



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
AREAS TOOLKIT

4 **Working With
the City**

October 2025

Edmonton

TABLE OF CONTENTS

City of Edmonton Core BIA Supports	3
Touchpoints between the City and BIAs	4
City Support for BIAs and Member Businesses	5
BIA Governance and Economic Vitality	5
Economic Indicator Reporting	5
One-on-One Support for New Businesses	5
Grant Programs to Support Reinvestment in Buildings	6
Development Incentive Program	6
The Facade Improvement Program	6
Collecting BIA Taxes	7
BIA Insurance Coverage	8
Infrastructure and Operations	9
Infrastructure Coordination	9
Reporting Infrastructure Issues in a BIA through 311	9
BIA Clean-up and Beautification	10
Flower Pots and Barrels	10
Street Tree Lights and Banners	10
Graffiti Management	11
Safe Needle and Sharps Disposal	11
Vacant and Derelict Commercial Buildings and Properties	11
Helping Make BIA Events a Success	12
Safety and Bylaw Enforcement in your BIA	13
Licensed Bars and Restaurants	13
Municipal Bylaw Enforcement	13
Addressing Crime and Disorder	13
City Rules and Processes Related to Businesses	14
Business Licensing and Permit Needs	14
Influencing City Policies, Regulations and Processes	14



CITY OF EDMONTON CORE BIA SUPPORTS

The City and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are partners in local economic development and placemaking; they can work together in many ways. This document identifies City staff and programs that support BIAs and member businesses.

Key City staff work closely with BIAs to support vibrant commercial areas, with a focus on good governance and infrastructure coordination.

A BIA Liaison helps BIAs with governance, fulfilment of operational requirements related to City Policy, and economic development needs. An Infrastructure Specialist helps to address infrastructure coordination and maintenance. These staff are go-to resources for BIAs, helping with annual requirements, long-term planning, and emerging issues. In addition to supporting these essentials, staff may also partner with or otherwise assist BIAs with special projects where resources allow. Staff also help connect BIAs with other City contacts and services, and work internally with a diversity of colleagues to promote understanding of BIAs and BIA interests. See below for more information on their roles and working with them.

BIA Liaison: Charles Gordon
charles.gordon@edmonton.ca
780-944-0300

Small Business Liaison: Nolan Carter
nolan.carter@edmonton.ca
780-944-5396

BIA Infrastructure Specialist:
James Robinson
james.robinson@edmonton.ca
780-984-0890

TOUCHPOINTS BETWEEN THE CITY AND BIAs

CITY COUNCIL

Approves BIA annual budgets, appoints directors to the BIA board, approves changes to existing BIA boundaries, and approves the creation or dissolution of BIAs.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CITY COUNCIL

Receives BIA annual reports and audited financial statements.

CITY STAFF

Support BIAs on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways, working directly and most often with executive directors and BIA boards, and also supporting member businesses.

CITY SUPPORT FOR BIAs AND MEMBER BUSINESSES

BIA GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

Staff work with BIAs to support:

- Fulfilment of BIA administrative requirements and annual reporting.
- BIA governance and organizational capacity building.
- Changes to BIA boundaries.

Staff also provide support to businesses that are interested in forming a BIA, and can help connect BIAs to other areas of the Administration and provide advice related to strategic business planning. Staff may also partner with BIAs on one-off projects or longer-term initiatives focused on local economic development and small business support, where these projects support the collective needs of multiple BIAs, are identified as priorities, and where resources allow.

Contact: Charles Gordon
charles.gordon@edmonton.ca
780-944-0300

ECONOMIC INDICATOR REPORTING

BIA Economic Indicators provide BIAs and the City with quantifiable data to better understand the local economy of these key commercial areas. The City evaluates indicators annually and reports on year-over-year trends in the local economies of each BIA. Economic Indicator reports are shared with BIAs and are typically completed in the fall of each year.

Contact: Charles Gordon
charles.gordon@edmonton.ca
780-944-0300

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT FOR NEW BUSINESSES

The **Open Window Program** provides one-on-one support to new businesses to understand business license, development permit, and building permit requirements. Business owners can contact the program before beginning their applications to ensure their experience goes smoothly.

Open Window can also help them explore location options for their business.

Contact: smallbusiness@edmonton.ca

CITY SUPPORT FOR BIAs AND MEMBER BUSINESSES (CONT.)

GRANT PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT REINVESTMENT IN BUILDINGS

Partnering to create interesting, attractive, and safe places for customers to shop, dine and do business is one of the major ways BIAs, member businesses and the City of Edmonton help spur economic development and reinvestment together.

The Storefront Improvement Program

The **The Storefront Improvement Program** encourages commercial building owners in BIAs to renovate their storefronts by offering matching grants to cover a portion of renovation costs. A more attractive storefront can help attract customers through stronger curb appeal and business branding.

