



CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development Division

TO: Chair and Members General Issues Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: WARDS 1,2,3,4,6,7,9,11,12, 13 and 15
COMMITTEE DATE: November 14, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: The Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (H.A.B.I.A.) Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan (PED11193) (Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15)	
SUBMITTED BY: Tim McCabe General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department	PREPARED BY: Eileen Maloney 905-546-2632
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) That the Terms of Reference for the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas, attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED11193, be received and approved;
- b) That the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas Strategic Plan: 2011-2014, attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED11193, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010, the City, in consultation with the Concession Street, Downtown Dundas, Ottawa Street, Waterdown, and Westdale Business Improvement Areas (B.I.A.s), retained Urban Marketing Collaborative to undertake a review of the original Commercial Market Assessments of the above referenced B.I.A.s that were completed in 2003. Findings from the reports were presented to the members of the Planning Committee and were received by Council in April 2010. The five (5) updated reports all

identified that, “There may be a need for a strategic review of the role and structure of HABIA, especially in light of the increased number of BIAs, their different needs and the wide range of issues they may have.”

In July 2011, the City retained LURA Consulting to undertake a strategic review of the role and structure of H.A.B.I.A. and to prepare a strategic plan for H.A.B.I.A. The scope of work for the project did require that the Consultant prepare a Terms of Reference for H.A.B.I.A. and a Strategic Plan for H.A.B.I.A., attached to Report PED11193, as Appendix “A” and “B”, respectively. The Terms of Reference outline H.A.B.I.A.’s vision, goals and values, their membership composition, and their governance and operation structure.

In preparation of the reports, the Consultant met with each B.I.A., members of City Council and members of staff and facilitated three (3) strategic planning workshops with the members of H.A.B.I.A. The draft reports were presented to the members of H.A.B.I.A. and the final draft reports were distributed to each B.I.A. and member of H.A.B.I.A. for review.

“Alternatives for Considerations – see Page 5.”

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

There are no financial, staffing or legal implications arising from approval of this Report’s recommendation. Urban Renewal staff currently provide administrative support to H.A.B.I.A.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Prior to 2001, there were eight (8) B.I.A.s within the City of Hamilton; Barton Village, Concession Street, Downtown Hamilton, International Village, King West, Main West Esplanade, Ottawa Street and Westdale Village. The “B.I.A. and Business Association Coordinating Committee” existed, whereby, representatives from the B.I.A.s and business associations met on a regular basis to share information and discuss issues of common concern.

In 2001, during amalgamation, it was identified that the Towns of Dundas, Stoney Creek and Flamborough (Waterdown) had established B.I.A.s within their municipalities. The amalgamation brought the total B.I.A.s within the City of Hamilton to eleven (11). Since then, two new B.I.A.s have been designated, the Locke Street B.I.A. in 2006 and the Ancaster B.I.A. in 2008. Currently, there are thirteen (13) B.I.A.s within the City of Hamilton.

During 2001, the name of the “B.I.A. and Business Association Coordinating Committee” changed and has since been known as the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (H.A.B.I.A.). H.A.B.I.A. is a forum wherein representatives from each of the B.I.A.s meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues and concerns of mutual interest and to collectively identify solutions. The Committee is a great resource for the members because of the sharing of information and ideas. Many times B.I.A.s find successful solutions to problems that other B.I.A.s have faced. The forum also provides an opportunity for City staff to attend the meetings, sharing and gathering information on issues and policies that affect small businesses throughout the City.

In 2010, the City in consultation with the Concession Street, Downtown Dundas, Ottawa Street, Waterdown, and Westdale Business Improvement Areas, retained Urban Marketing Collaborative to undertake a review of the original Commercial Market Assessments of the above referenced B.I.A.s that were completed in 2003. Findings from the reports were presented to the members of the Planning Committee and were received by Council in April 2010. The five (5) updated reports all identified that, “There may be a need for a strategic review of the role and structure of HABIA, especially in light of the increased number of BIAs, their different needs and the wide range of issues they may have.”

In July 2011, the City retained LURA Consulting to undertake a strategic review of the role and structure of H.A.B.I.A. and to prepare a strategic plan for H.A.B.I.A. The scope of work for the project did require that the Consultant prepare a Terms of Reference for H.A.B.I.A. and a Strategic Plan for H.A.B.I.A., attached to Report PED11193, as Appendix “A” and “B”, respectively.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The consultant organized meetings with each of the B.I.A.s and members of City Council. The consultant facilitated three (3) strategic planning workshops with the members of H.A.B.I.A. The consultant also met with relevant staff from the Planning and Economic Development and Public Works Departments.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

The designation of Business Improvement Areas and the Boards of Management are establishment by a municipal by-law. B.I.A.s allow local business people and commercial/industrial property owners and their tenants to join together with the support of the municipality, to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that which is provided at the expense of the municipality and to promote the area as a business or shopping area. The membership of H.A.B.I.A. is comprised of representatives from each active B.I.A. Meeting once a month, H.A.B.I.A. provides a forum for staff to receive input from the B.I.A.s on various policies or initiatives that may affect small businesses throughout the City. Staff is often directed by Council to receive input from H.A.B.I.A. respecting policy, procedure and by-law recommendations.

