

## IMPLEMENTING AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT INTO OUR DOWNTOWN CORE

### Policy Considerations for the Town of Okotoks

#### Issue

Some municipalities in Alberta have instituted entertainment districts in their downtown core to encourage movement between retail and dining establishments within the district.

#### Background

A priority of the current Government of Alberta has been to reduce red tape and regulation across the province. A primary example of the execution of this is the bill tabled last year to amend the Alberta Gaming, Liquor, and Cannabis Act to allow for municipalities to introduce entertainment districts.

An Entertainment District is clearly outlined in a bylaw introduced by a municipality within which visitors would be allowed to consume alcohol in public areas outside of the confines of a dining establishment. The bylaw would need to define the location, hours, and any restrictions or fees that would apply in the area.

#### Analysis

Downtown vitality has been recognized as a priority for the Town of Okotoks for many years and through many councils. A natural part of a vibrant downtown is the encouragement of visitors to the core after working hours – through nights and weekends. The implementation of an Entertainment District in Okotoks could increase visits to our downtown, ultimately serving one of Council's identified goals.

More visitors to an area provide the opportunity for local retail and dining businesses to increase their clients, increasing the potential success for those. Higher trafficked areas are also more attractive to new and upcoming businesses, potentially increasing the establishment of new businesses in that area.

While the institution of such a district may result in a more significant requirement on Municipal Enforcement and Maintenance, we anticipate that the increase in tourism and downtown business will outweigh the potential implications.



Recommendation

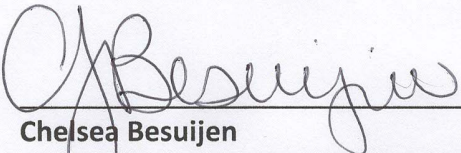
The Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce recommends the Town of Okotoks:

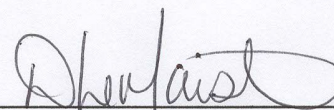
1. Table a bylaw that will implement an Entertainment District in Okotoks' downtown core by May 31, 2023, in time for next summer's event season.
2. Consult with the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce in the establishment of the Entertainment District's proposed boundaries.

**Date Approved:**

November 8, 2022

Motion made by Chamber Director James Lee and seconded by Chamber Director Adam Stepa.  
All directors were in favour.

  
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**Chelsea Besuijen**  
Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce  
President

  
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**Dawn LeMaistre**  
Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce  
Executive Director