

Riverside District Business Improvement Area Expansion Poll Results

Date: April 21, 2026

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: Ward 14, Toronto-Danforth

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend the expansion of The Riverside District Business Improvement Area (BIA) boundary outlined in Attachment 1. In accordance with Chapter 19 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, the City Clerk conducted a poll to determine if there is sufficient support to expand The Riverside District BIA boundary outlined in Attachment 1. The City Clerk received a majority of accepted ballots that were in favour of expanding the BIA.

While polling results were favourable, the BIA boundary expansion process did not include adequate consultation with key City Divisions to ensure coherence with key City policies and goals in such a way that the City's interests would be fully considered. As a result, when the poll was circulated the initial proposed boundary expansion failed to reflect certain key City policy needs such as traffic management. The recommended expansion boundary has been revised to address the need for divisional consultation with a partial expansion now proposed versus the original expansion. Staff will also be reviewing the broader process for any BIA boundary expansion to ensure stronger organizational alignment allowing for a 'whole-of-City' approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, recommends:

1. City Council designate the area outlined in Attachment 1 as the expanded boundaries of The Riverside District Business Improvement Area, under the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to conduct additional consultation with City Divisions, including but not limited to Transportation Services and City Planning, regarding any further proposed expansion to the Riverside BIA, and to review the BIA boundary expansion process to ensure that it

is transparent and balances the interests of local businesses, BIAs and the City of Toronto and report back to City Council as a part of the 2027 Annual Update on the Implementation of Sidewalks to Skylines.

3. City Council direct the City Solicitor to submit a By-law to designate the area outlined in Attachment 1 as the expanded boundaries of The Riverside District Business Improvement Area.

4. City Council amend Schedule A of the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas, as necessary, to reflect the expanded boundaries of The Riverside District Business Improvement Area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no current year financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report.

Capital budgets may be affected in future years should streetscape or other capital improvements be undertaken by the expanded BIA. Capital improvements are generally cost-shared equally between the BIA and the City.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 10, 2025, City Council adopted item EC23.4 titled "Intention to Expand The Riverside District Business Improvement Area." The staff report recommended that The Riverside District Business Improvement Area boundary be expanded, subject to a favourable poll result.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EC23.4>

COMMENTS

Before passing a by-law to establish a BIA, the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 19, Business Improvement Areas, requires notice of the proposed by-law be sent by prepaid mail, by the City Clerk, to every person listed as an owner assessed for rateable property, in a business property class, and located in the proposed expansion business improvement area using the following documents:

1. Current returned assessment roll; and/or
2. Municipal Connect, Toronto Property System (TPS) or any other related geographic information system (GIS) developed using information from Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and City records.

Any person who receives notice is required to give a copy of the notice to each commercial/industrial tenant of the property to which the notice relates. In addition, the BIA steering committee provided unaddressed notices to commercial and industrial tenants of those property owners receiving the City Clerk's notice. The notice included a copy of the ballot with instructions on how to obtain a printable copy of the ballot through the Clerk, or from the City's website, along with acceptable forms of proof of tenancy.

A person receiving notice is entitled to complete and submit one ballot regardless of the number of properties or businesses owned by that person within the proposed business improvement area. The polling period commenced on November 3, 2025, for 60 days and closed on January 1, 2026. The City Clerk determines whether all conditions have been met and, if they are, shall issue a certificate affirming the fact.

Council cannot pass a by-law to establish a new Business Improvement Area if:

1. Fifty percent or more of the accepted ballots respond in the negative.

Due to the Canada Post strike, on November 3, 2025, the City Clerk couriered a total of twenty-nine (29) notices and ballots for the Intention to Expand The Riverside District Business Improvement Area to all owners of commercial/industrial property assessed for rateable property within the proposed expansion area to determine if there was sufficient support to expand the BIA.

The City Clerk received a total of twenty (20) ballots by January 1, 2026, the end of the notice period. A total of seventeen (17) of the twenty (20) returned ballots (85%) were in favour of expanding the BIA, meeting the benchmark as set out in the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 19-2.3H. A total of three (3) ballots (15%) opposed the expansion of the BIA. No ballots were spoiled.

While polling results were in favour of expanding the BIA as outlined in Attachment 1, it has since been determined that several City divisions, including City Planning and Transportation Services, have concerns with the northwestern portion of the proposed boundary expansion between Davies Avenue and Carroll Street between Queen Street East and Dundas Street East. It is not standard practice to consult with other Divisions before conducting a poll to expand a BIA. As a result, the concerns of other Division were not known or factored into the proposed boundary expansion before the poll was completed. For example, the traffic management and pedestrian safety objectives of Transportation Services for the area were not considered.

The omission of a circulation and commenting process for BIA boundary expansion requests has now been identified as a gap in current processes within the Economic Development and Culture Division. A need for a 'whole-of-City' approach for potential BIA boundary expansions is critical for ensuring that all parts of the organization work in alignment, remain coordinated and consistent, focused on collective impact, and yielding strong outcomes for Toronto's residents and businesses alike. Staff will work to address this gap and identify any others through a review and revision of the evaluation criteria applied in BIA expansion requests.

