

# Belltown BIA / MID Outreach - 2012

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# Possible Belltown BIA – Key Questions (11/3/11)



- ▶ Boundaries
- ▶ Relationship to MID
- ▶ Scope of Services
  - » Security
  - » Cleaning
  - » Marketing & Promotions
  - » Streetscapes / Beautification
  - » Management / Advocacy
- ▶ Assessment Concept
  - » Commercial / Office
  - » Residential
    - › Condominiums
    - › Rental
    - › Subsidized
  - » Social Services / Nonprofits



# Belltown Business Association

## BIA Work Group

February 28, 2012, 1:15 - 2:30 p.m.  
 Millionair Club,  
 2515 Western Avenue  
 Seattle, WA 98121

### Meeting Notes

#### ***Attendees:***

Barbara Hartley, Allegra Properties  
 Jim Miller, Millionair Club Charity  
 Jane M. Savard, TrueNorthLaw, PLLC  
 Tula Waldron, Tula's Jazz Club  
 Brian Scott, BDS - Planning & Urban Design  
 Tyler Brewer, BDS - Planning & Urban Design  
 Dwyn Armstrong, BDS - Planning & Urban Design

#### ***Meeting Purpose / Agenda Review***

Brian Scott, BDS - Urban Planning & Design, reviewed the proposed agenda and purpose of the meeting: to continue work on BIA feasibility study by identifying key challenges and who needs to be involved in the process. He also invited Kate Joncas, President of the Downtown Seattle Association and Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) to outline the MID renewal process, current thinking, and to answer any questions about possible changes to the MID through the renewal process. Brian noted that he is also working as a consultant on the MID Renewal.

#### ***Schedule & Work Plan***

Brian distributed the process diagram for MID renewal and a draft process diagram for Belltown's exploration of creating its own Business Improvement Area (BIA). He noted that it is to Belltown's advantage for the two processes to be aligned and suggested that Belltown use the MID timeline to create its own process milestones. The MID plans a Key Concepts Forum for May, at which Belltown's role with the MID will be a topic. It will be advantageous for everybody if Belltown has a clear idea of what it wants to do by that time.

Brian then reviewed the Belltown BIA Feasibility Study process diagram (attached). The Belltown BIA Work Group will meet weekly to pull together information for the ratepayer analysis, define initial concept options, and evaluate management alternatives including: creating a stand-alone BIA, joining the MID, contracting with the MID, and operating overlapping districts. The group will aim for a bigger forum-type meeting in mid- to late-April to precede the MID's Key Concepts Forum. By then, some outreach to larger ratepayers should be complete, and the group should have some sense of what Belltown would like to do.

#### ***Relationship to the MID***

Brian introduced Kate Joncas, who described what's going on with the MID and answered questions. Kate explained that the opportunity for Belltown to be involved in the MID is different now. In years past, the MID could offer services only under the existing ordinance. Now, through the MID renewal

process, there is opportunity to change services and boundaries. The petitions describing the new MID will go out this fall, with a business plan written by June. Kate relayed the MID Board's invitation to Belltown interests to participate in the MID planning meetings to articulate Belltown's needs. The key question for Belltown is, "what problems could a BIA help solve?" During MID renewal, everything is on the table: assessment methodologies, services, boundaries. Everything. The MID Board has said it wants to continue to provide and make some changes to cleaning and safety/hospitality services, as well as destination marketing, business recruitment, and transportation solutions for downtown Seattle. The planned start date for new MID is July 2013.

Some of things on table/under discussion and open for change:

- Transitional employment program - the Clean Team. This could possibly include partnering with the Millionair Club.
- Provide more evening and weekend services to support increase in residents and longer activity hours downtown.
- A licensed mental health services professional to help fill gap not covered by the public sector.
- Move toward making ambassadors more specialized.
- The MID is looking at responses to the potential loss of the City's public safety officer position.
- Applying the Westlake Park model to other public spaces, with year-round parks staffing.
- Economic Development: focus on independent retail with a full-time retail recruitment person.
- Whether to provide different services in different neighborhoods.

