



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Intention to Designate the Area along Danforth Avenue
between Victoria Park Avenue and Scotia Avenue as the
Crossroads of the Danforth Business Improvement Area
(BIA)**

Date:	January 22, 2008
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Acting Director, Small Business & Local Partnerships
Wards:	35 – Scarborough Southwest
Reference Number:	P:\2008\Cluster A\EDCT\ECON DEV\ed0802-006 (AFS #6790)

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 Victoria Park Avenue to Scotia Avenue as the Crossroads of the Danforth Business Improvement Area (BIA).

Upon completion of the poll, the Acting Director of Small Business & Local Partnerships shall report on the results to the Economic Development Committee. 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, be designated as the Crossroads of the Danforth Business Improvement Area (BIA), under Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code;

2. The City Clerk be authorized to send out a notice of City Council's intention to pass a by-law designating the area as defined in Attachment No. 1 as a Business Improvement Area (BIA); and
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.

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, funding for 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 December 2002, a few business people from the local business community on or near Danforth Avenue between Victoria Park Avenue and Warden Avenue and Danforth Road between Danforth Avenue and Warden Avenue formed the Danforth Victoria Park Business Association (DVBA). During the last five years, the DVBA has partnered on various initiatives with the City.

The Economic Development Office and the DVBA, with local stakeholder input, produced a five year strategic action plan for the area in 2003. The action plan recommended four strategic strategies:

- i) to engage the DVBA members to develop an association structure that would provide a basis to form a business improvement area,
- ii) to create an attractive business district,
- iii) to restore the community's sense of safety, and
- iv) to attract and retain vital businesses

The DVBA has implemented the second and third strategies by preparing a community improvement plan, an urban streetscape plan and an avenue study with the City's Community Planning Division and by implementing street, curb and sidewalk improvements with the City's Transportation Division.

The first strategy has evolved by the DVBA continuing to expand their own association with new members and, in partnership with the current councillor and previous councillor, by hosting information sessions on the formation of a Business Improvement Area (BIA). The latter included three BIA information sessions from Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 with a formal public meeting on the formation of a BIA held on October 25, 2007. The DVBA distributed meeting invitations to all business tenants in the area and invitations to property owners were mailed by the City's BIA Office for the formal public meeting. The information and formal public meetings averaged twenty participants. The public meeting 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. The business owners that attended the meetings were very enthusiastic and indicated a strong interest in forming a BIA. The DVBA has followed the City's procedures for establishing a BIA.

The DVBA has concluded that the BIA structure is the most effective means to implement the remaining recommendations in the strategic action plan, to continue the revitalization of their section of Danforth Avenue and to manage and expand their existing commercial business base by rebranding the area and undertaking new marketing initiatives.

The DVBA has decided, based on feedback from their stakeholders and from the participation at the information sessions, to ask the City to conduct a poll on the formation of a BIA for a smaller area along Danforth Avenue between Victoria Park Avenue and Scotia Avenue (one street east of Warden Avenue) as shown on Attachment No. 1 to this report.

The DVBA steering committee has submitted a letter dated January 10, 2008, to the BIA Office confirming that they have undertaken the public consultation required by the City and formally requesting that City Council undertake a poll for the formation of a BIA.

COMMENTS

The proposed BIA is a predominantly commercial strip along Danforth Avenue immediately adjacent to the existing Danforth Village BIA to the west. Although there are some institutional uses and a park 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 visual linkage between most of the commercial blocks. Identity branding, additional streetscaping improvements and marketing are needed to improve the commercial vitality and viability of the area. Establishing a BIA would provide the DVBA a funding mechanism and the link to City support programs that will help to address these issues.

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

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Map of Proposed Crossroads of the Danforth BIA