

Subject: Centretown Business Improvement Area – Boundary Adjustment

File Number: ACS2025-SI-ED-0011

Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 14 October 2025

and Council 22 October 2025

**Submitted on October 2, 2025 by Sheilagh Doherty, Director, Economic
Development Services**

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Ward: Somerset (14)

**Objet : Ajustement des limites de la Zone d'amélioration commerciale du
centre-ville**

Numéro de dossier : ACS2025-SI-ED-0011

**Rapport présenté au Comité des finances et des services organisationnels le 14
octobre 2025**

et au Conseil le 22 octobre 2025

**Soumis le 2 octobre 2025 par Sheilagh Doherty, directrice, Développement
économique**

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Quartier : Somerset (14)

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Finance and Corporate Services Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Designate the area described in Document 1 as an expanded Business Improvement Area, under Sections 204 and 209 of the Municipal Act, 2001**
- 2. Authorize and direct the City Clerk to send out a notice of Council's intention to adopt a By-law to alter the existing Business Improvement Area boundaries, as described in Document 1, in accordance with Section 210 of the Municipal Act, 2001**
- 3. Authorize and direct the City Clerk to prepare a By-law to designate the area as an expanded Business Improvement Area, as described in Document 1, in accordance with Sections 204 and 209 of the Municipal Act, 2001 and**
- 4. Enact the aforementioned By-law in accordance with Sections 204 and 209 of the Municipal Act, 2001, subject to the City Clerk receiving favourable results on the notices referred to in Recommendation 2, advising of the intention to adopt a By-law expanding the Business Improvement Area boundary.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et des services organisationnels recommande au Conseil :

- 1. De désigner le secteur décrit dans le document 1 comme étant une zone d'amélioration commerciale élargie, en vertu des articles 204 et 209 de la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités**
- 2. D'autoriser la greffière municipale à publier un avis de l'intention du Conseil d'adopter un règlement municipal modifiant les limites actuelles de la zone d'amélioration commerciale, comme le décrit le document 1, conformément à l'article 210 de la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités**
- 3. D'autoriser la greffière municipale à rédiger le texte d'un règlement municipal désignant le secteur décrit au document 1 comme zone d'amélioration commerciale élargie, en vertu des articles 204 et 209 de la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités**

- 4. D'adopter le règlement municipal susmentionné, en vertu des articles 204 et 209 de la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités, à condition que la greffière municipale reçoive des réponses favorables à l'avis mentionné à la recommandation 2, au sujet de l'intention d'adopter un règlement municipal élargissant les limites de la zone d'amélioration commerciale.**

BACKGROUND

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercially assessed property owners and their tenants within a specified geographic area who, with the approval of the municipality under [Section 204 of the Municipal Act, 2001](#), join together in a self-funded program paid through a levy collected with annual municipal property taxes. BIAs undertake a variety of beautification, cleanliness and safety, and marketing programs to attract customers and visitors to their commercial main street or district and support member businesses. The City of Ottawa currently has [eighteen \(18\) BIAs](#).

The Centretown BIA was formed in 1977 by By-law 204-77 under their original name "Bank Street BIA" and includes Bank Street from Sparks Street to Catherine Street. On July 20, 2023, the BIA Board of Management voted to change the name of the BIA from Bank Street BIA to Centretown BIA in anticipation of an eventual boundary expansion to include more Centretown area commercial property owners and businesses.

The BIA began rebranding efforts and City Council enacted By-law 2023-528 on December 6, 2023, to formally update and amend the name of the Bank Street BIA to Centretown BIA. The Centretown BIA's ongoing mission is to improve and promote the northern section of Bank Street to foster a commercially vibrant main street that delivers a strong sense of community and belonging. The BIA executes a range of programs including maintenance and cleanliness initiatives, marketing and promotion, and public realm enhancements. The BIA currently supports approximately 143 commercial properties and approximately 320 businesses.

The Centretown BIA Board of Management submitted a letter to the City on August 12, 2025, (Document 2) officially requesting that City Council adopt a By-law to expand the BIA boundary. The proposed expanded boundary is identified in Document 1: Proposed Boundary Expansion Map – Centretown BIA. The BIA proposes to expand its boundary north to meet the boundary of the recently expanded Downtown BIA, west up to Bronson Avenue, south to Catherine Street, and east up to Elgin Street. Properties with civic addresses on Bronson Avenue and Elgin Street are not included in the proposed Centretown BIA boundary expansion. The street segment of Somerset Street West

between Bay Street and Lyon Street is not included in the proposed Centretown BIA boundary expansion, as Somerset Street Chinatown BIA has indicated a desire to expand its boundary to include this segment in 2026. The Ward Councillor is supportive of this approach. Additionally, the Somerset Village BIA is not included as part of the proposed Centretown BIA boundary expansion and will remain an independent BIA.

Pursuant to [Section 210 of the Municipal Act, 2001](#), City Council must authorize the City Clerk to send out a notice of intention to designate an area as a BIA to all property owners within the existing BIA area as well as those within the proposed expansion area. The property owner must, within 30 days after the notice is mailed, provide a copy of the notice to each tenant of the property who is required to pay all or part of the annual municipal property taxes.

City Council shall not enact a By-law if written objections are received by the City Clerk within 60 days of the notices being mailed and the objectors represent:

1. at least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to notice; and
2. at least one-third of the annual municipal property taxes in all prescribed business property classes within the improvement area.

DISCUSSION

In 2025, the Centretown BIA was a successful grant recipient of the City of Ottawa's [Formation and Expansion Grant Funding Program](#) administered by Economic Development Services. The BIA received \$7,500.00 in grant funding to conduct research to a) gauge the level of interest in the business community to support a BIA expansion, b) perform a thorough review of the current BIA boundary and membership, and c) assess the potential benefits and impacts of a boundary expansion. Findings from the BIA research report included an analysis of the property tax roll for commercial properties located within both the existing BIA area and proposed expansion area, an inventory of expansion area businesses, an assessment of the potential impact of boundary expansion on BIA levies, and a description of potentially distinct sub-districts within the proposed BIA expansion.