The group brought up several issues for discussion, and further research. These included:

- The assessment on some hotels, which are more like apartments than typical hotels.
- What does the MID hear from its ratepayers about Belltown? Kate noted that many MID ratepayers see Belltown as struggling, and express a desire to include some or all of Belltown in the MID. The negative news about Belltown effects all of downtown and so it would be helpful to include Belltown in both safety and marketing programs.
- Parking and parking perception challenges were discussed. A 4-county survey by the MID found that 65% of people don't come downtown because parking is a barrier. The MID plans to leverage some of the State construction mitigation resources to address this challenge. The MID also provides counseling for property owners on commuting through Commute Seattle (with funding that is matched by the City and County). Assistance for property owners interested in providing high quality bike parking for younger segment of workforce is also available.
- The group asked about restrictions on hiring off-duty police for security? Kate noted that the MID currently spends \$150,000 / year on off-duty police.

The group also discussed how to decide whether Belltown should be included in the MID renewal effort. This needs to be resolved by May. Kate reported that the MID board has said that if there is not support in Belltown for joining the MID, then they won't include it. She also reiterated that MID committee meetings are open to Belltown, and invited the group to please come if interested.

### ***Basic Challenges & Goals for a Possible BIA in Belltown***

Following Kate's departure, the group identified Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons regarding why Belltown might consider creating a BIA and/or joining the MID. These included:

#### ***Challenges:***

- Aggressive panhandling
- Sleeping in doorways

- Graffiti
- Dirty sidewalks
- Aggressive people / Perceptions of aggression
- Mental health issues
- Bell Street Park and limitations of Park Rangers
- Perceptions of Belltown
- Vacant storefronts
- Parking - cost, time of day, perception, availability
- Memories of old BIA
- Small scale property owners
- “It’s personal”
- Gross lease bottom line for property owners
- High resident population

### ***Opportunities:***

- Mental Health Professional
- Coordination of human services
- Hospitality Ambassadors

### ***Lessons:***

- Critical to change up services
- Needs to be clearly a new package

The group also discussed assessing businesses (rather than properties), using business square footage, number of employees, or sales data as basis of assessment was briefly discussed. The challenge of these assessment mechanisms is that it is hard to get reliable information that is kept up to date. However, it is an option.

### ***Who Else Needs to be Involved / Outreach Strategies***

Jim asked what group is going to make the decision about a BIA going forward. Brian distributed a table for discussion purposes showing the top Belltown Portfolios and Top 20 Properties if a MID-like formula were applied to Belltown. The example shows that if Belltown were included in the existing MID, \$900,000 would be raised from Belltown rate payers.

The group discussed using “affinity groups” as a means of outreach, including: Retail & Personal Services, Restaurants, Night Clubs, Residential, and Office & Non-street Level Businesses. Following the affinity groups, there will be additional outreach to key potential ratepayers.

Brian suggested that we start the next meeting with the affinity groups questions:

- Do we have all the groups identified?
- Who should be invited to each one?

The next meeting’s agenda will also include exploring how the group wants to address the challenges, opportunities and lessons discussed today. **Next meeting - Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> Noon, same location.**

### ***Upcoming Meeting Schedule***

- Weekly meetings: **Tuesdays at Noon; Millionair Club**, 2515 Western Avenue
- Lunch will be provided by the Millionair Club.



## Let's Discuss Belltown's Future!



The Belltown Business Association (BBA) recently received a grant from Seattle's Office of Economic Development for a feasibility study of whether a Business Improvement Area (BIA) makes sense for Belltown at this time. We need your help! A key first step is a series of discussion groups about Belltown's needs as well as strategies for improving the economic vitality, cleanliness, and safety of our neighborhood.

The BBA is working with *BDS - Planning and Urban Design*, who will facilitate these discussions. Please join us at a meeting with the consultants and other business owners in Belltown to discuss key issues. *Meeting times and topics are listed below.* Please join us!

Thank you for helping us make Belltown a wonderful place to live, work, eat, and play!

## Belltown Discussion Groups

All Meetings Will Be Held at  
*The Millionair Club - 2515 Western Avenue*

Business owners are welcome and appreciated at *any* of these meetings!

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Group</i></b>
Monday, March 26 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 AM	Retail / Personal Services
Monday, March 26 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 AM	Nonprofits
Wednesday, March 28 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 AM	Restaurants
Wednesday, March 28 <sup>th</sup>	2:00 PM	Hotel / Motel
Thursday, March 29 <sup>th</sup>	1:00 PM	Nightclubs
Thursday, March 29 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 PM	Condominiums
Friday, March 30 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 AM	Apartments
Friday, March 30 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 AM	Office / Non-Street Level

Please RSVP with your meeting of choice to [tyler@briandscott.net](mailto:tyler@briandscott.net)

These discussion groups will last for about an hour.

