

COUNCIL REPORT

Edmonton

2024 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA ANNUAL REPORTS AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Recommendation

That the June 4, 2025, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE02878, be received for information.

Requested Action		Information only	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Regional Prosperity	
City Plan Values	THRIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Catalyze and Converge	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bylaw 7968 - Edmonton Downtown Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 8621 - Edmonton Kingsway Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 8993 - 124 Street and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 9747 - Edmonton Fort Road and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 10454 - Edmonton Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 10919 - The Crossroads Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 11083 - Edmonton Beverly Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 11084 - Edmonton Alberta Avenue Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 12370 - Chinatown and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 12926 - Northwest Industrial Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 14125 - Stony Plain Road and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 14959 - North Edge Business Improvement Area Bylaw● Bylaw 16219 - French Quarter and Area Business Improvement Area/Association Des Intérêts Commerciaux Du Quartier Francophone		

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Related Council Discussions

- November 27, 2024, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE02300, Edmonton Business Improvement Areas 2025 Budgets
- November 27, 2024, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE02299, Edmonton Business Improvement Areas 2025 Boards of Directors

Executive Summary

- Edmonton's 13 Business Improvement Area (BIA) associations have submitted their 2024 annual reports and audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2024.
- Administration has reviewed all documents to ensure conformance with applicable provincial and municipal requirements for the operation of BIAs in Edmonton.
- BIA association accomplishments in 2024 cover a range of focus areas, including addressing safety concerns, vibrancy and activation, visitor attraction and advocacy.
- While Administration has confirmed that all submitted documents meet the minimum Provincial legislative requirements, the auditor for the Chinatown BIA issued a "Disclaimer of Opinion" on the BIA's 2024 financial statements. This "Disclaimer of Opinion" is not in alignment with the requirements under the Chinatown and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw. Administration has advised the Chinatown BIA to work with their auditor to improve internal documentation and financial tracking.

REPORT

Executive Committee is provided with the annual reports and audited financial statements for the Business Improvement Area (BIA) associations according to the reporting requirements under the *Municipal Government Act*, the Business Improvement Area Regulations and the City Bylaws that establish and define the Business Improvement Areas (Bylaws 7968, 8621, 8993, 9747, 10454, 10919, 11083, 11084, 12370, 12926, 14125, 14959 and 16219). This regular reporting aligns with The City Plan's direction to support opportunities for local economic and community resilience, as well as the Economic Action Plan's direction to align relevant economic development activities, reporting metrics, funding agreements and grants to ensure the City and economic partners are working together as effectively as possible (Action 2).

BIA associations, governed by an elected board of directors, represent business members within specific geographic areas of the city, allowing members to pool resources and work together to further economic development in their area. This model is common in cities across Canada. There are 13 BIAs in Edmonton that share a commitment to building a vibrant local economy.

Edmonton's BIA associations are required to submit annual reports of their activities, as well as audited financial statements pursuant to the Business Improvement Area Bylaws. This independent audit of financial results ensures member levies are used appropriately and align with the budgets set each year. Administration has reviewed all documents to ensure conformance with applicable provincial and municipal requirements for the ongoing operation of BIAs in Edmonton.

While Administration has confirmed that all submitted BIA documents meet the minimum provincial legislative requirements, the Auditor for the Chinatown BIA has issued a Disclaimer of

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Opinion on the 2024 financial statements due to insufficient information to complete the audit. The audit report is also attached for reference (see attachment 4).

As such, the requirement to maintain true accounts of all financial activity, as set out in the Chinatown and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw (attachment 14, Bylaw 12370 section 9(6)), has not been met.

As the bylaw contains no enforcement provisions, Administration has advised the Chinatown BIA to work with their auditor to improve internal documentation and financial tracking. The BIA has been advised to report back to Administration once improvements are in place. Administration will continue to monitor the situation and provide Council with updates as appropriate.

The reports for each BIA are attached.

Budget/Financial Implications

The City does not fund BIA operations, but collects and disburses the member levies on behalf of the BIA associations. Each fall, the BIA associations hold their annual general meetings in which member businesses are invited to participate and vote on the budget for the coming year, which is set by the association's board of directors. Based on member approval, the budgets are presented to Council at the end of the calendar year, where they are approved according to provincial and municipal processes and regulations.

Business members of each association are then assessed a Business Improvement Area Tax - their portion of the association's budget - which is collected by the City from each member in the BIA boundary. These funds are disbursed in full to each association and are used to pay for operations and programming such as enhanced cleaning, activations, security, festivals, events and business-specific support.

The City delivers programming and services dedicated to supporting BIA members, including beautification, cleaning and facade improvement grants. While the City is making changes to various programs as a result of City financial pressures, the support to BIAs on core services is being enhanced overall. This includes Centre City Optimization and a new BIA Enhanced Services Grant. Support that is being discontinued includes Bloomin' Boulevards (effective in 2026), decorative crosswalks and traffic control boxes, bike education and the Window and Storefront Repair Program.

Community Insight

Administration continues to work in close partnership with BIA associations. Administration's participation in the BIA associations' annual general meetings supports compliance with governance and legislative requirements. The City's participation in monthly BIA Council meetings, a regular meeting of BIA association Executive Directors, aids in best practice sharing, issue resolution and project and initiative prioritization. Additional support is provided as issues arise related to infrastructure needs, support for member businesses, marketing and communications and other initiatives aimed at capacity building for boards and Executive Directors. During Economic Development Week in May 2024, the Business Friendly Edmonton

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team partnered with BIA associations to host a business mixer that highlighted the benefits of operating in a BIA, featuring an inspiring panel session with business owners.

Administration further supports BIA member businesses through Business Friendly Edmonton services. This includes the Storefront Improvement Program (matching grants for facade improvements) and one-on-one business support to help open and grow a business in Edmonton. Administration strives to strengthen its relationships with the BIA associations and members to support vibrancy, growth of the visitor economy and the resilience of local businesses. Public engagement for this information report was not conducted, as it serves to demonstrate conformance with applicable provincial and municipal requirements.

GBA+

BIA associations are independent, board-governed entities with their own procedures and operating guidelines. Administration's role is to:

- Collaborate with the 13 associations, including their boards and Executive Directors, to ensure they have the support to understand, appreciate and apply a thorough GBA+ process when reviewing their internal bylaws, policies and procedures.
- Collect and disburse the levies that make up the budgets set by each association's board, to fund annual operations, events and initiatives.

Integrating GBA+ processes can help ensure that the work and budget allocation for the BIA Area associations contribute to the accessibility and equity of services.

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. 124 Street and Area Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
2. Alberta Avenue Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
3. Beverly Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
4. Chinatown and Area Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
5. Downtown Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
6. Fort Road Business and Community Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
7. French Quarter Business Association/Association des entreprises du quartier francophone - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
8. Kingsway District Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
9. North Edge Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements

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10. Northwest Industrial Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
11. Old Strathcona Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
12. Stony Plain Road and Area Business Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
13. The Crossroads Business Improvement Area Association - 2024 Annual Report & 2024 Audited Financial Statements
14. Bylaw 12370 - Chinatown and Area Business Improvement Area Bylaw