



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Intention to Designate the Dundas Ossington Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Date:	June 12, 2007
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Acting Director, Small Business and Local Partnerships
Wards:	18, 19
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the City Clerk conduct a poll to determine if there is sufficient support to designate the Dundas Ossington area as a Business Improvement Area (BIA).

Upon the completion of the poll, the General Manager of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism report on the results to Council. Subject to a positive poll result, staff shall prepare the necessary by-laws and bills to give effect thereto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director, Small Business and Local Partnerships recommends that:

1. the area described by Attachment No. 1 (Maps 1 and 2), be designated as a Business Improvement Area (BIA), under Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code;
2. the City Clerk be authorized and directed to send out a notice of Council's intention to pass a by-law designating the area, as defined in Attachment No. 1 (Maps 1 and 2), as a Business Improvement Area (BIA), in accordance with Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code;

3. the Executive Director of Technical Services be requested to prepare designation by-law maps of the area, as described by Attachment No. 1 (Maps 1 and 2), and submit them to the City Solicitor; and
4. subject to the General Manager of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism reporting favourably on the results of the poll referred to in Recommendation 2, and upon receipt of the maps referred to in Recommendation 3, the City Solicitor be directed to prepare a by-law designating the area, as described by Attachment No. 1 (Maps 1 and 2), as a Business Improvement Area (BIA) in accordance with Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code.

Financial Impact

The proposed Dundas Ossington Business Improvement Area (BIA) is one of four potential new BIAs to be established in 2007.

Capital budgets may be impacted in future years should streetscape or other capital improvements be undertaken by the Dundas Ossington BIA. These capital improvements are cost-shared equally between the BIA and the City.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Over last four months the BIA Office has been working with the members of the Dundas Ossington BIA Steering Committee, consisting of retailers and property owners, in their efforts to establish a BIA.

The steering committee was formed after an informal public meeting held on March 19, 2007. The committee has followed the procedure for starting a BIA set out in the City of Toronto Municipal Code, defining the boundaries of the proposed BIA (from Shaw Street to Rushholme Road/Lisgar Street), speaking to local businesses about what a BIAs is and how it operates, and hosting public meetings.

Formal public consultation meetings were held on May 15, 2007 and June 7, 2007 for property owners and business tenants within the proposed BIA. For these meetings notices were distributed to area businesses by the Steering Committee and mailed to commercial and industrial property owners in the area by the City's BIA Office. Approximately thirty property owners and tenants attended each meeting.

The public consultation meetings included a presentation and discussion of what BIAs do, how they operate and how they are self-funded through a special charge on member property tax bills. Ample opportunity was also provided for questions and clarification. Issues discussed included ways to beautify the area through the City's BIA Capital Cost-Share Program, area identification and marketing, public safety, and the role BIAs play as advocates for the interests of the local business community. BIA Office staff participated in the public meeting, providing details of the support programs offered by the City to

BIAs and the hands-on assistance provided by City staff to the BIA Boards of Management. Overall, response to the proposed BIA at the public meetings was positive, with a significant majority of those in attendance agreeing to proceed to the polling stage.

The BIA Steering Committee has since submitted a letter to the General Manager of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism confirming that they have successfully undertaken the public consultation process required by the City and formally request that City Council adopt a by-law to establish the BIA.

COMMENTS

The proposed Dundas Ossington BIA is a main street area consisting primarily of one and two storey buildings with commercial uses at grade and residential or office uses above, interspersed with a few automotive uses. Although there have been indications over the past few years that the area may be experiencing a turn-around, there remain a number of vacant and poorly maintained properties.

The area is home to many Portuguese businesses and community organizations, including many restaurants, cafes, bars, clothing and jewellery stores, bakeries, and professional services, such as law offices, medical and dental offices, banks and a credit union. The proposed BIA is also home to St. Christopher House, a non-profit neighbourhood centre which has provided staff to assist the steering committee.

The Portuguese character of many of the businesses would provide the basis for a clear branding identity for the Dundas Ossington BIA. To date, the area has not established a clear branding identity like the successful Little Italy and West Queen West BIAs located to the north and south. A BIA could be used as a means to promote the unique character of the neighbourhood.

Some of the challenges facing the Dundas Ossington area include lack of parking, graffiti, vacant storefronts, and the poor appearance of many storefronts. A BIA could help to address these issues by providing a common voice when dealing with parking issues, by making use of the Mural Program and Graffiti Transformation Program to deal with locations prone to graffiti, and by taking advantage of the Commercial Façade Improvement Program, which would be available to the BIA in its fifth year.

A BIA would also provide the funding mechanism for streetscape improvements. The repair of damaged sidewalks on Dundas Street West in 2008, which will be done in conjunction with the reconstruction of TTC tracks, provides the opportunity to undertake improvements in conjunction with Transportation Services, thereby reducing costs.

A Dundas Ossington BIA would also have opportunities to collaborate with new BIAs located immediately to the west (Dundas West BIA) and east (the proposed Dundas-Bathurst BIA) on events and marketing.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS -

Attachment No. 1 – Maps (1 & 2) of Proposed Dundas Ossington BIA