Contact: Program Manager
storefront.improvement@edmonton.ca
780-221-2337

The Storefront Refresh and Signage Program

The **The Storefront Refresh and Signage Program** grant is a matching reimbursement grant of up to \$1,000 for modest storefront improvements such as new paint, repairing damaged front steps, reskinning an existing awning or adding a new fascia sign.

Contact: Program Manager
storefront.improvement@edmonton.ca
780-221-2337



COLLECTING BIA TAXES

The City collects BIA taxes from all businesses within a BIA and remits these in full to the BIA.

The BIA uses these funds to operate and to provide services in support of members and the overall economic vitality of the area.

Assessment and Taxation Staff support and work with BIAs by:

- administering assessment and taxation requirements for BIAs.
- providing annually a list of businesses located in each BIA for the BIA executive director to review for accuracy.
- providing information on how BIA assessments and taxes are calculated, in general and specific to business accounts.
- answering questions related to information presented on BIA assessment and tax notices.

Contact: Call 311 or
email: assessment@edmonton.ca



BIA INSURANCE COVERAGE

The City encourages BIAs to obtain their insurance through the City's insurance program.

BIAs may also choose to carry their own insurance through regular insurance carriers. To contract with the City, or to ask questions about what is or isn't covered and requirements for special activities, BIAs should call the City's Risk Management team. This team can also assist with the process for reporting claims and/or property damage.

Contact: Tanya Blackie
tanya.blackie@edmonton.ca
780-496-5137



INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

We recognize that well maintained infrastructure, from roads and parking to streetlights and parks is essential for a vibrant BIA and a positive user experience.

To enhance the environment, City Operations partners with BIAs to provide essential short and long-term services. This support includes the maintenance and operation of vital public assets like roads, parks, sidewalks, and parking areas, as well as the upkeep of streetlights, street furniture, and street trees.

INFRASTRUCTURE COORDINATION

The Infrastructure Specialist works as the key connector between the City and BIAs. They provide expert advice and support for operational issues, BIA placemaking, and infrastructure projects. Their internal work involves coordinating City colleagues to ensure all planned infrastructure projects and operational policies support the local business area, while also providing oversight for rehabilitation work within BIAs.

Reporting Infrastructure Issues

311 is Edmonton's non-emergency phone line and central point of contact for all City government information and services, providing easy access for residents, businesses, and visitors.

It's a vital tool for BIAs and local businesses to quickly report operational issues and concerns related to public infrastructure, including:

- **Roads and Sidewalks:** Reporting snow/ice, potholes, loose manholes, deteriorated pavers, uneven surfaces, and obstructions.
- **Lighting and Signage:** Issues with streetlights, traffic lights, traffic signs, maintenance needs, damage, or outages.
- **Maintenance and Environment:** Litter, overflowing garbage, unsightly property, pooling water, blocked drains, flooding, graffiti, and vandalism.
- **Parks and Trees:** Maintenance issues, damaged or overgrown trees, and concerns with trails or sports fields.
- **Enforcement:** Parking complaints and requests for private parking enforcement.

To report an issue, you can call **311**, use the 311 App, or submit an **online intake form**. A complete list of all services is available [here](#).

BIA CLEAN-UP AND BEAUTIFICATION

The City provides a variety of services to help keep your BIA looking great.

FLOWER POTS AND BARRELS

Through the Bloomin' Boulevards program, the City partners with BIAs and individual businesses to provide flower baskets and barrels in BIAs during the summer. The City partners with local greenhouses and waters the flowers all summer long for a reduced fee. Requests for brand new basket installation are due every year on February 28, while barrel and reoccurring basket orders are due by May 15.

Contact: Patricia Rooker
patricia.rooker@edmonton.ca
 780-496-4678



STREET TREE LIGHTS AND BANNERS

City staff can work with BIAs to install and provide year-round lights on street trees. There are costs involved for the BIA, for installation of underground power supply, purchasing of lighting, installation of lights by the Urban Forestry team, and powering the lights. Once installed, the City plans routing to visit trees four times each year; maintaining the lights and their electrical systems. To request lighting where underground power is not current installed, contact the BIA Infrastructure Specialist to work through process and costs for installation. The City can also work with BIAs to provide permissions to install decorative banners on light poles.

Contacts:

Tree Lighting Repair: Call 311
 Requests for banners on streetlight poles:
rowsign@edmonton.ca

BIA CLEAN-UP AND BEAUTIFICATION (CONT.)

GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

As per the *City's Community Standards Bylaw (14600)*, it is the property owner's responsibility to remove graffiti tags.

The Graffiti Management Program implements a number of initiatives as part of the graffiti abatement strategy, including:

- **Professional Graffiti Cleaning:** Up to \$750 grant to property owners each year for professional graffiti cleaning.
- **Graffiti Mural Program:** \$5000 grant to properties that have a history of graffiti. Murals are an effective way to deter graffiti vandalism.

