the fiscal year. The aim is to prevent dilution of the Fund's impact as a consequence of growth in the number of BIDs.

A one-year requirement provides reviewers with some indication of the financial status of the applicant and their ability to match funds and/or deliver a program or service. The deferred eligibility also affords the applicant sufficient time to gauge the needs of their district and develop an application that addresses those needs in accordance with the Fund's objectives.

- 4.2. *Debts or Claims:*** Applicants in debt to the municipality, or party to a legal claim, shall be ineligible for consideration pending:
- a signed payment plan and compliance with same, and/or
  - settlement of the claim.

At its discretion, Regional Council may waive applicant ineligibility determined under clause 4.

## **5. Duplication of (Municipal) Funding**

The recipient BID shall be required to identify any contribution from the *BID Contributions Fund*, and any other form of municipal financial assistance, as separate line items in their annual financial statement, or as a separate schedule in the financial statement. The purpose of this requirement is to distinguish HRM funding from the BID's area rate and other self-generated revenues, and to distinguish the source(s) of any HRM funding.

## **6. Application Process**

As part of the regular submission of BID business plans, budget and levy rates, eligible BIDs shall identify the intended use of any discretionary contribution from the *BID Investment Fund* using an application form provided by HRM.

Submissions shall be received by the deadline stated. Late or incomplete applications shall not be considered.

## **7. Project Modification**

Where necessary, changes in approved, contribution-supported activities may be initiated due to changes in personnel, changes in the status or organization, or changes in the objectives or timeframe of the approved project. Minor changes in methodology, approach, or other aspects of the project objectives can be made. However, prior approval from HRM must be given for changes in scope, direction, type of service delivery or training, or other areas that constitute a substantive change from the objectives or purposes of the approved project.

## **8. Substitute Project**

Where an approved project cannot proceed, the Applicant may, make application to substitute a new project for a previously approved project. Where a substitute project is ongoing prior to HRM's approval, HRM may cover incurred project costs. Incurred expenses relating to a substitute project are evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the following criteria:

- they must be "eligible expenses" as per sections 20,21,22 and 23 of this policy;
- they must relate to the substituted project which has been approved for funding;
- the cost must be incurred after April 1<sup>st</sup> of the current fiscal year and before March 31<sup>st</sup> of the current fiscal.

HRM will not assume any responsibility for any expenses in the event that the substitute project is not approved.

## **9. Changes in Expenditures**

The total budget for a project cannot be increased. However, a degree of latitude is allowed in making post-award revisions to an approved budget. Re-budgeting within, and between, categories in the approved total project budget, is permitted to meet unanticipated requirements or to accomplish programmatic changes. In using this authority, proper stewardship must be exercised over Municipal funds and all costs charged to HRM must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

## **10. Inability to Proceed and Carry Forward of Funds**

If a commitment or contribution to a project that relies upon third party funding, such as fundraising or a government grant, proves not to be feasible (i.e. lacks the necessary funding), unused funds shall be returned to HRM.

If an extension is needed, applicants shall submit a request in writing. HRM staff will provide a written response. Funds committed to a project may be carried forward, by the contribution recipient, to the next fiscal year. Funds carried forward in a reserve account shall be noted as such in the organization's audited financial statement. The balance of any un-spent funds (i.e.

the project is completed under budget) shall be returned to HRM.

**11. Confirmation of Matching Funds**

HRM's total contribution (from all sources) shall not exceed 50% of total project costs. Applicants are encouraged to cost-share or seek assistance from other sources (e.g. program fees, charge-backs, fundraising etc.).

Confirmation of matching, non-municipal funds shall be provided. Unconfirmed commitments shall be clearly identified and may warrant a conditional award. For example, payment may be withheld pending confirmation or issued in instalments.

At a minimum, applicants shall identify:

- Cash contributed by the BID itself (levy monies are eligible as matching funds);
- In-kind contributions provided by the BID or a third party (these do not qualify as monetary value for the purpose of "matching funds" but are an indication of partnership development) and/or different forms of 'project investment' or collaboration;
- Estimated revenue (if any) created by the project (e.g. admission charges, registration fees, product sales);
- Other forms of confirmed financial assistance (e.g. private donation, corporate donation, foundation grant, donation of goods and services, federal or provincial contribution).

