

**The Involvement of Business Improvement Areas in Tourism:  
An Exploratory Study of Ontario BIAs**

by

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### **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

Local festivals and cultural events, signage and streetscape improvements, and regional marketing efforts indicate that tourism is present in some Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). However, the extent and form of this relationship has never before been examined in the North America context. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the involvement of Ontario's BIAs in tourism. It reports on the findings of a 2008 province-wide survey of approximately 260 BIAs, touching on a variety of topics, including: the proportion of BIAs that are involved in tourism, the factors prompting them to attract tourists, the ways that they promote themselves to tourists, the types of tourism experiences that they offer, the positive and negative impacts of their tourism efforts, and whether they partner with other stakeholders in tourism promotion efforts. The data are then used to propose a typology of Business Improvement Areas showing differing levels and forms of tourism involvement. The thesis concludes by considering four case studies of successful tourism-oriented BIAs (Downtown Kingston, Downtown London, Downtown Yonge and Creemore), which are examined to identify the characteristics that have led to their success.

The findings show that the majority of Ontario's Business Improvement Areas are involved in tourism, using diverse methods to promote themselves as destinations. Their tourism offering usually includes special events and festivals, but can also involve investments in other attractions. Although BIAs are aware of both positive and negative impacts from tourism, tourism management efforts are uncommon. Seven characteristics of successful tourism-oriented BIAs are identified: innovation, self-awareness, appearance, attractions, partnerships, experiences, and planning. BIAs that strongly manifest these characteristics are believed to be likely candidates to benefit from the tourism industry.

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, fiancée, and Lord, Jesus Christ. Certainly I could have acknowledged each of you above, but I'd much rather dedicate this work to you.

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*"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour  
and power: for thou hast created all things, and for  
thy pleasure they are and were created."*

Revelation 4:11

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Although tourism has been a growing phenomenon for decades, it was not until the 1980s that cities became seriously engaged in efforts to attract tourists (Judd, 1995). As globalization became increasingly evident, urban areas realized that they must compete to be successful in keeping and attracting businesses, residents and visitors. Cities and towns of all sizes are now working to distinguish themselves as destinations where corporations will choose to locate, residents will want to live, and tourists will come to visit.

Tourism's diverse and complex nature makes measuring its impacts difficult, which may cause some to underestimate its importance to the local urban economy. However, Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen (2005) note that tourism can increase household income, provide jobs, support local businesses, and supplement government revenue. Further, initial tourism spending continues to impact the local economy through successive rounds of spending, as businesses, individuals and governments re-spend a portion of their earnings (Archer, Cooper & Ruhanen, 2005). If carefully managed, tourism can also provide a number of social and cultural benefits to urban areas, such as increased cultural understanding of ethnic or minority groups, and the preservation of heritage structures that would otherwise be destroyed.

Knowing how to maximize the benefits of tourism should interest urban planners, politicians and municipal managers. Understanding how to attract visitors, encourage visitor spending within the destination, and bring visitors back again is key to long-term success. Decision-makers can gain this understanding by being aware of the relationships between the three main components of the urban tourism system: tourists, tourism promoters, and the urban environment (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986).

Understanding the urban tourism system first requires that the word "tourism" be defined. Common definitions refer to distance travelled, length of stay, familiarity with the area, purpose of travel, or some combination of these factors. Ultimately, it is the purpose of the definition that

determines what it includes. One of the first academics to consider the subject identified an urban tourist as a “visitor coming from outside the service area of the town ... [who is] visiting the inner city predominantly for leisure reasons” (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986, p.83). This broad definition shows that urban tourism can be regional in nature. Thus, this urban tourism study requires a definition of tourism that is more inclusive than exclusive. For this reason, this thesis uses the broad definition supplied by Wall and Mathieson, that tourism is “the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created and services provided to cater to their needs” (2006, p.1).

Each urban area has different set of tourism promoters based on its attractions, location and history. However, decision-makers can identify promoters by noting which organizations stand to benefit from tourism activity. Along with transportation and accommodations companies, local shopkeepers’ associations can profit from urban tourism. It is to their advantage to improve the urban environment around their businesses by installing benches, planting trees, preserving heritage structures, emphasizing cultural characteristics, and promoting themselves as interesting shopping destinations.

It is to a form of business association that this thesis directs its attention. Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) have become an increasingly popular model of sub-local governance in Ontario and around the world. These groups of business and property owners voluntarily tax themselves to improve the appearance, safety, and facilities of the urban area where they are located. The Business Improvement Area model is an example of active place management, where businesses go beyond caring for the internal and external appearance of their facility by investing their time and money in shaping the neighbourhood as a whole. For this reason the BIA model is compared to the management of shopping centres, as it allows diverse property owners to work together to fund and manage the redevelopment, security, cleanliness, and promotion of a defined urban area.

Presently, local festivals and cultural events, shopping and dining promotions, signage and streetscape improvements, and regional marketing efforts testify to the existence of tourism in some BIAs. If tourism is taking place within their boundaries, it is likely that Business Improvement Areas are involved in creating it, nurturing it or shaping it in some form. However, the extent of this relationship cannot be confirmed in any jurisdiction, as very little is known about the tourism involvement of BIAs. As the literature review will reveal, no previous study in North America has directly addressed the subject. Thus, there is a clear need for exploratory research that offers an understanding of Business Improvement Areas' involvement in tourism.

### **1.1 Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to begin to fill in this significant literature gap by exploring the involvement of Business Improvement Areas in tourism. This included consideration of BIAs' involvement in place promotion to tourists as well as in tourism development and tourism management within their boundaries. More specifically, this study had four objectives.

The first objective of this thesis was to identify the nature of BIAs' involvement in tourism. This involved selecting a large political region that encompassed a number of BIAs, in this case the Province of Ontario, and using it to collect broad and descriptive data about the nature of BIAs' involvement in tourism. This included consideration of what proportion of BIAs are involved in tourism, why they are involved in the sector, and how they are involved at the present.

