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CITY OF VANCOUVER

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July 10, 2008



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 24, 2008
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Meeting Date: July 10, 2008

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: Project Civil City Commissioner in Consultation with the General Managers
of Community Services and Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Ambassador Program Expansion (Other Areas)

RECOMMENDATION

- A. That Council instruct staff to negotiate and enter into one-year sole-source contracts with the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) for expansion of the Ambassador Program in six BIA areas as outlined in Appendix A of this report at a maximum cost of \$186,124, on the terms acceptable to the General Manager of Community Services; source of funds to be the carry-forward funding from the 2007 Operating Budget as approved by Council in 2007, it being understood that no legal relations are hereby created and none shall arise hereunder until the agreement is drawn to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services and executed by her on behalf of the City.
- B. That Council instruct staff to negotiate and enter into a one-year sole-source contract with the Victoria Drive Business Improvement Association (VDBIA) for expansion of the Victoria Drive volunteer patrol, a program similar to the Ambassador Program, as outlined in Appendix B of this report, at a maximum cost of \$ 4,800, on the terms acceptable to the General Manager of Community Services; source of funds to be the carry-forward funding from the 2007 Operating Budget as approved by Council in 2007, it being understood that no legal relations are hereby created and none shall arise hereunder until the agreement is drawn to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services and executed by her on behalf of the City.

- C. That Council instruct staff to report back in Fall 2008 after completion of all needs assessments, regarding disposition of the remaining \$309,076 program funding not allocated to sole-source contracts as outlined in Recommendations A and B.
- D. That Council instruct staff to report back on expansion of the Ambassador Program, or other similar programs, within one year of execution of the contracts.
- E. That Council instruct staff to report back on one-year sole-source contracts with the eight business improvement associations outlined in Appendix C of this report after needs assessments have been completed in all of the areas.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Managers of Community Services and Corporate Services recommend approval of A to E.

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 builds partnerships between businesses and their communities.

In December 2007, Council expressed support in principle for the expansion of the DV BIA Ambassador Program within the Downtown Business Improvement Area as well as to other commercial districts.

In April 2008, Council approved the expansion of the DV BIA Ambassador Program within the Downtown Business Improvement Area, and instructed staff to proceed with formal notification to all neighbourhood Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) regarding the possibility of further expansion of the Ambassador Program, or other similar programs, and to report back on the needs assessment and recommendations for contracts with other eligible business improvement associations, and funding approval.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

This report responds to Council's instruction to notify the 19 neighbourhood BIAs regarding the possibility of further expansion of the Downtown Ambassador Program, or other similar programs, and reports the results of the initial areas ready to proceed with expansion. Specifically, the report outlines

- the outcome of consultation with the BIAs
- principles for eligibility for contracts
- a method for prioritization of contract funds within the Council-approved \$500,000, and;
- the status of needs assessments

BACKGROUND

In 1998, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) introduced the Downtown Ambassadors program. Ambassadors provide a range of services, including helpful information to visitors and the general public, liaison with business, and, through their visible presence, discouragement of street disorder. They monitor street activities for emergencies and potential problems and provide valuable linkages to other services including the police, ambulance, city and social agencies.

In December 2007, Council passed a motion to support in principle the expansion of the Ambassador program within the DVBIA boundaries subject to a report back from the DVBIA addressing issues of program need and expected results. Council also approved in principle the expansion of the Ambassador Program into other BIA areas up to a maximum cost of \$500,000, subject to a report back on further consultation with the BIAs, individual area need, applicability of the Ambassador Program, and expected results.

In April 2008, Council approved the expansion of the DVBIA Ambassador Program within the Downtown Business Improvement Area at a cost of up to \$237,000, source of funds to be the 2008 Operating Budget as approved by Council in 2007, and instructed staff to proceed with formal notification to all neighbourhood Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) regarding the possibility of further expansion of the Ambassador Program, or other similar programs, and to report back on the needs assessment and recommendations for contracts with other eligible business improvement associations, and funding approval.

Apart from the DVBIA, there are 19 other BIAs in the City of Vancouver that were notified per Council's instruction.

