



- **OLD TOWN KEMPTVILLE**
- **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA**
- **INTERIM BUSINESS PLAN**
- **FOR 2025**
- **CONSULTATION DRAFT – V 11-10-2024**
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## ● INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

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The 2025 Business Plan for the Old Town Kemptville Business Improvement Area (BIA) is meant to be an interim plan to guide its activity, pending a move forward for an expanded BIA for Kemptville based on the risk BIA's current assessment (page 5).

2024 was a very busy year for the BIA with some changes in Board composition, some great events and some new initiatives.

- Advocacy was the driving force in 2024. This accomplishment is the silent but powerful tool that moves the BIA forward and ensures that our businesses and their concerns and needs are heard. Advocacy does not always provide the results we hope for in the timeframe we want, BUT it is what contributes to the successful completion of any number of projects. EX. the BIA has advocated for a crosswalk at Prescott and Asa for 10 years and this year the work paid off and now there is a safe way for our customers to cross Prescott.
- The BIA represented member businesses when consulted on the Waterfront access study, the Parking Study, Riverside Revitalization, Hwy 43 expansion and more recently the Official Municipal plan. All of these municipal strategies have involved the BIA because of our unique relationship to the Municipality and the work that has been done to strengthen this relationship
- The BIA has been busy building on the relationships with our municipality and other stakeholders
- Emphasis on building relationships and improving communication with the Municipality. This past year the BIA has been involved in a formal way of putting our requests for The Board prepared the first and second Municipal Ask: a formal way to advocate for downtown issues in a way that gets our requests incorporated into Municipal staff work plans
- Members only newsletter became an integral part of improving communication with member businesses
- Member Welcome package created for new and existing members
- What is a BIA pamphlet was created
- BIA's signature events (like the Easter Bunny Hop, Kreepy Kemptville and Old Town Christmas) were executed
- New South Branch Serenade, a weekly music in Rotary Park program was initiated (July and August). Member's only table put out weekly with member business



promotional material. The Bia successfully applied for and received the Arts and Culture Grant.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Buskerfest was successful with nice weather!
- Distributed a members only survey to gain insight into members satisfaction with the work being done by the BIA. The results were positive and provided some feedback for the BIA to follow up on.
- Created an event survey and had over 100 Kreepy Kemptville participants provide feedback
- Participated in First Impressions Community exchange with Petawawa and received very favorable feedback about downtown Kemptville.
- Successfully applied for and received funding from Canada Summer Jobs for a summer student
- Advocated for the recognition of BIA's as a Not-For-Profit organization
- Supported member businesses and the downtown as a whole through advocacy
- Participated in Strategic Planning and created the Small Events Policy and adopted the municipalities Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (EDI)
- Created effective marketing strategies that included print, social media, radio and online initiatives
- Promoted downtown businesses by sharing social media content
- Continued to provide a monthly article to NG Times to promote downtown and it's businesses
- Upgraded all our files to Google Workspace to increase Board efficiency and ensure institutional knowledge
- Continued to support and participate in non-BIA organized events brought downtown
- Sponsorship provided for events and initiatives created by other organizations
- BIA Board development
- Staff hiring and training
- Held a volunteer appreciation luncheon



- Held an expansion information session
- Participated in Parking Study and promotion of Follow44 initiatives
- Promotion of small business as a driving force and downtown as our small town identity
- Welcomed new businesses into the downtown area
- Launched this Business Plan and updated it for the 2025 year

The current BIA continues to face many challenges, and is working on:

- Making an economic difference in downtown Kemptville with a very small budget;
- Recruiting Board members for optimum board development
- Building and sustaining stakeholder partnerships for the benefit of the downtown;
- Ensuring adherence to its mandate to engage in business improvement activity;
- Increasing credibility among its members as a viable organization;
- Developing the downtown as attractive to both residents and visitors alike;
- Ensuring an appropriate governance relationship with the Municipal Council.
- Incorporating work of past boards and profession thinking about expansion ([McSweeney Report 2015](#)) which is also available to be viewed on the BIA website.

2025 continues to be a crucial year for the current BIA and answers to the following questions must be found:

- Is there an ongoing role for the current BIA in the downtown's economic development?
- If so, what should that role be in the context of the BIA's legal mandate?
- How can the BIA best support small business?
- What role should the BIA play (with participation of its members) in creating a vision for downtown?
- How can all stakeholders work together to sustain a vibrant downtown business community?
- How can the downtown be part of an expansion to include a larger footprint?
- What is the process for expansion and how can the McSweeney Report and the significant efforts of previous Boards of Management be part of the consultation for expansion?



- What role can the BIA play in creating conditions for downtown businesses to be successful?

