



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: December 4, 2007
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Meeting Date: December 11, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: The Project Civil City Commissioner, in consultation with the General Managers of Community Services, Corporate Services and Engineering, and the Vancouver Police Department

SUBJECT: DV BIA Ambassador Program - Funding Proposal for Expansion

CONSIDERATION

A. i) THAT Council support in principle the DV BIA Ambassadors Program downtown area extension to 24 hour coverage as outlined in this report and in Appendix A and allocate one time City funding of up to \$237,000 from the 2007 Contingency Reserve, subject to a report back from the DV BIA addressing issues of program need and expected results;

OR

A. ii) THAT Council support in principle the DV BIA Ambassadors Program downtown area extension to 24 hour coverage as outlined in this report and in Appendix A and refer consideration of ongoing City funding of up to \$237,000 to the 2008 Operating Budget process, subject to a report back from the DV BIA addressing issues of program need and expected results.

B. THAT Council support in principle the expansion of the DV BIA Ambassador Program to BIA areas outside the downtown core generally as outlined in this report and in Appendix A and allocate up to \$500,000 in program costs and \$45,000 in technology and vehicle costs on a one time basis from the 2007 Contingency Reserve to initiate a shared funding program subject to a report

back on further consultation with BIAs, individual area need, applicability of the Ambassador Program and expected results.

- C. AND THAT if Council approves Consideration B, that up to \$90,000 in staffing and office costs be allocated in the 2007 Contingency Reserve for a temporary Planner I position for one year to oversee the development of the area expansion. The position is subject to review and classification by the General Manager of Human Resource Services.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The Ambassadors Program has been a very successful initiative which has had a significant impact on the civility of the downtown area and has contributed to making it a more welcoming environment for citizens and tourists alike. The Program also provides important assistance for street individuals including referrals to social services. Given the positive results of the program, the City Manager and the Project Civil City Commissioner support *in principle* the involvement of the City in its expansion, subject to the DV BIA and the other potential areas reporting back with further details on specific needs and outcomes.

There are two proposals in this report, one of which builds on an established program in the downtown area, the other of which seeks cost sharing for expansion of the program to other undefined BIA areas. Two choices are provided Council on the former request, one of which would provide one-time funding for 2008 and require a further assessment before ongoing funding is considered, the other which includes this request in the list of 2008 Operating Budget initiatives for permanent funding. These are offered for Council consideration. With respect to the expansion of the program to new areas, the City Manager supports one-time funding at this time. Expansion will require further consultation with BIAs across the city to determine the extent of interest and applicability of the Ambassador Program and as a result, it would be less appropriate to commit to ongoing funding.

The City Manager notes that irrespective of which options Council chooses, the allocation of City funds to the DV BIA or to other BIAs for this Program following a report back would constitute a grant and would require eight votes of Council.

COUNCIL POLICY

In December 2006, Council passed a resolution making a commitment to the Project Civil City initiative which supports projects which result in safer streets, increased civic pride, and build partnerships between businesses and their communities.

PURPOSE & SUMMARY

This report provides Council with information on the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Area's (DV BIA) proposed expansion of the Ambassador Program, attached as Appendix A, and puts forward options for matching City funds to expand the existing downtown program and establish it in other BIA neighbourhoods.

The Ambassador Program, working in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), City departments and outside service agencies, has been highly successful in improving the image and civility of the downtown. The Ambassadors provide assistance to business owners, customers, residents and visitors to the area. They also provide assistance to street individuals requiring assistance and/or referrals to service agencies. The DVBIA is proposing a shared funding program with the City to extend the existing downtown program to a 24-hour service, and to cost share aspects of new areas outside of the downtown core. The proposed costs to the City would be up to \$237,000 annually for the downtown night time program extension and staff estimate that up to \$500,000 annually would be required for cost-sharing the expansion in areas outside the downtown core.

Staff recommend support in principle and have put forward two options for proceeding with both the downtown area program extension and the expansion to new areas, subject to a more detailed report from the DVBIA on area proposals: Council could allocate existing funds from the 2007 Contingency Reserve to initiate these programs for one year and subject to a report back, consider permanent funding as part of the 2009 Operating Budget; or, refer one, or both, to the 2008 Operating Budget for permanent funding. Subsequent annual funding should be subject to an annual report.

BACKGROUND

Vancouver has 19 BIAs located throughout the City. BIAs are funded through an annual tax levy authorized under the *Vancouver Charter*. They are managed and promoted by a non-profit association of commercial property owners and business tenants. The owners and businesses join together to improve the economic vitality of their business district, playing a role in tourism development, business promotion, safety and security, and street enhancement.

In 1998, based upon growing safety and security issues, the DVBIA began development of the Downtown Ambassador Program. The goal of the Program, in addition to hospitality services, is to address street disorder issues such as panhandling, litter, illegal vending, graffiti, etc., with the understanding that these issues not only affect the general quality of life in the downtown but also the overall crime rates. The initial steps involved working with the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) on program development and training. Linkages were also established with local social service agencies. Both measures were aimed at strengthening program integration with local service delivery (e.g., Police, social services, other security programs, etc.) and to ensure Ambassadors play a value-added role re: hospitality, tourism support and linking services and vulnerable people.

In May 2000, 16 Ambassadors provided the initial presence on the streets in the DVBIA area. The DVBIA contracts with a licensed security provider for the Downtown Ambassador services. Currently Genesis Security holds the contract at a fixed rate until March 31, 2010. The DVBIA is responsible for managing the contract, program development, supervision of policy and procedures and monitoring of crime issues through a Security Consultant Genesis Security is responsible for hiring basic security staff, training and managing personnel.

The Ambassador Program has proven to be effective. In 2007, the Yaletown, South Granville and West End BIAs integrated the trademarked Downtown Ambassador Program into their

areas through agreements with the DV BIA. The DV BIA advises that these areas are also experiencing the benefits realized in the downtown area.

The new DV BIA 5-Year Strategic Plan (2007-2012) recognizes and shares the Project Civil City goals of increasing public order and civility, and realizing reductions in homelessness, the open drug market and aggressive panhandling. These are expressed through a number of DV BIA goals relating to community safety and quality of life. The Ambassador Program has positively impacted street disorder issues and provides an opportunity to achieve these results elsewhere in the city.

DISCUSSION

This following, along with the attached DV BIA proposal "Downtown Ambassadors - A Proposal for Expansion" (see Appendix A), describes the proposed expansion of the program and options for shared City funding.

1. Ambassador Program Benefits

Since its inception seven years ago, the Ambassador Program has become an effective presence on downtown streets, providing a range of services including hospitality, connecting those in need to resources and providing 'eyes and ears' on the street for police. Due to the contribution to increased safety and order on the streets, the Program has achieved credibility with the community, police and business. The Program has also facilitated business interest in contributing to social responsibility.

