

BYLAW 20950 - EDMONTON ALBERTA AVENUE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That Bylaw 20950 be given the appropriate readings.

Purpose

To amend the boundaries of the Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area at the request of the Alberta Avenue Business Association, one of Edmonton's 13 Business Improvement Areas.

Readings

Bylaw 20950 is ready for three readings.

Position of Administration

Administration supports this Bylaw.

REPORT

City Council approved the establishment of the Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area (BIA) on September 13, 1995. The Alberta Avenue Business Association has determined that it is in the best interest of the association and its businesses (and the business members that will become members of the association) to request an expansion of its current boundaries. Bylaw 20950 Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area Bylaw Amendment No. 4 (Attachment 1) proposes to amend Bylaw 11084 Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area Bylaw to incorporate the requested boundary change. According to the BIA Regulation (A/R 93/2016) and City Policy C462B (Business Revitalization Zone Establishment and Operation), City Council approval is required to expand the boundaries of a Business Improvement Area.

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In addition, the BIA Regulation (A/R 93/2016) and City Policy C462B state that the process for a Business Improvement Area boundary amendment requires the following:

1. Proponents must submit a formal request for the boundary amendment to the City Manager, which must be accompanied by a justification for the boundary change being requested, as well as a statement outlining the public consultation process that was followed to solicit the support;
2. The Board of the Business Improvement Area association then must notify all businesses within the proposed expanded boundaries, at least one month prior to the date on which City Council will consider the proposed amending bylaw, of a summary of the proposed bylaw, including a map and description of the change in boundaries, as well as a description of the opportunity, manner and time period for affected taxpayers to make representations to City Council regarding the proposed amendment; and,
3. Written consent must be given from the board of the Business Improvement Area association to the amending bylaw before the bylaw receives Second Reading (see Attachment 2).

Each of these requirements has been fulfilled by the Alberta Avenue Business Association and would allow for the bylaw to be passed by City Council.

Current and Requested Boundaries

The existing boundary of the Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area includes retail, commercial and mixed-use development along 118 Avenue from 105 Street to 77 Street; 104 Street and 103 Street to 119 Avenue; 102 Street and 101 Street to 117 Avenue; 95 Street to 117 Avenue; and 82 Street, and 79 Street and 78 Street to 117 Avenue (Attachment 3, page 1 depicts the existing boundary map).

On August 1, 2024, Administration received a request from the Alberta Avenue Business Association to expand the Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area boundaries to include commercial developments along 95 Street that are south of 118 Avenue to 113 Avenue and to include the area known as the Exhibition Lands (proposed boundaries in Attachment 3, page 2). If approved, this will result in all current and future businesses within the proposed boundaries automatically becoming levy-paying members of the Alberta Avenue Business Association.

Impact to Exhibition Lands

Exhibition Lands is a City-led transformational project. As such, the City, as a landowner, has an interest in the implications of the proposed boundary expansion. The proposed amended boundaries include all of the City-owned redevelopment land, in which two existing businesses would become levy paying members of the association. By approving this expansion, all future businesses that establish within the City-owned redevelopment area would automatically be a member of the Alberta Avenue Business Association, whether or not they were supportive of it.

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The proposed expansion area does not include the majority of existing businesses within the Exhibition Lands Planning Framework boundary.

Commercial development is permitted within all of the future land uses throughout the Planning Framework, including the ground oriented residential areas. The proposed expansion area will include mostly residential development, however a reduction in the proposed boundary would result in the potential exclusion of new businesses as the neighbourhood redevelops.

The annual levy for business members of the association is dependent on business size and value. The average current fee for members of the Alberta Avenue Business Association is typically below one thousand dollars per year. It is unlikely that the compulsory membership into the association as a result of this expansion would deter potential buyers or negatively impact market values.

Request Justification

The association is in the mid-range of business improvement area size in the city with approximately 220 member businesses within the current boundary and a 2024 budget of \$323,500, which is funded mostly through the Business Improvement Area tax levy (\$200,000).