DISCUSSION

Following Council's instruction in April, staff have undertaken the following work:

- All 19 BIAs other than the DVBIA were formally notified regarding the possibility of further expansion of the Ambassador program, or similar programs. The notification included a Call for Expressions of Interest to conduct a needs assessment. Fifteen expressions of interest were received; of these, seven BIAs expressed interest in expansion of the Ambassador program, while eight BIAs expressed interest in expansion of other similar programs. Appendix C lists BIAs by program type.
- To date, needs assessments have been completed in seven BIAs with City observers (from Corporate Security) present during the audits. Audits are not yet complete in eight BIAs; however, they have submitted Letters of Commitment confirming participation in program expansion, intention to complete needs assessments, and commitment of BIA funding for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Appendix C shows the status of audits and needs assessments as of the date of this report. The process and requirements for needs assessments, approved by Council on April 17 2008, are attached as Appendix D.
- Staff have reviewed the needs assessments submitted to date which represent close to half of the areas indicating interest. Not surprisingly, the assessments indicated that

there is considerable ongoing need in several BIAs, with other BIAs having critical need at certain locations or time periods. Not all needs can be met through a contract with the City.

- A facilitated workshop was conducted on June 2, 2008, to which all BIAs were invited. Representatives from all 19 BIAs attended. The purpose of the workshop was to come to conclusions on the criteria that would form the basis upon which BIAs may contract with the City for the expansion of Ambassador or other similar patrol programs that address the goals of Project Civil City, given a finite Council-approved budget of \$500,000. Materials distributed in relation to the workshop are filed with the City Clerk.

BIA Consultation and Outcomes

Discussion with the BIA representatives was based on the following:

A. Expansion of Services, Not Current Services: Council's directions contemplate contracts with BIAs only for the *expansion* of eligible patrol programs. Funding is not intended to contract for existing services currently provided by patrol programs. In this context, 'expansion' means:

- The expansion of an existing Ambassador program in a BIA
- The expansion of an existing program 'similar to' Ambassadors in a BIA
- Introduction of the Ambassador program into a BIA not previously served by Ambassadors
- Establishment of a new program in a BIA, 'similar to' Ambassadors

B. Portion Only, of New Ambassador or Similar Program: Contracts are not intended to cover the full cost associated with the introduction of Ambassador or other similar programs in areas not previously served. Rather, contracts are intended to augment services that will be provided by the BIAs at their cost.

The facilitated BIA workshop was structured around three key questions:

1. How to define 'other similar programs' in Council's April 17 resolution?
2. How should 'threshold expenditure' be defined or calculated?
3. If total expansion costs exceed \$500,000, how should contracts be allocated?

1. Other Similar Programs

Patrol programs eligible for contracts with the City include the Ambassador Program or other programs that are similar to the Ambassador Program. During discussions, some BIAs intending to use Ambassadors commented that CPC volunteer patrol programs should not be considered eligible for contracting for a number of reasons, including: volunteer reliability issues and lack of professional accreditation, insufficient data collection, sharing and tracking capacity, and the fact that CPCs already receive City support. Other BIAs raised a question as to whether vehicular or bike patrols serve a similar or different function to foot patrols, and whether programs using those forms of patrol should be considered 'similar to' Ambassadors. Discussions ultimately revealed that BIAs were not generally prepared to limit participation in the expansion initiative to foot patrols, indicating that it might be possible

for patrols using bicycles and other vehicles to perform activities similar to Ambassadors. BIAs also generally indicated that it would be inappropriate to assume that only 'paid professionals' could perform activities similar to Ambassadors.

BIAs generally felt that a broader, more inclusive definition that focuses what a program does would be more appropriate, noting that there appears to be significant overlap in the activities of the various existing patrols. BIAs suggest that they be allowed to make a case for inclusion based on activities performed as part of their needs assessment report. Such an approach to defining 'similar to' programs would recognize that programs are not identical because different areas have different needs.

