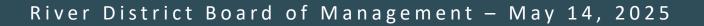


Municipal Act Process to Expand the River District and an Approach to Preliminary Consultation





Background

An improvement are is a defined geographic area where businesses and property owners collaborate to enhance economic development through:

- Beautification;
- Promotion;
- Events; and
- Placemaking.

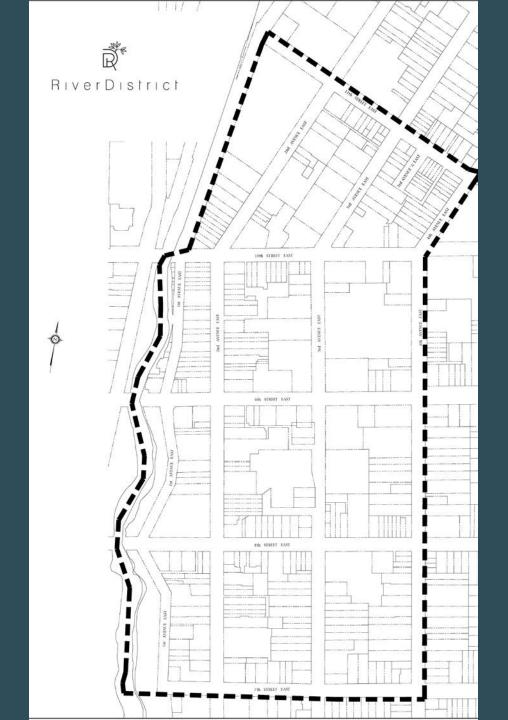
The Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area – now known as the River District – was established in 1973.

River District Action Plan

- Approved in 2020 by the Board and Council
- The Plan focuses on four key pillars:
 - Branding
 - Management
 - Experience Development
 - Promotion



Why Expansion?



Municipal Act Authority and Process

- The Municipal Act, 2001 gives Council the authority to amend the boundaries of an improvement area*
- *Subject to the process prescribed in the Act:
 - Notice by mail to all affected property owners and tenants
 - 30 days for property owners to inform tenants and report details to the City Clerk.
 - 60-day objection window: If 1/3 of those affected (by number or tax share) object, the process cannot proceed.
 - The City Clerk verifies whether thresholds are met.
- Only if objections do not meet these thresholds can Council proceed with a boundary amendment by-law.

Proposed Preliminary Consultation

- Before the Board considers making a request to Council respecting boundary expansion, staff propose a consultation phase to gather feedback.
- Staff would seek input from:
 - Current River District stakeholders
 - Property owners and businesses in the potential expansion area(s)
 - The general public



Consultation Outcomes

- Follow-up report to the Board, including:
 - Summary of preliminary feedback consultation
 - Areas under consideration for potential inclusion
 - Financial implications
 - Potential benefits and challenges
 - Recommendations on how (or whether) to proceed



Next Steps – If Directed

If the Board directs staff to proceed:

- Begin outreach and engagement
- Collect and analyze feedback
- Return with a comprehensive report including data and options for consideration



Recommendation

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-065 respecting the Municipal Act Process to Expand River District Boundaries and an Approach to Preliminary Consultation, the River District Board of Management provides direction to staff."

