



Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) Welcomes New Executive Director on the 50th Anniversary of BIAs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OTTAWA, ON: The Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) is pleased to welcome newly appointed full-time Executive Director, Rebecca Palmer, effective immediately. OCOBIA enables the city's 19 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to speak with a unified voice on urban, suburban and rural issues impacting local communities. OCOBIA is comprised of an elected Board of Directors with members from different BIAs.

OCOBIA works closely with the City of Ottawa, Province and Federal Government to sustain and advance the livelihood of mainstreet businesses in Ontario. Members of OCOBIA pay an annual fee based on the levies paid by local business and property owners within a business improvement area. OCOBIA aims to support members by shaping policy, sharing best practices and strengthening relationships with the City of Ottawa and other key stakeholders.

"Small businesses are the heart of many business improvement areas and need our support more now than ever before" says OCOBIA Executive Director Rebecca Palmer. "Working together, our BIAs are finding ways to mitigate the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and future-proof business with the assistance of partner organizations including the City of Ottawa, OBIAA, and Invest Ottawa."

"We are excited to welcome Ms. Palmer as our new executive director. She will strive to raise the profile of BIAs within the city, and to continue collaborating with the city's economic development partners to help our mainstreet businesses survive and thrive" says Mark Kaluski, chair of the organization.

BIAs are community builders, neighbourhood champions and economic drivers. Ottawa BIAs represent more than 6,400 businesses that employ 120,000 people and reinvest nearly \$7.4 million in private sector funding back into their neighbourhoods. These resources 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.

The first BIA was formed in the Bloor-West Village of Toronto in 1970 and on Bank Street in Ottawa in 1977. BIAs represent over **100,000** businesses and 17,600 property owners and are integral to advancing a distinct, livable, vibrant and resilient business district in its local community.

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