

BIA DELEGATION TOOLKIT

Empowering Ontario's BIAs to work Effectively with Municipal Council

Prepared by:

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WHAT IS A DELEGATION?



A delegation is a formal presentation made to the municipal council or one of its committees. It allows individuals or organizations like BIAs to share their perspectives, raise awareness, advocate for support, or respond to council decisions that may impact their communities.

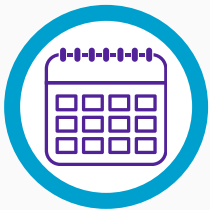
“Every successful delegation is an investment in your BIAs future.”



WHY SHOULD YOU DELEGATE?

Delegating provides your BIA the opportunity to:

- ✓ Advocate for funding, policy changes, or support.
- ✓ Educate council on your initiatives, impacts, and challenges.
- ✓ Influence decisions that directly affect your BIA and local businesses.
- ✓ Build Relationships with Councillors and municipal staff.
- ✓ Demonstrate Leadership and community stewardship.



WHEN SHOULD YOU DELEGATE?

Consider delegating when:

- A policy, budget, or municipal initiative impacts your BIA area or membership.
- You need to request support (e.g., funding, in-kind services, or partnership).
- You wish to celebrate or report on successes and outcomes.
- A local issue needs urgent attention or clarification.
- You want to raise awareness of your BIAs work and value.

Spring

- Event Launch (focus on the benefit to the community, where funding came from...)
- Beautification Project

RECOMMENDED

Fall

- Annual Report ([view sample](#)).
- Budget (if possible identify how your budget aligns with the Municipalities strategic plan)

HOW TO REQUEST A DELEGATION

It is always recommended to reach out to your municipal clerk to find out what the procedures are in your municipality, and if they have any requirements. Each municipality has its own process, but here is a general guide:

Visit Your Municipal Website:

Find the Delegation Request Form under Council or Clerk Services.

Submit a Request:

Complete and submit the form by the deadline (usually 1 week prior to the meeting).

Attach Presentation Materials:

Provide slides or handouts ahead of time, if required.

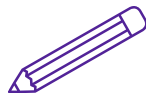
Wait for Confirmation:

You will receive a time slot and meeting details.

Prepare Your Remarks:

Stick to time limits (usually 5–10 minutes).

Checklist:



- ☐ Identify your objective & “ask”
- ☐ Confirm board support
- ☐ Select a spokesperson & co-presenter
- ☐ Review municipal procedures (consult Clerk)
- ☐ Submit delegation request
- ☐ Prepare slides, handouts, and speaking notes
- ☐ Practice, including Q&A



QUICK TIPS

- Sometimes you can only speak to an agenda item, ask the clerk first.
- Find out if handouts are allowed and if so how far in advance to they need to be shared.
- Your Council representatives should be informed of any delegation and it is recommended that you include them in the process.
- Visuals like, maps, stats & event photos go a long way.
- Take a photo, respectfully – for newsletters or social media.



- ✓ Be professional, clear, and focused
- ✓ Focus on outcomes
- ✓ Include visuals
- ✓ Reinforce your key message and ask
- ✓ Bring board/business members for support
- ✓ Include a visual handout & a thank you



- ✗ Criticize staff or council personally
- ✗ Go off-topic or exceed your time
- ✗ Read word-for-word
- ✗ Arrive unprepared or emotional



SAMPLE PRESENTATION STRUTURE

1. Introduction:

- Acknowledge Council & introduce BIA
- Distribute materials if not already done

2. BIA Snapshot:

- % of GDP, commercial tax base, events, tourism

3. Focus Topic:

- Event results, beautification ROI, attendance stats

4. Funding Use (if applicable):

- Impact across the municipality
- Tourism and economic development outcomes

5. Your Ask:

- Be specific, strategic, and connected to the municipal strategic plan

6. Closing:

- Thank them and invite questions

After Your Delegation

- Send thank-you emails to Mayor, Council, and Clerk
- Share highlights with your board and members
- Follow up with relevant staff
- Monitor minutes and decisions
- Record the outcome in your BIA file

Keep a Record



Maintain a Delegation Log with:

- Date and purpose
- Presentation materials used
- Who attended
- Outcome and follow-up actions

This will make annual planning and continuity much easier.

