



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Intention to Designate the Area along Danforth Avenue between Jones Avenue / Dewhurst Boulevard and the Lands just West of Westlake Avenue as a Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Date:	July 20, 2007
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Acting Director, Small Business & Local Partnerships
Wards:	29, 30, 31 and 32
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 properties fronting on Danforth Avenue from Dewhurst Boulevard on the north and Jones Avenue on the south and the properties located at 2396 Danforth Avenue on the north and 2385 on the south as a Business Improvement Area (BIA). In addition, the adjacent commercial properties with municipal addresses 663, 665 and 667 Greenwood Avenue, 26 Ladysmith Avenue, 699 Coxwell Avenue and 955, 957, 959, 969 and 985 Woodbine Avenue have been included within the proposed BIA boundary.

Upon completion of the poll, the Acting Director of Small Business & Local Partnerships shall report on the results directly 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 of Small Business & Local Partnerships recommends that:

1. The area described by Attachment No. 1 (Maps 1 to 6), be designated as a Business Improvement Area (BIA), under Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code;

2. The City Clerk be authorized to send out a notice of Council's intention to pass a by-law designating the area as defined in Attachment No. 1 as a Business Improvement Area (BIA);
3. The Executive Director of Technical Services be requested to prepare designation by-law maps of the area as described by Attachment No. 1, and submit them to the City Solicitor; and
4. The Acting Director of Small Business & Local Partnerships report directly to Council on the poll results so that the BIA can be established and hold an annual general meeting in time for the 2008 budget cycle.

Financial Impact

Capital budgets may be impacted in future years should streetscape and other capital improvements be undertaken by the new BIA. Capital improvements are shared 50/50 between the City and the BIA.

Should the BIA be formed, future capital projects must be approved by Council, and the City's 50% share of the capital costs will be funded in the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism capital budget.

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

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2006, a group of business stakeholders along Danforth Avenue between Coxwell Avenue and the area lands just west of Westlake Avenue, adjacent to the Danforth Village BIA boundary, decided to gauge local interest in establishing a BIA. Another group of business stakeholders on Danforth Avenue between Coxwell Avenue and Greenwood Avenue formed and incorporated a business association named Midway on Danforth in May 2006 with the intention to become a BIA when their members were comfortable to proceed with a request to the City. In 2007, both groups decided to merge their efforts into one steering committee with two co-chairs each representing one of the business groups.

The expanded steering committee decided to include the area of Danforth Avenue between Greenwood Avenue and Jones Avenue/Dewhurst Boulevard at the request of several businesses that wanted to be included in the initiative.

The steering committee has followed the City's procedures for establishing a BIA, including hosting eight information meetings and two formal public meetings on April 18, 2007, for the area between Coxwell Avenue and lands just west of Westlake Avenue, and on July 5, 2007 for the area between Jones Avenue/Dewhurst Boulevard and lands just west of Westlake Avenue. The steering committee distributed meeting invitations to all tenants. Invitations to property owners were mailed by the City's BIA Office.

Both public meetings included a discussion on the proposed BIA boundaries, a presentation by City staff on the functions of a BIA, how the BIA levy is determined and supporting programs that the City offers to BIAs. Both public meetings were well attended, with 38 participants at the April meeting and 30 participants at the July meeting. Only one business stakeholder objected to the formation of a BIA. The other stakeholders that attended the meetings were very enthusiastic and indicated a strong interest in forming a BIA, including some business stakeholders that were not part of the initial boundary vision for the BIA. Accordingly, the proposed BIA boundaries were amended to include a few business properties that do not front onto Danforth Avenue; but were contiguous to the proposed BIA commercial area and had the support of the businesses on these properties. These properties include 663 Greenwood Avenue, 667 Greenwood Avenue, 26 Ladysmith Avenue, 699 Coxwell Avenue and 955, 957, 959, 969 and 985 Woodbine Avenue.

The BIA steering committee has submitted a letter dated July 23, 2007 to the General Manager of Economic Development, Culture & Tourism confirming that they have undertaken the public consultation required by the City and have formally requested that City Council adopt a by-law to establish a BIA.

COMMENTS

The proposed BIA is a predominantly commercial strip along Danforth Avenue between two existing BIAs, Danforth Village BIA to the east and Greektown on the Danforth BIA to the west. Although there are some institutional uses, a parkette and some townhouses within the proposed boundaries, the area is essentially a mature commercial strip and appropriate for a BIA.

Although there has been some recent investment in the area, there are pockets of building facades that have deteriorated, random graffiti that has not been removed in a timely manner and some vacant stores creating a depressed shopping atmosphere along this section of Danforth Avenue. There is no linkage between most of the commercial blocks. Identity branding, streetscaping improvements and marketing are needed to improve the commercial vitality and viability of the area. Establishing a BIA would provide the organization, a funding mechanism and the link to the City's programs that will help to address these issues.

A new BIA would have opportunities to collaborate with the adjacent Greektown on the Danforth and Danforth Village BIAs on events and marketing.

CONTACT

Mike Major, Acting Director
Small Business & Local Partnerships
Telephone: 416-392-0623
Fax: 416-392-1380
Email: mmajor@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Mike Major
Acting Director, Small Business & Local Partnerships

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Maps (1 to 6) of proposed BIA