The Terms of Reference, attached to Report PED11193 as Appendix “A”, defines the vision, goals and values of H.A.B.I.A. The priorities listed in the document endorse the value of collaboration amongst the B.I.A.s and it is recognized that H.A.B.I.A. provides them the forum to work together. The document defines who will comprise the committee and outlines the conditions and commitment of the membership. A representative selected by Council will be a non-voting member of H.A.B.I.A. The roles of the Chair, Vice-chair and Treasurer are defined. They will be nominated positions established through a majority vote of the members of H.A.B.I.A. using a secret voting process. The structure of the meetings and the voting procedure and decision making process have been developed. Decision-making will be based on the principle that everyone has a right to express their opinion. A consensus-based approach is the preferred method of operation for H.A.B.I.A. – where members seek general agreement on issues and recommendations. When consensus cannot be achieved, H.A.B.I.A. members will conduct a vote and the vote can only be taken when quorum is achieved. A recorded vote can be requested by any member of H.A.B.I.A. immediately before or after a vote takes place. The minutes of H.A.B.I.A. meetings will regularly be distributed to members of Council and relevant City departments.

The H.A.B.I.A. Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan provide the footprint for the B.I.A.s throughout the City to collectively work together in an effort to enhance the economic well-being of the City of Hamilton.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

Council may choose to not endorse the Terms of Reference for H.A.B.I.A. Staff does not recommend this alternative as it would leave H.A.B.I.A. without a clear Terms of Reference by which they are governed. Their ability to move forward with their mandate and implementation of their strategic plan may be hindered and less efficient.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability,
3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development,
6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Growing Our Economy

- ◆ H.A.B.I.A. initiatives help retain and attract businesses

Healthy Community

- ◆ H.A.B.I.A. is involved in developing and implementing local solutions

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix “A” to Report PED11193 – H.A.B.I.A. Terms of Reference
Appendix “B” to Report PED11193 – Strategic Plan for H.A.B.I.A.

EM/dkm

Hamilton Association for Business Improvement Areas Terms of Reference

Last Updated – October 2011

1) Vision

“The Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (HABIA) promotes supports and advocates for businesses within BIAs.

We innovate and work collaboratively with partners to create unique places to live, work, play, learn, shop, and invest.”

2) Goals

- a) HABIA acts as a unique voice for designated business districts.
- b) HABIA focuses on the following five strategic areas:
 - i) Advocate collectively for small businesses;
 - ii) Develop and lead initiatives that improve the prosperity and competitiveness of small businesses within BIAs;
 - iii) Market and promote designated business districts;
 - iv) Provide leadership, support, and guidance to local BIAs; and,
 - v) Develop strategies and plans that foster a sense of community and support the creation of aesthetically pleasing, livable, walkable, and complete communities.

3) Values

- a) HABIA believes in the values of respect, intentionality, collaboration, accountability, and fairness.
 - i) *Respect*: HABIA works constructively to resolve issues that are impacting small businesses within BIAs. HABIA is run in a manner that optimizes available resources and uses volunteer and board members’ time efficiently.
 - ii) *Purposeful*: HABIA strives to resolve issues and develop strategies and actions that benefit small businesses in BIAs.

- iii) *Collaboration*: HABIA works with each BIA and strategic partners, including governmental organizations, to exchange information and leverage existing resources.
- iv) *Accountability*: HABIA voices member concerns to decision-makers in a timely and unbiased manner. HABIA operates in a transparent manner to ensure resources are used for the sole purpose of helping BIAs, and subsequently small businesses, to flourish.
- v) *Fairness*: At all times, HABIA provides fair and equal opportunities for all BIAs to participate and have representation at HABIA.

4) Our Priorities

- a) The following statements clarify our priorities as an association:
 - i) We are entrusted by small businesses in BIAs to use their resources in a responsible manner;
 - ii) BIAs need to work together and share information / resources;
 - iii) Small business is an economic driver in the City of Hamilton;
 - iv) Services provided within BIAs must be fair and equitable across the City of Hamilton;
 - v) Small businesses must voice their concerns and success stories to local, provincial, and federal governments;
 - vi) Complete, sustainable neighbourhoods and business districts that foster a sense of community are vital to the City of Hamilton;
 - vii) Healthy and vibrant business districts are important for local tourism and attracting new residents in the City of Hamilton;
 - viii) Education and awareness of the opportunities and importance of supporting small businesses is needed in the City of Hamilton;
 - ix) Beautification and place-making is essential for attracting shoppers to business districts; and,
 - x) We must push the envelope and develop innovative/creative solutions for small business so they remain prosperous for years to come.