**12. Value of Contribution**

The Fund is allocated on the basis of each BID's proportional share of the combined area rate levied for all eligible BIDs in the current fiscal year. This approach recognizes that each BID's percentage of the total levy, and by extension, their proportional share of the Fund, is largely self-determined. Individual BIDs are autonomous in establishing individual area rates, including minimum and maximum thresholds.

**13. Proportional Share Formula**

Each eligible BID's proportional share of the Fund shall be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Applicant Levy}}{\text{Cumulative Levy}} \times \text{Fund Value}$$

Cumulative Levy: Total area rate levy raised by all HRM BIDs (expressed as dollar value), exclusive of federal and provincial area rate levies).

Applicant Levy: Area rate levy raised by applicant BID (expressed as dollar value, exclusive of federal and provincial area rate levies).

Fund Value: Annual value of the Fund as approved by Regional Council (expressed as dollar value).

**14. Indexing the Value of the Fund**

Because a BID's proportional share is tied to the collective value of all BID levies, the addition of any new BID impacts existing BIDs' proportional share of the Fund. Therefore, the value of the Fund shall be indexed to prevent dilution of impact.

The Fund shall use the following indexing formula:

$$\frac{\text{Current Fund Value} \times \text{New BID Levy}}{\text{Cumulative Levy}} = \text{Fund Increase}$$
$$\text{Fund Increase} + \text{Current Fund Value} = \text{New Fund Value}$$

## **15. Payment Schedule**

Notwithstanding any unforeseen circumstances, awards shall be paid in one instalment. There shall be no supplementary or incremental commitment from HRM.

## **16. Reporting**

The application deadline to the BID Contributions Fund will be 30 business days (excluding weekends and statutory public holidays) after the date of the BID area rate's approval by Regional Council.

A project final report will be due on or before April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following fiscal year.

## **17. Public Notice of Contributions**

In accordance with the provisions of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (2008), a list of all contributions awarded under the *BID Investment Fund* shall be sent by HRM to a newspaper that circulates throughout the municipality.

## **18. Funding Acknowledgement**

Funding recipients are expected to provide the appropriate public acknowledgement. Guidelines regarding government protocols shall be provided by HRM.

## **19. Indemnification, Insolvency and Guarantor Status**

The funding recipient(s) shall indemnify HRM against all claims and losses. In the event of bankruptcy, insolvency or dissolution of the business improvement association, HRM shall not be required to complete payment to the project. HRM shall not serve as a guarantor of a project, nor shall there be any implied or expressed, direct or indirect liability.

## **20. Eligible Funding Categories**

Applicants are encouraged to identify, plan and implement business improvement projects that will have demonstrable benefits for district constituents and HRM. Contributions are intended to help develop a new project or enhance existing programming.

**20.1. Business Recruitment & Retention:** Applicants may engage in projects that promote a desirable business and service mix, achieve vacancy reduction, market to investors, and attract financial incentives for new and expanding businesses. The following list is provided for

illustrative purposes and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Undertake a retail study to assess the current retail mix, identify the district's trade area, develop a shopper profile and identify gaps where the retail mix can be improved;
- Work with appropriate agencies and other district stakeholders to change zoning in order to realize the full economic potential of the district;
- Conduct commuter surveys, employer consultations and parking analyses;
- Create media kit/collateral and/or loyalty programs that attract new businesses and/or property developers to the district;
- Conduct retailer outreach to attract new businesses that match the demographic profile of the area;
- Complete a commercial use study to obtain information about commercial space and its use including information on vacant square footage, number of businesses, and business use categories;
- Promote major construction or revitalization projects in partnership with government agencies and elected officials that promote economic vitality;
- Collect data on commercial leases in the district to detect and interpret current trends and to help accurately guide the expectations of both property owners and prospective retail tenants;
- Implement a strategy to mitigate any negative effects of construction within the district.

**20.2. *Enhanced Maintenance & Beautification:*** Applicants may implement maintenance and beautification initiatives that enrich the experiences of neighbourhood visitors, enhance pride of place, discourage vandalism and improve the street-level image of the district. The following list is provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Provide enhanced sanitation services including neighbourhood clean-up event, street and sidewalk cleaning, actions to discourage illegal dumping, cleaning of street furniture, graffiti and sticker removal;
- Provide enhanced seasonal maintenance including power washing sidewalks and snow and ice removal;
- Work with relevant agencies and organizations to encourage active transportation (e.g. encouraging the placement of bike racks and installation of bike lanes);
- Launch an initiative to bring public art into the public realm, attract new pedestrian traffic and expand the district's reputation for supporting and exhibiting art (e.g. temporary art installations and functional art, sculpture, murals);
- Design and install banners to brand the BID and promote the district;
- In the absence of an HRM approved Streetscape Plan, develop a streetscape design that will strengthen the overall sense of place in the district, attract more people and increase 'dwell' times;
- Strengthen, expand and support the business community's commitment to green solutions (e.g. recycling, waste reduction, solar lighting, anti-littering campaign, bicycle infrastructure etc.).