Shelley Mitchell

Chair

○ **RISK ASSESSMENT**

| Potential Risk  | Consequence(s)   | P*     | S*     | Prevention<br>(A Plan)  | Contingency<br>(B Plan)                               |
|---|--|--------|--------|---|---|
| Not enough resources to survive as an organization            | OTK BIA shuts down   | High   | High   | Expand as soon as possible to include the larger footprint                            | Shut down completely                                  |
| Continuing apathy of members                                  | OTK BIA not pertinent to member needs                          | High   | High   | Engage directly with members in priority setting                                      | Help individual businesses understand and participate |
| Ineffective relationships with some stakeholder organizations | Continued perception of unequal competition among stakeholders | Medium | High   | Renew efforts at establishing linkages with the key stakeholders                      | Continue to deal with issues as they arise            |
| Low appetite for expansion on the part of business owners     | The OTK BIA is stuck in its current model                      | High   | Medium | Demonstrate that the BIA's lack of achievement is due to the size of the organization | Shut down completely                                  |
| Much work being accomplished by a very few                    | Exhaustion and disaffection of key players                     | High   | High   | Establish the conditions to spread the work around                                    | Shut down completely                                  |

**P: Probability; S: Seriousness**

**Conclusion: the current BIA is in a high risk situation. It has only three options:**

- 1) Shut down and go out of business; or
- 2) Request an interim shut down while options are being contemplated; or
- 3) Expand to build a more meaningful and active Business improvement Area.

● **BACKGROUND TO THE OLD TOWN KEMPTVILLE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA BUSINESS PLAN**

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■ **Purpose**

This Interim Business Plan aims at:

- Providing Strategic Direction to the organization for operational implementation;



- Playing a leadership role in the economic development of the downtown;
- Improving the BIA's effectiveness and credibility with its membership;
- Prioritize supporting small business
- Continue working with the Municipality in matters of importance to downtown businesses
- Moving forward with an expansion to the footprint of the current BIA.

#### ■ **The Annual Business Planning Cycle**

For 2025, the BIA's annual Business Planning Cycle is made up of the following elements:

- A strategic, operational and financial audit of the previous year's achievements;
- Consultation with the BIA Board of Management on strategic directions;
- Identification of the 4 pillars of support provided by BIA's: Advocacy and Strategic Planning, Beautification, Marketing/Promotion and Events
- Consultation with Municipal Council, to gain perspective on expansion;
- Identification of the key risks facing the BIA and how to manage them;
- Approval and sign-off of the plan by the Board of Directors;
- Presentation to Municipal Council for support as the BIA moves forward;
- Creating a work plan based on the approved business plan and 4 pillars of support
- Review of staff performance aimed at operational alignment to strategic priorities.
- Invite members to review the Business Plan draft.

This Business Plan spans a one-year period aimed at achieving some form of expansion. However, it contains an additional 2-year perspective in order that it be both current and visionary.





## ● MISSION, VISION, VALUES AND KEY RESULT AREAS

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### ○ MISSION FOR 2025

The 2025 mission of the downtown BIA is to provide support to downtown businesses through the 4 pillars of support (advocacy/strategic planning, beautification, marketing/promotion and events) while preparing for and contributing to an expanded footprint.

### ○ VISION TO 2027

The vision of an expanded Business Improvement Area is to provide leadership to the collaborating stakeholders in achieving an economically viable and thriving business sector.

## VALUES

With the current focus on the downtown, we at the downtown BIA believe in the following 7 values:

1. **Community Engagement and Community Building:** We involve ourselves in community building in downtown Kemptville as a show piece for North Grenville. To do so, we provide the community with reasons to engage and participate, and we build local champions in our downtown community as a force for positive change. We bring large-scale visibility to downtown through events and other promotional initiatives.

The payoff: Downtown Kemptville is seen as a leader in community growth and engagement in matters related to downtown

2. **Marketing and Promotion:** We market and promote the businesses and attractions of downtown Kemptville to the North Grenville community and pursue larger regional marketing opportunities, in order to focus interest on this vital part of the North Grenville Community. By measuring the performance and contributions of downtown Kemptville, we also empower decision makers and community stakeholders to understand the value of a strong downtown.

The payoff: Residents and visitors alike know what is available in downtown, appreciate, and enjoy the community value provided by the downtown Kemptville businesses, leading to profitability and viability for downtown Kemptville businesses.

3. **Relationship Management:** The BIA is a voice of leadership for the downtown business community and to that end, establishes relationships with other community voices, e.g. Municipal Departments, the Chamber of Commerce and local community groups and institutions. We work to harmonize our efforts and achieve economies of scale. The BIA

The payoff: No duplication of effort and more collaborative activities take place with harmony and efficiency.