The BBA will have a representative outside to greet attendees and guide them to the meeting room.

## Tyler Brewer and Joe Roberson – Belltown BIA Storefront Outreach – 3/19/12

Tyler and Joe walked around Belltown and talked with various businesses that either had not been previously invited to the Belltown BIA Affinity Groups or who had yet to respond. The discourse among business owners was generally receptive to the idea of holding a feasibility study in which a potential Belltown BIA will be considered. A full list of businesses contacted and any notes regarding the contacts is below:

- Previously Discussed Contact Updates
  - Karen Dannenberg
    - *Karen will definitely be attending the Retail/Personal Services Meeting. She was also rather vocal with her opinion that “Belltown is dying” and that something needs to be done to promote/save the area.*
  - Northwest Work Lofts – Office/Non Street Level – Shawn Safavi (property manager for Pinnacle Commercial) will hopefully attend the Office/Non Street Level Meeting
  - El Gaucho – Hotel/Motel – Cooper Mills (General Manager) will potentially attend meeting in place of Paul McKay
  - Copper Cart – Night Clubs – Left a flyer in the door
  - Local 360 – Restaurants – Marcus Charles will hopefully attend the Restaurants meetings
  - City Hostel Seattle – Hotel/Motel – Lee Kindall or Brett will hopefully attend the Hotel/Motel meeting
  - BIG Insurance – Office/Non Street Level – Todd Comer will definitely attend the Office/Non Street Level meeting
  - Cristalla – Condominiums – Cristalla’s head concierge (Matthew Slinger) was informed of the Affinity Group meetings via a flyer
  
- Newly Added Conacts
  - Nyberg Lock and Key – Retail/Personal Services – Rob Watson will hopefully attend Retail/Personal Services meeting
  - Floral Masters – Retail/Personal Services – Bijan will hopefully attend Retail/Personal Services meeting
  - Behavioral Tech – Nonprofits – Kathy Satre will hopefully attend the Nonprofits meeting
  - La Vita É Bella – Restaurants – Guissepe Forte will hopefully attend the Restaurants meeting
  - Belltown Pub – Night Clubs – Erwin Arceo will hopefully attend the Night Clubs meeting



## ***Working Towards a BIA Plan***

### ***Issues***

- ***Negative perception of Belltown hurts the area!***
- Belltown *lacking* in:
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Cohesion among business owners
- Too much:
  - Homelessness
  - Open-Air Drug Trafficking
- Transportation:
  - Parking (Cost/Hours)
  - Metro's Impending shutdown of Ride Free Zone
- Social services a good thing, but they must be well-maintained

### ***Opportunities a BIA can Provide***

- Improved:
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Beauty
- Staffing for:
  - Marketing
  - Public Outreach
  - Lobbying Power
  - Improving the perception of Belltown

### ***Thoughts on the MID***

- Differences:
  - Belltown needs nighttime security!
  - Belltown is highly residential (residential owners must share cost of BIA)
  - Belltown has a high number of social services
- BIA Model
  - A layered model would be effective, timely, and efficient
    - MID to provide cleaning and safety services
    - Marketing, Outreach, Lobbying provided by BBA/separate Belltown committee on MID Board



# Belltown Business Association

## BIA Work Group

April 3, 2012  
12 - 1pm; Millionair Club

### Meeting Notes

#### ***Attendees:***

Barbara Hartley, Allegra Properties  
Jim Miller, Millionair Club Charity  
Jane M. Savard, TrueNorthLaw, PLLC  
Tula Waldon, Tula's Restaurant and Nightclub  
Jessica Norton, Spa Noir  
Kathy O'Kelley, Hines; Chair, MID Board of Directors  
Brian Scott, BDS - Planning & Urban Design  
Tyler Brewer, BDS - Planning & Urban Design

#### ***Meeting Purpose / Agenda Review***

Brian Scott outlined the agenda for the meeting and handed out the summaries of last week's Affinity Groups. He introduced Kathy O'Kelley to the group and noted that she was at the meeting on behalf of The MID and Hines.

#### ***Affinity Group Summaries***

Brian and the BBA members who attended the Affinity Group meetings discussed the content of the meetings. Nearly all of the attendees were very supportive of some form of BIA in Belltown. Moreover, nearly all of the attendees were very appreciate of the MID and what it does for Seattle. There was, however, a strong sense that for the MID to expand into Belltown, the MID would need to change. Specifically, Belltown is concerned about becoming an afterthought in the MID, and would want its own marketing program and representation of on the MID Board. Some are also concerned about the way the MID assesses residential properties. Belltown business owners want the rate structure of any potential BIA to be equitable and they want to see Belltown-specific services to improve and promote the neighborhood. Belltown wants its voice to be heard.

