



MEDIA RELEASE

From: Jim Comuzzi, Chair
The Waterfront District BIA Board of Management

Date: December 28, 2017

Subject: Waterfront District BIA 2018 Budget & Tax Levy

The Board of Management of the Waterfront District BIA submitted their 2018 budget request to the City of Thunder Bay in September 2017. The budget included a request for an increase of \$36,000 of the City's contributions.

The Waterfront District's strategic plan and expansion goals align with the City's strategic plan for the revitalization of the downtowns and business areas. The Waterfront District BIA's budget increase is building on local economic and tourism development. The key expansion areas are related to the marketing and beautification of the Waterfront District.

We are in the process of implementing a comprehensive marketing plan for advertising that captures the essence and voice of the Waterfront District to our targeted audiences – local residents and visitors. We will continue to leverage the Waterfront District's online/media presence including its rebranding campaign to better reflect the transformation we are undergoing. Our marketing efforts will continue to promote the Waterfront District in the City of Thunder Bay as a tourist destination to bring increased economic activity.

Our beautification initiatives include the trees/tree lights program, seagull management and walkability improvements. We are in the process of working with the City on a trees and tree lights maintenance program. The trees and lights provide great value to the appearance of our area. The seagull management program has made a significant difference in reducing the number of seagulls in our downtown area. The walkability of the Waterfront District is another important initiative. We will identify, assess and develop strategies to promote walkability in our area; as a pedestrian focused tourist destination.

The City Administration supported the Board of Management's additional funding request and has proposed the additional funding be split between the City's contributions and the Member's tax levy. The proposed increases will be an additional \$19,500 to the City's contributions for a total of \$81,500 and an additional \$16,500 to the Member's tax levy for a total of \$81,500. If approved by City Council, the Waterfront District BIA's Budget for 2018 will be \$163,000.

The Board of Management approved the City's proposed recommendations for the split between the City's contributions and the Member's tax levy. The proposed budget increase was presented at the Annual General Meeting to the Membership on November 28 and there were no objections at that time.

An email to the members and a letter to the property owners has been recently sent out advising the exact increase amount of the proposed tax levy per property is not currently available.

The Board of Management is considering an information session on the budget process with interested members for early January.

The Board of Management's Budget meeting with City Council has been set for January 24, 2018. We will be advising the membership if the 2018 proposed budget is approved.