4. **Business Recruitment and Retention:** We participate in an overall recruitment effort to attract and retain businesses in downtown Kemptville. The BIA works with property owners to help ensure that available space is occupied and that an optimum mix of businesses and services is achieved.  
The payoff: Zero business vacancy downtown with a mix of uses as arrived at through a Business Model unique to downtown Kemptville.
5. **Beautification and Revitalization:** The BIA contributes to the enhancement of the downtown environment to create a more pleasant atmosphere attracting residents, visitors, and businesses alike. A strong and unique sense of place will evolve through a focus on Architecture and Design (landmark projects, heritage protection and enhancement, development that enhances the Downtown Kemptville character and sense of place); Connectivity (walking, cycling, design for all ages) and Culture (vibe, values, virtuosity) helps to achieve this.  
The payoff: Downtown Kemptville has a unique sense of place, is the heart and soul of North Grenville, and a centre of attraction for all. North Grenville's small town identity is secured in the downtown core.
6. **Personal Involvement:** We work with each business on an individual basis to meet their need for advice, coaching and programming, as well as for inspiring volunteer person-hours.  
The payoff: Every business knows and appreciates what it is getting from the BIA, and willingly contributes to its success.
7. **Inclusion:** We work with the full mix of businesses in our catchment area and provide the framework and opportunity for all businesses to be an integral part of the attraction of downtown Kemptville. Downtown Kemptville is an eclectic mix of retail storefronts, restaurants and personal service destinations that work together to create a distinctive downtown experience.  
The payoff: All businesses without exception participate in the success of downtown Kemptville.

The Values of the expanded Business Improvement Area will be the subject of discussion among stakeholders as they prepare the first Business Plan for the new organization.



- **ECONOMIC DRIVERS:**

As part of the BIA's values and beliefs, the following Economic Drivers are still current and valid: "what is unique is valuable" and therefore our path to success, whether it is for the downtown or for a larger Kemptville footprint, is driven by the following factors:

1. **Our Unique Heritage:**

We have a unique history and story to tell; so it should be celebrated. Much of it is reflected in our built heritage. North Grenville's small town status and rural roots are linked to downtown Kemptville. We need to promote its protection, restoration and preservation.

### **Our Unique Natural Assets**

The South Branch of the Rideau River runs through Downtown Kemptville and three parks front it (Curry, Rotary and Riverside). We need to draw people to the river to walk and cycle along it and promote it as another means to enter downtown by boat, canoe and kayak.

2. **Our Unique Small Business:**

Many businesses offer one-of-a-kind shopping experiences, products and/or services. We need to celebrate and promote them to both residents and tourists. What is unique is valuable and will bring visitors to downtown Kemptville

- **PRIORITY AREAS FOR 2025**

For 2025, there are five priorities for BIA:

- Expanding the footprint of the BIA

- Programming and Promotion

- Focusing on downtown development

- Financial Management

- Governance

- Advocacy

## ● PRIORITY AREA DEVELOPMENT

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### ○ Priority Area: Expanding the Footprint of the BIA

#### ■ Objective

To expand the footprint of the BIA beyond the current boundaries to include those areas to be identified.

#### ■ Goals

- Create an associate membership package
  - **Performance Indicator:** The Board will have information to give to businesses interested in having a relationship with the BIA
- Create an expansion committee with vested members of the business community
  - **Performance Indicator:** A vibrant committee with members from both inside and outside the current footprint
- By creating an expansion plan with consultation of the McSweeney report and the work done by previous BIA Boards
  - **Performance Indicator:** A current plan for expansion
- By validating the plan with the North Grenville Municipal Council
  - **Performance Indicator:** Support to the BIA expansion in the context of the process set down by the province
- By engaging with the current BIA stakeholders to gain their support for the expansion
  - **Performance Indicator:** Report on the level of current stakeholder support for expansion

## ○ **Priority Area: Programming**

### ■ **Objective**

To implement programming that supports improving business in Old Town Kemptville:

### ■ **Goals**

- Providing workshops and networking opportunities to members.
  - **Performance Indicator:**
    - Member businesses learn tips and tricks for running their business which improves their social media and online presence
    - Members have the opportunity to connect with other business owners
- By supporting events that are conducted by other stakeholders whether or not they are in the OTK BIA footprint, e.g. Kemptville Live, Santa Claus Parade, Kemptville Hospital Foundation events, the Farmers' Market etc:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Financial and/or volunteer support to organizers
- By conducting a selected and limited number of BIA OTK events aimed to benefit as many businesses as possible in the downtown:
  - **Performance Indicator:**
    - Events conducted
    - Results of impact and benefit assessment on OTK businesses, e.g. Kreepy Kemptville, Old Town Christmas, the Easter Bunny Hop, Buskerfest, etc.
- Committing to the goal of Buskerfest moving towards an event that is more and more community driven with less BIA commitment and possibly independent by 2026
  - **Performance Indicators:**
    - Answer the question: What is best for Buskerfest and how can the BIA help?
    - Answer to the question: Can the BIA monitor the event with more volunteers and less staff time?
    - Answer to the question: Is there another community organization interested in partnering on the event?