The DV BIA has been monitoring the Ambassador Program results both in the downtown and the recent expansion areas. In all cases there was an initial spike in incident reporting and as the Ambassadors became more established, the numbers began to fall. These and other results are described in detail in the attached proposal. Typically, in a single month, the DV BIA Ambassadors are involved in the following in the DV BIA area alone:

- up to 3,800 checks and patrols of parking lots;
- suspicious vehicle checks and recovery of up to six stolen autos;
- interaction with over 3,000 visitors, relaying information about events, attractions, places to eat, and directions;
- liaison with City staff, reporting 400+ incidents regarding street furniture, garbage, repairs, etc.;
- response to 400 plus street disorder issues, providing information and soliciting cooperation from street people;
- provision of safe walks;
- recording of information of use to the housing centre, engineering and the tourism bureau;
- conducting 1,200 'meet and greets' with business, offering a proactive relationship for problem solving and effective collaboration;
- reductions in squeegee interactions and other incidents under the Safe Streets and Trespass Acts; and
- strengthening of relationships with key partners including the VPD, City departments and social services.

While the initial goal of this Program was to provide hospitality and a street presence, the role has broadened to include linking those living on the street to social service agencies. The Ambassadors Program now includes staff training delivered by these agencies.

Current BIA Security Programs

The magnitude and allocation of BIA expenditures reflects the importance of safety and street disorder issues to businesses and their customers in most BIA areas. A review of BIA budgets for the 2007-08 fiscal year indicates that 17 of 19 BIAs include some form of 'safety and security' initiative as part of their annual expenditures. The total outlay for those 17 BIAs is around \$2.0M, close to one-third of the total annual BIA expenditure. This figure does not include other BIA expenditures related to street disorder issues such as street and lane clean-up, graffiti removal, and addressing social issues. The opportunity for a cost-shared, consistent response across the City would appear to have significant benefits for both the City and the BIAs.

The pattern of BIA 'safety and security' expenditures is currently quite varied, reflecting differences in need and financial capacity. For example, the Point Grey Village and Marpole BIAs do not budget for security issues - security issues may be of lesser concern in their areas or, as these BIAs have smaller budgets (\$70,000 and \$139,000 respectively), they are less able to afford the significant expense of professional security or ambassador patrols. If the Downtown Ambassador Program is expanded to neighbourhood BIAs outside the Downtown core, some areas may not require the service or may not have sufficient funding to take advantage of the service, even if cost-shared.

Among BIAs with security budgets, the nature and cost of programs is varied. As noted, three BIAs - West End, Yaletown and South Granville - currently have agreements to utilize the Downtown Ambassador Program at full cost. If a cost sharing model is introduced, these areas may wish to participate in the program.

Several other BIAs contract with different security providers other than the Ambassador Program at a cost ranging from \$40,000 to \$175,000 depending on the BIA. Further consultation is needed on whether these BIAs would wish to be included as part of an expanded Downtown Ambassadors Program and would depend on the desire to keep the existing contract, the 'fit' of the Ambassador Program with area needs and cost/benefit considerations.

In some cases, BIAs and Community Policing Centres (CPCs) are establishing relationships to provide some community safety initiatives; the Victoria Drive BIA provides funding to the South Vancouver CPC to provide some volunteer daytime patrols, and the Hastings North BIA funds the Hastings North CPC to provide some volunteer foot and bike patrols as well as graffiti removal. In Collingwood, the BIA provides funding for the Collingwood CPC to provide volunteer patrols similar to Victoria Drive and Hastings North, but also provides major funding for the 'Collingwood Guardians' program which involves students/young adults who are trained and paid for hours worked. The 'Guardians' program involves close contact with VPD members, local businesses and social services, and in that respect is similar in approach to the Downtown Ambassador Program.

2. Expanding the Ambassador Program

The DVBIA is proposing that the Ambassador Program be expanded in two ways: extending the hours of operation in the downtown area; and expanding into new areas.

i) Extending the Hours of Operation in the Downtown

At present, the DVBIA operates the Ambassador Program with 16 Ambassadors from 7am to 10:30pm, seven days a week. In addition to the Ambassador salaries, the current annual budget of \$680K also supports an operations manager, equipment and administration. The DVBIA area is a busy, populated area with street disorder issues occurring 24/7. The proposed expansion is to address 'night scene' issues by extending Ambassador coverage to 24 hours a day, involving the addition of 3 Ambassadors and 1 Supervisor each night from 10:30 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The proposal to extend the Ambassador Program to a 24-hour service has a total cost of approximately \$237K (for a total program cost of approximately \$817K). The proposed funding model is discussed below.

ii) Expansion into New Areas

As noted, the Ambassador Program has already been expanded to three new areas. The experience of the downtown program and its first phase of expansion suggests a potential to realize the same benefits in other neighbourhoods across the City. To date, area expansion has been fully funded by the individual BIAs.

As noted earlier, not every BIA experiences the same pedestrian volumes, issues, disorder problems, budgets or administrative infrastructure. Expansion of the Program to new areas should take into account the transferability of the model, including consideration of:

- documentation of the nature and extent of the street issues;
- applicability of the Program to the issues;
- existing BIA funding; and
- the desire and ability of the local BIA to match funding.

The DVBIA has developed an audit tool that gathers and categorizes data about street issues in BIA areas to determine the extent of problems and the applicability of the Ambassador Program. Three areas (Mount Pleasant, South Hill (Fraser), and Commercial Drive) have utilized the audit tool. The DVBIA has advised that the initial analysis demonstrates a significant level of street disorder issues with similarities to those experienced in the DVBIA, supporting the establishment of Ambassador Programs. Other BIAs have also expressed interest and are interested in pursuing the audit. If Council adopts a shared funding program, the recent expansion areas (West End, Yaletown and South Granville) may also wish to apply. The DVBIA advises that further consultation is needed with BIAs; however, estimates are that approximately 9 areas (including the existing, self-funded BIAs) are likely to apply if shared funding is available. Letters of support from four BIA areas are attached as Appendix B.

3. Ambassadors Program Funding

The DVBIA has indicated that the model (which includes the contract with Genesis Security) should be kept consistent if expansion to other areas is to be efficient and effective. Advantages of having a consistent model include:

- consistent approach to the achievement of City goals re: street disorder;
- proactive and collaborative relationship with other City services;
- investment in coordination and broader approach (supported across communities just as problems exist across neighbourhoods);
- tested model;
- established training;
- consistent monitoring, accountability, and streamlined reporting; and
- avoids supporting a patchwork of models with differing goals and inconsistent or unproven benefits.

i) Downtown Program Extension Funding

To extend the downtown program, the DV BIA is proposing that the City share the overall program cost by funding the addition of 3 Ambassadors and 1 Supervisor as well as a 15% administrative overhead to cover the costs of radio, uniforms, software, office space and consulting fees. The proposed city share would be \$237K annually.

