



**Board Of Directors, February 26, 2026
114 Dundas Street
8:00 A.M.**

LDBA Board Meeting

Attending: Andrew McClenaghan, Asaad Naeeli,, David Ferreira, Kristin Nielsen, Mario Circelli, Michael Pottruff, Natalie Boot, Scott Collyer,Carolynn Conron

Regrets: Bonnie Wludyka, Brian Dempsey, Greg Harris, Nick Vander Gulik

Staff: Vicki Smith, Tristan Hughes, Judith Smith, Kathy McLaughlin, Brent Hodson

1. LDBA Board Call to Order – Kristin Nielsen

2. Approval of Consent Agenda Items

Motion: to accept the consent agenda as presented

- Approval of board minutes of January 22, 2026, financial statements and report for January 2026, Governance Committee minutes for February 23, 2026, and Advocacy Committee minutes for January 30, 2026.

Moved: David 2nd: Natalie Carried

3. Staff Presentation - data dashboard, CUI report

- Downtown recorded 97.5 million visits in 2025, with strong repeat visitation.
- Seasonal trends show summer as the strongest period and winter as the weakest.
- Visitor origin data indicates the majority of visitors come from west and north suburban areas.
- Data collection is based on anonymized mobile device tracking, identifying visitation patterns and frequency (not individual users).
- Two member surveys will be conducted in 2026:
- Community Wellbeing Survey (late spring)

- Economic Wellbeing Survey (late fall)
- Surveys will be short, focused, and separated by theme to improve response rates and reduce survey fatigue.

4. London Police Services update

- Overview provided on the Open Air Substance Use Strategy (April 2025 – January 2026).
- Additional officers have been assigned to downtown foot patrol to increase visibility and response.
- The initiative focuses on addressing open air drug use and connecting individuals to available supports.
- Health professionals have partnered with patrol teams to provide outreach and care where appropriate.
- Business feedback indicates appreciation for increased officer presence, though challenges remain.
- Ongoing systemic pressures, including capacity within health and justice systems, continue to impact outcomes.
- The project will continue through the fall, at which time it will be evaluated.
- If funding is not renewed, service levels will return to the previous model.

5. City Updates

- Proposed deferral of CIP loan payments would provide financial relief to participating businesses, pending approval.
- Ongoing concerns regarding downtown security and safety.
- Letter submitted to the Ministry of Health advocating for improved aftercare and treatment supports.

- Noted that the Open Air Strategy is operating within broader systemic constraints; long-term solutions require structural change.
- Emphasis on communicating the full scope of actions and advocacy efforts to businesses to support a more unified and informed voice.

6. Board Discussion: Deferral of CIP Loan Payments

- Discussion focused on the Upgrade to Building Code Loan and Façade Improvement Loan programs.
- Loans are repaid by property owners (unless co-applied with business tenants).
- Board acknowledged:
- Programs are important tools for building reinvestment and modernization.
- Strong feedback from both new and existing property owners.
- Monthly repayments range from approximately \$100 to \$1,700.
- Concern that continued blanket deferrals could create recurring financial pressure in future years.
- Consideration of case-by-case deferral flexibility, particularly for more recent applicants.
- Discussion on evolving the program:
 - Introduce grant components alongside loans.
 - Expand support for activating B-Class, street-facing buildings.
 - Align with Downtown Master Plan objectives to improve lease readiness.
 - Recognition that the Fit-Out Grant has been highly successful and oversubscribed; tenant eligibility seen as a key strength.
- Agreed that a formal response will be drafted to the Mayor's Office.

7. Board Discussion: Economic Vitality and Business Climate

- Discussion opened on strengthening member support and value delivery over the next five years.
- Emphasis on increased direct outreach and in-person engagement, including business visits and information packages.
- Consideration of immediate, tangible incentives to drive engagement.
- Key challenges identified by businesses:
 - Perceptions of safety impacting visitation.
 - Seasonal foot traffic fluctuations, particularly winter.
 - Rising operating costs; many businesses breaking even or operating at a loss.
- Interest in enhanced data insights:
 - Visitor spending patterns and demographics.
 - Worker vs. visitor differentiation.
 - Length of stay and movement patterns.
- Discussion on tools and supports the BIA can provide:
 - Block-level or area-specific marketing highlights.
 - Expanded promotional initiatives and cross-business collaborations.
 - Support for coordinated events (e.g., March 15 opening day activation).
 - Facilitation of loyalty programs and collaborative campaigns.
- Recognition of the success of targeted initiatives (e.g., Wellness Trail) in engaging underrepresented sectors.



- Agreement that proactive outreach, amplification of member-led initiatives, and clear communication of available supports are essential to maintaining relevance and strengthening business resilience.

8. Recruitment Committee update

- No updates. Want to match strategic plan directions. Should have recruitment committee meeting in March

9. Motion to adjourn –“adjourn the meeting at 9:14 am”

Moved: Assad

2nd:Carolynn

Carried