The boundary amendment request provided by the Alberta Avenue Business Association included the prioritization of Nodes and Corridors identified in The City Plan within their boundaries; this can promote job creation and industry diversification in the area to help develop vibrant, high-density economic hubs. In addition, they noted that supporting a long-term vision for growth and development ensures a prosperous, sustainable and livable city for all residents and businesses.

Further justification from the Alberta Avenue Business Association is that the proposed expansion to include an additional 10 businesses will allow them to increase their services to new members. Expansion to the Exhibition Lands has the potential to increase their future membership base as commercial development occurs in the area. Non-residential development is currently expected to represent about 14 per cent of the entire area; however, 9.6 per cent of the area is occupied by the Edmonton EXPO Centre (according to the Edmonton Exhibition Lands Planning Framework¹).

Support for the BIA

This potential boundary expansion adds City-provided operational (i.e. maintenance) scope and responsibility, but not funding. As a result, it can have a service level diluting effect to a degree in terms of the support the City provides to this Business Improvement Area. Member businesses may expect a higher level of service and that comes at a cost but isn't supported by City budgets. While there is no increase in operational funding to specifically service the expansion area, consideration of the Alberta Avenue Business Association's overall priorities will help inform the

¹ [Edmonton Exhibition Lands Planning Framework](#) (see Development Statistics page 34)

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partnership between the Alberta Avenue Business Association and the City. Existing operating and infrastructure programs and services may be adapted within existing budgets as required.

Should the application to expand the BIA area be approved, grant programs that are offered only to BIA members (e.g. Storefront Improvement Program) would be offered to the businesses in the expanded area as well. Support for BIA governance, issue resolution, reporting requirements, and capacity building would be handled by existing resources and budget.

Assessment and collection of additional Alberta Avenue Business Association member levies can be supported through existing resources.

Process Compliance

Administration confirms all processes and requirements of the BIA Regulation (A/R 93/2016), have been completed and verified, including taking reasonable steps to ensure notice of the proposed bylaw amendment (boundary amendment), to be “mailed or delivered” to every taxable business in the area (current members), and to “every business that would be a taxable business under the change in boundaries”. This also included a statement regarding the manner and time period for making representations to City Council about the proposed change in boundaries (see Attachment 4).

Community Insight

Ensuring effective communication and listening to the business owners and managers within the proposed boundary expansion was important as this change affects approximately 10 existing businesses, both in the form of additional business support they can receive as well as the addition of a mandatory annual association member levy.

Although there is no available data that identifies the makeup or percentage of equity seeking groups, anecdotally the Alberta Avenue Business Association and Administration understand that there are business owners who are either new Canadians or that do not speak English as their first language. Future communication with this group can be modified as we learn more about them and their needs. The Alberta Avenue Business Association excels at engaging with these members of the community.

Based on the information available about the business owners within the expansion area, the project team reached out in multiple ways. This included two open houses held by the Alberta Avenue Business Association and in-person meetings with business owners and managers within the expansion area to provide information and discuss the implications of the expansion.

The open houses focused on businesses in the expansion areas. One was held prior to the Association’s expansion request on July 31, 2024, and one open house was held after the application on August 28, 2024. Information included an introduction to the Alberta Avenue Business Association, general information on business improvement areas and rationale for the proposed expansion. Administration attended the open houses to gather information and to

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assist with any technical or City-related questions. The Association also met with many business owners or managers in the expansion area to provide information. They notified all businesses within the entire proposed expanded boundary, via mail or personal delivery, of the Executive Committee date where taxpayers in the area and people who would be taxpayers under the proposed change in boundaries will be provided with an opportunity to make representations concerning the change to City Council, as required.

Environment and Climate Review

This report was reviewed for environment and climate risks. Based on the review completed no significant interactions with the City's environmental and climate goals were identified within the scope of this report.

Attachments

1. Bylaw 20950 - Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area Bylaw Amendment No. 4
2. Alberta Avenue Business Association Consent Letter
3. Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area Boundaries
4. Notification of Proposed Boundary Expansion and City Council Meeting

Others Reviewing the Report

- M. Plouffe, Chief People Officer and City Solicitor