Having identified the overall nature of BIAs' involvement in tourism, the second objective was to identify BIAs that are successful in attracting tourists. This was done by creating a typology of BIAs, based on the extent of their involvement in tourism. The typology was created using the information that was collected under objective one. The population size of the municipality where each BIA is

located was also considered, to determine if population size is related to Business Improvement Areas' level of tourism involvement.

The third objective was to identify the characteristics of BIAs that make successful tourism destinations. Four BIAs, which the typology showed to be more involved in tourism, were selected for case studies. By exploring and analyzing their experiences with tourism, the characteristics of their success were identified. Taken together, the four case studies revealed several common characteristics that enable BIAs to be successful tourism destinations.

The final objective of this thesis was to create a template that can be used to assess a BIAs' current tourism potential. Based on the lessons and common characteristics identified in the four case studies, a set of guidelines was created to assess the strength of a BIA's present condition in relation to tourism. The template also provides a number of recommendations to assist BIAs that are interested in developing tourism within their boundaries.

## **1.2 Thesis Outline**

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter Two consists of a literature review that sets the academic context for this study. It moves from broad subjects in the literature to the scholarly sources that address Business Improvement Areas. In doing so, a clear gap in the academic literature is identified, and the relevance of the study site, Ontario, is discussed.

Chapter Three presents the research approach that this study utilizes. It begins with the detailed description of the above objectives, then moves on to discuss what research methods were used to collect and analyze the data. It explains how each method was used, and presents its strengths, weaknesses and limitations. Finally, the order of the research approach is identified and explained.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the first two research objectives using both written text and a number of tables. The survey findings are presented first, followed by the typology of Business

Improvement Areas. The characteristics of each cluster in the typology are then discussed using variables from the survey data.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the last two research objectives. It begins with four case studies of successful tourism-oriented BIAs, chosen from municipalities of different sizes. Each of the case studies identifies the characteristics that have led to the BIA's success and supports them with examples. The common characteristics of success are then used to create a template that can assess a BIA's current tourism potential. This chapter finishes with a number of recommendations for Business Improvement Areas that want to develop as tourism destinations.

Chapter Six concludes the thesis by summarizing its findings. It then considers the implications of these findings for both BIA practitioners and tourism decision-makers. Later on, the study's academic contribution is discussed in light of existing urban retail, urban tourism and BIA literature. Finally, the chapter and thesis conclude with a discussion of areas for further research.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Beginning in the 1980s, urban areas in North America began to fiercely compete for tourists (Judd, 1995). This opened up new avenues of tourism research into the broad field of urban tourism, which encompasses many wide-ranging subjects as they are found to take place in urban areas of varying sizes. The breadth of the literature shows that rather than being one specific area of research, urban tourism has more to do with the context in which tourism activities take place. Thus, any literature review of the field needs to be more specific in its focus.

Working within the context of urban tourism, this literature review will merge several different but related fields. Its goal is to identify a specific gap in the academic literature concerning the tourism activities of Business Improvement Areas, organizations that are believed to take part in tourism promotion and management. The review will begin with a brief overview of urban tourism and urban retail literature. It will then narrow in focus to address a specific form of tourism, leisure shopping, before addressing models of tourism development in retail areas. The review will continue by exploring the literature on Business Improvement Districts as a form of local governance, before emphasizing their role as tourism developers. This process will demonstrate that the involvement of Business Improvement Areas in tourism development has been scarcely addressed in existing research.

### 2.1 An Introduction to Urban Tourism

In today's global economy, urban areas compete to attract businesses and residents to locate in their municipality. The trend is no different in the tourism sector, with each destination seeking to enhance its vitality and appeal to promote itself as *the* place to be. It appears that many destinations have been successful in this quest, as Jansen-Verbeke notes that a "larger number of visitors [are] spending more leisure time in the urban environment" (1986, p.80). With urban tourism's growth in importance, planners, politicians, and municipal managers are starting to pay closer attention, and some

are now seeking to integrate tourism into general municipal functions (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986). Likewise, academics have also recognized the importance of urban tourism, and have sought to understand how tourism takes place in urban areas.

Academic research into the field of urban tourism began in earnest in the 1980s. It was then that one of the most significant and foundational works on the subject was completed by Dutch academic Myriam Jansen-Verbeke (1986). Using empirical data from a number of case studies she constructed a conceptual framework of inner-city tourism. Her framework looks at the relationships between three key components of the urban tourism system: tourists, tourism promoters, and the urban environment as a tourism product. Even at this early stage of urban tourism research, the importance of local shopkeepers' associations in tourism development and place promotion was identified (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986).

Academics have since contributed in a number of ways to this growing area of study. For example, Owen (1990) looks at tourism as a catalyst of positive change in the economy, morale and appearance of urban areas. Russo and van der Borg (2002) demonstrate that the "soft" elements of the urban tourism product – its hospitality functions – are essential for urban areas to succeed as tourism destinations. While Judd (1995) introduces a North American perspective, presenting an overview of how urban tourism development is playing out in US cities as they seek to redevelop themselves into destinations.

Despite the breadth of literature in the field, one particular area of study is receiving significant attention from scholars - destination branding and imaging. Judd (1995) discusses branding as the first step that destinations take in competing for visitors, and explains that the character of a place is represented through its physical attributes, as well as images, catch phrases, and songs. Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) explain how urban areas can, and do, go about branding themselves based on their personality, the construction of flagship attractions, or through major events. Looking at destination



branding within the context of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005) discover that these organizations need to include other local stakeholders in brand creation. This point is further supported by Wang and Xiang (2007), who propose a model of collaborative destination marketing, and by Sheehan, Ritchie and Hudson (2007), who explore the interdependencies of municipalities, hotels and DMOs as key stakeholders in place promotion. Likewise, Paskaleva-Shapira (2007) illustrates that effective tourism management requires stakeholders to work together to create a brand that appeals to both residents and visitors. In addition to more commonly-recognized stakeholders, Jansen-Verbeke (1986) adds that urban retailers also have an interest in building a positive image of their area to promote tourism.