Council could proceed with this proposal by allocating existing funds in the 2007 Contingency Reserve subject to a more detailed proposal from the DV BIA outlining the current indicators of night time street disorder and expected results of the program. The program could then proceed immediately and would serve to pilot the program for one year with a report back at the end of 2008 for ongoing funding as part of the 2009 Operating Budget. If Council wishes to establish ongoing funding at the start of the program, then the DV BIA report should be referred to the 2008 Operating Budget.

ii) Area Program Expansion Funding

The DV BIA is proposing that the City share the cost of the Program in new areas based on an area audit of the local and seasonal needs, suitability of the Program for the area, and financial capacity of the local BIA. Appendix A provides examples of a variety of shared funding arrangements that range in cost to the City of approximately \$16K to \$93K including 15% administrative costs. Based on the average cost of the examples provided in the attached proposal, funding for the current estimate of 9 areas could cost up to \$500K. Council could allocate this amount in the 2007 Contingency Reserve subject to a detailed report on an approach to proceeding with area expansion, likely take-up, expected results, etc. This would allow the DV BIA to introduce the Downtown Ambassador cost sharing area expansion for one year to gain a better understanding of take-up and costs for this expansion phase. Permanent program funding would be referred to the 2009 Operating Budget subject to a report on the Program results and an approach to including areas with different security arrangements if required. Given the preliminary stage of the proposal, staff recommend this approach. Alternatively, if Council wishes to establish some permanent funding now, Council could refer the area expansion program to the 2008 Operating Budget.

The DV BIA is also proposing the City fund web-based technology improvements at a cost of \$25K and a supervisor vehicle at a cost of \$20K. The total estimated cost to the City for the downtown area, up to 9 areas and the technology and vehicle costs would be up to \$782K. With the exception of the technology, these would be annual costs.

Allocation of the funds to the DV BIA for program expansion would constitute a grant and requires 8 votes of Council. Staff recommend, subject to a report to Council outlining area

funding selection and accountability measures, that the DVBIA be responsible for the administration of the funding program with an annual report to Council on Program results.

3. Impact on City Services

In addition to hospitality and assistance, the Ambassador's role includes alerting the VPD and City Staff (e.g., Engineering Services and Property Use) to situations that require prompt response (ranges from disruptive, dangerous behaviour to the presence of graffiti and garbage). In part, the Program depends on how quickly City and VPD Staff can respond. On one hand, this could require additional staff time especially in the initial period, but if overall problems are reduced, then staff time may be reduced in the longer-term. Given this, Engineering Services and the Co-ordinated By-law Enforcement Branch have indicated that any additional calls for service can be handled with existing resources for the time being and noting that an increase in 'eyes and ears' on the street, particularly through an organized program, is helpful.

The VPD supports the expansion of the Ambassador Program to other communities experiencing problems like those that led to the initial establishment of the DVBIA Ambassadors. They have noted the effectiveness of the Ambassadors as a calming influence on the streets. They particularly emphasized their value as 'eyes and ears', alerting both police and other city services to street disorder issues that require their involvement. The business community is stepping forward to meet their community and social obligations in this regard while respecting the boundaries and providing complementary services that mesh with the police who have greater expertise, training and resources to deal with more serious situations.

The BIA Program is currently staffed by one full-time Planner and a part-time Auxiliary staff. Currently, the BIA Program is fully extended. If the Ambassador Program is expanded as a cost-shared service to BIA areas throughout the city, the program expansion will require monitoring and oversight by staff at least through the initial stage of development. Therefore, staff have added for Council's consideration the addition of a temporary staff person for up to one year at a cost of \$90,000 to be funded from the 2007 Contingency Reserve to facilitate the launch of the Program and co-ordinate reports to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report offers Council two options with regard to the expansion of the Ambassador Program, one involving a one-time commitment of up to \$872,000, the other involving a combination of ongoing funding (\$237,000) for the DVBIA and one-time funding for expansion to other BIA areas (\$635,000). The one-time costs include data reporting and equipment costs of \$45,000 and a one-year temporary Planner 1 position and office costs to oversee the development of the area expansion. Should Council approve one-time costs, it is recommended they be provided from the 2007 Contingency Reserve allocation. At the end of the trial period, a decision can be made on ongoing funding, likely as part of the 2009 Operating Budget discussion. On-going funding is appropriately considered as part of the 2008 Operating Budget "new initiatives" process that will conclude with approval of the Budget in April 2008.

CONCLUSION

In co-operation with city staff and the VPD, the Ambassador Program acts on behalf of businesses and residents to improve street civility and reduce crime in a variety of ways and to provide linkages between vulnerable citizens and services. The Ambassador Program supports all the goals of Project Civil City - reducing homelessness, panhandling, the open drug trade and an improved increased response to street disorder and nuisance issues.

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APPENDIX A

Downtown Ambassadors A Proposal for Expansion



Downtown Vancouver Business
Improvement Association

October 2007



DVBIA Downtown Ambassador and Loss Prevention Programs Background

In 1998, the DVBIA was entering into its mandate renewal and the members were focused on safety and security issues in the area. The DVBIA was also about to expand its boundaries south of Robson to Pacific Street. The renewal and the expansion provided the opportunity to create the Downtown Ambassador and Loss Prevention Programs. The DVBIA worked with the Vancouver Police Department to create the programs and provide some of the training. In May of 2000, sixteen ambassadors in red and black uniforms and six covert plainclothes loss prevention team members headed out onto the streets of the DVBIA area.

In the seven years of the program's operations, the red and black uniform has become an icon in the downtown area for hospitality, guidance to resources for street people and the eyes and ears for police. The loss prevention team is responsible for over 400 apprehensions of criminals each year. Both programs enjoy great credibility with police and the public. Both programs are now tied into Operation Co-Operation connecting them to the information sharing agreement with the Vancouver Police Department. This agreement gives them access to persons wanted on fresh warrants by police as well as other information that assists in keeping our streets safe. In 2007, the Yaletown, South Granville and West End BIAs integrated the trademarked Downtown Ambassadors into their areas through agreements with the DVBIA.

The DVBIA provides the services through contracts with Genesis Security, who hold the contract through the Olympic period at a fixed rate, with a one year renewal option commencing April 1, 2010. The DVBIA oversees the management of the contract and the delivery of services. DVBIA staff set the goals and analyzes the results.

The work performed by the Downtown Ambassadors has been shown to be a benefit in terms of the training and experience the ambassadors get. Many have gone on to careers in policing, corrections, bylaw enforcement and CSIS. The judgment, conflict resolution, decisiveness and interpersonal tolerance they develop are exactly the skills sought in these other careers.

As part of the DVBIA's new five-year strategic plan, reducing homelessness, aggressive panhandling and the open drug market by 50% is our goal. The Ambassadors and Loss Prevention Team will play a major role in achieving these aggressive targets.

Operation Co-Operation

Operation Co-Operation has become the principal conduit for information sharing amongst security interests and police. In addition, several times a year the police establish a joint force operation with private security interests to go out on four-day projects to identify and apprehend property crime offenders. There were 12 arrests made during the last one in June 2007, 11 of them involving the DVBIA's Loss Prevention Team. Theft from auto dropped 48% in District One following this operation.