5) Membership

a) Membership Composition:

- i) Membership is voluntary and open to participation from all active BIAs who express written or verbal interest to the Chair.
- ii) It is required that each BIA involved designate one (1) representative and two (2) alternates to attend HABIA meetings and participate in the ongoing functions of HABIA. Both primary representatives and designates must be a BIA Executive Director / Coordinator or a designated representative of the same BIA.
- iii) A representative selected by Council at the City of Hamilton will be a non-voting member of HABIA.

b) Membership Conditions and Commitment:

- i) Upon accepting membership of HABIA, each member, and their designate, agree to abide by HABIA's terms of reference as well as the following:
 - (1) Members are asked to review all documents, agendas, and meeting minutes presented to them so that they can participate meaningfully and make informed decisions / recommendations.
 - (2) Members commit to respect that each member has the right to their opinion. Members agree to discuss their respective views and opinions openly while also listening to other members. No member shall be deemed to have precedence or seniority over another member.
 - (3) Members strive to operate in a consensus mode and seek to develop common ground on areas of disagreement to the best of their ability.
 - (4) Members agree that BIA representatives (or their designate) will brief BIAs on HABIA's functions, decisions, and discussions on an ongoing basis to ensure HABIA meetings run efficiently and effectively and appropriate feedback (where required) is given from the BIA to HABIA.
 - (5) Members are advised that they are not to speak to the media on behalf of HABIA and will refer all media inquiries to the Chair or designated spokesperson (if applicable).
 - (6) Members agree to participate at HABIA meetings as a representative of their BIA and to actively update their organization to ensure they are provided with all relevant and necessary information.
 - (7) Members will adhere to ground rules and effective team characteristics established in 2005 (refer to Appendix A).

c) Term of Membership

- i) HABIA membership functions on a two year rotation. After two years, the BIA will be asked to provide their designate and alternate members for HABIA meetings. Note, existing designates and alternates can be reinstated to HABIA at the discretion of the BIA.

d) Relinquishing Membership

- i) HABIA members will notify the Chair if they wish to withdraw from HABIA for any reason. A member that has relinquished their membership has the right to rejoin HABIA at any point should they decide to do so.

6) Roles and Responsibilities

a) Chair

- i) The Term of the Chair is for one year.
- ii) The role of the Chair is a nominated position established through a majority vote of the members of HABIA using a secret ballot voting process.
- iii) The Chair will be a member of HABIA.
- iv) The Chair is expected to attend all HABIA meetings. If unable to attend the Chair will notify the Vice-Chair to serve in his/her place.
- v) When in attendance the Chair will preside over all meetings, moderating discussions and ensuring that all HABIA members have an opportunity to be heard. The Chair must act in an impartial manner, preserving order and decorum.
- vi) The Chair shall be the only spokesperson authorized to speak publicly for HABIA unless another individual is expressly delegated this responsibility with HABIA approval. Note, if a City Councillor is selected to Chair HABIA, a separate spokesperson must be designated.
- vii) Chair will be required to participate in media training offered by the City of Hamilton.

b) Vice-Chair

- i) The Term of the Vice-Chair is for one year.
- ii) The Vice-Chair will act as the Chair in his/her absence.
- iii) The role of the Vice-Chair is a nominated position established through a formal motion by a member. When more than one motion exists, a secret ballot voting process will be conducted in a similar manner for the position of Chair outlined above.

- iv) The Vice-Chair is expected to monitor and report to the group on an ongoing basis the implementation of HABIA's strategic plan.
- c) Treasurer
 - i) The Treasurer is responsible for managing HABIA finances in an open and transparent manner providing regular reports and updates as directed by the committee.
 - ii) The role of the Treasurer is a nominated position established through a formal motion by a member. When more than one motion exists, a secret ballot voting process is required. Note, the Chair or Vice-Chair can act as the Treasurer of the committee if so desired.
- d) City of Hamilton
 - i) Co-ordinator of the BIAs ("Co-ordinator")
 - (1) The Co-ordinator will also act as a resource to HABIA and will provide relevant and timely updates to HABIA on City functions, policies, and procedures that impact or have a potential impact on BIAs.
 - (2) The Co-ordinator will attend each HABIA meeting.
 - (3) The Co-ordinator is responsible for preparing and circulating succinct meeting agendas and minutes as outlined in Section 8.
 - (4) When needed, the Co-ordinator will provide logistical support to connect HABIA with appropriate staff members and City resources.
 - (5) The Co-ordinator will maintain backup copies of meeting minutes, agendas, and other HABIA documents.
 - (6) The Co-ordinator will circulate meeting minutes.
 - ii) Other City of Hamilton staff and Council members are permitted to attend HABIA meetings. Should a representative from the City of Hamilton want to address HABIA, a delegation request must be made to both the Chair and Vice-Chair no later than three business days before a meeting. If no delegation request is made, these individuals are welcome to attend the meeting as a public observer.
- e) Vacancies
 - i) The seat of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer becomes vacant when:
 - (1) Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer is absent from HABIA meetings for three (3) consecutive meetings. Upon failing to attend two (2) consecutive meetings, HABIA shall send a notice to the individual advising that upon a third (3rd) failure to attend, HABIA shall recommend that the individual be removed from their position. The HABIA membership, local Councillor

and Co-ordinator of BIAs will be copied on the notice sent to the individual.