## **2.2 The Changing Nature of Urban Retail**

Today, some urban retailers play important roles in uniting urban areas and promoting them as places to visit. But this was not always the case. In the past, efforts to band together were unnecessary because consumers supported their local bakery, grocery store, or hardware store (Tam, 1994). However, in the decades after the Second World War, shopping patterns began to change. Urban areas began to spread out and took on suburban form. Automobile ownership increased along with consumers' desire for standard brands and chain stores. Meanwhile, a growing number of regional shopping centres scooped up consumer dollars since they addressed these changes better than small retailers could (Tam, 1994).

Retail formats have continued to evolve since the development of suburban shopping centres. In the last two decades especially, large format stores have entered the market offering a greater assortment of merchandise at lower profit margins, which has led to certain companies dominating in their retail sectors (Jones & Doucet, 2001). Known as big box stores, super stores, membership clubs,

and category killers, these new retail formats have forced traditional malls, department stores and inner city business districts to adapt to survive (Jones & Doucet, 2001).

Millward and Winsor (1997) shed light on how urban retailing has reoriented itself in the face of these economic challenges. As Canadian society has grown more dependent on suburban shopping malls and power centres, they note that downtown retailers have changed their focus from selling general goods to the sale of services and some specialty items. Food services have replaced food goods, and convenience goods, office services, fine dining, tourist shops, pubs, clubs, and high quality clothing shops have replaced traditional neighbourhood retail in the city centre. Tam (1994) agrees, stating that neighbourhood business areas must make the transition to selling unique goods and services that larger format retailers do not offer. Millward and Winsor (1997) also note that some retailers are increasingly orienting their offerings to suit the desires of the evening leisure crowd and in some cases, tourists. Using Halifax's central business district as an example, the authors mention a number of areas where these changes have taken place, including: the Province House office district, Spring Garden Road, Barrington Street, Blowers Street, Argyle Street, and Historic Properties, a pub district located near a number of tourist hotels. Jones and Doucet (2001) document the spread and impacts of more recent retail formats into the Greater Toronto Area. Rather than being a purely suburban phenomenon, large format retailers are also seizing opportunities to locate in prestige urban locations. A number of big box stores, including a Business Depot, Loblaws Superstore, Chapters, Home Depot, Petsmart and Canadian Tire, have located within the central area of the City of Toronto. In addition, fashion-oriented flagship stores and other category killers are replacing former retail formats along main city streets. Thus, urban areas have not only experienced changes in the type of goods and services sold, but also in the format and size of retail stores.

The growing importance of ethnic identity in urban commercial areas has also brought about changes in retail. This is especially true in Canada, as the country was not only built by immigrants, but

continues to welcome large numbers of newcomers every year (Statistics Canada, 2009b). Seeking to maintain their ethnic connections, many newcomers settle in specific areas of the city where they form a cultural cluster. These concentrations of new or old immigrants have affected the nature of urban retail in many places. For example, Grafos (2001) describes how a collection of neighbourhood businesses in Toronto actively created a Greek identity with which to promote themselves to the wider city. Similarly, Hackworth and Rekers (2005) found that while the packaging of ethnic identity by urban retailers varies, business associations collectively determine whether their cultural offering will focus on meeting the needs of residents, tourists, or some combination of the two. Jamal (2003) furthers the discussion through his work on retailing in a multicultural world. He argues that some retailers act as cultural intermediaries, since they target modern consumers through a variety of cultural offerings that include ethnic tastes, themes and sounds.

### **2.3 Leisure Shopping as a Form of Tourism**

As some of the previously-mentioned work indicates, several studies have noted the significant relationship between the fields of urban tourism and urban retail. It was approximately twenty-five years ago that the first academic study sought to demonstrate the importance of shopping as a tourist activity. Kent, Shock and Snow (1983) found that although shopping is not often cited as a reason for visiting a destination, it was the most popular activity engaged in by tourists in a major North American city.

Since that time several academics have furthered our understanding of leisure shopping as a tourism experience. Roberts (1987) explains that shopping is a leisure experience when it is conducted for pleasure, rather than necessity. He identifies the “pedestrianization” (Roberts, 1987, p.87) of commercial streets as a key measure in the growth of leisure shopping, and notes that shopping

experiences are often combined with other leisure functions, such as entertainment, site-seeing, going out to eat or drink, or walking through a historic area.

Jansen-Verbeke (1991) further expands our understanding in her comprehensive reflection on the subject of leisure shopping. Acknowledging that little empirical data are available, she notes that leisure shopping has become a 'magic concept' for the tourism industry. In outlining what is known about the subject, she discusses the motives and behaviour of visitors, the functional characteristics of the shopping environment, and important environmental qualities of shopping destinations. Jansen-Verbeke then considers various forms of shopping tourism, including a type which she terms "urban shopping tourism" (1991, p.12). While revealing that these urban shopping destinations can be either planned or unplanned, she notes that they typically include some combination of the following features: food facilities, leisure facilities, vitality of place, historic or symbolic settings, pedestrian precincts, refurbished building facades, and improved streetscape design. Jansen-Verbeke (1991) concludes that the destinations which offer a wide range of leisure experiences to their visitors are the ones that are most likely to succeed in encouraging tourists to answer their shopping impulses.

By applying these concepts to smaller urban areas in more rural settings, Getz coined a new term for leisure shopping destinations, "tourist shopping villages" or TSVs (1993, p.15). Explaining that little attention has been paid to the role of shopping as a tourism attraction despite the industry's growing importance; Getz (1993) sets out to remedy the situation. Using three case studies of TSVs, he draws a number of conclusions about the process of business evolution, the importance of heritage in creating distinctiveness of place, how local business investment can both enhance economic impacts and foster stronger community support, and how tourism planning needs to consider accommodation facilities, joint-marketing plans, traffic flow and parking issues, and residents' concerns. Like Jansen-Verbeke (1991), Getz (1993) concludes that leisure shopping destinations can evolve naturally or be

planned endeavours; however, he further divides the latter category into those that are entrepreneur-driven, and those that are driven by a government tourism agency (or agencies).

