

Staff Report

Presented By: Amanda Monaghan, Community Development Officer

Meeting Date: March 24, 2025

Subject: Business Improvement Area(s) Update

Attachment(s): Port Elgin BIA New and Current Boundaries
Southampton BIA New and Current Boundaries
Port Elgin BIA Board Meeting Minutes, February 21, 2025
Southampton BIA Board Meeting Minutes, February 27, 2025

Recommendation

That Council adopt By-law 27-2025, a By-law to allow the Port Elgin BIA to change their minimum and maximum levy to a percentage-based structure.

Report Summary

This report is being brought forward to recommend amending [By-law 80-2012](#) and establishing a percentage-based levy structure to allow more flexibility in the annual operating budget of the Port Elgin Business Improvement Association (BIA). Additionally, this report outlines the steps required to consider an expansion to the boundary areas of both the Port Elgin BIA (PEBIA) and the Southampton BIA to include all businesses in Saugeen Shores.

Background/Analysis

The Port Elgin BIA was formed in 1983. Over the following decades, the nature of the business areas in Port Elgin changed and built up beyond the downtown core and the main street, Goderich Street. Many plazas have been developed, and the tenant businesses have chosen Port Elgin as their place to do business. While downtown Port Elgin has remained a strong business community in the Town of Saugeen Shores, the growth of businesses just outside of the current boundaries has continued.

The Southampton BIA was formed in 2014 and has continued to grow. The Southampton BIA is relied on by the residents, visitors, and the Town of Saugeen Shores to encourage local shopping through events, activities, and other community initiatives. These efforts also play a role in making Southampton a place to live, work, and do business.

Port Elgin BIA minimum and maximum charge to commercial properties

In 2012, the Town passed [By-law 80-2012](#) will allow PEBIA to increase their levy each year to better support member businesses, and the community. However, the By-law had a minimum and maximum levy amount which has caused challenges with establishing the PEBIA budget and is an antiquated approach. For comparison, the Southampton BIA By-law is a percentage-based levy amount which does not cause the same issues. It is recommended to move the PEBIA By-law to a percentage-based By-law.

Switching to a percentage-based levy structure can make the PEBIA's funding model more flexible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of businesses, while also simplifying administration and fostering growth in the area. It also helps ensure that the contributions are closely aligned with the size and success of the businesses, making it a fairer and more sustainable model in the long term.

In conclusion, it is recommended that Council adopt the By-law allowing the PEBIA to change their minimum and maximum levy to a percentage-based structure.

BIA boundary expansion

The boundary expansion of both the Port Elgin and the Southampton BIA will allow the BIAs to increase their levies. Expansion will create opportunities for more collaborative community events and programs, encouraging local shopping experiences and community engagement. A subsequent result of the boundary expansion is an increase to the overall operating budget of both BIAs. The increased operating budget will create more opportunities for initiatives in Saugeen Shores that foster placemaking and community development.

As the Town continues to support the initiatives of the BIAs, the Town will help facilitate the process for boundary expansion for both Port Elgin BIA and Southampton BIA.

The role of the respective BIA Board of Directors, in the instance of boundary expansion, is to provide the recommendation to Council. Council will decide to adopt or decline the boundary expansion recommendation. The BIAs are also responsible for explaining and defending the proposed boundary.

The Town will facilitate, and Council will decide on the boundary expansion recommendations provided by the respective BIA Board of Directors, who will defend the proposed boundaries.

Boundary Expansion Next Steps

Gauging sentiment (Q2):

- Work with the Town's GIS team to develop new maps depicting current and proposed BIA boundaries – **complete** (attached);
- Determine list of businesses in the proposed boundaries, with contact information – **complete**;
- Draft letter for BIAs to review and approve outlining the proposed expansion – **complete**;
- Information update to Council (**March 24**);

- Mail letter and applicable maps to businesses within its respective BIA boundary (new and proposed); and
- Collate feedback from commercial property owners. If less than one third of commercial property owners are opposed, move forward with the formal expansion process.

Formal process (Q3) (as defined by the [Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, s. 209.](#)):

- Municipality issues, by mail, notice of intention to pass a By-law to expand the BIA boundary to property owners in the current and proposed BIA area;
- Within 30 days of the mailing date - landlords must provide tenants a copy of the notice and provide the Clerk a list of all tenants on their property and the share of property tax they are responsible for:
 - The notice will state that any written objections to the boundary expansion must be submitted within 60 days of the mailing date.
- The Clerk of the Municipality determines if objections have been received by 1/3 of the total number of members eligible to get notice, and the total assessment of those objecting make up either 1/3 of the total value of the assessment for the existing or proposed expansion area; and
- New By-law is advanced to Council.

In conclusion, Council is asked to receive this information update regarding the BIA boundary expansions. Updates will be provided to Council as the process develops.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Division Highlight

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

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