(2) Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer resigns in writing to HABIA with the letter copied to the local Councillor and Co-ordinator of BIAs.

f) Other Appointments

i) At the discretion of HABIA, other appointments can be made when appropriate.

7) Absenteeism

- a) Each member commits to attending monthly HABIA meetings. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, notification must be sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair prior to a meeting taking place. If a representative is unable to attend, appropriate arrangements should be made to have their one of their alternates attend the meeting on their behalf.
- b) If both a member and the alternates are absent for two consecutive meetings, that member and designates will be contacted by the Chair to discuss their participation on HABIA.
- c) If a member is then absent for a third consecutive meeting, the BIA will receive a letter from the Chair. The Chair will copy HABIA members, the local Councillor, and the Co-ordinator of BIAs on this letter.

8) Meetings

a) Regular Meeting Time

i) Meetings will be held monthly in accordance with the schedule agreed to by HABIA members.

b) Location of Meetings

i) HABIA meetings will be held at City Hall or, as agreed upon by members, at alternate venues that HABIA members deem appropriate. The Co-ordinator of BIAs will be responsible for booking meeting space at City Hall and notifying the Chair and Vice-Chair of the meeting location. The Chair will be responsible for booking meet space at alternate venues as required.

c) Rules of Procedure

i) As applicable, the rules governing the procedure of the Council shall be observed at HABIA meetings by the membership. When rules have not been outlined in this Terms of Reference or inadequate examples exist in the Procedural By-Law for Council, proceedings will follow parliamentary procedures outlined in the latest version of *Bourinot's Rules of Order*.

d) Agenda and Minutes

i) Agendas

- (1) The Co-ordinator of BIAs is responsible for preparing and circulating the meeting agendas no later than one week prior to a HABIA meeting.
- (2) Meeting agendas for regular HABIA meetings will be brief and include the following:
 - (a) Declaration of Conflict of Interest
 - (b) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
 - (c) Approval/Changes to the Agenda
 - (d) Roundtable Discussion
 - (e) Update on Strategic Plan Success/Challenges
 - (f) Delegations
 - (g) HABIA Program Reporting / General Information / Other Business
 - (h) Next Meeting Location and Future Agenda Items
 - (i) Adjournment

ii) Minutes

- (1) The Co-ordinator of BIAs will take minutes during meetings and circulate succinct summaries within one week following a HABIA meeting. To review a sample template for meeting minutes, please see Appendix B.
- (2) The Co-ordinator of BIAs is responsible for circulating meeting minutes to the following parties:
 - (a) General Issues Committee
 - (b) Planning and Economic Development Department
 - (c) Public Works Department
 - (d) Small Business Enterprise Centre
 - (e) Other parties as deemed appropriate by HABIA
- (3) Amendments to the minutes, if required, will be dealt with in the subsequent HABIA meeting

e) Quorum

- i) The quorum for HABIA meetings shall be half of the membership rounded up to the nearest whole number.

b) Voting Procedures / Decision Making

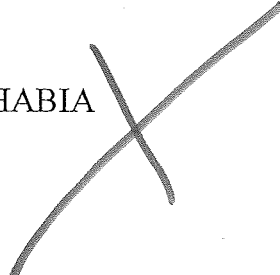
- i) Decision-making will be based on the principle that everyone has a right to express their opinion. A consensus-based approach is the preferred method of operation for HABIA – where members seek general agreement on issues and recommendations.
 - ii) When consensus is cannot be achieved, HABIA members will perform a vote according to the voting procedures listed below. A vote can only be taken when quorum is achieved:
 - (1) Each BIA member (or designated alternate) at HABIA is entitled to one vote.
 - (2) Decisions will be made by a vote greater than 50% of members in attendance at a meeting.
 - (3) A recorded vote can be requested by any member of HABIA immediately before or after a vote takes place. If a request is made, the Co-ordinator of BIAs shall record the name (including BIA) and vote of every HABIA member in the meeting minutes.
 - (4) When requested, an individual can also request that a summary of their objection to a decision be included in the meeting minutes.
 - (5) Except for the election of HABIA positions, no vote shall be taken by ballot or by any other method of secret voting.
 - iii) Overturning a decisions
 - (1) To overturn a decision, two thirds of HABIA members must vote in opposition to the original vote.
- c) Delegations
- i) Persons who wish to attend HABIA meetings to present information, ask for feedback, or provide an update to the membership must make a request no later than three days before a meeting. Delegations shall be limited to a presentation of no more than 15 minutes (including an opportunity for questions/comments following a presentation).
 - ii) A delegation request must be sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair no later than three days prior to a HABIA meeting so it can be included on the following meeting agenda. A request should include the person's name, organization, contact information, and reason for the delegation. Note, if a member of HABIA would like to obtain endorsement/support from the committee on an issue that impacts their individual BIA, a delegation request should be made prior to a meeting.
 - iii) A summary of the delegation should be provided to the Chair and Vice-Chair, along with any other relevant background information, so it can be provided to the HABIA membership in advance of the meeting.

