



DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA

Member Handbook

WHAT IS THE BIA?

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) consists of commercial properties and their non-residential tenants within a defined boundary. The individuals and corporations who own these commercial properties or the businesses within them make up the BIA Membership. Established in 1974, the Downtown Barrie BIA elevates the experience of Barrie's one-of-a-kind waterfront & flourishing downtown.

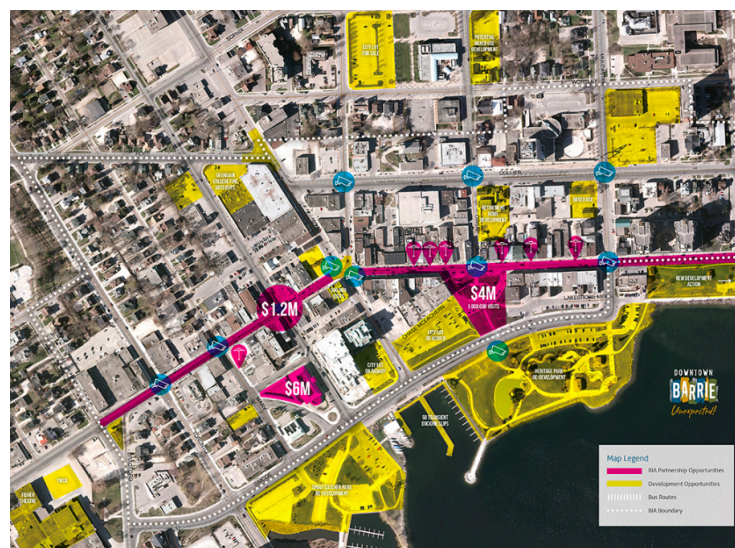
We aim towards the development of a vibrant downtown core by advocating for people-focused growth in the private sector and City Hall.

We act with intentionality to shape its identity, organizing programming, events, and festivals marketed to downtown residents, Barrie customers, and tourists alike.

With major organizational restructuring in the last few years, the Downtown Barrie BIA has streamlined its focus and purpose to deliver on investments in community, beautification, art, & safety of its public spaces so we can enhance our members' ability to deliver their customers an unrivalled experience.

AM I IN THE DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA?

Take a look at the map below! If your business sits within the Downtown Barrie BIA boundary, then you're already a member.



Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA)

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HISTORY

Downtown Barrie has historic roots and heritage dating back 200+ years. Before there was Barrie, there was the beginning of the Nine Mile Portage. Then came the War of 1812 and a cluster of storehouses and homes. The first streets on Barrie were named after British Officers Collier, Bayfield, Owen and Poyntz. Then came the extension of the railway which allowed the Town of Barrie to expand its transportation, agriculture and natural resource industries.

In the late 1800s, downtown Barrie experienced many fires, one of which destroyed the entire north side of Dunlop Street from Bayfield Street to Owen Street. This led to a bill prohibiting the construction of wooden-sided buildings and the redevelopment of a brick streetscape turned Barrie into a town complete with a commercial centre.

Today, Downtown Barrie is full of vibrancy. It's a community with an exciting future where friends, family and visitors gather to make and share memories - right at the centre of our city.

HOW DOES A BUSINESS BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BIA?

Downtown Barrie is designated a Business Improvement Area under a special municipal by-law and legislated by the Province of Ontario THROUGH THE MUNICIPAL ACT. If your business falls within the catchment area, then you are automatically a member of the Downtown Barrie BIA. The boundaries of the catchment area are defined by the City of Barrie.

WHAT DO MEMBERS PAY TO BE A PART OF THE BIA?

All commercial property owners within the BIA pay a special levy on their property taxes. This levy is dependent on the property's commercial assessment and is paid when the property taxes are paid. A property owner may choose to factor in this special levy when determining the details surrounding leasing out their property to a business. Both property owners and business owners are members of the Downtown Barrie BIA.

WHO OPERATES THE DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA?

The Downtown Barrie BIA is run by a volunteer Board of Management and an office staff of three (3) full-time employees with the assistance of part-time staff and seasonal student ambassadors.

BIA BOARD & STAFF

The Board of Management consists of eight (8) Board Directors, who are elected to sit on the Board for a four (4) year term. The Board is comprised of property owners, business owners and members of the Barrie City Council; along with one ex-officio Member.

The 2023 - 2026 Board of Management is comprised of the following...