The TSV model was further tested by Frost (2006) in the Australian context. He found that there is a synergy between cultural heritage and shopping activities, as the two elements work together to attract tourists. Thus, a community needs to offer its visitors a combination of leisure and shopping experiences to be able to market itself as a leisure shopping destination.

Related to this conclusion, is the subject of marketing urban retail areas as shopping destinations. Warnaby and Davies (1997) argue that marketing principles are essential to the successful promotion of an urban shopping destination. By this they mean that destinations need to not only promote themselves, but also to identify and satisfy consumer wants and needs. Warnaby, Bennison, Davies and Hughes (2004) add to the subject by considering the nature of the partnerships that exist between actors who are involved in place promotion. Their findings show that Town Centre managers play a central role in promoting urban areas as shopping destinations, and that seasonal festivals and events are a common element in retail promotion initiatives. The authors conclude that the benefits of partnerships in the promotion of urban shopping destinations can be realized at the neighbourhood level. Specifically, they suggest that by working with other stakeholders, local businesses will have access to greater resources, increase the effectiveness of their marketing, and have greater legitimacy in their tourist offerings.

## **2.4 Modeling the Transformation from Locally-Oriented to Tourist-Oriented Retail**

While leisure shopping destinations can have great appeal to day tourists, they have also been shown to have a significant influence on local residents. Over time, the nature of the retail offering in a commercial area changes to suit the desires of visitors at the expense of the needs of local residents. A

number of researchers have sought to model this transformation in both urban and rural settings, and have come to similar conclusions.

In the context of small towns, Mitchell (1998) examined heritage shopping villages, a concept that is essentially the same as Getz's (1993) tourist shopping villages. She found that the entrepreneurial efforts of key individuals or corporations who are seeking to capitalize on the rural idyll lead to the growing commodification of rural heritage; a process that ultimately culminates in the destruction of the heritage landscape. Describing the process as creative destruction, Mitchell (1998) advanced a five stage model from early commodification to post-destruction based on investment levels, resident attitudes, and business composition.

Recently Mitchell and de Waal (2009) came back to the model to test its continued relevance and strengthen its conceptual foundation. They not only found that creative destruction has continued to occur, but that the transformative process can be better understood if the model is broadened to include additional perspectives. The diversified model now contains six stages from pre-commodification to post-destruction, and includes the perspectives of profiteers, preservationists, authentic heritage-seekers, post-tourists, old-timers, and new-comers.

Other scholars have also modeled the transformation of rural towns from local retail to tourist-oriented commercial activity. Snepenger, Reiman, Johnson, and Snepenger (1998) examine the perceived impacts of tourism development in a downtown commercial strip. The researchers find that the residents' perceptions of downtown as a place to shop and socialize can be used to assess the shopping space's level of tourism involvement. They propose a five-stage model called the Downtown Tourism Lifecycle Model, in which downtown retail areas progress from tourism exploration to tourism stagnation.

Returning to the model later on, Snepenger, Murphy, O'Connell, and Gregg (2003) expand it by adding tourists' perceptions to those of residents. Finding that the impacts of tourism development are

in the eye of the beholder, they acknowledge that it is difficult to determine exactly where a shopping area sits in the tourism lifecycle. Nevertheless, by combining their new insights with Mitchell's work (1998), the researchers propose a new model of resident-tourist shopping spaces. Called the Tourism-impacted Shopping Space Model, it combines the views of tourists, residents and entrepreneurial merchants together to assess where a retail area sits in its orientation towards locals and tourists. Thus, the researchers recognize that, in addition to tourists and residents, merchants play a major role in shaping shopping spaces through their influence on the retail offering, their setting of product prices, and their engagement in area promotion through community events.

While no comparable lifecycle model appears to have been created for shopping districts in larger urban areas, the work of several researchers sheds light on the transformation of these spaces into more tourist-oriented retail. Tunbridge (2001) introduces the Festival Marketplace Model into the discussion, in his examination of Ottawa's Byward Market as an urban market. He shows how that particular retail area has changed its retail orientation towards tourists, and how the revitalization of the market can be seen as using many of the features of the Festival Marketplace Model. These include a number of elements that have already been mentioned in the above models and discussion of leisure shopping, such as: increasing heritage commodification, a focus on exotic foods, the use of temporary stalls by vendors, the combination of shopping and entertainment, the creation of festival events, increased management integration, the spatial demarcation of the retail area, the increased privatization of space by commercial interests, and the use of street ambassadors for both security and tourist information. Tunbridge (2001) also includes a discussion of stakeholder conflict within the Market, explaining that greater success breeds more stakeholders, as well as more frequent conflict between residents, businesses, tourists, leisure-seekers, and other actors.

Similarly, Litvin (2005) links tourism and shopping in his examination of a retail strip that serves both tourists and residents. Although he does not pose a model of transformation, Litvin (2005)

examines the recent revitalization of an urban commercial area that is undergoing a streetscape redevelopment project. His findings reveal an increasing dependence on tourism by local retailers, in keeping with Snepenger, Reiman, Johnson, and Snepenger's (1998) Tourism Lifecycle Model. Litvin (2005) warns that this dependence may not be a good thing, as a shopping district must maintain its local flavour to remain viable, meaningful and attractive to both residents and tourists. He calls on city planners to manage commercial areas so that a balance is maintained between tourist and resident-oriented retail, to ensure that the area remains a sustainable tourist attraction.

## **2.5 The Role of Business Associations in the Management of Commercial Areas**

Although the above discussion knits together the work of researchers in several different fields, common themes have emerged regarding the nature of tourist-retail shopping spaces, and the significance of leisure shopping as a form of tourism. However, one very important theme that underlies several of the above studies has been left largely unmentioned. In many cases, business associations have played an integral role in the management and evolution of retail districts.