- iv) Delegations can be made by more than one person; however, the presentation is limited to 15 minutes.
- v) At the discretion of the Chair, delegations can exceed the allotted 15 minutes.
- d) Subcommittees
 - i) Where appropriate, HABIA can establish subcommittees to deal with specific areas of interest/concern.
- e) Public observers
 - i) HABIA meetings shall be open to members of the public, other BIA members, and interested stakeholders. Members of the public who attend HABIA meetings agree that their role is to observe meeting procedures from "public seats" and shall not be given opportunities to speak unless a delegation request is made.

9) Conflict of Interest

- a) Members must declare a conflict of interest after approval/changes are made to HABIA meeting agendas. A conflict of interest may arise when a HABIA member has or represents interests that could compete with those of the committee.

10) Amendments to the Terms of Reference:

- a) The Terms of Reference may be amended periodically by consensus of HABIA members.
- 

Appendix A: Ground Rules and Effective Team Characteristics

Meeting Ground Rules (Developed in 2005)

- Respect start and stop times
- All contributions are welcome and weighted the same
- Constructive ideas only
- Focus on interests – not positions
- No sidebar conversations
- Realistic agenda – with timelines for items
- All comments through the Chair
- Every agenda item concludes with an action
- No sarcasm or personal attacks – differences of opinion are welcome
- Review ground rules at every meeting

Effective Team Characteristics (Developed in 2005)

- A lot more is accomplished when working in numbers
- Everyone has a place on the team and everyone is equally important
- There is respect for differing opinions
- It's okay for people to leave the team and the team can move forward
- Leadership is the responsibility of all team members
- New BIA team members are welcome
- There is support for leaders and the leaders rotate
- There is caring for team members
- Individual BIAs have support from HABIA
- The team will go through difficult times and deal with difficult issues but will be able to regroup and move on

Appendix B: Sample Meeting Minutes

Hamilton Association for Business Improvement Areas

Draft Meeting Minutes – Insert Date, Time, Location

Summary of Action Items from HABIA Meeting held on INSERT DATE

Action Item #	Action Item / Resolution	Individual(s) Responsible for Action Item

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- None or Insert Name and Conflict

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Approved, Rejected, or Approved with the following changes

Approval/Changes to the Agenda

- Approved or Approved with the following changes

Roundtable Discussion

- Name of BIA which contributed

Update on Strategic Plan Success/Challenges (begins 30 minutes after scheduled start time)

- Insert action taken or challenges encountered, providing reference to the goal it fall under in the strategic plan.

Delegations

- Insert Contact Information and Delegation Topic. Attach delegation request and other information in appendices as appropriate.

H.A.B.I.A. Program Reporting / General Information / Other Business

- Text as appropriate

Next Meeting Location and Agenda Items

- Insert next meeting date and location
- Insert new items for inclusion

Adjourn - (Insert Time)

