

Downtown Langley Business Association Strategic Plan 2017-2019



Submitted by the Board of Directors
Downtown Langley Business Association
Business Improvement Area

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Introduction

Business Associations have been established in communities across British Columbia as a way of bringing business people together and working to make their individual Business Improvement Areas more attractive and successful. Businesses acting on the necessity to take charge of their destiny and turn the Langley Business Improvement Area (BIA) into a thriving business district resulted in the forming of the Downtown Langley Business Association, a registered non-profit society.

A BIA is a system that allows property owners and business owners, in a defined geographical area, to pool their efforts and funds for marketing, planning, promotions and management activities that can improve the business area.

Since the BIA's inception in 1999, the following achievements have occurred:

- Promotion and sponsorship of events such as the “Every Bloomin’ Thing” Plant & Garden Sale, “Downtown Street Sounds” Jazz and Blues Festival, Community Days Parade, Arts Alive Festival, Langley Good Times Cruise-In, the Langley Women’s Festival, Summer Sounds Busker’s Program, Open Air Sale, Fork & Finger, McBurney Plaza Summer Series and the Magic of Christmas Parade.
- Support of the construction of the Cascades Casino, Coast Hotel and Convention Centre, Timms Community Centre, and the development of a business relationship with these integral structures located within our downtown core.
- Development of a coupon book, door hanger, an “8 Reasons” marketing piece (25,000 copies delivered to targeted residential areas, tourism associations and hotels), a 16 page “Rediscover Your Unique Downtown” magazine (distributed to 23,000 homes plus an additional 5,000 copies distributed through Tourism Langley and hotels), a 16-page marketing publication titled, “The Confidential Diary of a Shopaholic”, (distributed to 30,000 homes in the Fraser Valley and provided as an on-line publication on the DLBA website), the production of a Business Welcome Kit, recycling guide, “Who’s Job Is It?” information piece, downtown parking map and a “Downtown Awaits You” brochure with copies distributed to new and existing businesses, target mailed and racked at Tourism Langley, the City of Langley and other locations as they present themselves.

- Development of a BIABC Award Winning Christmas Guide from 2008 – 2015 that was distributed to businesses and delivered to 30,000+ homes in Langley and surrounding areas.
- Implementation of a “Win This Window” contest from 2009 - 2012 (changed to “Win Your Wish List” in 2013 - 2017) that provides extensive advertising opportunities for participating businesses at little to no cost, which includes very successful cross-promotion amongst members of the business community.
- Cooperation and participation with Communities in Bloom.
- Ongoing and successful development of an area awareness marketing campaign.
- Support of the City of Langley’s Wayfinding Strategy for directional signage at prominent locations throughout the outskirts and within the downtown core.
- Completion of a Repositioning Strategy Analysis in partnership with the City of Langley, for use in marketing our area for economic growth.
- Completion of a Downtown Business Action Plan in partnership with the City of Langley, for the use in researching, analyzing and recommending of specific opportunities to improve the business environment in the BIA.
- Extensive website development in 2011, 2015 and 2018 including directory pages for every business in the BIA. This includes in-house training to enable staff to handle the ongoing maintenance and updates when required.
- Printed media area awareness campaigns including; Economic Development Magazine, Visitor’s Choice Tourism Guide, Tourism Langley Experiences Guide, Langley Advance Travel Guide, Langley Times Information Guide and the Tourism Langley Map.
- 600 AM eight-month radio awareness campaign.
- OMNI TV eight-month commercial awareness campaign.
- Virgin Radio and JRFM Radio campaigns for Arts Alive, Christmas and the launch of the 2011 website.
- Co-partnership with the City of Langley’s CD Rom Business Card in 2005, 2008 and 2012.
- Annual DLBA printed newsletters and exposure in the City’s on-line newsletters.

- Participation in the City’s 50th Birthday Celebrations including the BIABC award winning “When is a Nickel worth \$50” Promotion.
- Implementation of a BIABC Award Winning Volunteer Program, designed to assist with events, greet tourists, deliver relevant information to businesses and assist with identifying areas that require anti-graffiti and maintenance attention by the City of Langley. This program began in March 2004 and now provides us with an ongoing volunteer group that returns year after year.
- Development of a BIABC Award Winning Environmental Program designed to educate the business owners in ways to ‘green’ their businesses in easy and inexpensive ways.
- Going beyond the City of Langley’s original SPARC BC Accessibility Study by obtaining the necessary grant money to hire a summer student to continue with business audits which contributed to the DLBA’s “Gold Star Program”. This BIABC Award Winning program was designed to inform those with mobility challenges where they can shop, eat, stay and access services in the Business Improvement Area in the City of Langley.
- Implementing an ongoing “Get Fresh” Grant Program since 2012 that allows qualified business and property owners the opportunity to receive matching dollars towards signage and awning cleaning, new awnings or signage and all exterior façade improvements.
- Creating and sponsoring a free WiFi “hotspot” throughout the downtown core.
- Creation of a Downtown Dollars Program in 2013, now with over 80 participating businesses.
- Creation of 70 Remembrance Day Banners installed for four weeks of every year near the Cenotaph at Douglas Park and throughout the downtown core. This program won the BIABC award in 2013 for Programming and Partnerships.
- Working in a cost-sharing partnership with BC Hydro and the City of Langley to have ten traffic and seven Hydro boxes professionally wrapped, all located within the BIA.
- Engaging the business community to provide input before and during the revitalization of McBurney Lane in the downtown core.