BIA representatives generally agreed that clean-up, graffiti-abatement and beautification programs - which some BIAs budget under 'safety and security' - should not be considered as 'other similar programs'. As well, the group agreed that 'event' security should not be considered, as its purpose is to handle the temporary security issues created by crowds, street closures etc, rather than the ongoing issues addressed by Project Civil City.

Conclusions - Other Similar Programs

The Downtown Ambassador Program is primarily a foot patrol, as a key element of the program is interactions with visitors, customers, homeless and others on the street; however, this attribute is not absolute, as the Ambassadors themselves occasionally use bicycles to cover larger distances. Activities of the Ambassadors can be summarized as follows:

1. Assisting the public with directions and inquiries about the district, its businesses and its services and conducting a safe-walk service to escort employees and visitors to their vehicles, where safety might be a concern.
2. Responding to calls concerning specific incidents (suspicious persons, tourists with special needs, first aid situations and similar events).
3. Assisting homeless persons and providing them with directions to the shelter and free food locations, as well as making contact with rehabilitation centres and outreach workers.
4. Providing an effective street presence, monitoring and deterring criminal activities in parking facilities and other areas accessible to the public.
5. Documenting crime and "quality of life" concerns and reporting instances to appropriate agencies, assisting with preventative measures, and tracking data for benchmarking purposes.
6. Completing accurate and concise daily incident reports on issues attended to, conducting follow-up with other agencies to affect problem resolution, and tracking data for benchmarking purposes.

Staff recommend that a proposed 'similar to' program must generally reflect the activities listed above, noting that activities may vary depending on time of day patrols take place.

Some programs that perform activities 'similar to' Ambassadors use professionally licensed and trained security personnel while other areas use volunteers (e.g. in CPC programs) who receive VPD-led training together with instruction from other relevant agencies and organizations where applicable. Staff also recommend that programs mainly using other patrol modes will generally not be considered unless the BIA demonstrates that the service provides a function similar to foot patrols.

2. Threshold Expenditure/Ability to Pay

Council's direction was to determine a threshold (or minimum BIA expenditure on security patrols) for City contracts. A number of different measures to determine threshold expenditure were discussed. A key question is whether the benefits of patrol programs a) be distributed broadly but more thinly across the city's BIAs or b) be concentrated in fewer BIA areas with greater need?

Formulas for averaging existing expenditures on patrols resulted in the likely exclusion of a number of areas. In lieu of this approach, a suggestion was made to use a proportional allocation according to a BIA's existing or proposed expenditure. Proportional allocation is discussed below.

Another suggestion was to limit eligibility for City contracts by setting a minimum program cost, eliminating the possibility of contracts for programs with little impact, and focusing resources on contracts in areas with greatest need and potential impact.

However, concerns that some programs might be so limited in scope as to be an ineffective use of resources can be addressed through the needs assessment process. Needs assessments must demonstrate real need, and make the case that a small, targeted program can produce measurable results and address Project Civil City goals. A neighbourhood BIA might have a problem, for example, only on Saturday nights, which can be addressed inexpensively by a small targeted program.

3. Proportional Allocation

BIAs have advised that the actual need for Ambassadors or similar programs, if fully addressed, would exceed the \$500,000 amount that Council has approved for contracts to deliver program expansions. BIAs communicated that they do not want to be placed in an adversarial position competing for contracts and the value of those contracts. Instead, they prefer an allocation of contract value proportional to actual or proposed BIA patrol expenditures.

BIA boards have to make decisions about how to allocate BIA funds in their areas. On the assumption that current expenditures reflect the priority the BIA places on safety and security, a 'lift' proportional to current expenditures is a reasonable allocation of Council's limited resource.

Staff looked at this issue in two ways: a) the total fund available and b) proportional allocation based on a BIA's existing or proposed expenditure. As the need for services appears to justify use of the entire fund, a 40% lift on BIA expenditures would achieve a proportional allocation of that fund, as outlined in the table below. The table assumes that the City contracts with each of the BIAs indicated, except the last four BIAs, showing as

'zero'. The latter areas do not currently have security programs and do not wish to allocate BIA funds toward such programs at present.

