

August 15, 2016

Mr. John Smit
Acting Director, Economic Development & Innovation
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON
K1P 1J1

RE: Request to Expand the Boundaries of the Westboro Village Business Improvement Area

Dear Mr. Smit:

At the February 25, 2016 Board of Management meeting of the Westboro Village Business Improvement Area (WVBIA), a motion was moved, seconded and unanimously passed to move forward with a Letter of Request to the City of Ottawa to modestly expand the WVBIA's existing boundaries which would include the area outlined in **Appendix A** attached:

- From Richmond Road, North along McRae Avenue to Scott Street, both sides;
- West along Scott Street to Churchill Avenue, South side only;
- South along Churchill Avenue to Richmond Road, both sides;
- Continue South along Churchill Avenue from Richmond Road, midway to Kenwood Avenue, both sides.

The Westboro Village Board of Management has been reviewing and researching a boundary expansion since July 2015. Some of the reasons why are as follows:

- Requests by adjacent businesses to join the WVBIA
- To correct a number of anomalies along Richmond Road which reflect new development since the WVBIA's last boundary expansion in 2007
- To capture only those properties that have underlying commercial zoning being Traditional Mainstreet (TM)), General Mixed Use (GM) and Local Commercial Zone (LC)
- To welcome nearby properties and businesses that have organically grown, expanded or located to the cross streets along Richmond Road and its adjacent corridors, and with whom the WVBIA wishes to support or partner with, but is unable to because they are not Members of the WVBIA
- To respond positively to the development that is, and continues to take place in close proximity to the WVBIA, by increasing the number of BIA Members thereby further strengthening the draw and attraction to Westboro as a shopping, and place-to-do business district
- To encourage a more competitive business development position for the WVBIA by reducing the levy fees of its existing Members, particularly in an assessment year
- To lead a common voice, vision and direction for the WVBIA in partnership with the City of Ottawa and its area stakeholders

- To strengthen the BIA's budget base so as to further improve and develop the services and programs to the existing and proposed expansion area Members, thus delivering more fully, the mandate and mission of the BIA
- To further grow our relationship with our community and have a positive impact in maintaining and further improving the quality of life and experience in Westboro

For the past year and a half, the WVBIA Board and its Business Planning and Development Task Force have researched this initiative, working closely with the City's Economic Development & Innovation Department and Finance Department staff to ensure accurate, proper and transparent procedures and process.

Communication, Member education and consultation were paramount in the planning and execution. Once the WVBIA Board approved the motion to proceed, an application was submitted, and a City of Ottawa Business Improvement Area Formation/Expansion grant was awarded to the BIA. This enabled the WVBIA to hire a seasoned consultant to assist the WVBIA with the process.

The WVBIA Board Members and Executive Director were responsible for approaching the Existing Members & other area Stakeholders. A timeline of the correspondence circulated and meetings held can be seen in **Appendix B** attached. It was a long and fulsome process, often requiring many return visits to meet with business owners and managers, to review the expansion particulars, to answer their questions and to solicit their support. The results of that effort can be seen in **Appendix C (1) and C (2)** attached.

The benefits outlined and discussed with Existing Members were as follows:

- Strengthen our advocacy role with the City
- Increase our marketing budget to further promote our retail district through thoughtful, fact-based strategic marketing which encompasses stand out advertising, unique promotions and branded events
- To affect more and needed streetscape improvements and enhancements such as more street furniture, public art, attractive and functional wayfinding and more interesting green spaces to meet, gather and socialize
- Reduce the levies of the existing property owner Members by approximately 15-20% which in turn provides an opportunity to pass the savings on in terms of rental rate adjustments

For the potential members in the proposed expansion area, the selected research company, Shore Tanner & Associates led the charge, contacting and meeting with the businesses over a 10-week period to explain the benefits of becoming a member of the WVBIA and to answer any questions businesses may have. Barry Nabatian was the research study leader for this part of the process. The WVBIA Executive Director and Lead of the WVBIA Task Force regularly met with Mr. Nabatian throughout the period to ensure steps . The results of his work are outlined in **Appendix D** attached.

The benefits outlined to the potential New Members, stressing value for cost incurred, were as follows:

- **To immediately address the graffiti problem in the expansion area** by becoming part of the professional graffiti removal program that the WVBIA provides for its current Members, thus extending the clean, safe, graffiti-free presentation we enjoy within our existing boundaries to the expansion area
- **To immediately address the streetscape beautification challenge in the expansion area** by becoming part of the street bannering pageantry program that currently exists within the WVBIA's current boundaries. Subsequent years will see the addition of flower planters, more street furniture, wayfinding measures and public art in the expansion area
- **To receive immediate benefit of current marketing programs** including website and profile page listings, business directory listing and parking maps, and participation in WVBIA's seasonal promotions and events
- **With the pending construction of the Western LRT**, the opportunity to be part of a collective, working through the challenges sure to arise with the planned construction along Scott Street and all its implications
- **With the pending complete street vision for Richmond Road to the West**, the opportunity to be part of a collective to mitigate as much as possible, any negative repercussions or revenue loss to businesses during this period
- To immediately tap into the **support of the WBIA's professional and highly skilled staff**, their relationships with other BIA Members, the City and other stakeholders, and **have immediate access to WVBIA archival information** including research and statistics to better understand the WVBIA trade area and its current and potential customers
- To generate a **larger advocacy voice** for the WVBIA
- To tap more readily into the **City's various granting programs**
- To **increase networking and partnership opportunities** within the WVBIA

From this consultation process, the Westboro Village BIA believes there is support from our existing and proposed members to proceed with the boundary expansion outlined in Appendix A. The commercial 2016 assessment for all of the properties in our existing boundary totals \$131,180,200. The proposed expansion will add approximately \$35-38million (2016 assessment) to the City's overall commercial tax assessment. We believe this to be a modest expansion and is in keeping with the natural and organic growth that has taken place in the area over the past nine years. The WVBIA budget resulting from the new Members will not only be sufficient to allow a reduction in levy fees to property owners, but it will enable us to extend core services to our new Members, while at the same time, support the needs of the larger BIA.

Once the expansion is approved, we plan to deliver immediate benefit to new Members in Year One, by adding new street banners along expansion roadways and including all businesses in our professional graffiti removal program. The budget increase resulting from the new members in 2016 will be not only be sufficient to allow a reduction in levy fees to property owners, but will enable us to extend these two core services to our new Members. Extended pageantry, a planter program and further initiatives mentioned above, will follow in years 2-5 as we expect additional levies will come on-line as a result of new mixed-use property developments. These additional new levies will help the WV BIA to enhance all of its services to all members and expand programming into the new area.

The WV BIA is happy to provide any additional information you may require to assist you in reviewing this, our boundary expansion request (**see Appendix E attached**), and meet our projected approval timeline, effective January 2017.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Thorne
Executive Director
Westboro Village Business Improvement Area

c.c. Councillor Leiper, Ward 15, City of Ottawa
Dan Hwang, WV BIA Board Chair
Jamie Hurst, Economic Development Officer, City of Ottawa