Reflecting on a few case studies makes this point clear. In Getz's (1993) three studies of tourist shopping villages, each of towns examined had some form of business association behind the revitalization project. In Acton and St. Jacobs it was a dominant entrepreneur who led the way with other businesses following, while in Elora it was the Chamber of Commerce that encouraged an increasing tourism-orientation to its shopping area. Similarly, in Litvin's (2005) case study of Charleston, a group of merchants worked with the city to form a legal body that would lead the streetscape revitalization project, known as the King Street Improvement District. Perhaps the reason why merchants have banded together is because local economic developers have traditionally given little attention to consumer services like retail (Warnaby & Davies, 1997). Regardless of their motivation,



neighbourhood-level business partnerships can be quite effective in managing and promoting commercial districts.

In Britain, there is formal name for merchants associations that are involved in retail district management. Called Town Centre Management (TCM) schemes, the concept has been defined as “the process of planning and taking action to improve the vitality and viability of a town or city centre as a whole, involving inputs from both public and private sectors” (Guy, 1994, n.p., as cited in Warnaby & Davies, 1997). Hogg, Medway and Warnaby (2007) explain that since the first TCM scheme was established in 1987, hundreds of others have been organized. They add that the functions of TCM schemes include the day-to-day management of urban retail areas, as well as long term strategic development that includes managing the mix of occupants in an area and promotional activities. This supports the earlier assertion of Warnaby, Bennison, Davies and Hughes (2004), who found that Town Centre Managers play a central role in promoting urban areas as shopping destinations.

However, TCM schemes face the significant challenge of convincing business stakeholders that the model of retail management is worth investing in (Hogg, Medway & Warnaby, 2007). Since there is no legal mechanism that compels all the businesses in an area to contribute financially, free-riders receive the same benefits as the stakeholders who invest and participate in TCM. This is why the government of the United Kingdom has recently turned its attention to a model of urban retail management found in North America, the Business Improvement District (Hogg, Medway & Warnaby, 2007; Ward, 2006).

While Business Improvement Districts (BIDs<sup>1</sup>) are only one of several possible ways in which business associations can form, they have shown themselves to be particularly effective in transforming

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<sup>1</sup> BIDs are known as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in Ontario and other parts of Canada. While American BIDs are often larger in scale and budget than their Canadian counterparts (BIAs), the two models are essentially the same in form and function. For the purpose of this literature review, the two terms will be used synonymously. However, the Ontario term, Business Improvement Area or BIA, is used throughout the rest of this thesis.

and revitalizing retail areas. The previously-considered research allows us to reflect on a few examples. In Millward and Winsor's (1997) discussion of retail change in downtown Halifax, the researchers noted that the designation of Barrington Street as a BID had stabilized the street's retail decline. On a more positive note, Tunbridge's study (2001) of Ottawa's Byward Market found that since its formation in 1993, the BIA has played a significant role in the development of the area as a form of festival marketplace, by giving the business community an instrument to collectively manage issues of shared concern – such as area improvement and promotion. Likewise, in Grafos' (2001) examination of Greek identity, he found that the Danforth BIA had successfully constructed a Greek identity to better market themselves to the population of the Toronto area. The success of the Business Improvement Area model, as a form of urban retail management, calls for further discussion of how BIAs originated, how they operate, and what activities they engage in.

## **2.6 Understanding the Origin, Operations, and Activities of the Business Improvement Area Model**

Business Improvement Areas originated in the City of Toronto in 1970, in a commercial strip known as Bloor West Village (Perez, Hernandez & Jones, 2003). At the time, a subway recently had been completed under Bloor Street replacing streetcars as the dominant mode of transportation. As a result, pedestrian traffic moved from street level to below ground. When combined with the increasing popularity of suburban shopping centres, this development left the once vibrant neighbourhood commercial district of Bloor West Village poorly maintained, with a high vacancy rate and low retail sales (Perez, Hernandez & Jones, 2003; Tam, 1994). A group of businesses in the neighbourhood saw the need to work together to prevent further losses, but realized that efforts to create a voluntary business association would lack the business support and financing necessary to make a real difference. Believing that they could positively determine their own future, they successfully lobbied the Provincial Government to create the first Business Improvement Area legislation (Toronto Association of Business

Improvement Areas, n.d. - a). The City of Toronto then followed through with By-law no. 170-70, designating Bloor West Village as the world's first BIA (Ward, 2006).

Since that time, BIAs have sprouted up across Ontario, and indeed, the model is now spreading across the world. In a comprehensive study of Business Improvement Districts in the United States, Mitchell (2001a) found more than 400 BIDs in a study conducted some ten years ago (1999). Ratcliffe and Flanagan estimated in 2004 that there were more than 1,200 BID-like organizations in more than 16 countries, spread from Europe to North America and Asia. For the purposes of this study, the Province of Ontario's (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004) BIA handbook indicates that there are presently more than 230 Business Improvement Areas, of which Toronto now has 64 (Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, n.d. - b).

The international popularity of the BID model has been known to cause confusion, as a number of different names have been attached to it by different countries, provinces and states (Ward, 2006). Fortunately, the BID concept has been defined and explained by a number of researchers. Mitchell describes a BIA as an area in which "a geographically defined majority of property owners and/or merchants agree to provide an extra level of public service ... by imposing an added tax or fee on all of the properties and/or businesses" (2001a, p.116). Similarly, Hochleutner writes that Business Improvement Districts are "territorial subdivisions with a municipality... [where] local property and business owners pay distinct-specific assessments to fund local improvements such as enhanced security, sanitation, marketing, and infrastructure" (2003, p.374). In his authoritative text on the subject, Houstoun offers an extended definition of the BID concept, outlining five key characteristics that are paraphrased below (2003, p.4):

1. BIDs are systems by which a group of private properties or businesses cooperate to share the costs of solving common problems and realizing economic opportunities.
2. BIDs have sustainable financing systems that allow them to formulate plans and budgets that extend over several fiscal years.
3. BIDs are authorized by government through legislation that defines their purpose, governing structure, functions and limits.