**20.3. *Marketing and Promotions:*** Applicants may pursue projects that enhance the branding and marketing of the district and bring more pedestrian traffic into the area. The following list is

provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Develop or re-brand the district's print collateral and online media in order to strengthen the BID/BIA brand and establish a coordinated and unified presentation;
- Strengthen ties to organizations and events that expand the district's reach to new audiences;
- Promote the district's arts and entertainment uses to the greater public through promotional giveaways and media placements (advertisements, direct mails and other marketing efforts);
- Design and distribute district asset marketing materials (e.g. business directory, walking tour postcard, district maps, restaurant guide, promotional brochures) promoting the district to specific target audiences e.g. tourists, visitors and shoppers;
- Sponsor activities and events, hosted by partner organizations, that take place in the district;
- Implement way-finding and/or directional signage to highlight businesses and destinations within the district;
- Develop or host a regionally/nationally-recognized event (conference, symposium etc.) to profile the district;
- Establish/expand annual, BID-led, public events, programs and outdoor performances that highlight the district's restaurants, retailers, artists, cultural organizations, and public spaces (e.g. restaurant tours, block parties, farmers' market, holiday festivals, street fairs, parades).

**20.4. *Safety and Security:*** Applicants may implement initiatives that improve the sense of security and well-being in the district and surrounding area to keep the community safer. The following list is provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Seek a coordinated, sustained, informed response from relevant agencies and stakeholders to address any security concerns regarding loitering for illegal or undesirable purposes (e.g. drug trafficking, under-age or public alcohol consumption, sale of contraband or stolen goods etc.);
- Implement security patrols and/or video surveillance program;
- Participate in local traffic management initiatives to relieve congestion and improve the environment for pedestrians;
- Work with local public authorities to keep crime at a minimum and ensure safe, well-lit streets for pedestrians;
- Serve the district's population of homeless persons through a BID coordinated/sponsored outreach program in partnership with relevant public and non-profit agencies;
- Partner with governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that enhance public safety;
- Conduct a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) safety audit.

**20.5. *Heritage Conservation and Cultural Districts:*** Applicants may pursue projects that advance public understanding of neighbourhood, district or regional history through the restoration, preservation, public display and/or interpretation of buildings, sites, and artefacts of historical significance. The following list is provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be an

exhaustive:

- Support the conservation of artefacts (e.g. monuments, markers, memorials, interpretation panels) - an accredited conservator and use of authentic restoration/preservation methods and materials is recommended;
- Promote major structural/façade repairs to heritage buildings (e.g. streetscape façade, walls, foundation, roof, windows, exterior doors);
- Commission photography, photo-reproduction, or illustration of historic buildings, sites, landscapes, streetscapes, artefacts, people, and events of neighbourhood significance;
- Produce educational/promotional materials (e.g. book, booklet, walking map, poster, cd, video, film, interpretation panel, exhibition catalogue, interpretive markers etc.). Excludes commercial, for-profit publishing by individuals or commercial interests.
- Develop mobile exhibition, permanent display, or web site to explain the significance of an historic neighbourhood streetscape, building, site, or artefact;
- Development and implementation of a strategy for (re)development of registered heritage properties to facilitate adaptive re-use of underutilized spaces;
- As applicable, facilitate the identification of a locale within the BID's catchment area as heritage district;
- Identify and brand a cultural district for the purpose of creating a distinct destination.

**Note:** The expenditure of public funds on private property is permitted under Section 22 of the Heritage Property Act. Such properties must be municipally registered heritage properties (building or site) pursuant to HRM By-law H-200 or be properties situated within a designated municipal Heritage Conservation District.