Contact: Andrew Jabs
Capitalcitycleanup@edmonton.ca
 780-496-5238



SAFE NEEDLE AND SHARPS DISPOSAL

Capital City Cleanup oversees the collection of discarded needles and sharps found on public property or deposited in one of the Safe Needle Sharps Boxes located in high incident areas. Call 311 to report a needle on public property. This helps determine where a future needle box should be placed. Needles found on private property must be disposed of by the business or property owner. Information on how to collect and dispose of these needles properly can be found in the [Safe Needle Toolkit](#).

VACANT AND DERELICT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

Properties that are in serious disrepair can have a negative impact on surrounding sites and the wider commercial area, and can negatively influence perceptions of a BIA's vitality. A BIA can report vacant and derelict properties, and work with the City to help get issues addressed.

Contact: Justin Lallemant
justin.lallemant@edmonton.ca
 780-496-4719

HELPING MAKE BIA EVENTS A SUCCESS

Not sure what you need to do to plan and hold an event in public parks or streets? City staff can help with that, working with you to navigate the needed steps and connect with the right departments.

Organizers are encouraged to submit a **civic event application** as a first step, to allow staff to do an initial review of the proposed event. Event notification should be submitted a minimum of eight weeks from the event.

The City offers several grant funding options for BIAs hosting festivals and events.

1. Festivals & Events Micro Grant

This grant program was created to support smaller, outdoor festivals and events. Priority groups include cultural and multicultural events, Indigenous-led or Indigenous serving events and events run or supported by a Business Improvement Area.

Eligible Event Dates: January 1 – December 31

Grant Award Range: \$500 – \$10,000

Contact: Grant Administrator
eventsmicrogrant@edmonton.ca
edmonton.ca/eventsmicrogrant

2. Festivals & Events Micro Grant

Winter festival and event organizers share the magic of Edmonton's winter. However, there are higher operational costs for winter outdoor events therefore winter-specific funding is provided.

Eligible Event Dates: January 1 – March 15 and November 15 – December 31

Grant Award Range: \$500 – \$60,000

Contact: Grant Administrator
wintercityeventsgrant@edmonton.ca
edmonton.ca/wintercityeventsgrant

3. Neighbourhood Connections Grant

4. Neighbourhood Revitalization Project Macro-Grant

SAFETY AND BYLAW ENFORCEMENT IN YOUR BIA

There are a number of City and partner initiatives that can help BIAs and member businesses address safety, security, and bylaw enforcement.

LICENSED BARS AND RESTAURANTS

The Public Safety Compliance Team is comprised of the Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services, City of Edmonton Community Standards Branch, and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission. The team can support BIAs through education and enforcement of rules and regulations for businesses and venues that are licensed to serve alcohol.

Contact 311 to share complaints or concerns about a licensed venue, and to connect with an Officer in your area.

MUNICIPAL BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

Community Standards Peace Officers and Municipal Enforcement Officers work with citizens in neighbourhoods and business communities to ensure that activities and property conditions meet Edmonton's basic community standards. They enforce a wide variety of municipal bylaws and provincial statutes related to: business licensing, zoning, community standards (includes snow removal), noise, activities in public places, traffic, and gaming and liquor.

Contact: Call 311 to share complaints or concerns, and to connect with an officer in your area.

ADDRESSING CRIME AND DISORDER

The **Neighbourhood Empowerment Team** (NET) is a partnership between the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service, The Family Center, and United Way. It works with business and community stakeholders to reduce recurring situations of crime and disorder. NET focuses on relationship building and initiating projects that respond to crime and disorder. These projects may include animating spaces, building capacity and connections, creating safe spaces (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), education, events and training. The team also liaises with other programs such as 211, 24/7 Crisis Diversion, and other City departments.

Contact: Jenna Pilot
jenna.pilot@edmonton.ca
780-668-7956

CITY RULES AND PROCESSES RELATED TO BUSINESSES

BUSINESS LICENSING AND PERMIT NEEDS

Anyone providing goods or services in the City of Edmonton is required to have a business licence, and commercial development for new or existing buildings involves a number of different types of permit approvals. These could include building, development, and signage permits. Permits may also be required for sidewalk cafes and temporary events.

To find the most up-to-date information about the regulations and processes that apply to opening and operating a business in your BIA, check the [City's online resources](#). Information is also available through 311 and the Edmonton Service Centre.

INFLUENCING CITY POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND PROCESSES

BIAs and member businesses can influence City policies, regulations and processes in a number of ways. Your voices are important to helping City staff understand how to better meet the needs of BIAs and member businesses. Opportunities to learn about proposed changes to policies, rules or processes are advertised on the [City's website](#).

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