Information on bail conditions, warrants, chronic offenders actively investigated by police and requests to identify suspects on video tape are almost daily events for the participants in Operation Co-Operation. In one high profile case where an elderly man was robbed in a downtown church Loss Prevention Team (LPT) members viewed the police video sent out through Operation Co-operation and located the suspect an hour and twenty minutes later.



Police are consumed by call load and are unable to consistently walk beats to get to know the criminals. The LPT and Downtown Ambassadors see these people every day making them an excellent resource for police. The LPT is receiving a commendation from the police for their work. While Operation Co-Operation is working well it has the potential to engage more than just police and private security.

Elsewhere in North America, a software program like CityWorkSite (In operation in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Oklahoma City, El Paso and Saint Paul (See www.cityworksites.com/)) links civic resources with security, police and the public in an on-line integrated communications network with scaled security access. In other words, not everyone is able to access the same information. The development of Operation Co-Operation to this new level in conjunction with an expansion of the communications network is both a long-term and Olympic-specific tool that may be of significant value. The cost for CityWorkSite is about \$65,000 per year. Other less expensive options also exist.

The Downtown Ambassadors' Expanding Role

When the program first started, hospitality was a priority with eyes and ears for police paralleling as a lesser, but important component. Ambassadors are licensed security patrol personnel who are required to complete the provincially mandated BST 1 and 2 (Basic Security Training) courses. In addition, the DVBI requires that they be trained in hospitality techniques as well as conflict resolution and tactical communication. More recently, Ambassadors have taken on a more active role interacting with street people to connect them to income assistance and shelter. This role is developing in conjunction with the DVBI's strategic plan to be active in ending homelessness on our streets. The DVBI will be investing in partnerships with social agencies to help train ambassadors in this emerging role.

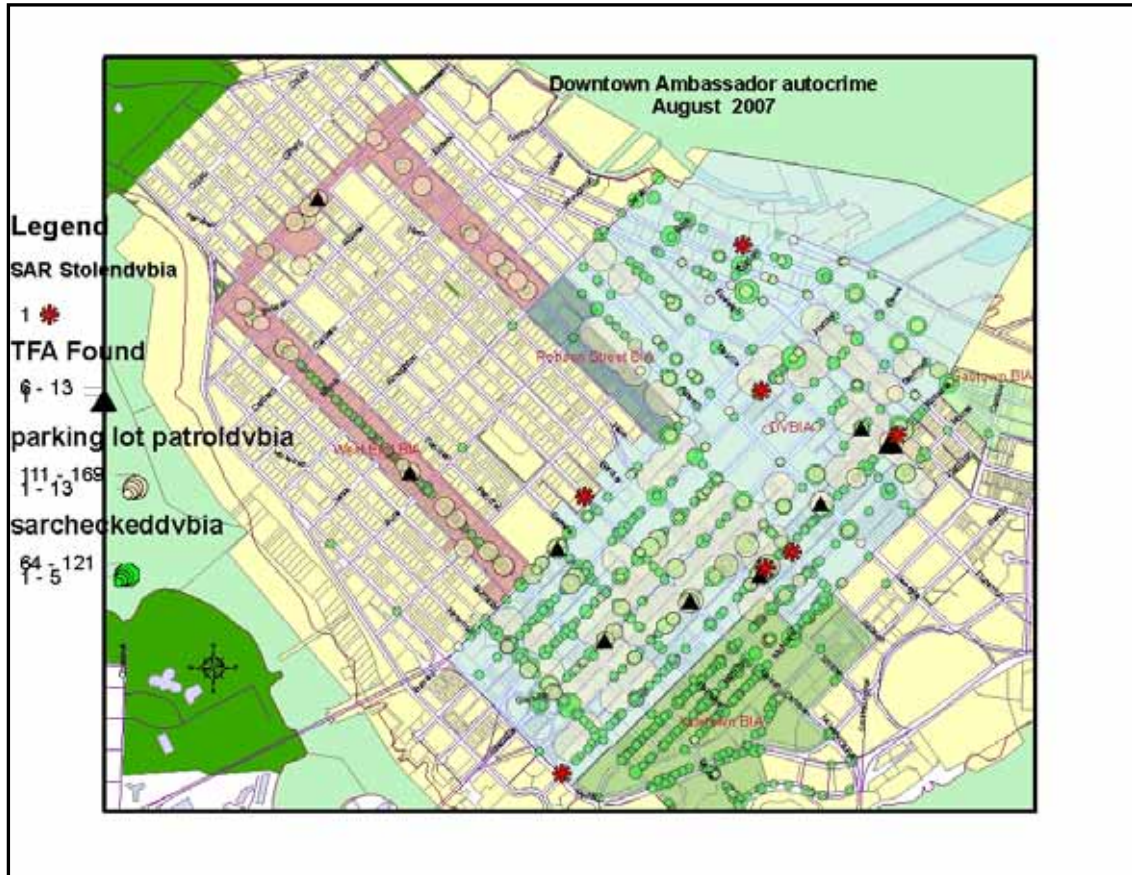
In a typical month the Downtown Ambassadors in the DVBI area are involved in a wide cross-section of incidents. They will check over 3,000 parking lots in the DVBI area alone. They will check over 1,700 suspicious vehicles and recover up to six stolen autos per month. They will provide information to visitors on restaurants, transit, local events, attractions and directions over 2,000 times per month. They will send on to the City over 300 problems with street furniture or news boxes, accumulations of garbage and other repairs needed that City staff coordinate. They will be called to deal with over 300 street disorder incidents where they will provide information to street people and solicit their cooperation. In problem cases they will call for police and stand by. In effect, where police were often called and were usually unable to respond to nuisance events, ambassadors triage the incident, attempt to resolve it and call for police assistance where required and appropriate. They do not take the place of police, rather they supplement them.

The Ambassadors use pocket PC's to record incidents and as a reference when offering assistance to visitors. The data they collect is illustrated in the following maps covering Yaletown, the West End and DVBI areas.



In the auto crime map below, the larger beige circles are the dumpster clusters. They appear in all of the subsequent maps. Parking lot patrols, suspicious vehicle checks, fresh thefts from autos located and stolen autos recovered are all shown.