#### ***The MID and Belltown***

The discussion then turned toward the MID and its thoughts on Belltown, with Kathy O'Kelley responding to questions from the group. Kathy noted that the MID's ratepayer advisory board tries to represent a solid cross-section of the neighborhood. She noted that clean and safe services use about \$3.5 million of the MID's \$5.5 million budget. All services are constantly monitored and adjusted by the MID board. Broad budgets for cleaning, safety, marketing and business development are fixed, but efforts are deployed in various ways depending on need.

The group then discussed how it is neither in the interest of The MID nor Belltown to have Belltown annexed into the MID in its current state. Changes will have to be made if this is going to be a good decision for either party. Brian noted that while Belltown could decide to make its own BIA, this would require significant effort to set up an operating structure. A layered model in which the MID provides cleaning and safety services while an organization like the BBA handles marketing and promotion might make sense for Belltown.

The group then discussed the idea of the BBA drafting a proposal of what Belltown would like to see out of a BIA in the area and then asking the MID how it might be able to provide these services. The MID would then analyze this proposal and see if such needed services would be feasible for an expanded MID. Kathy noted that the MID wants to see Belltown get what it needs to be successful without diluting the MID's resources. The MID wants to hear from Belltown what it would like to see in regards to its integration into the MID and then work from there. Kathy reiterated that getting office owners on board with a BIA in Belltown will be key to its success. The group liked this idea and decided that the upcoming community forum will be a perfect place to discuss Belltown's BIA ideas with the public and with the MID.

### ***Ratepayer Discussion***

The discussion then turned toward potential top BIA ratepayers in Belltown. Brian noted that Rick Ghramm, the property manager for Equity Residential's Moda Apartments, expressed concern about extra costs a BIA might present to his and other residential property owners. Kathy and Brian also noted that residential assessment rates will likely be increased during the MID renewal process.

The group discussed how to present the idea of a BIA to major ratepayers. Kathy warned against promising too much and reminded the group that it will be important to remain realistic in the expectations of what the MID could provide to the area. It is important to remember that while ratepayers are paying for effective services, the MID can only do what budgets allow.

### ***Community Forum Planning***

The meeting ended with a discussion of the impending community forum. Likely elements include:

- Cost
  - With food, the meeting might cost as much as \$2,000
  - Jim noted that some of this money can come out of the BBA's Reserves
- Timing
  - The meeting will likely be pushed out to the first week of May
  - Jane will have a set date and a price quote by next Tuesday's meeting
- Panel
  - The meeting will likely feature a panel of well-informed and influential members of the Belltown Community, as well as a presentation from Brian about BIAs in Seattle

Brian noted that outreach to major ratepayers (eight to ten of them) in Belltown should occur concurrently with the planning and execution of the meeting. This includes Brian meeting one on one with some of these key payers.

### ***Looking Forward / Upcoming Meeting Schedule***

- Jane will have a set date and a price quote by the next meeting (next Tuesday)
- The details of the community forum will be planned at the next meeting.
- The group will decide which ratepayers Brian will talk to at the next meeting.
- The BBA will work on planning its BIA proposal to give to the MID at the community forum. **A starting place for this proposal is provided on the next page.**
- Upcoming meetings (all 12-1pm, **Millionair Club**, 2515 Western Avenue):
  - **Tuesday, April 10; Tuesday, April 17; Tuesday, April 24**

## ***Working Towards a BIA Plan***

### ***Issues***

- Negative perceptions of Belltown hurt everyone!
- Belltown is *lacking* in:
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Cohesion among business owners
- Belltown has too much:
  - Homelessness
  - Open-Air Drug Trafficking
- Transportation challenges:
  - Parking (Cost/Hours)
  - Metro's Impending end to the Ride Free Zone
- Social services are a good thing, but predominance in Belltown presents challenges

### ***Opportunities a BIA can Provide***

- Improved:
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Beauty
- Staffing for:
  - Marketing
  - Public Outreach
- Lobbying & influence
- Improving the perception of Belltown