4. BIDs are allowed to perform a wide variety of business and property management services within their geographic boundaries.
5. Although BIDs may be managed by either quasi-public agencies or non-profit corporations, oversight is the responsibility of a board of directors that largely consists of property and business owners.

Houstoun's (2003) definition of the BID concept explains how Business Improvement Districts operate, with regard to their legal authorization, funding system, limits of authority, and decision-making. Several other researchers also make valuable contributions to our understanding of the subject. Ward (2006) identifies how BIDs are financed, explaining that a public assessment is made of all the private businesses and property owners in the BID boundaries, and then the money is sent directly back to the BID Board of Management to spend at their discretion. Stokes adds that BIDs rely on the "legitimacy and coercive power of the political system to mandate the funding of collective action" (2007, p.278). Finally, Mitchell explains that after a majority of property owners and merchants in specific geographic area agree to form a BID, then the local municipality "legally establishes the district, collects the special assessments, and ... transfers the funds [back] to ... [the] BID organization to use as it sees fit" (2001b, p.202).

The logical question that follows this discussion of the operation of Business Improvement Districts, is what activities do BIDs routinely engage in? The Ontario *BIA Handbook* provides the simple answer, saying that Business Improvement Areas exist for two main purposes: to revitalize and maintain local neighbourhoods, and to promote retail areas as business and shopping destinations (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004). Each BIA uses different activities and services to fulfill this mandate as they see fit. Mitchell gives a comprehensive list of nine potential service areas, which have been listed below with the examples he provides (2001b, p.203), and supplemented by examples from other sources (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004, p.1.4; Levy, 2001, p.129; Ratcliffe & Flanagan, 2004, p.385-386; Stokes, 2007, p.286):

1. **Capital Improvements:** Streetscaping projects, such as installing pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture, planting trees and shrubbery, sidewalk treatment, facade improvements and other urban design.
2. **Consumer Marketing:** Producing and promoting festivals and events, setting out seasonal decorations to create a pleasant environment, coordinating sales promotions, producing maps and newsletters, adding signage and banners, launching image enhancement and advertising campaigns.
3. **Economic Development:** Offering incentives (such as loans) to new and expanding businesses, working with property owners to ensure that all available space is occupied and that a desirable business and service mix is maintained, conducting market research, producing data-oriented reports, marketing to investors, enhancing community educational facilities, and engaging in transit and land-use planning efforts.
4. **Maintenance:** Collecting rubbish, removing litter and graffiti, washing sidewalks, shovelling snow, trimming trees, cutting grass, cleaning footpaths, and maintain flowerbeds.
5. **Parking and Transportation:** Managing public parking systems, maintaining transit shelters.
6. **Policy Advocacy:** Promoting public policies to the community, lobbying government on behalf of business interests.
7. **Public Space Regulation:** Managing sidewalk vending and street performances, discouraging panhandling, controlling vehicle loading and unloading, enforcing by-law compliance.
8. **Security:** Providing supplementary security guards and street guides, buying and installing electronic security systems, working with the local police force.
9. **Social Services:** Aiding the homeless, providing job training, supplying youth services, hiring at a decent wage formerly homeless individuals, or those making the transfer from welfare to work.

The willingness of businesses to tax themselves to fund these wide-ranging activities demonstrates that business owners are willing to pay for services that they can see, and that meet their needs (Levy, 2001).

## 2.7 The Current State of Business Improvement Area Scholarship

Moving beyond the BIA model, it is important to consider the current state of BIA scholarship to locate gaps in the subjects that have been considered. Three categories of literature are evident, which could be termed descriptive, governance and accountability, and BIA impacts. The first and largest area of Business Improvement Area literature deals with the BIA concept itself, generally with regard to describing the form and functions of the organizations. Mitchell provides the first and only (2001a, 2001b) comprehensive survey of Business Improvement Districts in the United States. His work provides insight into the services and programs that BIDs offer, the characteristics of BID organizations in terms of their budgets and boards of management, and the management approaches used by BID managers.

Similarly, Gross (2005) considered forty-one BIDs in New York City to explore differences in the form and activities of large and small BIDs. She found that BIDs could be categorized by their resource base, the type of commercial property represented, the composition and balance of power among key stakeholders, and the wealth of the community where the BID was located. The data she collected enabled her to create a three-category BID typology, in which she compared the features of corporate, main street, and community BIDs, showing differences in the services that they provided. Another example of descriptive work on BIDs is Levy's (2001) look at how BIDs have shaped public policy, and are emerging as an effective way to govern and manage cities. As if to support Levy's assertion, Stokes (2007) provides evidence of BIDs important role in local economic development, in his case study of San Diego. Likewise, Ward (2006) also emphasizes the desirability of the model, by explaining how the United Kingdom has recently copied the BID concept of retail management, hoping to mimic its success in the United States and Canada. Ultimately, Houstoun's virtual textbook on the subject (2003) provides the most comprehensive description of the BID model. Now in its second edition, *Business Improvement Districts* is an authoritative source of information on the legal foundations of BIDs, how they can best be planned and managed, and what the future is likely to hold for these organizations.

While the descriptive BID literature is quite comprehensive, a potential problem exists. In each case, the research was conducted in the American context. Thus, it appears that Canadian researchers are making the assumption that the form and functions of BIAs are the same in Canada. While it is likely true that Canadian BIAs are very similar in form, the possibility remains that the legal differences between the countries have created differences in the BIAs' activities. A comparative study of Canadian and American BIDs could reveal if these differences exist, and would therefore be an effective way of extending the descriptive BID literature.

