



## Important Notice for Landlords and Tenants – Sparks Street BIA Expansion

The Sparks Street BIA plans to expand its boundaries beyond the traditional pedestrian mall into a broader part of the downtown core in the new year. City Council approved the expansion, subject to public input at its last meeting.

Modelled after other urban centres' more expansive downtown BIA's landlords should have received a Notice of Intention dated October 23<sup>rd</sup> (attached as Appendix 1) and they were to provide a copy of the Notice to their tenants who pay all or part of the annual municipal property taxes within 30 days (November 23<sup>rd</sup>).

The proposed expansion will incorporate 29 street blocks of primarily mid and high rise commercial buildings, with some residential and institutional uses. The expansion area includes commercial properties on either side of the existing catchment area for the Centretown BIA, meaning the Sparks Street BIA would extend to Laurier Street West in the south, Bay Street to the west, and Elgin Street to the east, with a small additional strip of Wellington Street near the intersection with Elgin. The Sparks Street BIA would be re-branded as the Downtown BIA.

Each building would be charged a levy, which is used to fund the BIA's annual budget (also approved by city council). The Levy is determined by multiple factors, including the total assessment value of the entire BIA boundary, individual property assessment values, and tax ratios and rates. To learn what your level would be you should contact the Sparks Street BIA [kevin@sparkslive.com](mailto:kevin@sparkslive.com). An FAQ from the Sparks Street BIA is attached as Appendix 2.

Council would not enact a By-law if written objections were received by the City Clerk within 60 days of the notices being mailed (December 23<sup>rd</sup>) and the objectors represent:

- At least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to notice
- At least one-third of the annual municipal property taxes in all prescribed business property classes within the area

To calculate either of these baseline standards for objections, the Notice of Intention requires landlords to provide to the City Clerk a list of every commercial tenant and the share of the taxes that each tenant is required to pay.

To register an objection either landlords, tenants or both should forward their written (email) objection before December 23<sup>rd</sup> to the City Clerk

Caitlin Salter  
City Clerk  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa ON K1P 1J1  
Email: [Caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca](mailto:Caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Karakasis", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dean Karakasis  
Executive Director and CEO  
BOMA Ottawa



October 23, 2024

Dear Property Owner:

**Re: NOTICE OF INTENTION  
Intention to Expand the Boundaries of the Sparks Street  
Business Improvement Area (BIA)**

In accordance with the *Ontario Municipal Act, 2001*, hereinafter referred to as "the Act", the Sparks Street Business Improvement Area (BIA) Board of Management has requested the City of Ottawa expand the boundaries of the BIA as outlined in the map on page 5.

A BIA allows local businesspeople and property owners to join together and, with the support of the municipality, to oversee, finance, and carry out physical improvements, collective marketing and promote economic development in their district. The BIA is financed through a special levy, which is applied to all commercial and industrial property owners in the area.

The request to expand the boundaries of the BIA under the provisions of the Act was subsequently approved by City Council at its meeting held on October 16, 2024. In this regard, attached are Sections 209 and 210 of the Act (pages 3-4). You will note Section 210(2) of the Act outlines obligations of property owners (landlords) to provide copies within specific timeframes. Specifically, the Act requires that property owners, within 30 days of the registered notice being mailed and no later than November 23, 2024, give:

- A copy of this notice to each commercial tenant who is required to pay all or part of the taxes on the property; and
- The City Clerk of the municipality a list of every commercial tenant and the share of the taxes that each tenant is required to pay.

Further, if you and/or your commercial tenants are not in support of the Sparks Street BIA expansion, you may submit a written (email) objection to the City Clerk at the following:

Caitlin Salter MacDonald  
City Clerk  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Email: [caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca](mailto:caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca)

Objections must be received no later than December 23, 2024, (60 days from the date of this letter).



For more information on the Sparks Street BIA expansion request and City of Ottawa staff report, please contact Mike Bureau, Economic Development Officer, 613-580-2424 extension 22441 or [Mike.Bureau5@ottawa.ca](mailto:Mike.Bureau5@ottawa.ca).

To request your approximate levy amount, please email the Executive Director (Kevin McHale) of the Sparks Street BIA at [kevin@sparkslive.com](mailto:kevin@sparkslive.com).

