October 20, 2026

Edmonton City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City of Edmonton
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7

To Mayor Knack and City Council:

Re: 7.2 Business Improvement Area and Main Street Support –
Executive Committee meeting on October 21, 2026

The Edmonton Downtown Business Association (EDBA) thanks members of Council for bringing forward the motion and initiating the review of the City's relationship with Business Improvement Areas. We would also like to acknowledge City Administration for its thoughtful engagement with BIAs including the EDBA throughout the preparation of this report. The process reflected meaningful consultation and a genuine effort to understand the opportunities and challenges facing Edmonton's business districts.

The EDBA supports the direction outlined and appreciates the work undertaken to identify opportunities to strengthen the partnership between the City and Edmonton's Business Improvement Areas.

BIAs occupy a unique role within Edmonton. We are established through provincial legislation and municipal bylaw and are entrusted with representing the interests of local businesses. We provide on-the-ground knowledge of business conditions, help convene local stakeholders, contribute to place management and district vitality, and support economic activity within the communities we serve.

From EDBA's perspective, one of the strengths of this report is its recognition that BIAs are more than program delivery organizations. We are community partners, economic development partners, and a connection point between local businesses and municipal government.

We would particularly draw Committee's attention to Attachment 3 - Options to Strengthen City Supports for Business Improvement Areas, which outlines a number of opportunities.

Administration has identified opportunities that can be advanced through existing resources and ongoing prioritization with BIAs (marked with *). We appreciate that commitment and look forward to participating in that work, which we are advised don't require Council direction.

The report also identifies key items connected to the future implementation of Edmonton Advantage: Edmonton's Economic Development Strategy 2026-30 (marked with ***). We encourage Council to continue prioritizing investing in economic development and implementation. For downtown, this work is particularly important as it supports business growth, investment attraction, district vitality, and the successful implementation of the Downtown Action Plan.

The remaining category identified in the report includes opportunities that require Council direction before Administration can undertake further scoping and assessing resource requirements (marked with **). It is on this point that we respectfully seek Committee's support.

Specifically, we ask Executive Committee to direct Administration to work with Edmonton's BIAs in prioritizing and advancing the future opportunities identified in Attachment 3 and to return with recommendations as appropriate.

We view this as a practical and collaborative next step. It does not commit Council to future funding decisions. Rather, it allows Administration and BIAs to continue the work already begun through this process and determine which opportunities would provide the greatest benefit to businesses, commercial districts, and the city as a whole.

Should Committee wish to provide more specific direction, we would encourage consideration of these opportunities identified in the report including:

- Exploring multi-year or renewable funding agreements;
- Identifying relevant studies, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) studies, and exploring options for implementation where recommendations have been made;
- Exploring the development of a municipal service-level dashboard that improves transparency and understanding of City services delivered within BIA districts.

These are practical initiatives that would help BIAs better plan, better collaborate with the City, and better support the businesses we represent.

Finally, we look forward to continuing our engagement with Council and Administration through the upcoming budget process on several matters important to downtown businesses and downtown vitality. These include day spaces, the patio program, visible stewardship and maintenance of parks and public spaces, crisis diversion initiatives, and other investments that contribute to a vibrant and economically successful downtown.

Those discussions will occur through the appropriate budget deliberations. Today, our focus is more straightforward. We support this report. We support the collaborative approach that has been taken to date. And we respectfully ask Executive Committee to direct Administration to continue working with Edmonton's BIAs in prioritizing and advancing the future opportunities identified through this review.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



James L. Robinson
Executive Director
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