



DOWNTOWN CAMBRIDGE
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA



HESPELER VILLAGE
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA



PRESTON TOWNE CENTRE
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

September 2nd, 2025

Re: BIA Representation on the New Economic Development Working Group

Good Afternoon Mayor, Council,

We wanted to share our concerns surrounding the staff's report regarding the Terms of Reference for the proposed Economic Development Working Group and the importance of the BIAs keeping a seat at the table under this new structure.

Our BIAs connect directly with hundreds of small businesses in our core areas and are often the first to see the collective challenges or opportunities in the local economy. This perspective is exactly what the mandate of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, now turning into a Working Group, calls for. The proposed terms select prominent categories and representatives to build out a robust variety of voices around the table to offer industry insights, build connections, and amplify City-led economic initiatives.

Although we aren't the only voice of businesses, we are a large voice, especially in the core areas identified in the Economic Development Action Plan. That plan references core areas and BIAs 14 times, recognizing how central they are to Cambridge's future. Our actions around marketing, events, and beautification directly align with City goals outlined in the plan, and we are fundamental to the success of these initiatives.

Cambridge's three BIAs collectively represent over 450 businesses employing more than 2,500 people. This scale of representation demonstrates the importance of ensuring BIAs remain engaged as partners.

In the spring of 2023, Council approved three BIA seats on EDAC, one for each BIA, and had already identified the importance of BIAs to the City and to this committee. Removing us now from this new Working Group would cut off that continuity and a trusted channel for feedback and input that you gave us. We are uniquely positioned to act as ambassadors, to link different sectors of business, and to actively help gather input when Council calls on the BIAs to engage our members.

While we continue to grow our relationship with the City in different capacities, it should not take away a seat at the collective table of this city-wide Working Group. We strongly encourage you to ensure BIAs remain part of the newly proposed Economic Development Working Group so the voice of our businesses and commercial property owners continues to be represented in these important discussions.

Sincerely,

Brian Kennedy
Executive Director
Downtown Cambridge BIA &
Preston Towne Centre BIA

Shane Murphy
Chair
Downtown Cambridge BIA

Tony Schmidt
Chair
Preston Towne Centre BIA

Cory de Villiers
Chair
Hespeler Village BIA