



# STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH

# BACKGROUND

2018, the Ottawa Council of BIAs engaged in a strategic plan that resulted in the formation of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) in 2019.

- Among many items covered in the original Strategic Plan were three Primary Objectives and a Tactical Implementation Plan.

March 2022, OCOBIA awarded Rhapsody Strategies a contract to facilitate a Strategic Refresh.

- The purpose of the Refresh was to provide **a clear direction for OCoBIA that would result in sustainable organizational growth and best serve the Business Improvement Areas in the City of Ottawa.**

# PROCESS

## CONSULTATIONS WITH ROB DALE OF RHAPSODY STRATEGIES

- Interviewed the Executive Directors of the Ottawa BIAs
- 11 External Stakeholders as defined by the OCoBIA Board
  - the interviewees were promised anonymity, some of the responses have been edited to remove identifying elements).

## INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING WITH ROB DALE, RHAPSODY STRATEGIES

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, a facilitated virtual meeting of the Internal Stakeholders of OCOBIA - EDs or Board

Based on the interviews from the various stakeholders, Rhapsody Strategies recommended the new OCOBIA objectives been focused around three themes:

- OCOBIA as an **Advocate**.
- OCOBIA as a **Resource**.
- OCOBIA as a **Partner**.

The three themes were then applied to three questions:

- Who are we?
- How do we behave?
- Where are we going?

The attendees were divided into three groups, each group representing one of the themes to be covered. They were asked to consider the three questions and offer suggestions for the Board to consider as part of the Tactical Plan.

## Who Are We?

As an **Advocate** ...

- We advocate around issues of shared concern.
- We are a public voice, speaking to those in government & media
- We are the champions of BIAs as a valuable partner and model.

## Who Are We?

### As a **Resource**

- We are a liaison and bridge breaking down the silos of individual BIAs
- We are the negotiator for the BIAs to suppliers so that we can gain the best possible price on resources that most BIAs require.
- We provide the information and knowledge most needed by our BIAs

## Who Are We?

- We are experts on what impacts businesses at the hyperlocal level and can bring that information to the table with other organizations.
- We are the caretakers of the main streets and builders of healthy communities.

## How Do We Behave?

### As an **Advocate**

- The ED is the face of the organization externally and we have faith in the Board to represent us.
- We balance the need to address issues that face a smaller number of BIAs with the importance of coming to the table with issues that all BIAs face.
- As the trusted voice of neighbourhood businesses, we are an influencer with the City.

## How Do We Behave?

### As a **Resource**

- We engage in open conversations between all BIAs, sharing ideas and opinions without being judged.
- We act as a robust resource library openly sharing what all BIAs have.
- We are stronger together believing that there is much in common between the BIAs.

## How Do We Behave?

### As a **Partner**

- We are an organization that is trustworthy. We operate with integrity and honesty in dealing with our partners.
- We are a collaborator and open communicator.
- We build and strengthen relationships so that they are a win-win with our partners.
- We bring value as the voice of main street businesses and neighbourhoods.
- We are committed partners.
- We represent a diverse group of businesses on a range of very complex issues.

## Where Are We Going?

### As an **Advocate**

- Increase our capacity.
- Become thought leaders on some issues.
  - For example, the BIA model in general.
- Clearly define our value.
  - Use it to help politicians, media, etc. understand why it matters to have us at the table.
  - Use it to help launch new BIAs
- Become an economic development agency.
- Have a role in upcoming elections, but very cautionary.
- Look outside Ottawa for solutions (not just internally)
- Create partnerships with peer organizations in other cities.

## Where Are We Going?

### As a **Resource**

- Mentorship.
  - o Onboarding at different levels. EDs, Board members, etc.
  - o Building a resource list.
  - o Pairing new EDs with a more experienced ED.
- Create a suppliers' list.
- Create a "Key contact" list of City representatives.
  - o A more robust contact list for all BIAs to meet their needs.
- Develop a best practices list for marketing and communications.
- A resource of past experiences that EDs have and might be able to share with other BIAs.

## Where Are We Going?

### As a **Partner**

- Reinforce the strength of OCOBIA's voice.
  - We represent a large number of businesses, thousands of employees, tax revenue, benefits, etc.
- Define clearly who we are, and what we bring to the table
  - so that partners understand our unique value.
  - So that members have a greater sense of purpose and relevance.
- Be very deliberate on who we get involved with and what we get involved in.
  - This goes to capacity.
  - We also need to recognize and understand our capacity.
  - Stay focused on what we do and who we represent.
- Grow OCOBIA
  - Add more BIAs
- Identify new opportunities for mutual benefit.
  - Such as funding, projects, etc.

## OCOBIA BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The OCoBIA Board met on June 2, 2022 with Rob Dale at Rhapsody Strategies

The first item on the agenda was to review the original Strategic Plan. In the original plan, there were three Objectives identified:

1. Communicate the value of OCoBIA and BIAs to stakeholders.
2. Improve the OCoBIA meeting and collaboration process.
3. Improve the consultation process with the City of Ottawa

It was agreed that all three objectives, and the tactics outlined (on page 12) of the original Strategic Plan were on their way to being achieved.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2025

Following the model of the three Objective Themes discussed during the Internal Stakeholders Meeting, the Board agreed to the following *clear yet fuzzy* strategies:

## **OCOBIA as an Advocate**

1. Formalize a clear communication structure with the City of Ottawa.
2. Become the conversation starters on issues where BIAs should have a voice.
3. Advocate for sustainability resources for both OCoBIA and BIAs.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2025**

### **OCOBIA as a Resource**

1. Be the point for media, politicians and the public on questions related to main street businesses.
2. Be the collector of information for our members.
3. Be the convenor of BIAs and their stakeholders.
4. Share tools and resources for all members.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2025**

### **OCOBIA as a Partner**

1. Define who we are, what we bring, and what we want with our partners.
2. Become a strong resource and partner.

# IMMEDIATE TACTICS

Current Board will focus on tactics that could be achieved prior to the next AGM (November 2022) with the incoming board developing tactics forward, using the outlined strategic objectives.

Immediate tactics include:

1. Create a MOU for the City.
2. Create a handbook for Councillors and the Media.
3. Create a constitutional / Bylaw review committee
4. Research how other municipalities fund BIAs
5. Identify current Champions in the City who will support the BIAs.
6. Provide a template for BIAs to use with possible Councillors.

**DISCUSSION AND  
QUESTIONS?**