**20.6. Governance and Membership:** Applicants can undertake initiatives that build organizational capacity and strengthen their ability to be responsive to constituents. The following list is provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Develop a master contact list/database containing data for all commercial property owners and businesses in the district;
- Increase membership outreach and engagement (e.g. project updates, feedback forms, one-on-one meetings, roundtable discussions, Town Hall meetings, speaker series, newsletter, flyers, news and events calendar, etc.);
- Complete district survey of stakeholders to ascertain priorities and perceived association/district strengths and weaknesses;
- Diversify the BIA's revenue streams through sponsorship opportunities (e.g. sponsored trash receptacles on private property, streetlamp banner, map advertising, web site);
- Identify and attain new sources of governmental funding to support district programming;
- Improve the business association's service delivery to district constituents by implementing systems to identify and resolve problems as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- Conduct organizational development to expand the capacity of the BIA (e.g. staff training, strategic planning);



- Foster board development and board leadership and identify members of the community to serve on management or project committees.

**20.7 Advocacy:** Applicants may implement initiatives that are designed to provide their constituents with a medium/mechanism for communicating collective concerns and interests to relevant parties and effecting positive change. The following list is provided for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be an exhaustive:

- Assist BID merchants and property owners obtain information regarding non-municipal financing to renovate private property (including vacant land);
- Sponsor merchant breakfasts where representatives from government agencies conduct outreach to district constituents;
- Advocate for enhanced/expanded public spaces, including parks, located in the district, to make them more user-friendly and appealing to visitors and locals;
- Encourage members to participate in municipal public hearings, public information meetings, consultations, and surveys;
- Subject to liaising with HRM visioning staff, facilitate visioning sessions with stakeholders regarding the redevelopment of the district or a portion thereof.

**20.8. Other and Sundry:** Applicants may undertake initiatives that meet the goals of the *BID Investment Fund* but are not otherwise specified under this policy. Applicants will be expected to articulate the rationale for funding in relation to existing legislation and the Fund's objectives.

## **21. Eligible Expenditures**

The following are examples of eligible expenses. The list is for illustration purposes only. Applicants are advised to contact HRM staff for guidance if their specific requirement is not noted.

- Purchase/rental of specialized equipment or computer software (e.g. database management, inventory control, telecommunications, audio-visual equipment, public address system, portable lights);
- Facility rental;
- Purchase/rental of landscape and maintenance equipment and/or materials for site remediation or beautification;
- Purchase/rental of specialized heavy equipment (e.g. trailer, transmission system);
- Purchase/rental of specialized exhibition or performance equipment (e.g. display unit, portable stage, storage containers, tent);
- *Subject to HRM staff approval in the case of construction on HRM property, construction, purchase and installation of public amenities (e.g. gazebo, outdoor seating, raised beds, observation platform, lighting, fencing, gates, water fountain, bike rack etc.);*
- Interpretation panels or markers;
- Production of educational, self-promotional, marketing, or information materials (including web site development or interactive upgrades);
- Volunteer or membership identification program (excludes personal apparel or uniforms, or awards);
- Graffiti removal and prevention (e.g. exterior lighting, video monitoring, fencing, specialized equipment).

## Professional Fees

The following are examples of eligible professional expenses. This list is for illustration purposes only. Applicants are advised to contact HRM staff for advice on their specific request:

- Consultant (e.g. feasibility study, market analysis, marketing plan, consumer surveys, program evaluation, program design, policy, organizational review, needs assessment, asset mapping, report, test, drafting);
- Computer programmer (e.g. web site design, database design, information management system);
- Financial consultant (e.g. financial plan, capital plan, debt re-structuring, investment plan).
- Graphic designer, illustrator; photographer; artist or artisan, animator, photographer, signage design and/or fabrication, videographer, recording technician (production of project-specific cd), event design or management;
- Writer or editor (preparation of copy, editor, proofreading), publisher (marketing plan, project management);
- Lawyer (property title search, contract, articles of incorporation – excludes litigation);
- Statistician (demographic, trends analysis);
- Architect or landscape architect;
- Engineer (geotechnical/structural, civil, mechanical, electrical);
- Conservator (building or artefact), curator (collections management, exhibit design);
- Environmental engineer (tests for air quality, soil contamination, water course or quality, hazardous materials), energy efficiency auditor, laboratory fees (tests);
- Horticulturalist, arborist, landscape architect;
- Planner (land use, regulations, conceptual design) or surveyor.