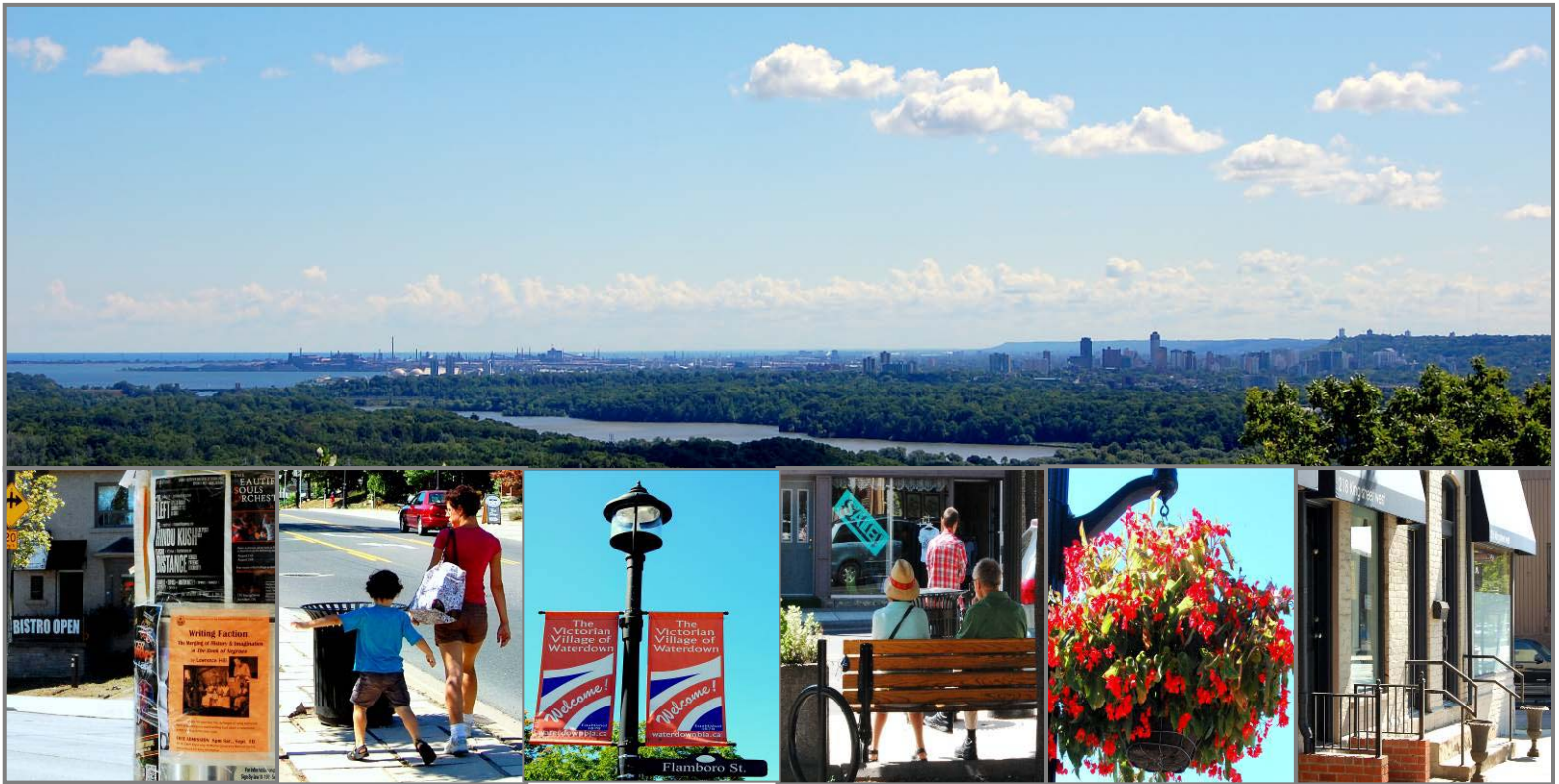
APPENDIX A: LIST OF MEETING ATTENDEES

Name	Organization (if any)
HABIA Members	
City of Hamilton Staff	
Delegates and Members of the Public	

APPENDIX B: Recorded Vote Form

Summary of Issue Requiring a Recorded Vote:	
HABIA Member:	Vote:
Summary of Objections (if required):	
HABIA Member:	
Objection:	

Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas Strategic Plan: 2011-2014



Prepared by:



{ This page has been intentionally left blank }

Table of Contents

Background	1
History	1
Strategic Planning Process.....	2
Strategic Plan 2011-2014.....	3
Vision	3
Values	3
Goals.....	4
2011 – 2014 Action Plan	5
<i>Goal 1: Advocate collectively for small businesses</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Goal 2: Develop and lead initiatives that improve the prosperity and competitiveness of small businesses within BIAs</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Goal 3: Market and Promote Designated Business Districts</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Goal 4: Provide leadership, support, and guidance to local BIAs</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Goal 5: Develop strategies and plans that foster a sense of community and support the creation of aesthetically pleasing, livable, walkable, and complete communities</i>	<i>10</i>
Reporting and Monitoring	11

Acknowledgements

The Project Team is grateful for the ongoing support of Hamilton's Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). The following BIAs dedicated their time to participate in the strategic planning process (in alphabetical order):

- Ancaster Business Improvement Area
- Barton Village Business Improvement Area
- Concession Street Business Improvement Area
- Downtown Hamilton Business Improvement Area
- Dundas Business Improvement Area
- International Village Business Improvement Area
- King Street West Business Improvement Area
- Locke Street Business Improvement Area
- Ottawa Street Business Improvement Area
- Stoney Creek Business Improvement Area
- Waterdown Business Improvement Area
- Westdale Village Business Improvement Area

The Project Team would also like to thank the following City Councillors for their participation in the strategic planning process:

- Councillor Brad Clark
- Councillor Chad Collins
- Councillor Scott Duvall
- Councillor Jason Farr
- Councillor Tom Jackson
- Councillor Brian McHattie
- Councillor Sam Merulla
- Councillor Judi Partridge
- Councillor Russ Powers
- Councillor Terry Whitehead

Background

HABIA is an arm's length association, independent from the City of Hamilton. For over ten years the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (HABIA) has been working collaboratively with its partners to improve conditions for small businesses in Hamilton's BIAs.

History

In 2001, the City of Hamilton amalgamated with Ancaster, Dundas, Glanbrook, Stoney Creek and Flamborough. The Towns of Dundas, Stoney Creek and Flamborough (Waterdown) had established Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) within their Municipalities. Prior to 2001, there were eight (8) BIAs within the City of Hamilton; Barton Village, Concession Street, Downtown Hamilton, International Village, King West, Main West Esplanade, Ottawa Street, and Westdale Village. The amalgamation brought the total BIAs within the City of Hamilton to eleven (11). Since, two new BIAs have been designated, the Locke Street BIA in 2006 and the Ancaster BIA in 2008. Currently, there are thirteen (13) BIAs within the City of Hamilton.

