DOWNTOWN SPOKANE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

What is the Business Improvement District (BID)?

The Downtown Spokane BID is a unique financing mechanism that helps more than 850 business owners and 350 property parcels in the 80-block BID area to collectively pool resources to provide supplemental services and improvements that enhance, not replace, existing municipal services. Authorized by Washington state law, the BID was established by downtown property and business owners with support of the City Council in 1995 and reauthorized in 2001. The BID aids general economic development and neighborhood revitalization by focusing on key services its stakeholders (BID Ratepayers) have identified, including safety and security, cleanliness and maintenance, marketing and events, urban planning and beautification, and transportation and parking.

Why does Downtown need a BID?

Spokane joined more than 1,000 cities across the country when it created the Downtown Spokane BID. The BID provides a way for downtown business owners to pool financial resources to more effectively pay for enhanced services and programs to supplement the services that are provided by the City of Spokane. BID services and programs are unique and tailored to the needs of the district's business and residential community and have broad-based support for its effectiveness. As Spokane continues to grow and evolve, the demands on BID services will also grow and change. It is important that the BID and the City continue to work together to learn from each other to improve BID services and management.

How is the BID administered?

Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP) is a private, not-for-profit membership organization hired by the City of Spokane to administer and manage the BID. DSP also leads planning and advocacy functions that support the development and vitality of downtown Spokane (such as the "*Downtown Plan Update*"). The elected Ratepayer Advisory Board (RAB) represents Ratepayers' interests to promote and improve their district by advising the City regarding assessments, monitoring service delivery, hearing appeals of assessments brought by Ratepayers, supporting budget development, and planning for the future of the BID. Any Ratepayer in good standing can seek a nomination to the RAB.

How is the BID funded?

As the City struggles with many issues, the BID is a way for downtown to get needed services supplemental to what the City provides. When business and property owners pool their funds, the result is a strong organization with more impact than any single entity could have. The BID is funded primarily by Ratepayer assessments and private investment, including supplementary contracts, event sponsorships, grants, and other contributions as well as an annual payment by the City of Spokane of $100,000 to support clean and safe programs.

By providing a stable funding source, the BID can invest in community priorities and services equitably for the benefit of all Ratepayers within the district.

How are BID assessments spent?

The BID supports economic vitality and neighborhood beautification to encourage livability, vitality, and community. BID programs focus on key areas making downtown Spokane a more desirable place for businesses, employees, residents, shoppers, and visitors. The RAB oversees how assessments are spent with support from the DSP Board to develop the annual budget and workplan, which are also reviewed annually by City Council.

Similar to other BIDs across the country, BID programs focus on **clean**, **safe**, **marketing & events,** and **business support.**

- **Clean:** The Clean Team crew works 7-days-a-week to remove trash and leaves, graffiti, and weeds, provides common area snow and ice removal, augments City sanitation services after large events, cleans and sterilizes railroad underpasses, and plants and maintains garden boxes and hanging baskets across the district.

- **Safe**: The Security Ambassadors provide security and hospitality services throughout the 80-block BID daily. The program coordinates a collaborative network of private security with the police and provides valuable information and assistance to visitors and workers.

- **Marketing & Events**: By amplifying downtown shopping, dining, and entertainment options to coordinating events like "First Friday" and holiday programming, marketing and events help to generate traffic for businesses and make Downtown a vibrant and friendly destination for residents and visitors. Marketing activities range from maintaining a website, e-newsletter, and social media, to advertising and public relations to connect Ratepayers with information.

- **Business Support**: Helping ground-floor and skywalk retailers thrive is critical to creating a vibrant and active Downtown. From supporting ribbon cuttings to business services, access to resources, and information, business support is economic development.

- **Transportation**: Parking validation (EasyPark) and satellite-parking programs like ShuttlePass are important parts of the "Park Spokane" programs managed by the BID to support finding and using downtown parking. The BID also provides advice and recommendations to support enhanced parking options, public transportation, micro-transit and road improvements.