- Implementation of a strong and ongoing social media campaign, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Constant Contact.
- Creation and ongoing distribution of a DLBA “Business Survival Guide” containing information on events, grants, parking, who to call, panhandling, committees and meetings and key contacts.
- Creation of twenty video vignettes that were utilized in a marketing strategy that targets business recruitment, increased foot traffic and increased awareness for downtown Langley as a shopping/dining/events attraction. This won the BIABC award in 2017 for marketing.
- Ongoing development of a strong relationship with the City of Langley staff and council, resulting in a commitment to the continued development of a vibrant downtown while working in cooperation with the City of Langley to achieve this goal.
- Winning the contract for “Discover Langley City” for a period of 5 years effective September 2017. Discover Langley City is Langley City’s tourism entity, with the goal of promoting all that Langley City has to offer, and increasing overnight visitor stays in our six hotels.
- Creation of a “Start It Up Langley” campaign in 2018 that rewarded one successful retail entrepreneur a prize package valued at over \$140,000. #startituplangley

Summary

The Downtown Langley Business Association has identified many opportunities for the City business district and believes that with the commitment and efforts of the City of Langley and businesses and property owners, the association can work together with them to:

- increase sales and profits for participating businesses
- improve property value
- increase area awareness
- attract and retain unique and desirable businesses
- provide a safe and pleasant environment for customers, businesses, residents and visitors
- allow business to be more competitive with both in and out of town competitors

- improve accessibility and inclusiveness
- increase environmental awareness amongst downtown businesses
- work with the City of Langley to support downtown revitalization and redevelopment

Downtown Langley Business Association Board of Directors 2017-2019

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Priorities

The Downtown Langley Business Association has determined a number of priorities for the 2016-2018 terms. These include:

1. Ongoing creation of professional marketing materials to be mailed out for target promotions and for use at events and Langley Tourism opportunities.
2. Updating of our Mission and Vision Statements when necessary.
3. Working to ensure that the areas outside of the immediate downtown core receive inclusiveness through our Get Fresh Program, website listings, Downtown Dollar Program and event opportunities.
4. Maintaining an updated database and website directory of the BIA businesses.
5. Working to enhance the welcoming environment of the BIA by continuing to distribute a Welcome Kit to be given to existing and new businesses in the BIA.
6. Working to enhance the physical attractiveness of the BIA by actively participating in the City of Langley's Downtown Master Plan.
7. Continue to get the word out to the business community regarding the "Get Fresh" Grant Program to include all manners of signage/awning and façade improvement to assist business and property owners with the exterior appearance of their aging buildings.
8. Continue to encourage the businesses to participate in our Downtown Dollars Program.

Mission and Objectives

The Downtown Langley Business Association will achieve its vision of a thriving business community by acting in accordance with the spirit and intent of the following marketing plan. The specific details of the plan, its goals, objectives and activities, reflect the beliefs of the DLBA and will be used as a mechanism to enhance the overall physical attractiveness of the business district, and to increase the economic activity of the businesses in the area. This plan also commits the DLBA to manage the business area in an efficient manner that maximizes participation and cooperation.

The DLBA recognizes that the success of its marketing strategy is entirely dependent on the participation of as many people as possible in the area. Therefore, the DLBA will continue to invite all members of the association to provide input whenever possible, in order to achieve its vision of a thriving business community. The plan outlined on the following pages continues to be implemented based on this input and in order to meet the changing needs of the association.

The following goals and objectives form the substance of the ongoing marketing plan for the BIA in the City of Langley. The plan is divided into four main areas:

- I. Physical Improvement
- II. Economic Growth
- III. Partnerships
- IV. Administration

I. Physical Improvements

Goal: Work with the City of Langley to create a safe, enjoyable and accessible environment for our customers, businesses, residents and visitors.

Objective 1: Increase the overall physical attractiveness of the business district

- 1.1** Maintain and enhance the revitalization in the BIA by actively participating in the City of Langley's Downtown Master Plan.
- 1.2** Ask the City of Langley to cooperate in the ongoing beautification effort by keeping the public areas clean and free of graffiti and trash.
- 1.3** Work with the City of Langley in establishing McBurney Lane revitalization and guidelines, in order to maintain its cleanliness and keep it graffiti and trash free, and interesting to the people who wish to use this public space.
- 1.4** Work with the City of Langley to curtail the proliferation of businesses that are not in keeping with the overall image we are trying to create in the downtown.
- 1.5** Continue to get the word out to the business community regarding the "Get Fresh" Grant Program to include all manners of signage/awning and façade improvement to assist business and property owners with the exterior appearance of their aging buildings.