Prior to 2001, the BIA and Business Association Coordinating Committee existed, whereby, representatives from the BIAs and business associations met on a regular basis sharing information and discussing issues of common concern. During 2001, the name of the committee changed and has since been known as the Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (HABIA).

HABIA is a forum where representatives from each of the BIAs meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues and concerns of mutual interest and to collectively identify solutions. The committee is a great resource for the members because of the sharing of information and ideas. Many times BIAs find successful solutions to problems that other BIAs have faced. The forum also provides an opportunity for City Staff to attend the meetings, sharing and gathering information on issues and policies that affect small businesses throughout the City.

Strategic Planning Process

In July 2011, the City of Hamilton initiated a strategic review of HABIA in order to define the role and structure of the committee and create an updated strategic plan.

The review was conducted in a collaborative manner, providing equal opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in the process. In order to ensure there were ample opportunities to receive input/feedback, the Project Team conducted interviews with representatives from each BIA in the City of Hamilton as well as with several members of City Council. These interviews provided the Project Team with a baseline understanding of the current role and structure of HABIA as well as potential areas for improvement.

In addition, two strategic planning workshops were held on August 23 and August 30, 2011. These workshops were organized in a sequential manner, working with individuals to conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges assessment and taking those results to collectively review the committee's vision, goals/objectives, and action plan for 2011-2014 as well as draft a Terms of Reference for the committee.

Following the two strategic planning workshops, the Project Team prepared draft versions of the committee's Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan (2011-2014) were circulated to all current members of HABIA for review. On September 28, a third workshop was held to conduct a final review of the draft materials and gain support from HABIA members for the Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan (2011-2014). The documents were well received by HABIA members and all who attended agreed to conduct a detailed review of the documents following the workshop. Revised copies of the Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan (2011-2014) were circulated to HABIA members on September 29 for final review and comment by October 5.

Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Vision

“The Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas (HABIA) promotes supports and advocates for businesses within BIAs.

We innovate and work collaboratively with partners to create unique places to live, work, play, learn, shop, and invest.”

Values

Throughout our ongoing functions as a committee, HABIA believes in the values of respect, intentionality, collaboration, accountability, and fairness.

- *Respect:* HABIA works constructively to resolve issues that are impacting small businesses within Hamilton’s designated business districts. HABIA is run in a manner that optimizes available resources and uses volunteer and board members’ time efficiently.
- *Intentionality:* HABIA strives to resolve issues and develop strategies and actions that benefit small businesses in Hamilton’s small business districts.
- *Collaboration:* HABIA works with each BIA and strategic partners, including governmental organizations, to exchange information and leverage existing resources.
- *Accountability:* HABIA voices member concerns to decision-makers in a timely and unbiased manner. HABIA operates in a transparent manner to ensure resources are used for the sole purpose of assisting BIAs, and subsequently small businesses, to flourish in the City of Hamilton.
- *Fairness:* At all times, HABIA provides fair and proportionate opportunities for all BIAs to participate and have representation at HABIA

Goals

HABIA acts as unique voice for designated business districts. Thus, our aim is to promote, support, and enhance BIAs in their work to ensure small businesses thrive in the City of Hamilton.

To that end, the association is committed to achieving the following goals that will help make our vision for HABIA a reality:

- Advocate collectively for small businesses;
- Develop and lead initiatives that improve the prosperity and competitiveness of small businesses within BIAs;
- Market and promote designated business districts;
- Provide leadership, support, and guidance to local BIAs; and,
- Develop strategies and plans that foster a sense of community and support the creation of aesthetically pleasing, livable, walkable, and complete communities.

2011 – 2014 Action Plan

Our strategic goals direct the work of HABIA and provide the basis for the action plan identified below. It is imperative that this plan be treated as a living document which guides the ongoing work of the committee. The goals, strategies, and actions outlined will be reviewed continually to ensure appropriate actions can be taken when opportunities become apparent.

Goal 1: Advocate collectively for small businesses

Strategies

- Advocate for solutions that meet the unique needs of businesses within each of Hamilton's BIAs
- Regularly communicate successes to external partners (e.g. City of Hamilton, Provincial Ministries/Agencies, Local Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Seek public support from Council
- Work with the Economic Development Department to showcase small businesses and include them in their long-term economic development strategies
- Advocate for additional BIA funding
- Explore the viability of hiring an Executive Director for HABIA
- Become a party that is circulated planning and building applications that impact local BIAs.