TABLE 1

BIA Area	2008/09 Levy	Current Year Security (patrols only)	Column A Allocation : Up to 40% (figures include up to 15% towards administration costs)	Column B Total Program Value
Cambie Village	100,000	5,000	2,000	7,000
Chinatown	226,270	40,000	16,000	56,000
Collingwood	175,776	34,500	13,800	48,300
Commercial Drive	398,400	129,120	51,648	180,768
Fraser Street	96,000	30,000	12,000	42,000
Gastown	370,000	126,000	50,400	176,400
Hastings North	250,000	50,000	20,000	70,000
Kerrisdale	291,000	73,500	29,400	102,900
Mount Pleasant	210,000	30,000	12,000	42,000
Robson	487,431	125,656	50,262	175,918
South Granville	450,000	83,308	33,323	116,631
Strathcona	586,329	175,500	70,200	245,700
Victoria Drive	95,000	12,000	4,800	16,800
West End	570,000	138,303	55,321	193,624
Yaletown	295,000	82,700	33,080	115,780
Marpole	150,000	0		
Kits Fourth Ave.	135,000	0		
Point Grey	75,000	0		
Dunbar	135,000	0		
TOTALS	5,096,206	1,135,587	454,234	1,589,821

The amounts indicated in Column A will enable BIAs to prioritize their need for expansion services within the total available fund. Alternatively, a BIA may augment program costs with additional BIA funds, or withdraw their expression of interest.

Four BIAs did not submit expressions of interest. Staff recognize that not all BIA areas are ready to participate but could be considered in future years if need is demonstrated and funds are available. If the program is continued beyond the pilot, allocations would vary

annually according to the expressions of interest in any given year, demonstrated need, and the total fund available.

Needs Assessments to Date

Council's directions stipulate needs assessments as a requirement for BIAs wishing to participate in the expansion of Ambassadors or other similar programs. Needs assessments are reports containing a) results of an audit and b) a review and assessment of need and cost based on the audit, supporting data and special risk factors. The components of an assessment are:

1. **AUDIT:** The audit is the core of a needs assessment, Conducting a BIA area 'audit' involves two eight-hour audit shifts with the presence of an observer from the City of Vancouver
2. **SUPPORTING DATA:** Inclusion of supporting data or documentation from the BIA that would aid in the clarifying of the specifics of need (community surveys, disorder data, photographs, testimonials, etc...)
3. **SPECIAL FACTORS:** Consideration of any special factors that may affect the number of personnel required for certain time periods and/or at certain locations (e.g. shifts during non-daylight hours or at locations with significantly higher incidence of higher-risk street activity.)
4. **ASSESSMENT:** Determining the number of patrol hours required to meet the need on a yearly basis.

Further details of the needs assessment process are outlined in Appendix D.

A total of fifteen BIAs expressed an interest in participating in a needs assessment. One other business improvement association expressed an interest in conducting an audit for the purposes of information only and will not be participating in the full needs assessment process this year. To date, seven of the fifteen participating BIAs have completed and submitted needs assessments to the City, copies of which are filed with the City Clerk.

There were challenges conducting the audits in a timely way due to scheduling difficulties. In fact, in one case, only one of two audit shifts had a City observer, and in two instances the shift was observed by staff from Concord Security, the City's offsite security provider, after briefing by Corporate Security staff. However, overall the audits are proceeding well, with needs assessments providing the required evidence of need. Current status of the needs assessments is illustrated in Appendix C.

Audits have yet to be completed in eight BIAs. These BIAs are expected to conduct their audits by mid August and the respective needs assessments submitted by August 30, 2008. In the interim, so that staff are able to report on the potential scope of the program, each of these eight BIAs was asked to submit a Board authorized letter of commitment indicating their intention to complete the needs assessment and confirmation of the amount of BIA funds earmarked for Ambassadors or other similar programs for the 2008-09 fiscal year. All

eight of the remaining BIAs have submitted a letter of commitment as requested. Contracts with these BIAs will be the subject of a report back to Council in Fall 2008.

Initial review of the first seven submitted needs assessments indicates significant need for Ambassador or other similar services in those areas. The reported cost of fully addressing the need in the seven areas totals approximately \$430,000. The remaining needs assessments are expected to report similar needs and costs.

