



July 25, 2016

Dear Mayor and Council,

In 2016, OBIAA entered into a funding partnership with the Province of Ontario for a research project to determine the **Return on Investment of BIAs** in Ontario. The primary goal is to identify a set of common indicators for BIAs across the province to establish the role they play in local economies and community development. These indicators will build a common set of measures for BIAs, the province and municipalities to use for:

- Future economic development and community planning decision making in a changing economy;
- The creation of planning tools for BIAs and municipalities to assist in determining the state and needs of local economies;
- The identification of data gaps, tools, templates and possibly training to help BIAs to gather socio-economic data easily.

We are reaching out to municipalities across the province to let you know about the project and ask for your assistance in its success.

How can your municipality help?

1. Share this project with your council and staff, especially those currently focusing on community and economic development
2. Assign a staff person to work with OBIAA and our consultants, provide information and data surrounding your municipal BIA(s). This should not be a time consuming role.

In 1970, Bloor West Village small business owners asked the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto to consider developing legislation that would enable the business community to create a self-funded, self-governed organization to aid in the revitalization of their historic shopping district. The Business Improvement Area (BIA) legislation was subsequently included into the Municipal Act, 2001, and the first BIA was born! As we approach 50 years of this 'game-changing' legislation we know many things about the success of the BIA but mostly ...the BIA model works!

In 2016, there are 82 BIAs in Toronto and approximately 305 BIAs in Ontario. BIAs, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Business Improvement Zones (BIZs) are



active across Canada and around the world, from the United States, to Africa, and Australia. We are also now seeing this form of business organization emerge in India, China and Singapore among others. Traditionally BIAs were formed around community main streets and downtown areas, representing the interest of small and medium business. Today, BIAs exist in a variety of settings – from rural mainstreets, to large industrial parks, to mixed-use urban neighbourhoods.

At OBIAA, we often call BIAs one of Ontario's best exports.

The Ontario Business Improvement Area Association hopes you share our excitement in this project. We believe our downtowns, often the historic root of our communities, are a community and economic development tools and in some respects, the backbone of our communities. With your assistance in this project, we can support BIAs in their continued efforts to build vibrant, safe, and successful communities across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Kay Matthews
Executive Director | OBIAA

Appendix: ROI Project Stages



Appendix

The ROI Project has been broken the project into 4 stages:

PHASE I – Background Research/Environmental Scan

1. Identify currently available data
2. Conduct a gap analysis of what data is needed
3. Summary report and recommendations for OBIAA and MMAH

PHASE II – Establishing the Indicators

1. Determine Required Data Indicator Sets
2. Gathering the Data
3. Provide framework for tool development
4. Development data gathering tools

PHASE III – Data Analysis and Monitoring Implementation

1. Hierarchy of Data
2. Analyse data to determine gaps in the research identified and required (Research)
3. Report back to Province (MMA)

PHASE IV – Knowledge Sharing

1. Presentation of accumulated Results, Findings and Recommendations, comments and finalization.
2. Develop materials to communicate project results and gather feedback on the project including:
 - The economic and community development success measures of a BIA community building
 - The indicators/measures
 - Future Data Collection
3. Develop and carry out the Communication Plan outlining how to share information with municipalities, BIAs and ministries. The Plan may include outreach through: BIA Conference or other Provincial Conferences, Open House, On-line Survey, Webinar, Planning, Environment, Resources and Land (PERL) Deputy Ministers' Committee.
4. Final Report – The Return on Investment (ROI) of BIAs and a perspective of a future state of BIAs and their development.



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