An analysis of the number of properties that would be added to the BIA should a boundary expansion be approved, indicated that approximately three-hundred and sixty-six (366) new commercial properties would be added, along with approximately four-hundred and twenty-eight (428) businesses. More than half of the businesses in the expansion area are located on the following streets: Catherine Street, Gladstone

Avenue, Kent Street, Metcalfe Street, and Somerset Street West. The proposed expansion area also includes many residential properties that would not be subject to a BIA levy.

The current property assessment value of the existing Centretown BIA membership is approximately \$1,162,822,996.00. Through research, the BIA concluded that the proposed expansion area property assessment value would total approximately \$493,848,383.00. The total new property assessment value (existing and proposed expansion area) would be approximately \$1,656,671,379.00 which represents an increase of approximately 42 per cent. The increase in overall property assessment value resulting from a boundary expansion would support the BIA in expanding their capacity and resources to deliver impactful services to members and improve the Centretown business district environment while ensuring that the individual member levy remains affordable.

The [2025 levy](#) for the Centretown BIA is \$1,038,555.00. If the proposed expansion is approved by City Council, and the BIA does not increase its overall property levy in 2026, the levy for the new expansion area would be approximately \$408,100.00. This would result in a 2026 combined levy (existing and proposed expansion area) of approximately \$1,446,656.00. Currently, the BIA is exploring the opportunity to increase the annual BIA budget by five per cent in 2026, which would result in a combined levy (existing and proposed expansion area) of approximately \$1,518,000.00.

The additional levy realized through a boundary expansion will allow the BIA to deliver expanded marketing initiatives, public realm enhancements and programming, and special projects to position Centretown as a vibrant commercial district and customer destination and improve the overall streetscape aesthetic and visitor experience. The proposed boundary expansion will enable Centretown properties and businesses not currently represented by a BIA to capitalize on the many benefits of membership including leadership and advocacy on area issues and opportunities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to the City. The Business Improvement Areas (BIA) are a self-funded program paid through a levy collected with annual municipal property taxes. The proposed expanded boundary for the BIA will increase the levy collected to support the BIA in expanding their capacity and resources.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

Councillor Troster:

“The Centretown Business Improvement Area (CBIA) has made significant efforts to expand their programming and support for members within the last few years.

The CBIA is regularly hosting events and executing programming, as well as working in collaboration with the city. They’ve taken on a large role in supporting the Street Seats pilot project, which has been a significant contribution to downtown revitalization in Centretown.

I am happy to support the proposed expansion plan.”

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

There are no advisory committee(s) comments.

CONSULTATION

The Centretown BIA Board of Management and leadership team began boundary expansion discussions in 2020 in response to a growing demand for BIA services and business supports as events including the COVID-19 pandemic and Freedom Convoy occupation resulted in the BIA supporting many non-BIA members in the Centretown area.

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting, the Centretown BIA provided an update to members indicating they would be moving forward with a proposed boundary expansion and would be engaging a consultant to undertake the necessary research to support a boundary expansion request to the City. At a BIA Board of Management meeting in June 2024, the Board unanimously approved a Motion confirming that the BIA would pursue a boundary expansion in 2025.

In 2024 and 2025, the BIA conducted regular meetings with non-BIA members and distributed letters to property owners and businesses within the proposed boundary expansion area to communicate the benefits of BIA membership. The BIA used their website and social media to communicate their intentions regarding a boundary expansion to their extended network and the public at large.

In August 2025, the Centretown BIA participated in local media stories in both the [Ottawa Business Journal](#) and [Le Droit](#) to further increase awareness of the proposed boundary expansion and how it will help support downtown revitalization.

Throughout September 2025, the BIA continued to meet with property owners and businesses within the proposed expansion area and hosted a public meeting on September 11, 2025, for both current and prospective BIA members.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

There are no climate implications.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no delegation of authority implications.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are a critical part of Ottawa's economic development ecosystem representing the interests of small businesses and highlighting the significance of vibrant main streets and commercial districts to economic growth and prosperity. Vibrant neighbourhoods and main streets contribute to quality of life and the attractiveness of Ottawa as a place to live, work, play, invest, visit, and learn.

An expansion of the Centretown BIA boundary will provide more businesses with critical advocacy support and the increased levy will fund marketing initiatives and street beautification and animation to drive customer traffic and enhance the customer experience. This boundary expansion will provide additional BIA capacity and investment in support of the [Downtown Action Plan](#) which seeks to revitalize and reimagine the downtown core through actions focused on diversifying uses, public realm and place making enhancements, programming, and new destination uses and experiences. Ottawa's downtown and central area BIAs are uniquely positioned to deliver impactful initiatives to support this work.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Indigenous, gender and equity implications.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the following 2023-2026 Term of Council priorities:

A city with a diversified and prosperous economy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Proposed Boundary Expansion Map – Centretown BIA

Document 2 Letter from Centretown BIA Board of Management to City of Ottawa

DISPOSITION

City Clerk will forward notices to affected property owners as provided for under [Section 210 of the Municipal Act, 2001](#).

Legal Services Branch will prepare a By-law to designate the area as an expanded Business Improvement Area, as described in Document 1, in accordance with Sections 204 and 209 of the Ontario Municipal Act, 2001 and place the aforementioned By-law on the Orders of the Day, subject to the responses to the aforementioned notices.

Economic Development Services staff will report back on the results of the circulation, and whether the proposed Centretown BIA boundary expansion was successful.