- By tracking the effectiveness of BIA operated and sponsored events:
  - **Performance Indicators:**
    - Answer to the question: Was it worthwhile?
    - Decision on continuing, changing, handing off or foregoing
    - Survey members

## ○ **Priority Area: Focusing on Downtown Development**

### ■ **Objective**

To establish the conditions in the downtown that will ensure that shoppers, visitors and residents come to a downtown that is both appealing and useful to them on a continuing and ongoing basis:

### ■ **Goals**

- By improving the participation by downtown businesses in the BIA Board of Management and in BIA business improvement activities
  - **Performance Indicator:** Increased Board of Management membership
- By supporting the development of the Kemptville Waterfront Trail:
  - **Performance Indicator:** BIA support of Waterfront Trail implementation
- By supporting efforts to increase beautification in the downtown
  - **Performance Indicator:** New initiatives such as plant pots, additional lighting, music downtown etc are investigated and enacted if feasible
- By supporting improved parking downtown
  - **Performance Indicator:** Supporting the implementation of key [2023 North Grenville Parking Study](#) (also available for view on the BIA website) recommendations and seeing improved signage for downtown parking.
- By supporting the implementation of the Municipality's Economic Development Strategy:
  - **Performance Indicators:**
    - Maximum occupancy reached
    - Most appropriate business mix achieved
    - Expansion and growth of downtown businesses

- By continuing to engage in partnerships with stakeholder organizations in North Grenville and beyond in order to innovate in all areas of BIA work:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Partnerships in place to support expansion and the BIA Business Plan, e.g. the North Grenville Chamber etc.
- By offering workshops that are of interest and relevant to operating a business:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Businesses have up to date information on topics such as social media etc that will help keep downtown businesses thriving in ever changing economic conditions.

## Priority Area: Financial Management Priority

### ■ Objective

To improve the financial status of the OTK BIA, rationalize its cash flow and make use of funding mechanisms available through the federal and provincial governments:

### ■ Goals

- By continuing to apply for and make use of external funding:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Programming supported by funding sources
- By applying for federal-provincial funding
  - **Performance Indicator:** Funding granted
- By seeking alternative sources of revenue
  - **Performance Indicator:** Increase in sponsorship and expansion completed

## ○ Priority Area 5: Governance

### ■ Objective

### ■ Goals

- By ensuring the annual updating of governance features such as By-Law review, Business Planning, Risk Assessment, Board constitution and Board performance assessment:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Confirmation that all governance features – compulsory and otherwise – are in place and functioning well on an annual basis
- By ensuring the continuous improvement of Board of Management meetings:



- **Performance Indicator:** The most effective BoM meetings taking place on an ongoing basis with time allocated for strategic discussions
- By ensuring that Committees are working for a purpose and effectively in support of BIA activity:
  - **Performance Indicator:** Committee work focused on BIA priorities
- By conducting annual strategic discussions on the priorities of the OTK BIA:
  - **Performance Indicators:**
    - Annual consultation with BIA members
    - Strategic priorities identified
    - Annual Business Plan and budget in place
- By promoting Board Development:
  - **Performance Indicator:** List of potential Board members in place
- By ensuring adherence to the BIA's Governance Policy
  - Performance Indicator: Sign off by current and incoming Board members

### ○ **Priority Area 5: Advocacy**

#### ■ **Objective**

- To be a united voice for downtown footprint and to be an advocating voice in partnership with individual businesses

#### ■ **Goals**

- By ensuring the members concerns and problems are being addressed
  - **Performance Indicator: Member business feel represented**
- Maintain open communication with Municipal Council and Municipal Staff members
  - **Performance Indicator:** Write Municipal Ask for items that will benefit the downtown
- By ensuring the interests of Downtown Kemptville are understood and represented
  - **Performance Indicator:** Take a seat on committees that have an impact on the downtown business community





- BIAs act as a voice for local businesses, advocating for policies and initiatives that benefit the area
  - **Performance Indicator:** The BIA is viewed as an important partner when creating policies and initiatives
  
- Influencing Policy.
  - **Performance Indicator:** BIA's communicate localized business opportunities and Relationship build with all types of partners.
  - represented members when consulted on the Waterfront access study, the Parking Study, Riverside revitalization, Hwy 43 and the Official Plan recently. It will be considered too when a secondary Plan for downtown is developed next year. All these municipal strategies have involved the BIA because of our unique relationship to the Municipality. ( a member of Council is always on the BIA Board)
  
- Provide one on one support to businesses who have specific problem or concerns
  - Performance Indicator: businesses feel the support of a 73 member BIA behind them when problem solving