### ***Thoughts on the MID***

- Belltown's differences:
  - Belltown needs nighttime security!
  - Belltown is highly residential (residential owners must share cost of BIA)
  - Belltown has a high number of social services
- Possible BIA Model
  - A multi-layered model might be effective, expeditious, and efficient
  - MID could provide cleaning and safety services
  - A BBA/Belltown committee might oversee marketing, outreach, and advocacy
  - Belltown representation on the MID Board



***Clean! – Safe! – Vibrant!***

## **Belltown Community Forum**

**Tuesday, May 1, 5:15 - 7:30 pm**



As a follow-up to the Community Forum last fall, the Belltown Business Association and the Belltown Community Council (with a grant from the City of Seattle) are conducting a feasibility study of whether a Business Improvement Area (BIA) makes sense for Belltown. ***We need your help!***

A series of Discussion Groups identified challenges facing Belltown as well as strategies for improving the vitality, cleanliness, and safety of our neighborhood.

***Now we want you to join the conversation!***

The program will include an update on the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project from WSDOT, an overview of Business Improvement Areas, and an open forum on BIA options for Belltown led by the feasibility study consultant.

***Thank you for helping us make Belltown a wonderful place to live, work, eat, and play!***

## **Belltown Community Forum**

**Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

**5:15 - 7:30 PM**

**5:30 - Welcome & Introductions - *BBA & BBC***

**5:35 - Alaskan Way Viaduct Update - *WSDOT***

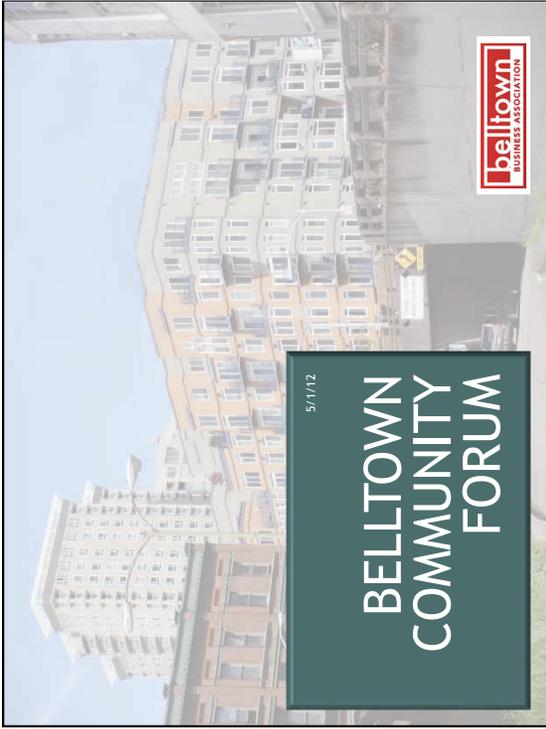
**6:15 - BIA Presentation by *BDS - Planning and Urban Design***

**6:45 - Community Discussion**

### **Seattle Labor Temple**

**2800 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, Main Hall**

Light Appetizers and Soft Drinks Will Be Provided



 A photograph of a group of about ten people standing on a sidewalk. Some are leaning on bicycles. They are in front of a building with a 'BELLTOWN' sign.
 

# BELLTOWN

## BIA Feasibility Study

### Process

- Jan: Organize
- Feb: Issues
- Mar: Affinity Groups
- Apr / May: Outreach
- Jun – Sep: Proposal
- Sep → Implementation


 The logo for PDS (Partners & Green Action) is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.


 A photograph of a group of about ten people standing on a sidewalk. Some are leaning on bicycles. They are in front of a building with a 'BELLTOWN' sign.
 

# BELLTOWN

## BIA Feasibility Study

### Options for Belltown

- #1: Status Quo
- #2: Independent BIA
- #3: Join the MID
- #4: Hire the MID
- #5: MID + Business BIA


 The logo for PDS (Partners & Green Action) is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.


 A photograph of a group of about ten people standing on a sidewalk. Some are leaning on bicycles. They are in front of a building with a 'BELLTOWN' sign.
 

# BELLTOWN

## BIA Feasibility Study

### Questions for Today:

- Challenges?
- Needed Services?
- Tradeoffs with Options?


 The logo for PDS (Partners & Green Action) is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



## BELLTOWN BIA FEASIBILITY STUDY

1

### Purpose:

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study is intended to determine if a Business Improvement Area is appropriate for Belltown at this time.

### Sponsors:

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study is sponsored by the Belltown Business Association and the Belltown Community Council.

### Funding:

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study is funded by City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development.

