

Local Economic Development

Wellington West Business Improvement Area

Ottawa, Ontario

Terms of Reference for McGill University School of Urban Planning

Studio III Fall 2014

Client:

Project Steering Committee

and the Wellington West Business Improvement Area (WWBIA)

August 27, 2014

Hosted by:

Creative Neighbourhoods



1. Planning Study Objectives

The study is intended to support the twin goals of strengthening the Wellington West Business Improvement Area (WWBIA) as the premier shopping, food and arts destination in Ottawa's west end and contributing to the liveability of the communities of Hintonburg and Wellington Village, which are located within the BIA.

Building on a recent census of the BIA delivered by Creative Neighbourhoods, the study will include ...

1. Undertaking a comparative review of existing municipal zoning and of clustering of non-residential land uses within and on the periphery of the BIA boundaries
2. Identifying opportunities for economic clusters in Wellington West, based on emerging and under-represented non-residential land uses and activities
3. Mapping the spatial distribution of non-residential locations by type of activity
4. Mapping significant local economic development features, including, but not limited to, transit, major gateways, economic dead zones
5. Recommending BIA intervention in the planning and programming of the area to support economic development, with reference to relevant best practices

2. The Study Area: The Wellington West Business Improvement Area

The Wellington Street West Business Improvement Area (WWBIA) is located west of the downtown core and is bounded to the South by the highway 417, to the north by the Ottawa Transitway, to the east by a light-rail train right of way and to the west by Island Park Avenue. (See Annex A).

The BIA is comprised of three distinct commercial precincts: Wellington Village, Parkdale Market, and Historic Hintonburg - of which Hintonburg and Wellington Village are recognized neighbourhoods within the City of Ottawa, and come together to create Wellington West. These three precincts along the Wellington Street West corridor developed at different points in time: The eastern portion - Historic Hintonburg - emerged in the late-1800's as a village core, while the western portion in Wellington Village was established between 1920 and 1950. The Parkdale Market area was developed as an industrial area in the 1920s, with office, commercial and residential redevelopment occurring more recently. The main commercial street, Wellington Street West, runs the entire length of the area for nearly two kilometres from east to west.

The residential neighbourhoods within the BIA are experiencing rapid intensification, particularly the eastern half. The BIA is becoming one of the fastest growing urban communities in the country and the construction of condo buildings is changing the overall character of the area. This is having a direct impact on foot traffic, vehicular congestion, and vibrancy. As the area continues to evolve and mature, and as residential intensification of the area increases, the nature of commercial and non-residential activity will change as well. These changes have already become visible and substantial.

Following a massive road revitalization project in 2008 (\$25 million invested over 5 years), the WWBIA found that pedestrian and cycling traffic were not as high as they could be. On the other hand, the BIA corridor has the highest modal share of cycling (+12%) in the entire city and is one of the most pedestrian-friendly environments (+46%) with wide sidewalks, 255 new bike racks and a predominantly mixed-used environment. This reflects the evolving transportation choices of the area, with growing modal tension between automobiles and cyclists, and pedestrians generally left out of the conversation.

In response to this problematique, the McGill School of Urban Planning Studio III group from 2012 submitted a Public Spaces Enhancement Plan (PSEP) to the WWBIA in December of 2012. The PSEP proposed a number of solutions to help the BIA increase the level of traffic throughout the corridor, and the BIA responded favourably to the idea of a comprehensive wayfinding system.

Other characteristics of the BIA include unintentional clustering of similar businesses in areas known informally as “Epicurious Row”, and the “Fashion Block”, as well as its unofficial designation as an Arts District. Financial resources from the BIA are increasingly being used to invest in beautification projects. Within this context, the area is being actively marketed as a destination for shopping, food, and the arts.

A census of the BIA undertaken in the summer of 2014 gathered information on all non-residential locations within the boundaries, providing a rich and unique source of information for ongoing marketing, communication and planning. The final draft version of the census included 550 unique non-residential locations.

Using the arts as an example, the census lends itself to an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities across multiple sectors:

- Arts-related uses are located across the BIA, with a cluster of activity concentrated in its southeast corner.
- Art is being sold in numerous for and non-profit businesses, complementing the efforts of a small number of formal commercial galleries located within the BIA.