Proposed Contracts

Based on the foregoing, staff propose contracting with the DV BIA in relation to each of the six areas where Ambassador services will be provided. Recommendation A provides instruction to negotiate and enter into those contracts.

The Victoria Drive BIA is the only area dealt with in this report where a services other than Ambassadors is proposed. Recommendation B provides instruction to negotiate and enter into a separate contract with the Victoria Drive Business Improvement Association for the provision of services similar to Ambassadors in the Victoria Drive BIA area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In 2007, Council approved one-time funding of \$872,000 for the expansion of the Ambassador Program for the DV BIA (\$237,000) and other BIA areas outside the Downtown core (\$635,000), the latter including \$90,000 staffing and office costs for a one-year temporary Planner I position, \$500,000 for program costs, and \$45,000 for technology and vehicle costs (RTS#7074). All items except the temporary Planner 1 position were subject to report back.

In April 2008, Council approved an allocation of \$237,000 to extend the Ambassador Program for the DV BIA to provide night time coverage from 10:30pm to 7am, and instructed staff to report back on needs assessments for allocation of up to \$500,000 for expansion of the Ambassador program, or other similar programs, and up to \$45,000 for technology and vehicle costs. (RTS#7326).

Needs assessments are complete for seven BIA areas. In this report, staff recommend that, for these seven areas, up to \$190,924 be allocated to fund sole-source contracts:

- a) with the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association for expansion of the Ambassador program in eligible BIAs as outlined in Appendix A totaling \$186,124; and
- b) with the Victoria Drive Business improvement Association for expansion of a similar program as outlined in Appendix B totaling \$4,800.

Staff recommend that the balance of the \$500,000 (\$309,076) program funding be subject to report back in Fall 2008 on completion of the remaining eight needs assessments.

With regards to the \$45,000 set aside for technology and vehicle costs, staff will report back after further investigation of communication, data exchange, and transportation needs.

Council has already approved an allocation of \$237,000 extend the Ambassador program to provide night time coverage from 10:30pm to 7am. Should Council in future decide to

negotiate contracts for Ambassador services beyond the one year pilot phase as a permanent program, it will result in an annual cost of up to \$737,000 in the 2009 Operating Budget, subject to review of follow-up audits at the conclusion of the pilot. Experience from the pilot programs will enable staff to advise Council on actual program needs and funding requirements.

CONCLUSION

Fifteen of nineteen BIAs have expressed interest in contracting with the City for expansion of the Ambassador program, or other similar programs, outside of the Downtown Vancouver BIA. This number is greater than anticipated, in part due to Council's April 17, 2008 resolution to consider programs similar to Ambassadors. Seven BIAs have submitted needs assessments and are the subject of the Recommendations in this report. Eight BIAs will submit their needs assessments later this summer and will be the subject of a report back in Fall 2008. Four BIAs will not be participating in the expansion due to budget constraints but may wish to participate in future if Council extends the program beyond the one-year pilot. Staff have completed consultation with the BIAs and recommend that Council direct staff to negotiate and enter into sole-source contracts with the DV BIA and the Victoria Drive BIA.

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EXPANSION OF AMBASSADOR PROGRAM - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Name of BIA	Proposed Contract Services*	Proposed Contract Amount
Cambie Village BIA	One 5-hour shift on a monthly basis, year round for two Ambassadors.	\$2,000
Fraser Street/South Hill BIA	One 8-hour shift weekly, year round for one Ambassador.	\$12,000
Gastown BIA	Peak season (May to September): Additional 12-hour shift daily for one Ambassador. Non-peak season (Oct to April): one 8-hour shift weekly for one Ambassador.	\$50,400
South Granville BIA	Non-peak season (includes those weeks when Stanley Theatre is dark): will consist of two 8-hour shifts per week. Peak season (summer and when Stanley Theatre is open to the public): coverage will consist of 8.5 eight hour shifts per week. Additional shifts may be added to coincide with events at the Stanley Theatre, for a total of 2,964 hours.	\$33,323
West End BIA	Additional four hours to pre-existing 8-hour shifts for 317 days of the year for two Ambassadors.	\$55,321
Yaletown BIA	Peak season (May to September): Additional four hours per day to a pre-existing 8-hour shift, six days a week, for two Ambassadors. Non-peak season (October to April): Additional four hours to pre-existing 8-hour shifts, Friday and Saturday, for two Ambassadors.	\$33,080
TOTAL		\$186,124

*All expanded patrol hours will be scheduled by the City in consultation with individual BIAs to address evolving circumstances and seasonal needs.