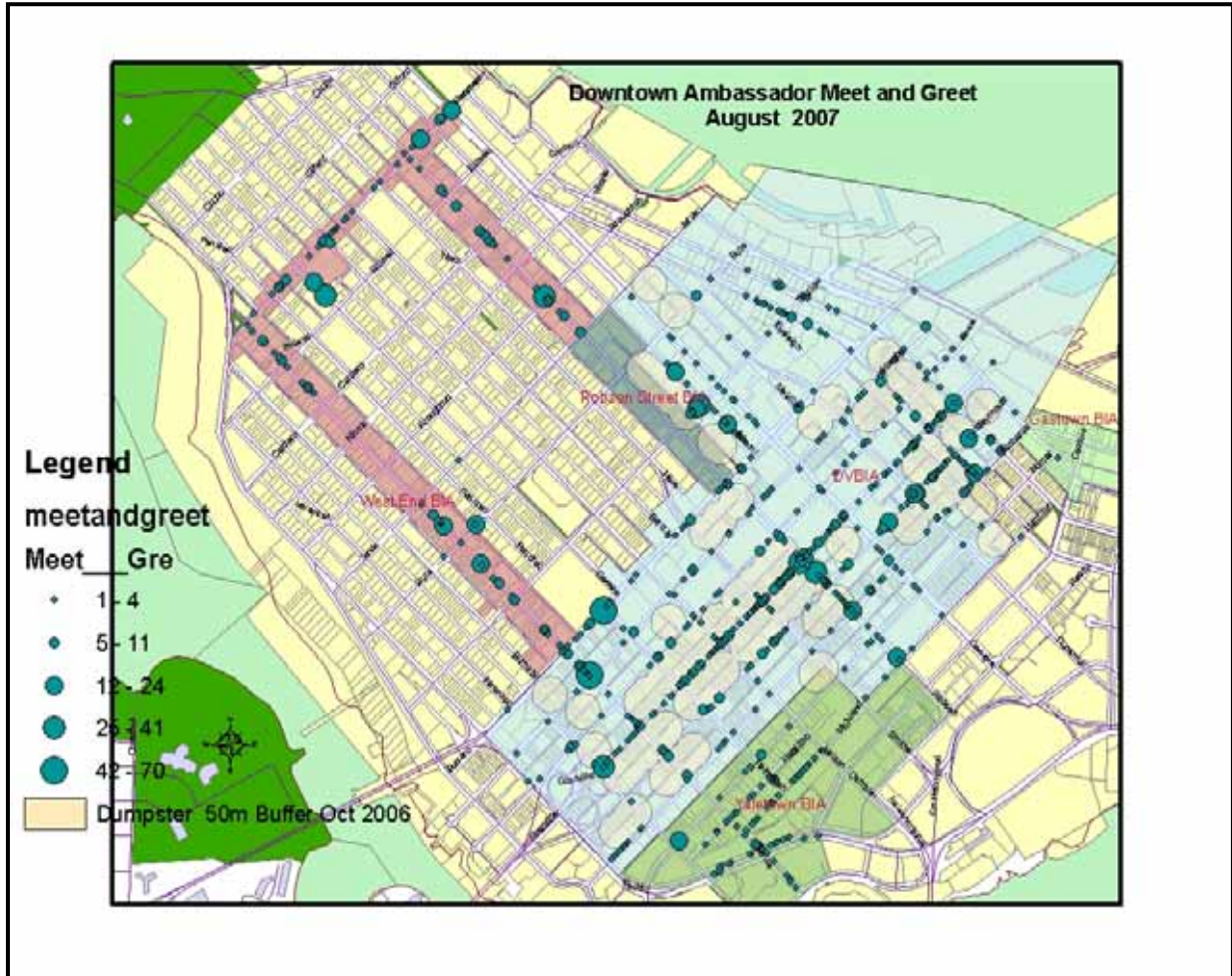
Map One: Auto Crime





Ambassadors conduct meet and greets with businesses. Where a business is experiencing problems they make multiple visits, so the size of the circle on the map indicates more or fewer visits.

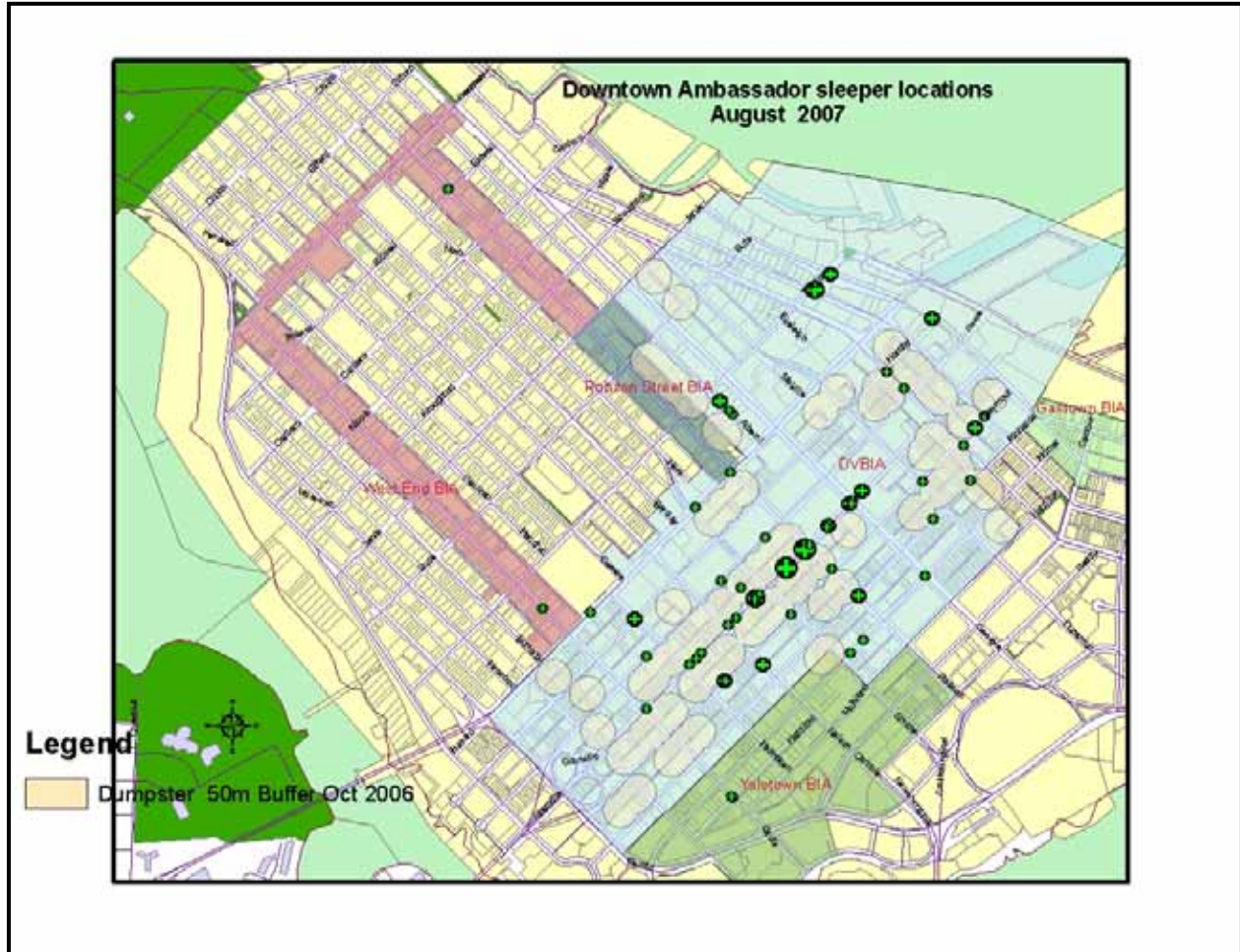
Map Two: Meet and Greet





Ambassadors also note where people are sleeping on the street so this information can be provided to the City of Vancouver's housing coordinator.