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'C. Salter MacDonal'.

Caitlin Salter MacDonal  
City Clerk  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Email: [caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca](mailto:caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca)

## **Ontario Municipal Act, 2001**

### **Changes to boundary**

**209.** The municipality may alter the boundaries of an improvement area and the board of management for that improvement area is continued as the board of management for the altered area. 2001, c. 25, s. 209.

### **Notice**

**210. (1)** Before passing a by-law under subsection 204 (1), clause 208 (2) (b), subsection 208 (3) or section 209, notice of the proposed by-law shall be sent by prepaid mail to the board of management of the improvement area, if any, and to every person who, on the last returned assessment roll, is assessed for rateable property that is in a prescribed business property class which is located,

- (a) where the improvement area already exists, in the improvement area and in any geographic area the proposed by-law would add to the improvement area; and
- (b) where a new improvement area would be created by the proposed by-law, in the proposed improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (1).

### **When notice received**

(2) A person who receives a notice under subsection (1) shall, within 30 days after the notice is mailed,

- (a) give a copy of the notice to each tenant of the property to which the notice relates who is required to pay all or part of the taxes on the property; and
- (b) give the clerk of the municipality a list of every tenant described in clause (a) and the share of the taxes that each tenant is required to pay and the share that the person is required to pay. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (2).

### **Objections**

(3) A municipality shall not pass a by-law referred to in subsection (1) if,

- (a) written objections are received by the clerk of the municipality within 60 days after the last day of mailing of the notices;
- (b) the objections have been signed by at least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to notice under subsection (1) and under clause (2) (a); and
- (c) the objectors are responsible for,
  - (i) in the case of a proposed addition to an existing improvement area,
    - (A) at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area, or

- (B) at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the geographic area the proposed by-law would add to the existing improvement area, or
- (ii) in all other cases, at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (3).

**Withdrawal of objections**

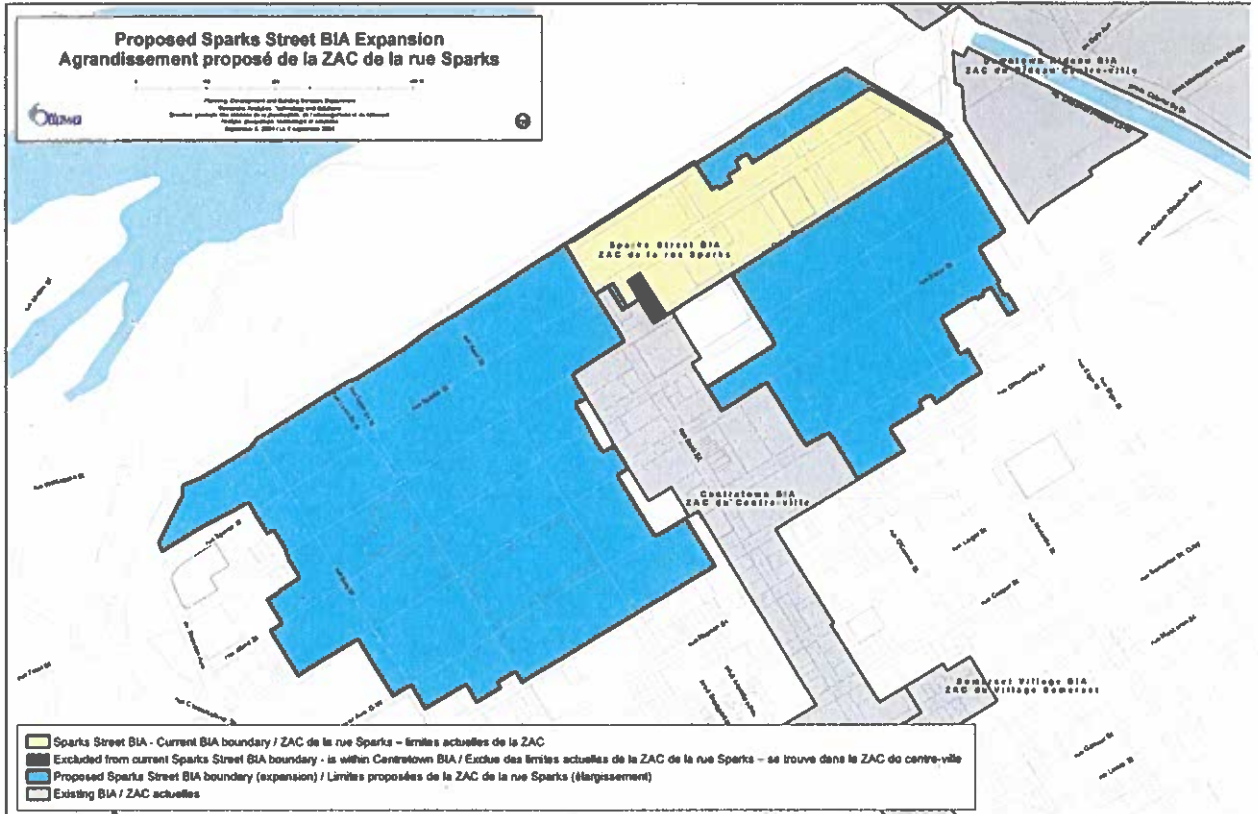
(4) If sufficient objections are withdrawn in writing within the 60-day period referred to in clause (3) (a) so that the conditions set out in clause (3) (b) or (c) no longer apply, the municipality may pass the by-law. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (4).

