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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Ontario BIA Association Celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIAs

**September 16, 2020**

**Mississauga, Ontario** – Fifty years ago today, the first Business Improvement Area was created in Toronto. The Ontario Business Improvement Area Association is proud to celebrate work of the BIAs that have since been formed in Ontario, Canada and beyond. For 50 years, BIAs have been pivotal in main street community revitalization.

On September 16, 1970, Bloor West Village BIA in Toronto became the first BIA in the world when Ontario's Municipal Act was amended to include the enabling legislation. There are now more than 300 BIAs in Ontario, a growing list. Across Canada there are 500 BIAs (or their equivalent) and the idea has also spread worldwide, with BIAs (or their equivalents) in more than 10 countries around the world, such as US, UK, Scotland, Germany, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, China and India.

*"BIAs are integral to advancing distinct, livable, vibrant and resilient business community in Ontario and beyond, and arguably Ontario's (Toronto's) greatest export,"* says Kay Matthews, Executive Director of OBIAA. *"We're excited to see the idea spread and OBIAA strives to be pivotal in building capacity of our BIAs by providing a platform for sharing their wonderful ideas and best practices amongst our BIAs."*

*"The BIA program has had a profound impact on Toronto,"* says John Kiru, Executive Director of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA). *"It's helped businesses thrive. It's helped shape the neighbourhoods we call home. And the changes it's enabled in our communities has helped put Toronto on the map as a world-class destination."*

Today BIAs represents more than 100,000 businesses, 271 municipalities and a report \$56,000,000 in annual investment through a special levy on commercial tax bills.



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## ABOUT OBIAA:

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association, incorporated in 2001, supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues. [www.obiaa.com](http://www.obiaa.com)



### Municipal Act

Designation of improvement area

204 (1) A local municipality may designate an area as an improvement area and may establish a board of management,

- (a) to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally; and
- (b) to promote the area as a business or shopping area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (1).

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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