

## **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (BIA) EXERCISE**

With this hands-on task, we are providing you with an opportunity to take the first step in implementing your Business Improvement Area (BIA). This activity is not meant to give you all the answers. Instead, it should outline the initial steps for you to establish your own BIA.

Let's begin!

### **STEP 1 – Create your Team**

Who should be a part of your team? Think about involving well-established property owners, important commercial renters as well as other individuals interested in creating a successful business environment in your neighbourhood. Your knowledge of the business community in your area should make a difference at this point. Always remember that your team will be guiding the BIA plan.

### **STEP 2 – Contact Elected Officials and/or Representatives of Other Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in your City**

Who are the individuals that have experience, expertise, and are positioned to provide your team with advice? Consider meeting with key mentors and supporters to discuss the best steps to developing and implementing BIAs in your neighbourhood. Before the meeting, it's important to make a list of questions to assist your group in gathering as much information as possible.

### **STEP 3 – What problem are you trying to solve?**

What is the main problem facing your neighbourhood that should be solved through the establishment of a BIA? When defining your problem in the meeting, remember that you are walking a fine line at this stage. Your role is to be a steady hand toward the establishment of clear objectives by fostering dialogue without alienating the remaining members of your team at the same time.

**STEP 4 – Host a Public Meeting**

How can you mobilize enough support in your neighbourhood to make your BIA achievable? The answer is to organize a public event to expose the impact of your BIA, the problem you’re trying to solve, share information, gain support, and understand how to establish it through a plan. Also, don’t forget to invite the external supporters and mentors to provide credibility to your idea during the meeting. To accomplish a public meeting, you need to outline key details of the event first.

**STEP 5 – Finance your Business Improvement Area**

Where will the funding for your BIA come from? You should first research how BIAs are funded through the property tax levy and how that is determined and collected through the city. In addition, invite city officials and/or representatives of other BIAs to explain and illustrate these key practices. In the end, you and your team should provide detailed information on how your BIA will be funded and its impact.

**STEP 6 – Formally Apply to your City to Establish your Business Improvement Area**

What is the process that you and your team need to go through to start a BIA? If you are unable to create a BIA through your city government, will you establish a nonprofit? What is the necessary supporting documentation for the application? Use the space below to answer these two key questions with your team by consulting your mentors and supporters in case of important questions or concerns.

**Now you have all the key information for your Business Improvement Area (BIA). Congratulations and good luck with your initiative!**