Objective 2: Support the work of the City of Langley's Downtown Master Plan

- 2.1** Assist the City of Langley in educating the businesses about the revitalization and design vision for the business district.
- 2.2** Assist the City of Langley to inform property owners that there are available tax incentive initiatives in order to encourage future revitalization projects.
- 2.3** Continue to get the word out to the business community regarding the "Get Fresh" Grant Program to include all manners of signage/awning and façade improvement to assist business and property owners with the exterior appearance of their aging buildings.

Objective 3: Increase the safety in the business district

- 3.1** Have representation on the City of Langley's Police Advisory Committee in order to maintain open lines of communication between the DLBA, the City of Langley and the Langley RCMP in order to keep informed about social issues such as homelessness, panhandling and business crime.
- 3.2** Work with the Langley RCMP to encourage businesses to deter crime and clean up their properties through CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) where safety and/or crime is an issue.

Objective 4: Encourage merchant adherence to City bylaws

- 4.1 Work with the City of Langley in educating the businesses regarding sandwich board bylaws.
- 4.2 Educate the Businesses regarding snow removal and potential fines associated with not removing the snow on the sidewalks in front of their businesses.

II Economic Growth

Goal: Create an environment for businesses that maximizes their competitiveness.

Objective 1: Enhance the types of businesses located in the BIA.

- 1.1 Keep an updated inventory of the existing businesses in the BIA and keep an eye out for complimentary businesses we would like to see establish themselves in the BIA. Work with the City's Director of Economic Development who contacts these businesses and developers and assist the City in showcasing what they have to offer.
- 1.2 Participate in the joint CD Rom business card partnerships with the City of Langley when appropriate and affordable opportunities arise.
- 1.3 Support the City of Langley's vision to encourage the development of more residential suites above existing retail businesses, in order to increase the population in the downtown.
- 1.4 Continue to update the DLBA website with current information and appropriate links.
- 1.5 Continue to distribute our "Welcome Kit" to new and existing businesses to our BIA.
- 1.6 Continue to work with the City of Langley to reconfigure existing parking lots and streets to maximize underutilized lots and parking areas.

Objective 2: Promote business and services in the business district.

- 2.1 Continue to update our Calendar of Events to promote on the website and through the DLBA newsletter.
- 2.2 Continue to create marketing brochures and publications to be distributed via mail, website, social media, Tourism Langley, the City of Langley, at promotions and events and to be handed out by the BIA volunteers.
- 2.3 Continue to encourage businesses to sign up for the "Downtown Dollars" Program.
- 2.4 Maintain the DLBA website, including relevant information and a calendar of events.
- 2.5 Work with the City of Langley's parking enforcement to help deter business owners and their staff from parking in the three-hour free customer parking.

Objective 3: Maximize the business skills and the quality of service delivery.

- 3.1 Inform business owners of training made available to them through outside agencies such as The Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce, Retail BC and the RCMP.
- 3.2 Inform business owners of opportunities to host Kwantlen or Trinity Western students for their required practicum training.

III Partnerships

Goal: Create a cooperative spirit among businesses that increases their individual competitiveness.

Objective 1: Keep member businesses informed about the activities in the area.

- 1.1 Continue publishing an annual newsletter that includes the following whenever possible: AGM information, calendar of events, upcoming promotions, items of interest and contact information.
- 1.2 Create and continue to distribute a “Business Survival Guide” for all BIA members.
- 1.3 Continue to get the word out to the business community regarding the “Get Fresh” Grant Program to include all manners of signage/awning and façade improvement to assist business and property owners with the exterior appearance of their aging buildings.
- 1.4 Continue to encourage businesses to sign up for the “Downtown Dollars” Program.
- 1.5 Continue to use social media as a way for businesses to communicate and stay connected and informed.

Objective 2: Continue to develop and maintain a unified image for the BIA.

- 2.1 Continue developing our branding.
- 2.2 Continue to ensure our updated Mission Statement accurately reflects our vision for the BIA.
- 2.3 Continue to deliver Welcome Kits to new BIA businesses.

Objective 3: Encourage merchant involvement.

- 3.1 Encourage merchant involvement and buy-in for events, promotions, marketing initiatives and other opportunities.
- 3.2 Continue to get the word out to the business community regarding the “Get Fresh” Grant Program to include all manners of signage/awning and façade improvement to assist business and property owners with the exterior appearance of their aging buildings.
- 3.3 Continue to encourage businesses to sign up for the “Downtown Dollars” Program.

Objective 4: Continue to promote the high levels of customer service and business pride.

4.1 Use marketing materials and events as opportunities to promote the high levels of customer service and business pride in our BIA.

IV Administration

Goal: To administer the business association in an efficient manner.

Objective 1: Carry out the administrative functions of the association.

1.1 Develop a volunteer base for assistance with special events.

1.2 Whenever possible, seek out additional sponsorship funding to assist with event costs.

Mission Statement

To build relationships and to lead a cooperative effort in maintaining and enhancing the City of Langley, and to work together to create a safe, vibrant and unique environment for the benefit of everyone.