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Ask council to publicly support/endorse HABIA's vision	Council Representative	2011
Make a year-end presentation to council	Chair	2011
Reach consensus on who speaks to media	HABIA	2011
Circulate meeting minutes to council, committees, and City Departments; formalize reporting to the City	Co-ordinator of BIAs	2011
Investigate potential operating grants for HABIA (e.g. to hire an Executive Director)	HABIA Subcommittee	2011
Develop reporting template/framework for an annual report	HABIA	2012
Apply for operating grants (e.g. to hire an Executive Director)	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Request retail sector representation on the Tourism Board	HABIA	2013 / Ongoing

Goal 2: Develop and lead initiatives that improve the prosperity and competitiveness of small businesses within BIAs

Strategies

- Examine and provide input into municipal, provincial, and federal policies and programs that effect small businesses
- Monitor service inequities across the City and advocate for fairness
- Research and report on policies and initiatives used in other jurisdictions that support small businesses
- Advocate for and provide input on how to streamline processes at City Hall for businesses within BIAs
- Encourage policies that foster small business development

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Request all BIAs to put HABIA on their agendas	HABIA	2011
Report the average length of time required to receive permits / approval for businesses	HABIA	2011
Conduct an inventory of vacant properties within BIAs	HABIA Subcommittee	2011
Assist BIAs in establishing service agreements with Public Works	HABIA / Public Works	2012
Explore group purchasing opportunities (e.g. planter watering)	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Meet twice with local MPs and MPPs to lobby on taxation/capping	Chair / Vice-Chair	2012
Explore a group Visa/MasterCard program for all BIAs	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Explore group liability insurance packages for BIAs	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Investigate the potential for hosting an annual conference for BIA employees and board members to learn about grants, new planning approaches, etc.	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Host an annual BIA conference	HABIA Subcommittee	2013 / Ongoing

Goal 3: Market and Promote Designated Business Districts

Strategies

- Increase understanding of both HABIA and BIAs amongst the media and general populous
- Promote small businesses through local and regional tourism organizations
- Ensure there is a two-way exchange of information between key partners (e.g. City of Hamilton, Tourism Hamilton, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Develop working relationships with media outlets
- Recognize and celebrate the success of individual BIAs
- Develop marketing strategies that cross promote BIAs
- Assist BIAs with special event themes that may complement each other
- Encourage individual BIAs to have a link to other BIAs and HABIA

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Invite media to attend HABIA meetings	Chair	2011
Investigate the feasibility of creating a website for HABIA	HABIA	2011
Continue the BIA award program	HABIA Subcommittee	2011
Develop a Communications Plan which includes a proactive media relations strategy	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Develop a HABIA website to market BIAs and provide education materials, including information available to the broader public about their importance	HABIA	2012
Write quarterly newsletters for circulation across the City	HABIA	2012
Develop a shop local campaign with the Economic Development Department	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Explore funding/grant opportunities for a broad based marketing strategy	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Get volunteers to write pieces for community newspapers	HABIA	2013 / Ongoing
Explore opportunities to become involved in Tourism Hamilton	HABIA	2013 / Ongoing

Goal 4: Provide leadership, support, and guidance to local BIAs

Strategies

- Explore group professional development opportunities for BIA staff and boards
- Provide human resources advice to BIA boards of management
- Establish a mentorship program for new BIA staff
- Assist BIAs with governance issues

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Communicate the Terms of Reference, vision, role and structure of HABIA to local BIA boards	Chair / Vice-Chair	2011
Develop / obtain materials to ensure good governance of BIAs	HABIA / Co-ordinator of BIAs	2012
Define a process for sharing governance / Human Resource information	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Establish a recruitment/mentorship program for new BIAs and staff	HABIA Subcommittee	2012
Establish a voluntary BIA levy contribution program to create funding for HABIA	HABIA Subcommittee	2013 / Ongoing
Explore pooling resources for group training	HABIA Subcommittee	2013 / Ongoing
Explore the option of partnering with the City of Hamilton to host governance training for board members and BIA employees	HABIA / Co-ordinator of BIAs	2013 / Ongoing

Goal 5: Develop strategies and plans that foster a sense of community and support the creation of aesthetically pleasing, livable, walkable, and complete communities

Strategies

- Build a suggested timetable and schedule for implementation of beautification elements for BIAs which are nearly established (e.g. gateways within 3 years)
- Continue to research beautification / placemaking projects BIAs can undertake
- Working collaboratively with strategic partners to advocate for creative beautification / placemaking projects within BIAs that foster their unique sense of identity.
- Generate community pride through improving the image of BIAs
- Participate in local planning processes that impacts BIAs
- Develop a 'shopping list' of beautification strategies/items for consideration and potential sources of supply

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Advertise volunteer opportunities within local BIAs for community improvement projects (e.g. cleanups)	HABIA	2011
Research funding/grant opportunities for beautification	HABIA Subcommittee	2011
Work with Public Works to develop a menu or list of potential services available to BIAs on an annual basis	HABIA / Public Works	2012
Prioritize available grants and apply for funding	HABIA	2012
Develop resources BIAs can use for long range planning	HABIA	2012

Reporting and Monitoring

It is recognized that for this strategy to be successful regular progress monitoring and reporting is needed. At the final workshop to review the Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan (2011-2014), participants agreed that a detailed review of the strategic plan was necessary. Consequently, participants decided to review each goal and its associated strategies and actions over the course of five HABIA meetings (one goal per meeting). Upon completion of the strategic plan review, the following will also be implemented:

- Progress reporting for the implementation of the strategic plan will be included on each HABIA agenda;
- An annual report will be prepared that details the success of each year and outlines the actions for the following year; and,
- The Strategic Plan will be updated and reviewed on a semi-annual basis.