**Determination by clerk**

(5) The clerk shall determine whether the conditions set out in subsection (3) have been met and, if they are, shall issue a certificate affirming that fact. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (5).

**Determination final**

(6) The determination by the clerk is final. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (6).



# BIA Boundary Expansion

The Sparks Street Business Improvement Area (BIA) is preparing for a boundary expansion in 2025, beyond its historic catchment area of Sparks Street, to include a broader area of the downtown Ottawa core.

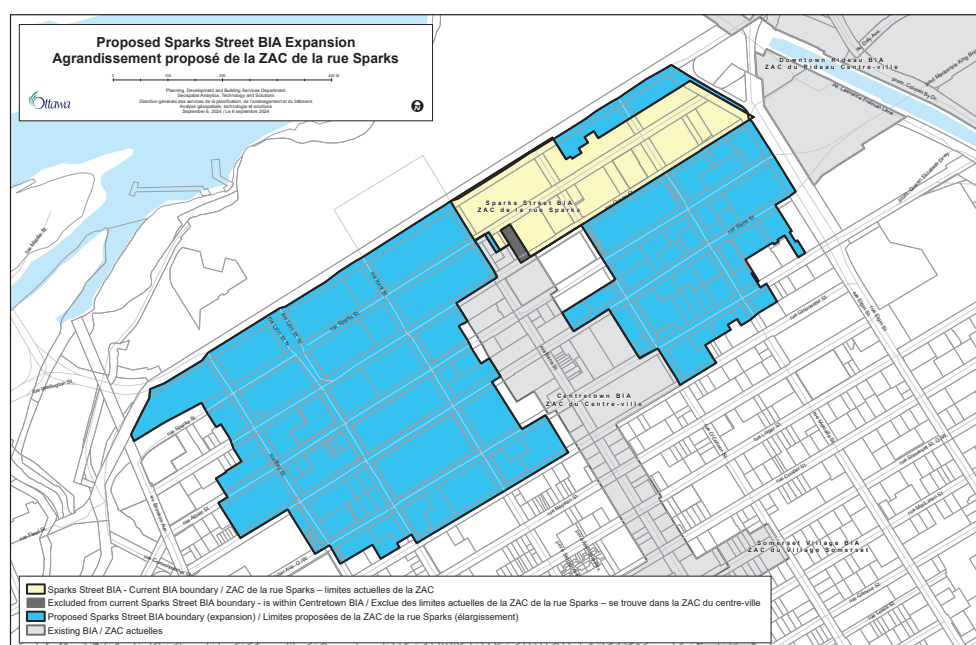
The following frequently asked questions provide background supporting this expansion to ensure that downtown Ottawa remains a thriving community for businesses, residents and visitors.