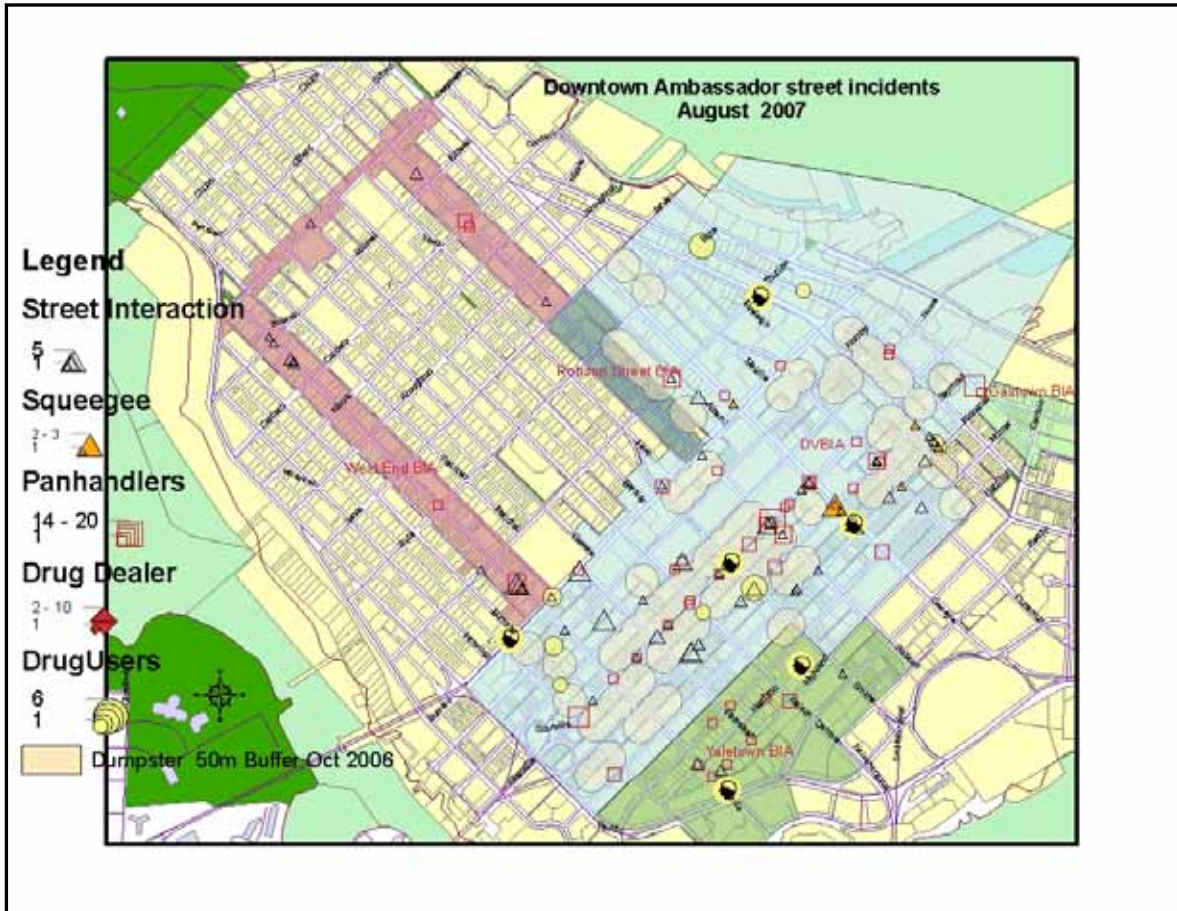
Map Three: Sleeper Locations





Selected street incidents are shown mapped against the current dumpster clusters in the DVBIA area. The yellow and black circles are where Ambassadors have been called to private property to deal with skateboard incidents.

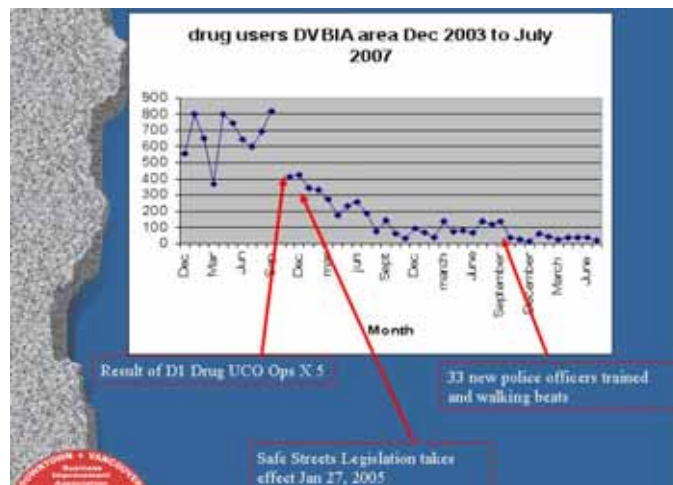
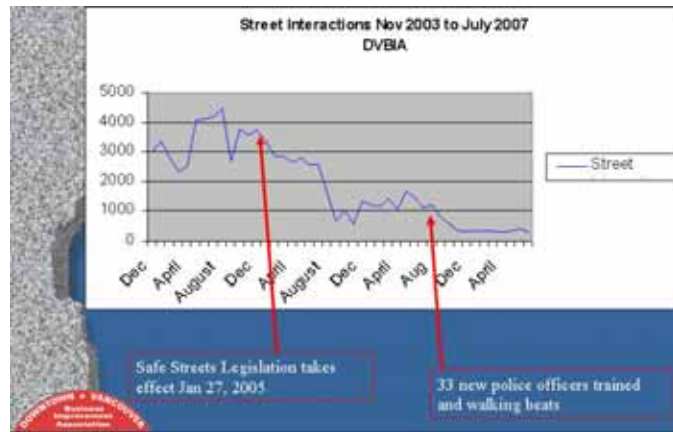
Map Four: Street Incidents





The Downtown Ambassador program has been successful. Legislation introduced in 2005 dealing with Trespass and Safe Streets assisted in putting some behaviour rules in place that allowed the Ambassadors to be more successful.

The graphs below show successes where the DVBIA Ambassadors, Loss Prevention Team and police have all contributed to positive outcomes.





Dr. Peter Tarlow (A leader in Tourism and Security issues. See his website at <http://www.tourismandmore.com/>) noted on a visit to Vancouver that visible security, including police in the business areas frequented by visitors to the city, is not just an investment in security, it is an investment in the economy of the city.

Existing Downtown Ambassador Coverage

At present the DVBIA operates the Ambassador program with sixteen ambassadors from 07:00 to 22:30 seven days a week year round.

The budget allows for the contract services provided by Genesis, an operations manager also provided by Genesis and equipment and administration provided by the DVBIA.

The Yaletown BIA has two Ambassadors seven days a week year round. They are on the street for 8 hours a day, 09:00 to 17:30.