**Delegating = Advocacy +
Storytelling +
Stewardship**

- It's your chance to shape decisions and highlight impact
- Be strategic, prepared, and consistent
- With clear messages, strong visuals, and meaningful stories
- Always follow up with appreciation and continued dialogue



WALKING TOURS

Walking tours are one of the most effective tools BIAs have to show the “real story” of Main Streets. The topics will vary depending on whether you’re with city staff (operational / technical focus) or councillors/mayors (policy/funding/governance focus)



WHAT TO INCLUDE WITH CITY STAFF

- ☒ Maintenance & Infrastructure Needs (i.e. sidewalk conditions, accessibility gaps, lighting, street furniture)
- ☒ By-law and Enforcement Issues (i.e. property standards, vacant buildings)
- ☒ Waste & Cleanliness (i.e. waste receptacle placement, snow removal practices)
- ☒ Traffic & Parking Management (i.e. loading zones, short-term parking, bike lanes)
- ☒ Safety Concerns (i.e. alleyway conditions, loitering or vandalism hotspots)



QUICK TIPS

- **Show appreciation** – Acknowledge recent City actions or initiatives.
- **Collaborate** – Ask how you can support each other’s goals.
- **Set expectations** – Share an agenda in advance to avoid surprises, allow staff to prepare solutions and ensure the right staff attend.
- **Follow up** – Take notes (or photos) so you can track and act on next steps.

WITH COUNCILLORS/MAYORS/MPs/MPPs

- ☒ Economic Impact of the BIA (i.e. number of jobs supported)
- ☒ Housing Opportunities (i.e. upper-storey residential, affordable/missing middle)
- ☒ Public Safety (i.e. need for police presence, social service partnerships)
- ☒ Investment Needs (i.e. CIP examples, wayfinding signage...)
- ☒ Tourism & Placemaking (i.e. events, cultural draws or popular tourism destinations)
- ☒ Zoning (i.e. protecting ground-floor commercial, policy impacts)
- ☒ Partnership Opportunities (i.e. Council advocating for funding, alignment with BIA initiatives)
- ☒ Success Stories (i.e. revitalized storefronts, new businesses)



QUICK TIPS

- Try to stay positive
- Highlight the value of the BIA and what you are contributing
- Match your topic to what they are interested in
- Provide refreshments / lunch
- Identify something you are appreciative for or mention a City staff that has assisted
- Take a photo and do a social post to thank them



Links to Sample Templates

- ✉ [Email to Councillors Before Delegation](#)
- ✉ [Thank You Email Post Delegation](#)
- ✉ [Walking Tour Invitation](#)

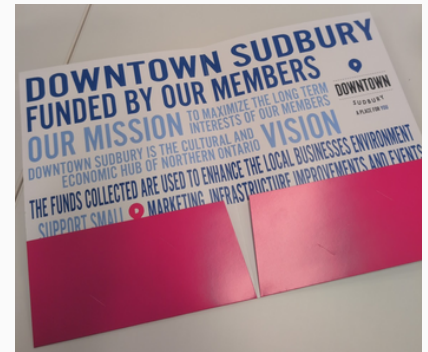
BEST PRACTICE



In Downtown Sudbury their physical materials are designed to strategically layer their "evergreen content"—the foundational identity of Downtown Sudbury.

The cover of their folder, for example, focuses on visual branding with a stylized map to immediately establish a strong sense of place. It's designed to be engaging and create a connection to the downtown area.

Once opened, the inside pockets lay out the core of their evergreen principles in detail: mission, vision, and funding model. This layered approach ensures that once someone is drawn in by Downtown Sudbury's visual brand, they can share the deeper substance of their purpose. Similarly, their meeting table, featuring a map of the BIA's geographic boundaries, constantly and visually grounds every conversation in the specific community they serve.



”

Your voice matters.
Your Main Street
matters. Make it heard”

OBIATMA

Contact Information



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