The second category of Business Improvement Area scholarship looks at the governance and accountability of BIAs. While the subject has only drawn limited attention, a debate has emerged as to

whether or not BID governance is sufficiently accountable. The work of Schaller and Modan (2005), questions the prevailing positive view of BIDs, by arguing that they exacerbate tensions over space in ethnically and economically diverse neighbourhoods. The authors examine a neighbourhood BID to show how local power relations and inequities are inscribed in the BID structure and decisions. Later on, Schaller (2007) drew similar conclusions in her dissertation, based on an extended case study. However, an opposing view of BID governance and accountability is presented by Hochleitner (2003). He argues that BIDs are both accountable and democratic, in that they are accountable to stakeholders in proportion to the impact that they feel from BID activities. Hochleitner (2003) explains that BIDs' small size, limited purpose, governance mechanisms, and oversight by municipal officials makes them sufficiently accountable to both businesses and residents. He concludes that no better alternative in the governance of sub-local commercial districts presently exists.

The third category of BID literature looks at the impacts of Business Improvement Districts. While this subject is especially important to demonstrate the effectiveness of the BID model, only a few studies have been conducted. Hoyt (2005) examined the impacts of BID services on crime, and found that commercial areas with a BID organization had lower property crime rates than those without a BID. She also found that the lower crime rates did not mean that crime had been pushed into the surrounding area, as higher crime rates were not found in the surrounding blocks. Hackworth and Rekers (2005) considered a completely different impact, by showing how ethnic packaging and branding by BIAs in Toronto had led to nearby residential gentrification. Finally, the work of Hogg, Medway and Warnaby (2007) considered the use of performance management measures to assess the impacts of BID policy interventions. The researchers found that American BIDs had embraced the use of performance management more enthusiastically than the United Kingdom's Town Centre Management schemes.

In addition to these themes in the literature, two trends are obvious. First, BIA scholarship is very practical in its orientation, as it is generally suited to meeting the needs of decision-makers, and

often written by BIA managers themselves. And second, BIA scholarship is relatively new, with almost all literature in the field being published in the last twenty years. The logical implication of this finding is that many subjects remain to be explored.

## **2.8 The Role of Business Improvement Areas in Leisure Shopping Tourism**

Although Jansen-Verbeke (1986) mentions local associations of shopkeepers as one of several promoters of inner-city tourism, the involvement of business improvement districts in tourism promotion and development has been largely ignored by researchers. This may cause one to wonder whether tourism is a relevant subject to study in relation to Business Improvement Areas. However, the frequency of its mention in BIA literature shows the significance of this currently unrecognized subject. References to BIAs that are involved in tourism are common. For example, Hogg, Medway and Warnaby (2007) mention a BID in Manhattan that was focussed on attracting tourists. This BIA was using performance indicators to measure its success in the tourism industry, such as the number of visitors at key attractions and the length of hotel stay. Similarly, Perez, Hernandez and Jones (2003) note that the Downtown Yonge BIA was officially designated as a tourist area, allowing its retailers to open on statutory holidays. Houston's (2003) textbook on BIDs provides several additional examples of Business Improvement Districts that are involved in tourism and hospitality activities, such as New York's 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership, Center City Philadelphia, and Downtown DC.

Likewise, the subject of leisure shopping as a form of tourism has been referred to in BIA literature. Hoyt (2005) began her research on BIDs and crime by providing the example of a tourist shopping for souvenirs. She explained how the visitor would likely choose the safety, cleanliness and comfort of a commercial area with a BID, over a run-down commercial area with graffiti, garbage, and vacant storefronts because it did not have a BID. Schaller and Modan (2005) explained how BIDs are able to package and market urban spaces as shopping destinations:



Through public/private partnerships, BIDs reconfigure neighbourhood space into specialized, mass-marketable, consumer-friendly environments... they self-consciously market the strengths of the city retail experience... emphasizing amenities, such as pedestrian friendly sidewalks, heterogeneous architectural environments, and bustling streets with easy access to public transportation... reinventing the urban landscape as... an urban mall (p.396).

Gross (2005) adds that BIDs encourage shopping through psychological clues that generate feelings of safety and comfort in the minds of visitors. These include the use of uniform signage, streetscaping efforts, providing benches to sit on, setting up festive lighting, and providing safety ambassadors. As if to demonstrate the hidden importance of tourists in BIA shopping areas, the Government of Ontario's BIA Handbook adds that a major goal of Business Improvement Areas is to lead a revitalization process that will attract local residents and "others" (read tourists) to spend their shopping dollars in the area (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004).

BID literature also hints at how business associations are involved in tourism development and promotion. In a case study of San Diego's BIDs, Stokes (2007) notes that "nearly one-third of BIDs in San Diego produce, coordinate, and promote large-scale street festivals" (p.285). He also found that BIDs used other tourism activities for place promotion, including: special events, restaurant tours, block parties, farmer's markets, and holiday festivals. Similarly, Hackworth and Rekers' (2005) study shows that BIAs promote themselves to tourists by: taking on an ethnic brand (often mentioned in the BIA's name), offering annual parades and street festivals, providing trolley service to downtown hotels, selling ethnic merchandise, and conducting strategic marketing campaigns to attract visitors.

Hochleitner (2003) suggests that all BIDs have four categories of core business activities, one of which is marketing and promotion, a category that could include tourism activities. But it is obvious that all BIDs are not involved in tourism development, and highly unlikely that those that are involved do so in the same way. Stokes' (2007) work in San Diego suggests that fiscally-strong BIDs are more likely to be involved in commercial promotion and special event production, as BIDs in less wealthy areas are more likely to focus on community development. This seems to be in agreement with Gross's earlier

study (2005) of BIDs in New York City, as she found that those BIDs in wealthier areas have multiple customer bases – residents, workers, and tourists.

However, in spite of tourism's significance as a theme in BID case studies, it has not yet been recognized as a subject worthy of further study. In fact, it appears that the only academic source to directly address tourism is the work of Ratcliffe and Flanagan (2004). The purpose of Ratcliffe and Flanagan's study (2004) was to show how BID legislation could be employed to foster the development of the tourism industry in Britain. The authors showed the relevance of BIDs to the promotion of local urban tourism by identifying four common goals of tourism and BID management: place management, customer satisfaction, hospitality management, and competitiveness. They then moved into a very brief discussion of tourism-related BIDs in the United States and United Kingdom, before concluding that BIDs can give a competitive advantage in tourist destination management, visitor generation, and visitor spending.

