

### Support for Business Improvement Areas

Businesses in BIAs make up approximately 13 per cent of all businesses in Edmonton. There are 13 BIAs that are located in self-designated zones in the City. Each BIA is administered by a business association, managed by an executive director who reports to a board of directors. BIAs play a critical role in supporting mainstreet vibrancy, visitor friendliness, economic growth and the aesthetic appeal of key commercial areas. BIAs benefit the businesses within the area by working collectively on initiatives such as beautification, neighborhood marketing, special events, business guidance, and advocacy for civic improvements such as infrastructure additions and upkeep. Some examples of these initiatives include:

- Funding for street lights, flower baskets and other beautification initiatives.
- Coordinating annual events and placemaking to attract patrons (e.g. Downtown Spark, holiday light-ups, temporary patio activations).
- Advocating on various issues impacting businesses (COVID-19 support, safety and cleanliness, infrastructure renewal projects).
- Business attraction initiatives to help improve and increase the business mix within the BIA.

To leverage the work of BIAs and champion local economic impact, Administration offers financial and strategic support exclusive to the BIAs and their businesses. These include:

- The Development Incentive Program, which offers matching reimbursement grants encouraging investment in vacant commercial units, and to build new commercial and mixed-use buildings, including interior renovations to ground-floor commercial units.
- The Storefront Improvement Program, which offers matching reimbursement grants for commercial property owners and is designed to support exterior renovations.
- The City waived 100 per cent of BIA business tax levies in 2021 and 50 per cent of levies in 2022.
- Administrative support, which includes a touchpoint for engagement with Administration, and support with association governance and operations.
- Guidance around infrastructure maintenance, long-term planning, renewal and growth options, and assisting with basic infrastructure investments (lighting, crosswalks) into the BIAs.

## Attachment 4

- Support related to City operations that impact and enhance BIAs (e.g. decorative lighting).