EXPANSION OF OTHER SIMILAR PROGRAMS - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Name of BIA	Proposed Contract Services	Proposed Contract Amount
Victoria Drive BIA	<p>The Victoria Drive BIA will expand its volunteer patrol program to provide an additional 265 patrol hours at a total cost not to exceed \$4,800.00. The additional patrol hours will be scheduled by the City, in consultation with the Victoria Drive BIA, to address evolving circumstances and seasonal needs.</p> <p>For example, additional patrols may be scheduled on a weekly basis as one 5-hour shift or ten patrol hours may be scheduled on a bi-weekly basis depending on specific needs at different times of the year.</p>	\$4,800

STATUS OF BIA AUDITS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

		BIA Expression of Interest for Needs Assessment	Audit #1	Audit #2	Needs Assessment submitted by BIA	Letter of Commitment submitted by BIA	Patrol Program Option
1	Cambie Village	X	5-Jun	7-Jun	X		Ambassadors
2	Chinatown	X	20-Jun	5-Jul		X	Similar To
3	Collingwood	X	15-Jul	TBD		X	Similar To
4	Commercial Dr.	X	12-Jun	TBD		X	Similar To
5	Fraser Street	X	26-May	1-Jun	X		Ambassadors
6	Gastown	X	5-Jun	6-Jun	X		Ambassadors
7	Hastings North	X	7-Jul	TBD		X	Similar To
8	Kerrisdale	X	TBD	TBD		X	Similar To
9	Mount Pleasant	X	TBD	TBD		X	Ambassadors
10	Robson St.	X	14-Jun	TBD		X	Similar To
11	South Granville	X	21-May	24-May	X		Ambassadors
12	Strathcona Area	X	12-Jun	21-Jun		X	Similar To
13	Victoria Dr.	X	28-May	7-Jun	X		Similar To
14	West End	X	22-May	31-May	X		Ambassadors
15	Yaletown	X	24-May	1-Jun	X		Yaletown

BIAs not participating in the patrol expansion initiative this year include: Marpole, Dunbar Village, Kits Fourth Avenue, and Point. Grey Village.

BIAs subject to a report back are: Chinatown, Collingwood, Commercial Drive, Hastings North, Kerrisdale, Mount Pleasant, Robson Street, and Strathcona.

PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The following outlines the process for evaluation of each commercial area, to determine the extent and nature of problems/activities that the Ambassador Program could potentially address, including:

- i) an audit of the area, conducted by the Ambassador Program in the area at the time or day or night proposed by the local business improvement association and including a minimum of two full 'shifts' or time periods for which the program is proposed; oversight of this audit is provided by the City's corporate security services and representative(s) of the local business improvement association. The audits will be conducted with input and advice of the local BIA association.
- ii) supporting data/documentation from the local BIA association, including community surveys, disorder data, etc. that would assist in clarifying the specifics of need.
- iii) an assessment of the number of Ambassador hours required to meet the need on a yearly basis.
- iv) any special factors that may affect the number of Ambassadors required for certain time periods and/or at certain locations. For example, shifts during non-daylight hours, or at locations with significantly higher incidence of higher-risk street activity. A determination under this paragraph is made, with input from the DVBIA's Ambassador Program managers, the local BIA, and the VPD.

This needs assessment determines the degree of issues in the area potentially addressed through the Ambassador Program. In consultation with local business improvement associations, needs assessments for City expansion of the Ambassador Program beyond the Downtown Vancouver BIA will be conducted in all commercial areas.