### Consultant:

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study is being managed by BDS – Planning & Urban Design, a sole proprietor firm based in Belltown with 30 years' experience in urban neighborhood revitalization throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond and a specialty in Business Improvement Areas.

### Process:

**January:** Organizing & Background

**February:** Issues & Options

**March:** Affinity Groups

**April / May:** Community Outreach & Community Forum

**May:** Priorities for Belltown; Options for Services & Management

**June – September:** Proposal Development

**October →:** Implementation

### Options for Belltown:

**Option #1: Status Quo**

**Option #2:** Organize & Implement an **Independent BIA**

**Option #3: Join the MID** (Metropolitan Improvement District)

**Option #4:** Form an Independent BIA and **hire the MID** for services

**Option #5:** Join the MID and form an **overlying business-based BIA** for special services (like Pioneer Square)

### Questions for the Belltown Community Forum:

- What are the **challenges** facing Belltown?
- What BIA-like **services** might be worth paying for in Belltown?
- What are the **tradeoffs** between forming an independent BIA or joining the MID?



## Affinity Groups Summary

### Issues in Belltown

- **Negative perception of Belltown** hurts everyone!
- Belltown lacking in:
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Cohesion among business owners
- Belltown has too much:
  - Homelessness
  - Open-Air Drug Trafficking
- Transportation Challenges:
  - Parking (Cost/Hours)
  - Metro’s Impending shutdown of Ride Free Zone
- Social services a good thing, but ...
  - High concentration in Belltown requires vigilant maintenance
  - Must pay fair share toward clean and safe services

### Opportunities for BIA-type Services

- Improving
  - Cleanliness
  - Safety
  - Appearance / Beautification
  - Perceptions of Belltown
- Funding & consistent staffing for:
  - Marketing & Public Relations
  - Community Outreach
  - Advocacy / Influence

### Thoughts on the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID)

- Differences for Belltown:
  - Belltown needs nighttime security!
  - Belltown is highly residential (hours of operation, needed services, and sharing costs of BIA)
  - Belltown has a high number of social services (perceptions, needed services, and sharing costs)
- Possible BIA Model: both property (MID) and business (BIA) funding & services
  - MID providing cleaning and safety services
  - Business-based BIA providing Marketing, Outreach, and Advocacy (guided by BBA)
  - Belltown presence on MID Board



# Belltown Community Forum

May 1, 2012

Wallgraphic from Forum

## BELLTOWN COMMUNITY FORUM - BIA FEASIBILITY STUDY - 5/1/12

### CHALLENGES

- > HOMELESSNESS
- > PEOPLE HANGING/SLEEPING IN PARKS
- > CAMPING OUT IN DOORWAYS  
→ WONT MOVE
- > VERY EARLY MORNINGS
- > DRUG DEALING → OVERT / NO FEAR
- > GRAFFITI

### NEEDED SERVICES

- > NEED EARLY MORNINGS - 2:30AM
- > MAINTAIN BASELINE CITY SERVICES
- > SAFETY / SECURITY
  - REALITY
  - PERCEPTION
- > CLEAN STREETS
- > ADVOCACY / LOBBYING

### TRADEOFFS w/ OPTIONS

- > TIME OF SERVICES
- > CAN WE HAVE "MENU" OF SCS?
- > HOW DO WE ADJUST / CHANGE SERVICES
- > YOU CAN SEE MID BOUNDARY w/ CLEAN SERVICES



# Summary

## Introduction

Brian Scott gave his BIA slide show and then opened up the meeting to questions from the floor. In general, questions covered **logistical issues** about how BIAs function and **how a BIA would work in Belltown**. Perhaps most importantly, the question session brought up a couple important issues that Belltown has with potentially joining the MID. Business and property owners in Belltown want to be sure that any **BIA** in the area is **held accountable** for delivering on the services it aims to provide. Also, Belltown wants an **established mechanism for removing itself from the MID** if things **are not working out**. The community then discussed challenges and needs / opportunities in Belltown, as well its thoughts on various styles of potential BIAs in the area. A number of these challenges and services were touched upon during the Affinity Groups in March.