The South Granville BIA has one ambassador on the street for 12 hours a day year round, 08:30 to 20:30.

The West End BIA has two Ambassadors seven days a week year round. They are on the street for 8 hours a day, 09:00 to 17:30.

Proposed Downtown Ambassador Expansion

There is an opportunity to meet the goals of both the DVBIA and Project Civil City to build on the success of the Ambassador program in other BIA areas as well as within the DVBIA area. The issue comes down to targeting the program at the right areas, the right issues and the right times.

BIA areas: There are 19 in the City. The maps below show their location and geography.





Not every BIA has the same issues, pedestrian volumes, disorder problems, budgets or administrative infrastructure. Some have seasonal as well as time-of-day issues. Some areas already have existing security contracts for very specific work. The list is as follows:

DVBIA:	Downtown Ambassadors
West End:	Downtown Ambassadors
Yaletown:	Downtown Ambassadors
South Granville	Downtown Ambassadors
Gastown:	Private Security Company
Chinatown:	Private Security Company
Robson Street:	Private Security Company
Pt. Grey Village:	None
Marpole:	None
Cambie Village:	None
Fraser St BIA:	None
Victoria BIA:	None
Kerrisdale BIA:	Private Security Company
4 th Avenue:	None
Mount Pleasant:	None
Commercial Drive:	Private Security Company
Hastings North:	None
Strathcona BIA:	Genesis Security
Collingwood:	None

Existing Downtown Ambassador Relationships:

In its recent expansion, the DV BIA negotiated a favorable rate, fixed for three years, expiring March 31, 2010, with a one-year renewal option for Downtown Ambassadors services. Yaletown, the West End and South Granville pay the contractor directly as well as a percentage fee to the DV BIA for uniforms, radio equipment, PDA's, administrative overhead, management and analysis. They also pay a licensing fee per year of \$2,500 for the Downtown Ambassador trademark. Genesis also pays a licensing fee for each area, which is included in their rate. The DV BIA is part of the Vancouver BIA Partnership and has established relationships with all of the other BIAs. The BIAs who have switched to Downtown Ambassadors have chosen the program, the credibility and the brand, in effect. The DV BIA has not gone out and sought other BIAs to sever existing security contracts so that they can avail themselves of the Ambassador services. Instead we offer a substantially different product. That decision rests with the other BIAs.



The DVBIA Proposal

Participation in the Downtown Ambassador program should be based on three factors:

1. **Matching or semi matching funding.** For example the DVBIA suggests that expanding hours in the DVBIA is the best way to maximize the program value there. The DVBIA is already spending \$680,000 on the Ambassador program for the DVBIA exclusive of consulting services to manage the program and provide analytic tools. In this case, the DVBIA would be looking to expand its program in the DVBIA area on a semi-matching funding basis. The DVBIA proposes to have eight additional ambassadors to cover the period 22:30 to 06:30. This provides not only services to businesses, but residents who do not pay the levy, since residential properties are exempt, but who benefit from the service. Other BIAs may wish to offset existing funding or expand their programs. The West End, because of its size and street pedestrian traffic late at night may have an argument to expand hours to 03:00. Yet others do not have the budget to pay for any Ambassadors, but could cover the licensing agreement fee.
2. **Identified need.** This should be based on issues, volumes and types of activities that Ambassadors can successfully deal with.
3. **Ability to partner with other agencies and programs.** For example should ambassadors move into the Gastown area the DVBIA and Gastown BIA would seek to align with an organization that supports social services and community courts. SPARC may well be the agency who could set up training for outreach intervention by Ambassadors while also being the identified facilitator for the Community Court process.
4. **No hybrid programs.** Some BIAs have existing security providers. They will have to decide whether to maintain their style of on-street security or switch to the Downtown Ambassador model. There should not be a hybrid model for the matching funding.



The DVBIA and Ambassador Expenses Overview.

1. The DVBIA incurs about a 15% administrative overhead as identified earlier for radio, PDA's uniforms, software, computers, office space and consulting fees.
2. Downtown Ambassadors for the DVBIA are at \$16.50 for 12 Ambassadors and \$19.00 for 4 supervisors. The DVBIA is a non-profit so pays 6% GST to the contractor, but recovers half of that.
3. There is a \$2,500 per year licensing fee to the other BIAs to use the trademarked Downtown Ambassador brand.
4. An expansion of the program to other areas of the city requires a radio system upgrade. Currently the DVBIA has its own repeater and licensed channel. An expansion would require switching to a trunk system with a repeater on Seymour Mountain. Cost for this is about \$7,000 per year with an additional federal radio frequency license fee of \$1,000.
5. Depending on the degree of the expansion it may be necessary to establish a dispatch during peak hours. This might also fit in with the CityWorkSite city wide communications network that would require someone to act as coordinator. There may also be some merit in exploring using E-Comm as the communications and CityWorkSite hub. This latter would be a more expensive undertaking, but would fit into the Olympic Security environment and integrate well with police generally.
6. With Ambassadors spread out, supervision becomes important and in addition to the existing operations manager there is a requirement for a mobile supervisor.
7. Data communications also have to change. The current system operates with PDA syncing to a computer in the office. With mobile units spread out it is more suitable to upgrade the communications packages on the PDA's to unlimited internet. Currently a PDA monthly fee is \$40; this would increase to \$110. Since Bell is an Olympic sponsor it may be possible to get a preferred rate. The advantage is real time reporting in a web based environment. This aspect may be about \$25,000 to implement.
8. Some additional transportation requirements may evolve as well. If the provincial government and municipalities solve the Segway legislation then some of the larger BIAs may be able to leverage the impact of Ambassadors with them on this type of transportation. Segways cost about \$6,000 each. Nearer the Olympics they may be less expensive as a featured device for the Olympics and Segway may see a marketing opportunity.



Model Proposal:

Four models are presented, one for the DVBIA and two examples of what a smaller BIA might look like. The DVBIA model assumes other participating BIAs. All models assume some degree of matching funding.

