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WHAT IS THE B.I.A.?

When one talks about the BIA, this raises the question from most people... "What is a BIA? "A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a "made-in-Ontario" innovation that allows local business people and commercial property owners and tenants to join together and, with the support of the municipality, to organize, finance, and carry out physical improvements and promote economic development in their district. A BIA is a geographic area in a municipality and the Acton BIA boundaries include Mill Street to Park Avenue (including Prospect Park) and Eastern Avenue and Main Street from St. Alban's Drive to Agnes Street. Any commercial property within these boundaries is automatically part of the Acton BIA.

A BIA board of management is an organization of volunteers set up to provide certain business promotion and improvement functions. The Acton BIA Board of Directors are: Chair - Nancy Wilkes, Vice Chair - Dana Selby, Treasurer - Heather Wedlake, Board Members: Alec Boyd, Kathleen Dills, Steve Fontanna, Linda Olson and Madeleine Atrell. The Town Of Halton Hills Council Representative - Clark Somerville, Josey Bonnette - manager and Jenn MacDonald - this year's summer student. The Acton BIA currently has one full time staff person and one full time summer student. All staff work under the direction of the Board.

The Acton BIA currently provides the following services; maintaining the BIA area which includes planting and maintaining all of the flowers, banners, Christmas lights and decorations, keeping sidewalks clean and safe for local residents, working closely with the Town of Halton Hills Public Works Department to make improvements within the BIA boundaries and organizing and running all of the events. We currently have 6 promotional events which include The Big Daddy Festival on Fathers' Day weekend, Canada Day Concert in the Park, Leathertown Festival the Sunday

after the long weekend in August, Trick or Treat on Mill & Main Street the last Saturday before Halloween, Light Up The Hills on December 1 and the Acton Winter Carnival the last weekend in January. The BIA also operates the Acton Farmers' Market on Willow Street South every Thursday from June to October. We also offer a façade improvement program every year which allows business and property owners to apply for a grant to make improvements to the front of their buildings.

Every year the Acton BIA prepares a budget which is presented to the membership for their approval. Once voted on and approved the budget is then sent to the Town of Halton Hills for Council approval. The Town sets the BIA levy for a property based on dividing the property's realty assessment. The Town's finance department collects the BIA levy and then forwards the funds in quarterly installments.

The Acton BIA currently has 98 businesses and services in our membership. We hold monthly board meetings and all Acton BIA members are encouraged to attend. For a list of current businesses and events please visit our website at www.downtownacton.ca Please contact us directly at actonbia@cogeco.net if you would like to be on our mailing list for information on upcoming events. Our mailing list is private and not for re-sale.

We should feel proud that BIA's were created in Canada! BIA's were created in 1970 to help small business/property owners to combat the new influx of large indoor malls. The first one was based in Bloor West Village, they have now gone international. Their importance is still very relative today. BIA's often celebrate and maintain the heritage of their small town. Your local BIA business owners support our communities through sponsorship, job creation, service, and pride in playing a role in our town. We encourage you to support our members by shopping local.