- Genuine artists' studios and galleries represent a comparative advantage for attracting visitors to the BIA
- Arts-oriented events such as the West End Studio Tour, 1st Thursday Art Walk, and Hintonburg ArtsPark actively promote the work of local artists and attract visitors
- At the same time, a disproportionate number of artists are concentrated in the southeast corner of the BIA, physically isolated from the mainstreet
- In addition, the rising cost of commercial rents and the redevelopment of older, non-residential buildings are resulting in a long-term displacement of local artists

The study team will rely on the BIA census results to conduct an in-depth analysis of multiple local economic development sectors. As with the arts, the networks of similar categories of business within the BIA are not well developed, and many groupings may not view themselves as being part of the BIA. As a result, existing events do not typically promote the full extent of the BIA, and the role of the BIA itself can be ambiguous.

3. Relevant Plans and Documents

A major source of information will be the BIA census database as well as mapping files covering the BIA territory. These will be made available by the client.

In addition, the City of Ottawa has supported a series of planning studies and projects aimed at supporting the continued redevelopment of the Wellington Street West corridor and surrounding neighbourhoods.

- Carling-Bayview Light Rail Transit Corridor Community Design Plan (http://ottawa.ca/en/city_hall/planningprojectsreports/public_consult/carling_bayview/index.html)
- A Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage & Culture in Ottawa, 2013-2018 (<http://www.artsoe.ca/uploads/advocacy/renewed%20ahc%20plan%20e.pdf>).
- A *Community Design Plan (CDP)* was completed in 2011 to guide the urban design and land use planning of the Wellington Street West corridor. The Wellington Street West CDP sets out a vision to guide both the future development of private lands and any undertakings of public works.¹ The City also supported the preparation of the Hintonburg and Mechanicsville Neighbourhood Plan (2010)²
- A recently launched study of commercial land use and existing zoning

¹ <http://ottawa.ca/cs/groups/content/@webottawa/documents/pdf/mdaw/mtm5/~edisp/cap140039.pdf>

² <http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2010/02-24/pec/10%20-%20ACS2010-ICS-CSS-0002%20DOCUMENT%20%20%20EN%20Vars.pdf>

In addition to the BIA census, additional information relevant to the study is contained in the Fall 2012 [Public Spaces Enhancement Plan](#) (PSEP) and Fall 2013 [Wayfinding Wellington West](#) project led by McGill School of Urban Planning Studio III students.

The Steering Committee may provide the team with additional relevant documentation at the time of project launch.

4. Studio III Activities

Activities are subdivided into two components:

- Component 1. Analysis & Map
- Component 2: Local Economic Development Programming

The following activities will take place between September and December 2014

1. Collect and review relevant documents, including the BIA census, mapping files, municipal plans, and local economic development best practices relevant to the BIA
2. Undertake in-depth analysis, including stakeholder consultation
3. Prepare Draft Analysis & Mapping
4. Conduct one community event
5. Present draft Analysis & Mapping to the Project Steering Committee, and local stakeholders
6. Submit revised Analysis & Mapping to the Project Steering Committee
7. With input from key stakeholders, recommend programs or activities that promote the BIA and its members, with reference to relevant best practices

5. Study Deliverables

The study team will deliver the following products by the conclusion of the study:

1. Draft report, containing analysis and mapping, and results of a stakeholder event
2. Slide presentation of the draft report
3. Final report of the analysis, with images of maps and recommendations for programming and interventions with reference to best practices
4. Slide presentation of the final report

All content, including images, maps, and reports to be organized and provided to the BIA on a hard drive (provided by BIA) at the completion of the project.

6. Study Budget

The client will reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, up to \$1000, associated with the delivery of the assignment. It is anticipated that these expenses will include travel between Montreal and Ottawa by car (up to 3 visits) as well as printing costs. Any expenses must be submitted to the client for approval in advance.

7. The Client

The study team will work under the guidance of a Project Steering Committee, led by the Wellington West Business Improvement Area. The community associations for Hintonburg and Wellington Village will be invited to join the project Steering Committee early in the process.

Creative Neighbourhoods will serve as the project host and provide professional planning supervision and direction.



The Wellington West Business Improvement Area was formed in 2008 to promote the Wellington Street West commercial area, which includes Hintonburg, Parkdale Market and Wellington Village. Wellington West is one of Ottawa's largest BIAs, rich in diversity, creativity, and community (www.wellingtonwest.ca)



Creative Neighbourhoods is an Ottawa-based non-profit dedicated to improving the use and design of public space.

Our Values:

- Place matters. Residents and businesses care about their neighbourhoods. They want to see development that reflects their community's unique identity.
- Public space should be both functional and beautiful, reflecting the unique character of each of Ottawa's neighbourhoods.
- Local organizations are vital. Associations of residents and businesses can work as equal partners with city governments and developers.

8. Key Contacts

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Annex 1: Study Area Map