Downtown Ambassador Expansion Comparisons Showing Existing or Possible Expenditures on Downtown Ambassadors (Costs per year)					
Existing BIA Downtown Ambassador Programs and possible examples	BIA Existing Expenditures on Ambassadors or Possible budgets	Proposed Expansion Example	City matching or semi-matching contribution for proposed expansion	Administrative Overhead to DVBIA (15%)	Total Cost to City of matching or semi-matching funding
DVBIA					
Ambassador Program- 16 Ambassadors, 7 days a week, 07:00 to 22:30 (existing program)	\$680,000	Extend Ambassador coverage to 24 hours a day by adding 3 Ambassadors and 1 Supervisor each night from 22:30 to 07:00	\$206,000	\$30,900	\$236,900
BIA Example One					
Currently has 2 Downtown Ambassadors 7 days a week from 09:00 to 16:30 (existing program)	\$113,781	Extend Ambassador program from an 8 to a 12 hour day to provide evening coverage to 20:30 (equivalent to 1 additional ambassador)	\$55,640	\$8,346	\$63,986
BIA Example Two					
BIA has no Ambassador program, but has a small budget that could be allocated to ambassadors (possible program)	\$10,000	Wants to add 2 Ambassadors from May through September from 09:00 to 17:30 (8 hour day)	\$13,680	\$2,052	\$15,732
BIA Example Three					
BIA has One Ambassador 7 days a week from 08:00 to 20:30 (existing program)	\$83,300	Wants to add 1 Ambassador for the same time period to provide support for the single Ambassador and better area coverage to prevent relocation of problem individuals who are avoiding the one Ambassador	\$80,800	\$12,120	\$92,920
BIA Example Four					
BIA has a small that could be allocated to ambassadors budget (possible program)	\$19,000	Wants to have 1 Ambassador year round, 8 hours a day (cost is \$56,520)	\$37,520	\$5,628	\$43,148
			Web based Reporting		\$25,000
			Supervisor Vehicle		\$20,000
Total BIA Contributions	\$906,081			Total City matching Funding	\$452,686



Mount Pleasant Commercial Improvement Society
Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Area (BIA)
Suite 301, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 3G7
Tel. 1.604.874.9816 Fax. 1.604.874.9316
email: mpbia@telus.net | www.mountpleasantbia.com

November 28, 2007

APPENDIX B

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Subject: Support for the Expansion of DV BIA's Ambassadors program

Dear Mayor Sullivan and Council:

This letter supports the expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors program to other participating Business Improvement Areas, including Mount Pleasant BIA, on the basis that it will be cost-shared with the City of Vancouver.

We understand that the expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors program is being considered as one of the many initiatives under Project Civil City, to attain targets set by Vancouver City Council to reduce homelessness, the open drug market, aggressive panhandling and nuisance complaints by at least 50% by 2010.

The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association created the program and has successfully operated it since the year 2000. The Ambassadors act as observers for the police and report suspicious behaviour to them. They patrol parking facilities to reduce break-ins. They connect the homeless and mentally challenged in the streets to social services. They report nuisance issues such as graffiti and litter to the proper City departments. As business resources, they also assist visitors in finding what they want or need in the area. In summary, the program has played an important role in improving public order and safety downtown.

The Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Area (MPBIA) can also benefit from the Ambassadors program. Our organization has relied on distant Community Police Centres and volunteers to institute our safety and security programs. As a smaller organization, the MPBIA is unable to support full-time "ambassadors", unless there is cost-sharing involved. Our safety and security goals are in line with Project Civil City – to reduce crime, homelessness, aggressive panhandling and graffiti in our streets and buildings. The Ambassadors program, we believe, is a very important component in meeting our goals and contributing to the City's goals for 2010.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Valdes
Executive Director, on behalf of the Board of the
Mount Pleasant Commercial Improvement Society

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2007 12:37 PM
To: 'Michelle Barile'
Subject: RE: Expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors Program

Thank you for your email which has been forwarded to the attention of the Mayor, and Council, and circulated for information to the City Manager, and BIA Planner.

From: Michelle Barile [mailto:info@thedrive.ca]
Sent: Thursday, November 15, 2007 6:25 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Cc: 'Charles Gauthier'
Subject: Expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors Program

Dear Mayor Sullivan and Council,

We understand that an expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors program is being considered as one of many initiatives to attain the targets set by Vancouver City Council to reduce homelessness, the open drug market and aggressive panhandling by at least 50% by 2010.

The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association created and has successfully operated the Downtown Ambassadors program on a full-time basis since the year 2000. The Ambassadors act as "eyes and ears" for the police and report suspicious behaviour to them, they patrol parking facilities to reduce break-ins, they connect the homeless to social services, they assist visitors, and they report deficiencies in the public realm (i.e. graffiti and litter) to the City departments so that they can be resolved. The program has had many successes over the years and has played a role in improving public order and safety downtown.

The Commercial Drive Business Improvement Association is interested in a crime prevention program that provides "eyes and ears" for our members and hospitality to our patrons. We are also interested in proactively assisting individuals requiring social assistance by connecting them with resources in the area. In light of the Ambassador Program's services, partnerships and effectiveness in neighboring commercial districts, we are interested in the expansion of the program into the Commercial Drive area.

Upon liaising with our members and the approval of the Board of Directors, our BIA would be in support of this expansion on the basis that it would be cost-shared between the City and the individual business improvement associations where the program would be introduced.

Sincerely,

Michelle Barile
Coordinator
Commercial Drive
Business Society
Phone: 604-251-2884
Fax: 604-251-2899
E-mail: info@thedrive.ca



Mayor Sam Sullivan and Councillors
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council;

The Board of Directors of the Kitsilano 4th Avenue Business Association has been advised that an expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors program is being considered as one of many initiatives outlined in Project Civil City. We believe that this program will be very effective in assisting Vancouver City Council in reaching its targets to reduce homelessness, the open drug market and aggressive panhandling by at least 50% by 2010.

The highly trained Downtown Ambassadors have a background in security, good host tourism experience and first aid training, and provide both an effective street presence to deter crime, and a visible presence for tourists and locals alike, providing a feeling of comfort and security.

We would be happy to see the Ambassadors program working along West 4th Avenue. While their primary role would be providing security patrols to deal with break and enters, graffiti, panhandling, and property crimes, their customer service support (reduction of victimization, first aid, special event support), and tourism assistance (providing directions, store information, greeting members & shoppers) would be invaluable to business owners and their staff as well as the public in creating a sense of safety and community support in the neighbourhood's primary shopping area.

Our BIA is in support of this expansion on the basis that it would be cost-shared between the City and the individual business improvement associations where applicable.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Easton
Manager, Kitsilano 4th Avenue Business Association

cc Susan Braverman, *President*

#202 – 1857 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1M4
604.263.6443 phone ♦ 604.263.6442 fax ♦ www.kitsilano4thavenue.com



THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE
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November 9, 2007

forward to JFR

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Mayor Sam Sullivan and Council
City of Vancouver
3rd Floor
453-12th Avenue West
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1 V4

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Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: **Downtown Ambassadors Program Expansion**

The Vancouver Board of Trade understands that an expansion of the Downtown Ambassadors program to other areas of the city is being considered as one of many initiatives to attain the targets set by Vancouver City Council to reduce homelessness, the open drug market and aggressive panhandling by at least 50% by 2010.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association created and has successfully operated the Downtown Ambassadors program on a full-time basis since the year 2000. The Ambassadors act as "eyes and ears" for the police and report suspicious behaviour to them, they patrol parking facilities to reduce break-ins, they connect the homeless to social services, they assist visitors, and they report deficiencies in the public realm (i.e., graffiti and litter) to the city departments so that they can be resolved. The program has had many successes over the years and has played a role in improving public order and safety downtown.

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The Vancouver Board of Trade is in support of this expansion on the basis that it would be cost-shared between the city and the individual business improvement associations where the program would be introduced.

Sincerely

Darcy Bezac
Managing Director

/jfr