



Formation of Business Improvement Areas in Scarborough East of McCowan Road

Date: August 20, 2019

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development process of Business Improvement Areas, improving employment opportunities and the establishment of business within all of the Scarborough community area east of McCowan Road.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. Economic and Community Development Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of June 26, 2019, the Economic and Community Development Committee requested the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Manager,

Business Improvement Areas to report to the September 5, 2019 meeting of Economic and Community Development Committee on:

- a. development of Business Improvement Areas in all of the Scarborough community area east of McCowan Road; and
- b. efforts being made to improve business relationships with the City of Toronto for the purposes of improving employment opportunities and the establishment of business within all the Scarborough community area east of McCowan Road.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC6.22>

COMMENTS

Development of Business Improvement Areas

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses. By working collectively as a BIA, local businesses have the organizational and funding capacity to be catalysts for civic improvement, enhancing the quality of life in their local neighbourhood and the City as a whole.

Toronto now has a total of 82 BIAs across the City, representing 45,000 members. Together, they generate more than \$34 million in funding towards street and sidewalk beautification, marketing and promotional campaigns, street festivals, clean street / graffiti-removal campaigns, and crime prevention strategies. BIAs also act as a unified voice to address issues on behalf of their membership.

The process of creating a new BIA is rigorous and involves significant local business community engagement. The decision to start a BIA can only be made by people who own or lease commercial property in the area. Starting a new BIA involves a specific process as outlined in [Municipal Code Chapter 19 \(Amended\)](#). There are a number of steps in Chapter 19 that need to be completed in order to establish a new BIA. They are outlined below.

1. Establish a Steering Committee to Start your BIA

The Steering Committee should include commercial and/or industrial property owners and business tenants that represent various types of businesses and geographic sections within the area. The Committee's main role is to gauge stakeholder interest in forming a BIA and to define the geographic area. With assistance from the City the Committee must develop an implementation strategy addressing the rationale for forming a BIA including potential benefits for the area and objectives for future improvements.

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2. Determine Community Interest within Proposed Area

The Steering Committee must provide business and property owners within the proposed area with information about BIAs. Informal meetings and consultation sessions with area stakeholders are held to confirm the area boundaries, clarify issues, and validate the level of interest.

The Committee then reports the level of stakeholder interest to the City BIA Office in order to determine sufficient support in proceeding to step three.

3. Hold a Public Meeting and Formal BIA Request

On behalf of the Steering Committee, the City organizes and hosts formal public meeting(s) to determine if there is sufficient interest in creating a BIA. If more than 50 per cent of those in attendance support moving to the formal polling stage, the Steering Committee then makes a formal request to proceed.

4. Polling Process for Creating a New BIA

Property owners must forward a copy of the poll to their tenants. The Steering Committee is responsible for distributing a copy of the notice to commercial/ industrial tenants in the proposed BIA area. Property owners and business tenants are asked to return ballots to the City Clerk's Office.

City Council can approve a BIA if:

- at least 30 per cent of the ballots mailed (or a minimum of 100, whichever is lower) are returned to the City Clerk's Office
- more than 50 per cent of the ballots are in favour of the BIA.

To begin this process, City staff will work with local Councillors to determine which areas may be best suitable for a BIA and how best to engage the local business community around this initiative.

Improving Business Opportunities

The Economic Development and Culture, Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) East Office works directly with the Scarborough business community to facilitate expansion projects, support new investment and promote business development programs to further growth and hiring.

Much of the investment activity in Scarborough is taking place east of McCowan Road. In terms of industrial investment projects, all ten of the major development projects facilitated by BR&E are located east of McCowan. These ten projects are estimated to support 3,600 new and retained jobs in over 3.4 million sq. ft. of new industrial space.

Of the ten projects, three are under construction and could yield over 700 new/retained jobs by the end of 2019.

Given the demand for industrial space, it is anticipated the remaining seven proposed industrial projects could be all completed in the next three years. The BR&E East Office is working closely with the industrial developers and City Planning to ensure these "Gold Star" projects are completed on time to get the jobs flowing to the residents of Scarborough.

Other investment projects east of McCowan Road the BR&E East Office is working on include:

- Toyota Canada Inc. retention efforts at 1 Toyota Place. The goal is to maintain 650 jobs and attract 100 from Markham in a new head office campus to be built on site
- Centennial College Progress Campus expansion. Assisting with numerous aspects including exchange of land parcels with City of Toronto
- University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) expansion including the EaRTH project
- Gervais Party Rentals expansion at 75 Milner Avenue
- 601 Milner Avenue repurposing of the existing industrial building
- Scarborough Centre office/mixed use investment sites including the Consilium, 675 Progress Avenue, 111 Grangeway Avenue, 110-140 Grangeway Avenue and 670-690 Progress Avenue.

These investment projects will all generate new construction and permanent employment opportunities for the residents of Scarborough. Timing of the projects to completion range from the short-term for Gervais Party Rentals to longer-term for the Centennial College, UTSC and Scarborough Centre projects.

In addition to facilitating investment projects, the BR&E East Office supports business and employment growth through:

- Support of the Scarborough Business Association (SBA). BR&E East Office staff regularly attend SBA event to network with the business community and serve as an advisor to the board
- Support of Rotary Clubs of Scarborough Community Renewal Plan
- A member of the organizing committee along with Toronto Employment and Social Services for the annual Scarborough Job and Career fair attracting over 2,000 job seekers and 40 employers each year to the Scarborough Civic Centre
- The Signature Sites on-line publication listing larger employment sites for sale or lease featuring 12 properties east of McCowan Road
- Meeting with over 100 Scarborough Business leaders on an annual basis to discuss opportunities for growth
- Through individual meetings, networking, newsletters and email blasts, businesses are provided with information on exporting, research and

development, energy efficiency, training and employment programs available to the Scarborough business community to help them grow and prosper.

The BR&E East Office also participates in area studies such as the Scarborough Centre Review and major transit project planning such as the Eglinton East LRT providing an economic development lens to ensure employment generation remains a top priority.

Building and maintaining strong business relationships has always been important to the BR&E East Office. It is through these strong business relationships that opportunities for expansion and employment growth are supported and facilitated as noted above.

The Economic Development and Culture, Entrepreneurship Services focuses service delivery for Scarborough out of the Scarborough Civic Centre (SCC). Much of Enterprise Toronto's service delivery requires them to work out of a centralized location. Entrepreneurs come to the SCC to register their business, access computers for business research and planning purposes and to meet with a qualified small business consultant. Enterprise Toronto is building relationships with local libraries so that it may expand its program delivery locations in the future.

Next Steps

City staff will work with local Councillors to determine which areas may be best suitable for a BIA and how best to engage the local business community.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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