- Heather Kennedy, Chair
- Steve Ricalis Kemp, Vice Chair
- Chris Gerrard, Secretary-Treasurer
- Alison Oakes, Director
- Christina Mancuso, Director
- Craig Nixon, City Councillor
- Craig Strachan, Director
- Richard Tremblay, Director
- Janet Kemp, Former Chair (2-year term)

The Downtown Barrie BIA staff is comprised of three (3) full-time staff and two (2)

- Craig Stevens, Executive Director
- Stacey Zubczyk, Operations Manager
- Cameron Stamper, Creative Communications
- Robert Wilson-Gill, Downtown Clean Team
- Danny Houle, Downtown Clean Team

The Downtown Barrie BIA also works closely with its partners:

- The City of Barrie's Various Departments
- Barrie Police Service
- Barrie Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Barrie

The Downtown Barrie BIA's goals are determined by the current Board of Management and their term. Key areas of focus for the 2023 Board include:

- Organizational + Management (Policy + Partner Influencer)
- Culture + Heritage Events (Event Facilitator)
- Marketing + Communication (Area Marketer)
- Beautification + Cleanliness + Safety (Public Realm Investor)

However, goals and items of interest can include items related to the following:

- Retail
- Hospitality
- Traffic
- Property Owners

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA AND THE CITY OF BARRIE?

The Downtown Barrie BIA operates independently of but with a highly valued partnership with the City of Barrie. Maintaining such a strong working relationship is vital to much of what we do including facilitating events and festivals, promoting the economic development of the downtown and more.

WHAT DOES THE DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA OFFICE DO?

The staff, student ambassadors and volunteers implement, facilitate and monitor all the activities of the organization. We are constantly working on our operating model to fully leverage our four pillars.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE DOWNTOWN BARRIE BIA:



Event Facilitator

New visits to the Downtown have the opportunity to bring new business to the Downtown. Promoting the Downtown area through visitor experience is a key priority for BIAs and hosting events is a way for Downtowns to show off all they have to offer. Events have the power to make visitors realize that the Downtown area is a place they want to be.

As an event facilitator, it is the BIA's responsibility to bring these Downtown events to life. With creative flair, BIAs identify target audiences, implement events for these audiences, support event brands, help devise event concepts and organize technical aspects. Additionally, BIAs help spread the word through social media, strategic marketing and by reaching out to local media outlets.

Event attendance is a good way to measure the ability of the BIA to draw visitors to the Downtown area. Core to visitor experience is the ability to generate a sense of strong cultural community building; facilitating events to draw people to the area creates a sense that Downtown is worth visiting.



Area Marketer

A BIA that promotes the Downtown area also promotes its businesses. This includes generating well-thought-out marketing campaigns utilizing all forms of media while remaining 'on brand'. The aim is to draw attention not only to the Downtown area but all the businesses within it. The BIA uses a model that focuses on 3 key brand-building categories:

- 'Brand Product Development' - focusing on small but significant physical attributes.
- 'Brand Marketing' - developing creative campaigns to reach the public.
- 'Brand Presentation' - a direct communication program that connects to local influential networks, partners and organizations.

Using this model results in the BIA marketing the Downtown area as a vibrant space that people will want to visit, strengthening the sense of community and establishing the Downtown and its businesses as places people want to be.



Public Realm Investor

At its inception in 1970, the BIA concept was based on the importance of investing in 'the space between and surrounding the buildings and businesses' - the public realm. Investing in the public realm creates a vibrant and enjoyable sense of place that attracts visitors to the Downtown. A BIA aims to generate a personal connection for visitors (by way of beautification investments as simple as flower planters and banners or as complex as large public buildings, venues and parks) to public spaces strengthening a visitor's connection to your business.

BIAs that are invested in the public realm recognize that the backbone of a successful Downtown begins with drawing visitors to it by making it a sociable, exciting, and vibrant environment.



Policy & Partner Influencer

With strong Strategic Plans (Brand Action Plans), BIAs become integral vehicles for communicating localized business opportunities and challenges to policymakers, government partners, local community agencies and commercial organizations. By embracing a cooperative relationship with these partners, BIAs are able to advocate and influence positive change on behalf of the Downtown area, its businesses, and the local community.

The ability to share captured data and effectively address policies and investments helps establish the right environment to contribute to building our local businesses and community. Creative problem-solving and strong working relationships with all key partners keep the BIA on your side for creating a vibrant and exciting Downtown area.

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS TO KNOW...

WASTE COLLECTION

- Each business can put out up to six (6) units of garbage (up to 45 lbs. each) a week
- Each business can put out up to five (5) recycling boxes a week

For **businesses in the Downtown BIA**, there will be daily (Monday to Friday) collection of garbage, and recycling from May 1, 2024 to September 7, 2025, until automated cart collection is introduced. There will be no change to weekly limits in this area.

BRIGHT SPOT PROGRAM

The Bright Spot program works towards providing a safer, more comfortable downtown environment for the locality. The introduction of new safety measures generates a secure feeling for individuals spending time downtown. The installation of murals and string lighting to alleyways and the addition of ten (10) new security cameras alongside safety-trained businesses will all contribute to the assurance of a safer downtown. Through and through this program intends to create a secure, protected and more encouraging downtown venue for all users.

WHO TO CONTACT





Welcome to Downtown Barrie!

We're happy to have you as one of our valued members.

