



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

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River District Board of Management – May 14, 2025



# Background

An improvement area 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?

  
RiverDistrict



# *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.”