## 22. Ineligible Expenses

**22.1 Core Operating Assistance:** The program does not provide core operating assistance (i.e. excludes salaries and wages, rent, office supplies, insurance). Project-specific professional fees are eligible. These are fees paid for services that require accreditation or technical knowledge and experience that exceeds the capacity of volunteers or an organization's own staff.

**22.2. Gifts or Awards:** The program does not sponsor personal gifts or awards, social events (banquets, receptions), or hospitality.

**22.3. Debt Repayment:** Prior losses or cost overruns are ineligible for funding.

**22.4. Private Interests:** Projects that accrue wholly, or in large measure, to the benefit of a proportionately small number of private interests are not permitted.

**22.5. Prepaid Expenses:** Applicants may not prepay expenses (i.e. claim costs incurred in the current fiscal year that relate to goods or services to be delivered or provided in the following fiscal year).

## 23. Repayment of Ineligible Expenses

Funds disbursed under the auspices of this policy are public monies. HRM is obliged to ensure

that funding is applied to approved projects and for eligible expenses. At Regional Council's discretion, any unauthorized or ineligible expenditure may be re-payable.

#### **24. Application Review**

HRM staff review applications to confirm eligibility with respect to BID eligibility, permissible expenditures, and matching funds. The applicant's proportional allocation from the Fund is calculated as per the formula set out in subsections 13 and 14.

#### **25. Approval Process: Contributions**

A staff report is prepared for the HRM Grants Committee. The committee provides oversight in terms of monitoring adherence to formal policies and procedures. The staff/committee report is then forwarded to Regional Council for approval.

- The HRM Grants Committee is a standing committee of Regional Council and comprises six (6) councilors (one per Community Council) and six (6) members of the public. The HRM Grants Committee may initiate a review of policy and procedures.

#### **26. Approval Process: Policy Amendments**

Proposed amendments to the BID Contributions Fund Policy shall be reviewed by HRM and a staff report prepared for the HRM Grants Committee's consideration. The staff/committee report is then sent to the HRM Audit & Finance Committee which provides policy development oversight for municipal grants and contributions programs. The staff/committee report is then forwarded to Regional Council for approval.

- The eight-member HRM Audit & Finance Committee comprises six members of Regional Council (one per Community Council) and two at-large appointments. The HRM Audit & Finance Committee may initiate a review of policy and procedures.

#### **27. Freedom of Information (FOIPOP) Disclosure**

The provisions of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (2008) shall be followed with respect to freedom of information and the right to privacy (FOIPOP). Funding applicants/recipients are advised that information pertaining to a request for funding may be shared with staff reviewers, HRM committees (including members of the public serving on same), or may be requested by third parties through a formal FOIPOP request. The Municipal Auditor may also request material in the course of a random or non-randomized financial audit of the *BID Investment Fund* or an internal service review.

The standard FOIPOP protocol directs the initial inquiry to departmental staff. If the request is not met to the satisfaction of the applicant, or not routinely available, the request shall be forwarded to the Director. Any grievance should be directed to the FOIPOP Coordinator of HRM who shall be responsible for the review and resolution of requests.

#### **28. Records**

Applications and applicable evaluation forms and reports are retained on file and held by HRM for a period of seven (7) years.

## **Special Projects Funding**

- HRM may, at its sole discretion, allocate funding by way of an internal transfer of funds from HRM departmental operating or capital account, or reserve, for a designated project, program or service.
- HRM may allocate funds received by HRM from a non-municipal source for a designated project, program or service.
- Matching funds or cost-sharing may or may not be required on a program-specific basis.
- Eligibility for special project funding shall be dictated by the terms and conditions of the applicable project, program or service agreement.
- HRM shall encourage equitable access to opportunity through an open call for submissions as per the applicable funding program eligibility criteria and timelines.
- HRM staff review applications to confirm eligibility with respect to BID eligibility, permissible projects and expenditures. Applications are evaluated and prioritized by a staff review team, and external reviewer where appropriate, to assess the respective merit of a project relative to the applicable funding criteria and make recommendations regarding any allocation or award(s).
- HRM may, at its sole discretion, convene a project-specific review process to assist in a merit-based evaluation or competition. For example, members of the public, a peer jury, technical advisory committee, presentation panel etc.
- The HRM Grants Committee provides oversight in terms of monitoring compliance with the applicable program's funding criteria and the adjudication of any appeals. A staff/committee report is then forwarded to Regional Council for approval.

## **Reference**

Administrative Order 47 - The Creation of the Business Improvement District