



PRESS RELEASE

The Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas

## Local BIAs unite to form the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OTTAWA, ON:** The interim board of directors is pleased to announce the formation of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA). The newly established organization will enable the city's 19 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to speak with a unified voice on urban, suburban and rural issues impacting local communities. OCOBIA aims to support members by shaping policy, sharing best practices and strengthening relationships with the City of Ottawa and other key stakeholders.

"As we celebrate Small Business Week, there has never been a better time to recognize the important value that BIAs bring to neighbourhoods here in Ottawa and elsewhere," notes OCOBIA Interim Chair and Quartier Vanier BIA Chair Mark Kaluski. "BIAs play a vital role in helping communities thrive – we want to build on the momentum of the past and create a promising future for members, businesses, customers and residents."

BIAs are place management organizations embedded in the areas they serve. They are community builders, neighbourhood champions and economic drivers. Ottawa BIAs represent more than 6,400 businesses who employ 120,000 people and generate nearly \$7.4 million in private sector funding. These resources are reinvested through initiatives that include on-street beautification, programming, promotional campaigns, public safety, and other activities. Globally, there are more than 4,000 like-minded organizations with 2,500 in North America alone.

"We are excited to work collaboratively with the City of Ottawa and other partners to effectively represent our members and build an even better Ottawa for residents and visitors alike," says OCOBIA Executive Director Lindsay Hugenholtz Sherk. "The timing of the new OCOBIA model is aligned with a growing international movement centered around establishing a sense of place and curating experiences that contribute to our quality of life."

Small Business Week runs October 20-26 to celebrate small businesses, who are the engine of our economy and vital to our prosperity. They account for approximately 95% of all businesses in Canada that employ over 8 million people. For more information on Small Business Week, visit [www.ottawa.ca](http://www.ottawa.ca).

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