



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Mayor and Members
General Issues Committee

Date: May 21, 2025

Report No: PED25131

Subject/Title: Designation of a Business Improvement Area in
Hess Village on Hess Street North and George
Street

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 2

Recommendations

- 1) That the area located between Hess Street North (Main Street West to King Street West) and George Street (Queen Street North to Caroline Street North) excluding the commercial properties on the north side of King Street West BE DESIGNATED as the Hess Village Business Improvement Area;
- 2) That the City Clerk's Division be authorized and directed to circulate the proposed area with the notice of intent to approve the designating by-law in accordance with Sections 204, 210, 212 and 213 if the Municipal Act 2001; and,
- 3) That the City Solicitor be authorized and directed to prepare the necessary by-law.

Key Facts

- Report PED25131 recommends the designation of a Business Improvement Area in Hess Village between Hess Street North and George Street including commercial and industrial zoned properties between Main Street West and King Street West, and commercial and industrial zoned properties between Queen Street North and Caroline Street North (as shown in Appendix A to Report PED25131).
- This would exclude the commercial and industrial zoned properties on the north side of King Street West as they are currently still designated to the King Street West Business Improvement Area that is in dormant status until 2026.

Financial Considerations

The designation of a Business Improvement Area in Hess Village will have no financial implication for the City of Hamilton as the operating budget for the Business Improvement Area will be totally derived through levying the Business Improvement Area members.

Background

The Economic Development Division, Commercial Districts and Small Business Section, received correspondence dated on June 9, 2023, from Adrian Mekli and Mike Pernfuss, a group that represents the property owners and business operators in Hess Village requesting information on how to establish a Business Improvement Area. On June 13, 2023, the Manager of Commercial Districts and Small Business and Business Development and Business Improvement Area Officer met with property owners and business operators in Hess Village to explain the benefits and process to establish a Business Improvement Area. The meeting was held at the request of the property owners and business operators and information was provided on the concept of a Business Improvement Area, the activities and responsibilities of a Business Improvement Area and the legislative process for designating a Business Improvement Area. A Steering Committee (made up of Hess Village property owners and business operators) was established and steps began in steps began to educate impacted commercial and industrially zoned properties, including the business operator tenants on the proposal for this Business Improvement Area creation. Ongoing contact was also established with the Ward 2 Councillor.

To facilitate the discussions with impacted property owners, who ultimately pay for the Business Improvement Area levy that funds the Business Improvement Area budget, staff provided the Steering Committee with financial modelling tables that specifically outlined how much each commercial and industrial zoned property would contribute to the overall proposed annual budget of \$50,000.

Starting in early 2024, meetings were established the last Tuesday of every month. Attendance typically ranged between 15 to 30 attendees, depending on availability. A Hess Winter Village and Market event in December 2024 was intended to show the impacted business operators and property owners the potential and benefits of creating a Business Improvement Area. This was intended to be a litmus test of sorts, to show prospective Business Improvement Area members the value this designation could bring to the area in marketing, advertising, activations and ultimately attracting visitors into Hess Village, ultimately resulting in benefits to the small businesses and restaurants in the area. This event was fully funded through fundraising initiatives and sponsorships. Ultimately very well received by the area, the Hess Winter Village and Market event was recognized with the 2024 Innovative Tourism Award, Regional Tourism Office (RTO) for Hamilton, Halton and Brant.

The Steering Committee has also created a Hess Village website that includes information on events and comprehensive business directory. Also created a mailing list that enabled the Steering Committee to share information and address any questions from the prospective membership. Hess Village has also established a social media presence with over 2,000 followers on Instagram. Direct canvassing of impacted property owners and merchant tenants started in July 2024.

On March 25, 2025, a final vote was held to determine if there was support to create a Business Improvement Area. Of the 65 eligible property owners and business operators, 51 voted in favour. A 2/3 majority is required (66%) and this 78% exceeded that threshold.

If, in the future, sufficient interest to expand the boundaries of the Business Improvement Area is evident, staff will take the appropriate steps to work with the Hess Village Business Improvement Area Board of Management for the purpose of expanding the Business Improvement Area boundaries.

Analysis

The designation of a Business Improvement Area in Hess Village will have no staffing implications for the City of Hamilton.

The Municipal Act 2001, Sections 204 provides the legislative authority to designate a Business Improvement Area. The process for designating a Business Improvement Area is dictated by *The Municipal Act*, Section 210, Subsections (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6); Section 212 (a), (b) and (c); and, Section 213. Ultimately, the decision to establish a Business Improvement Area will rest on the results of the notice of intent sent by the City Clerk's Division to those who are entitled to receive such notice. Staff will advise Council of the outcome of the notice.

Alternatives

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

1. Responsiveness & Transparency
 - 1.1. Build a high performing public service.

Previous Reports Submitted

Not Applicable.

Consultation

- Corporate Services, Taxation Division
- Corporate Services, Legal Division
- Corporate Services, Legislative Services

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Hess Village Business Improvement Area Proposed Boundaries

Appendix B: Reimaging Hess Village BIA Proposal – Image deck

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