## Why is the Sparks Street BIA expanding its boundary?

The recent focus on Downtown Revitalization has highlighted a significant portion of the downtown core as being not or underrepresented at the local level. Given the recent economic and social economic challenges of downtown commercial cores, the need for representation, advocacy and management of public realm is more important than ever.

The BIA has a proven track record of creating positive change and advocating for its members. With a focus on business retention and expansion, economic development, public realm and cultural programming, the BIA is well positioned to expand its area of influence beyond historic Sparks Street. This boundary expansion of the BIA trade area will extend these essential services to the heart of the downtown core that is currently underserved and underrepresented.

Once approved, the BIA expansion will come into effect on January 1st. 2025.



Proposed boundary expansion map subject to change.

## What areas are included in the BIA expansion?

The expansion area illustrated in the map includes commercial properties within the following boundaries:

- Bay Street to the West
- Laurier Avenue West to the South, to Metcalfe Street
- Slater Street to the South, between Metcalfe Street and Elgin Street
- Elgin Street to the East
- Wellington Street to the North

The expansion area consists of 29 street blocks, consisting primarily of mid-to- high rise commercial use and some residential and institutional uses. As the Sparks Street neighbourhood is largely a business district, many of these buildings are characterized by commercial or retail uses at-grade (including personal services, cafes and restaurants, and fitness centers) and office uses above grade. The area is also significantly made up of government offices which occupy the whole or part of several commercial properties in the BIA.

## What will the expanded BIA be called?

With the formation of an expanded BIA, and in support of the ongoing downtown revitalization plans, the current Sparks Street BIA will be rebranded to better reflect the expanded boundary. The BIA is currently engaged in a research and rebranding exercise to develop a new brand identity that best represents and reflects the uniqueness of the downtown Ottawa district. It is essential that the new branding resonates with all businesses and residents in the area and attracts a broad range of visitors with a strong marketing appeal. This rebranding will be an essential part of ongoing economic

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## What is the role of a BIA?

The role of a BIA is to drive collaboration between local business, commercial property owners, and visitors. With the support of the municipality, its mandate is to organize, finance and develop meaningful community and cultural programming and activations, while promoting economic development and destination development within the commercial district.

<b>COMMUNICATIONS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• branding &amp; positioning</li><li>• marketing &amp; social media</li><li>• media relations</li><li>• member advocacy</li></ul>	<b>COMMERCIAL:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leasing &amp; support programs</li><li>• business incentives</li><li>• strategic partnerships</li><li>• business retention &amp; expansion</li></ul>
<b>COMMUNITY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• placemaking &amp; greenspaces</li><li>• public realm management</li><li>• security &amp; safety</li><li>• member events</li><li>• community outreach</li></ul>	<b>CULTURAL:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• festivals &amp; event programming</li><li>• seasonal activations</li><li>• visitor attractions</li><li>• visitor outreach</li><li>• arts &amp; cultural collaborations</li></ul>

## What types of businesses are included in the expansion?

Any business that pays commercial property taxes to the city or through their property owner within the intended boundary will be included in this expansion.

Expansion area businesses were organized by three business categories: retail, restaurant, and service. Restaurant businesses also include cafes and takeaway only food establishments, while service businesses include hotels and banks. In total, of the 134 non-vacant businesses, approximately 11% are retail, 43% are restaurants and 46% are service based.

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## How is the BIA funded?

The BIA's primary source of funding comes from its members. Each member pays a levy, proportional to the value of property within the boundary. The BIA regularly applies for funding from all three levels of government to offset the costs of programming and projects. Over the past five years, the Sparks Street BIA has received over \$600,000 in funding for its initiatives.

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## What are the next steps in the expansion process?

The BIA invites you to be part of the process in this exciting expansion. For full transparency, the next steps will include:

1. Public consultations were held in September and October.
  2. Letters of support from stakeholders, existing and new business members will be collected and shared with the City.
  3. The BIA Expansion Report will go the Finance and Corporate Services Committee and then City Council in October.
  4. The City will send notification to all property owners within the expanded district in October.
  5. Once approved, the BIA expansion will come into effect on January 1st, 2025.
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## For further information or inquiries please contact:

**Kevin McHale, Executive Director**

kevin@sparkslive.com

**Christine Rozak, Economic Development Director**

christine@sparkslive.com