## Comments Recorded at the Community Forum

Challenges	Needed Services	Tradeoffs with Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• People hanging / sleeping in Pea Patch</li> <li>• Camping out in doorways &amp; unwilling to move</li> <li>• Very early mornings</li> <li>• Drug dealing → overt &amp; fearless</li> <li>• Graffiti</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need early mornings → 2 – 3 am</li> <li>• Maintain baseline City services</li> <li>• Safety / Security → Reality &amp; perceptions</li> <li>• Clean streets</li> <li>• Advocacy / Lobbying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time of services</li> <li>• Can we have a 'menu' of services?</li> <li>• How do we adjust / change services?</li> <li>• You can see the MID boundary on the street through cleanliness</li> </ul>





## BELLTOWN COMMUNITY FORUM NOTES

2

### Challenges Facing Belltown

In general, Belltown is lacking **cleanliness**, **safety**, and **cohesion** among business owners. Moreover, the prevalence of an **open-air drug market** and the problem of **homelessness** detract from the area and make the neighborhood less pleasant for locals and tourists alike. **Doorway loitering / sleeping** and **graffiti** are also major problems in the area. Most agree that social service organizations are a good thing, but the **high prevalence of social services** in Belltown presents challenges.

*Locals and tourists alike have a **negative perception** of Belltown that greatly **hurts the area**.*

### Services / Opportunities That a BIA Could Provide

Belltown has its share of **tangible, fixable issues** that a BIA could solve. A BIA could help **improve the overall cleanliness, safety, and beauty** of the area. **Early morning security is a must!** Equally as important, a BIA could provide **paid, dedicated staff** to market the area and **provide public outreach** as well as **lobbying power**.

A BIA can **provide a support structure** that works to **improve** the negative **perception** of Belltown. Belltown's **assets must be promoted** around the clock in order for the area to be successful.

### Thoughts on MID / Different BIA Styles

Overall, the community agreed that **something needs to change** in Belltown. **Street sweeping** and **improved security** will help Belltown. These services can be **provided by the MID** in an **efficient** and **effective** manner. Some aspects of the MID, however, **need to be addressed/changed**. For example, Belltown needs **nighttime security** and an **equitable rate structure** that **caters to the area's business makeup**.

*Belltown wants to **hold the MID accountable** for its services and **be able to cease its participation** if things are not working out.*

The community liked the idea of **using the MID** for **clean and safe** services while having **Belltown-specific services** such as **marketing** and **promotion** for the area be **handled by a group / organization** that is **in touch with Belltown's needs**. This layered BIA model would **require less initial startup time** and ensure that **Belltown has a voice in Downtown**.



## BIA Feasibility Study:

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study is intended to determine if a Business Improvement Area is appropriate for Belltown at this time. The Belltown Business Association and the Belltown Community Council are sponsoring the study with funding from the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development. BDS – Planning & Urban Design is the consultant managing the BIA study process.

### History:

The Denny Regrade Business Improvement Area was established in 1993 and disestablished in 2000. The Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) was established in 1999, incorporating four existing BIAs into the new district. At that time, potential ratepayers in Belltown declined to join the MID. Since disestablishment of the Denny Regrade BIA, several unsuccessful efforts have been launched to incorporate Belltown into the MID. Nevertheless, Belltown continues to struggle with challenges related to street disorder, cleanliness, perceptions, business development, and district management. Many think that a BIA may be needed in Belltown. Concurrently, the MID is going through an update and renewal process to be completed in 2013, which may present opportunities for collaboration.

### Options for Belltown:

- Option #1: Status Quo
- Option #2: Organize & Implement an Independent BIA
- Option #3: Join the MID (Metropolitan Improvement District)
- Option #4: Form an Independent BIA and hire the MID for services
- Option #5: Join the MID and form an overlaying business-based BIA (like Pioneer Square)

### Outreach:

Feasibility study outreach includes the Belltown Business Association and Belltown Community Council Board of Directors, a Community Council membership meeting, eight Affinity Groups in March and a Belltown Community Forum on May 1.

### Key Themes:

*Locals and tourists alike have a **negative perception** of Belltown that **hurts everyone!***

#### Challenges

- Image / reputation
- Homelessness
- Overt drug dealing
- Early morning disturbances
- Graffiti

#### Needed Services

- Safety / security
- Clean streets
- Advocacy / lobbying
- Baseline City services
- Early morning services

#### Tradeoffs with joining MID

- Local control?
- Schedule for services?
- Menu of services?
- Adjustments over time?
- Opt-out option?



**Key Issues in Joining the MID:**

To improve perceptions of Belltown, provide greater cleanliness and safety to the area, and gain the neighborhood more effective staffing for community organizing and advocacy for Belltown, the BIA Feasibility Study Work Group has concluded that it may be beneficial for Belltown to explore negotiations with the MID so Belltown can address its issues and as part of MID renewal process.