Proceeding with the boundary expansion as polled could negatively impact the work of other City Divisions into the future. Staff therefore recommends a partial expansion of the BIA boundary in the interim, including the uncontested new southern areas, while allowing time for staff to conduct the additional consultation required on the proposed northwestern expansion and review the boundary expansion process. This consultation will form part of a broader review of the BIA boundary expansion process to ensure the approach is transparent and appropriately balances the interests of local businesses, BIAs, and the City of Toronto. Staff will report back to Council on the outcome as part of the 2027 Annual Update on the Implementation of Sidewalks to Skylines.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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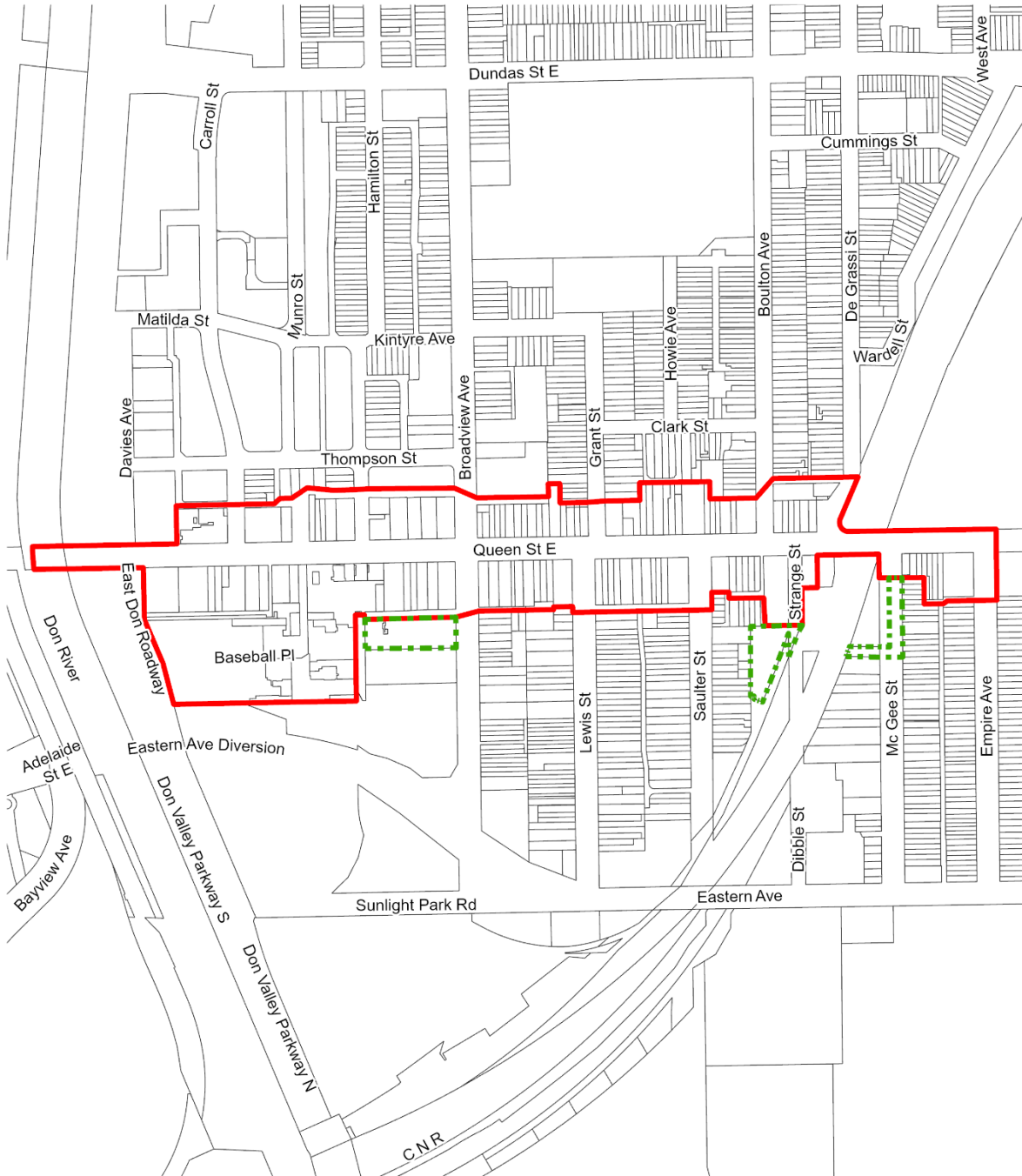
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Map of the Riverside District Business Improvement Area and Proposed Expansion

Attachment 1 - Map of the Riverside District Business Improvement Area and Proposed Expansion



Riverside District BIA - Proposed Expansion



- Riverside District
- Riverside District - Proposed Expansion



Map: Presentation Map - Letter -
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