

Intention to Designate the Area along Oakwood Avenue between Bude Street and the lands just south of Earlsdale Avenue at 317 Oakwood Avenue, and the lands between 616 and 637 Vaughan Road as the Oakwood Village Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Date:	May 16, 2008
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	Director, Small Business & Local Partnerships
Wards:	15
Reference Number:	P:/2008/Cluster A/EDCT/ECON DEV/0806-023 (AFS #7736)

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 Oakwood Avenue from Bude Street to the lands just south of Earlsdale Avenue at 317 Oakwood Avenue, and the lands between 616 and 637 Vaughan Road as the Oakwood Village Business Improvement Area (BIA).

Upon completion of the poll, the 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 Director of Small Business & Local Partnerships recommends that:

1. The area described by Attachment No. 1, be designated as the Oakwood Village 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); 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 September 2007, a group of business people around the Oakwood Avenue and the Vaughan Road crossroads met to determine if there was interest to create a BIA. A Steering Committee was formed. An information meeting was held on October 15, 2007 for all interested stakeholders. Representatives from the Steering Committee also met with every business in the proposed BIA during the late fall and early winter months sharing information on the BIA concept and the City's partnering relationship.

In April 2008, the Steering Committee distributed invitations to all business tenants in the area and invitations to property owners were mailed by the City's BIA Office for a formal public meeting held on May 6, 2008.

The information and formal public meetings averaged fifteen 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. In addition, the Steering Committee received many positive telephone calls from local commercial owners and tenants who could not attend the meetings. The Steering Committee has followed the City's procedures for establishing a BIA.

The Steering Committee has concluded that the BIA structure is the most effective means to implement a revitalization of the Oakwood Avenue and Vaughan Road crossroads and to manage and expand their existing commercial business base by rebranding the area and undertaking new marketing initiatives.

The Steering Committee 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 on the lands as shown on Attachment No. 1 to this report.

The Steering Committee has submitted a letter dated May 12, 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 mixed commercial - residential strip along Oakwood Avenue at the Vaughan Road crossroads. Although there are some institutional uses and residential homes 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 Oakwood Avenue. 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 existing businesses and commercial property owners with a funding mechanism and the link to City support programs that will help to address these issues.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Map of Proposed Oakwood Village BIA