At the same time, the Work Group recommends that Belltown use a portion of the money generated by the MID assessment to fund Belltown-specific organizing, communications, marketing, and advocacy through the Belltown Business Association. This money could also fund organizing a business-based BIA in Belltown.

While many in Belltown expressed interest in joining the MID, the BIA Work Group also concluded that Belltown requires a number of specific measures to ensure the MID assessments are truly beneficial to Belltown. Belltown has a high degree of nightlife and needs nighttime security. Belltown also needs to be assured that the MID is held accountable for the services it aims to provide, and that Belltown can discontinue its participation in the MID if it is not satisfied with the MID’s services. Finally, Belltown needs to be sure that the MID assessment is equitable for all ratepayers in the area, regardless of land use or for-profit / non-profit status.

**Belltown Needs:**

**Services**

- Cleaning & security
- Marketing & promotion
- Nighttime security
- Dedicated staffing

**Equity**

- Assessment reflecting Belltown’s mix of commercial, residential, & social services

**Accountability**

- Local oversight & performance review
- Mechanism to opt-out if unsatisfied

**Specific Proposal:**

The Belltown BIA Feasibility Study Work Group recommends that Belltown enter negotiations with the MID, with the objective of including Belltown in the MID if the following conditions can be met:

1. Within five years of joining the MID, Belltown will conduct a survey of ratepayers in Belltown. If the majority of Belltown ratepayers return votes of non-support then Belltown will discontinue its participation in the MID.
2. All Belltown ratepayers will pay their fair share of the assessment, regardless of for-profit / non-profit status.
3. Belltown will use a portion of the money paid by Belltown into the MID for Belltown-based marketing and advocacy (non clean and safe) activities. These activities will be directed by Belltown ratepayers through the Belltown Business Association, and may be used to work toward setting up a business-based BIA in Belltown to augment MID services.





Dear Belltown resident:

The Belltown Community Council (BCC) and Belltown Business Association (BBA) work individually and collectively in making Belltown a great neighborhood to live and work. That is why we are writing to you as united community leaders to let you know about the proposal to offer Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) services to Belltown, and to ask for your support.

These services occur daily in other Downtown neighborhoods, and it shows! Now it's up to you to help us realize neighborhood goals of cleaning and public safety that will help our community shine! So please take a moment to look over the enclosed newsletter which provides a broad description of the MID, in addition to some specific services the MID is offering at our request:

- Intensify concentration on clean sidewalks and curbs by hiring 17 additional staff.
- Target high-traffic times for clean-up, with the addition of weekend morning clean-ups to lower negative impact of our bars and clubs.
- Add special Belltown police resources: off-duty SPD officers to focus on early morning drug sales and late-night disorder as bars close.
- Station a "hospitality ambassador" within our planned Bell Street Park to ensure smooth and safe experience for all.
- Provide seed money for neighborhood events and produce Summer Concerts in Belltown.
- Assist with efforts to recruit tenants for Belltown's vacant storefronts.

We have also communicated that Belltown's inclusion in the collaborative MID would require a strong voice for our distinct neighborhood. The proposal we are asking you to support includes:

- Adding representatives *from Belltown* to the MID Board to ensure our needs are met.
- Establishing a MID Board subcommittee to provide feedback regarding the first year of operation in order to *ensure success*.

Each of the commercial property owners and condo association boards should have received a copy of the MID business plan and a petition in support of Belltown's inclusion in the MID. We need you to help us by encouraging your condominium board and commercial property owners to sign and return the petitions as quickly as they can.

We are asking that petitions be returned by **January 15, 2013**, so they can be tallied and prepared for submission to the City by the end of the month. Signed petitions should be mailed to MID, c/o Downtown Seattle Association, 600 Stewart Street, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98101.

We are aware that Belltowners have long worked to improve our neighborhood and keep Belltown clean and safe. With such a large population and so many visitors, we need to affordably expand the effort. If you have more questions about the MID, and would like a presentation, please contact Emily Bailor at (206) 623-0340 or at [emilyb@downtownseattle.org](mailto:emilyb@downtownseattle.org).

Joining the MID is good for our neighborhood businesses, residents and visitors! Please take this moment to read the enclosed newsletter and support our work to include Belltown in the MID.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Campbell".

Elizabeth Campbell, President  
Belltown Community Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Miller".

Jim Miller, President  
Belltown Business Association