While Ratcliffe and Flanagan's (2004) work is a valuable first step into understanding the relationship between tourism and BID management, it has a number of limitations. First, the study is focussed on BIDs in the United Kingdom, a setting where BIDs were only being pilot-tested at the time. As such, their findings are elementary and limited in scope. Second, the applicability of their findings in other jurisdictions is questionable, as other scholars' work has shown that BIDs in the United Kingdom are not the same as North American BIDs in terms of who initiates them, runs them, and funds them (Hogg, Medway & Warnaby, 2007). Third, Ratcliffe and Flanagan's (2004) study took a case-study approach, offering titbits of information on a number of tourist-oriented BIDs. This approach did not address the relevance of tourism to BID operations in general, as it did not provide any comprehensive examination of the proportion of BIDs that are involved in tourism development. Nor did it offer a broad understanding of the types of tourism development that BIDs engage in, or how their tourism-

orientation developed (whether tourism developed prior to the BID, or because of the choices of BID managers/businesses).

## **2.9 Integrating the Literature and Identifying the Research Gap: The Involvement of BIAs in Tourism**

Progressing through the literature on urban tourism and urban retail reveals the synergy between these two fields. This synergy has been demonstrated in the work of two groups of academics; those who have studied leisure shopping as a form of tourism, and those who have sought to model the transformation of shopping spaces from a local to tourist orientation. These studies have often hinted at an important theme – the role that business associations have played in the management and evolution of retail districts. It is this theme that this thesis explores, by examining the involvement of Business Improvement Associations in tourism.

The only study to have directly tackled this subject was conducted at a preliminary stage of BID development in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the study is limited in the comprehensiveness of the information it provides, and may also be limited in its applicability to the North American context. To fill in this gap in the literature, any further study should have a broad scope and be empirically grounded in North America. Thus, the following study of the involvement of BIAs in tourism is broad and exploratory in its assessment, and set in the Province of Ontario.

Ontario is a fitting context for such a study for two reasons. First, Ontario is home to the world's first Business Improvement Area, and currently features over 230 BIAs (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004). Second, several studies have shown that some of the Province's BIAs are currently involved in tourism development. Hackworth and Rekers' (2005) gentrification study looked at four ethnically-themed BIAs in Toronto, and noted differences in their level of tourism orientation. Further, Perez, Hernandez and Jones (2003) found in a telephone survey of

Ontario BIAs that 24 percent listed their primary focus as entertainment and tourism, while another 53 percent listed their focus as mixed retail – both of which could attract tourists.

It is anticipated that our understanding of Ontario BIAs' tourism-related activities, goals, and origins will be strengthened as a result of this explorative study. Further, it is hoped that tourism policy makers and Destination Marketing Organizations will be more frequently engaged with BIAs in tourism marketing and development once the synergies between their efforts are identified. Finally, the results of this study are expected to enhance BIAs' ability to make informed decisions about improving their tourism product. But before these findings can be considered, it is necessary to explain how the research was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH APPROACH**

This chapter explains in detail the research approach that was used in this study. Its purpose is to describe how the research was conducted, in a manner that would enable the study to be replicated in another jurisdiction. As the research process is presented, the decisions that were made are justified, so that the researcher's rationale can be understood.

The chapter begins by reiterating the study's purpose, before providing a detailed discussion of the four specific objectives that it pursued. The four research objectives are then divided into the two phases by which the research was conducted. This division is logical since the first two research objectives required different data sources, methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis than the third and fourth objectives. Further, since the objectives built upon each other, the second phase of the research could not take place until the first was substantially completed. Each of the two phases is considered separately, with a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of its methods. For each phase, the data collection methods are presented first, followed by a section on the methods of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a paragraph that summarizes the study's research approach.

### **3.1 Purpose and Objectives**

It is reasonable to believe that some BIAs are involved in creating, supporting or shaping tourism within their boundaries. However, the extent of this relationship had never before been comprehensively examined. Thus, the purpose of this thesis was to explore the involvement of Business Improvement Areas in tourism. This involved considering their efforts to promote themselves to tourists, as well as in their work in tourism development and management. More specifically, this study had four objectives, which are described in detail below.

### **3.1.1 Objective 1 – To Identify the Nature of BIAs’ Involvement in Tourism**

The first objective was to collect broad and descriptive data about the nature of BIAs’ involvement in tourism. To gain this comprehensive understanding, a large political jurisdiction with many BIAs (Ontario) was selected. Achieving this objective also involved meeting a number of sub-objectives:

- Identifying the proportion of BIAs that are involved in tourism
- For those BIAs that were not involved in tourism, identifying:
  - Why they are not involved in tourism (location, a BIA board decision, budget size, etc.)
  - If they expect to become involved in tourism in the near future
- For those BIAs that were involved in tourism, identifying:
  - What percentage of businesses in the BIA cater to tourists
  - What prompted them to seek to attract tourists (location near a major transportation route, leadership within the BIA, tourism already in the area, etc.)
  - The number of special events and festivals that they hosted in 2007 that are believed to have attracted tourists
  - Whether they are investing in creating tourist attractions (besides events and festivals)
  - Ways in which they promote themselves to tourists (websites, promotional DVDs, local newspaper advertisements)
  - What BIA activities, experiences and features are most important in attracting tourists (clothing stores, pubs, heritage structures, performance theatres)
  - What other stakeholders they have been partnering with to promote tourism in the area
  - Whether they have a written tourism strategy
  - What modes of transportation tourists can use to come directly to their BIA
  - What problems have arisen from tourism development in their BIA
  - What positive developments have resulted from tourism in their BIA
  - What they are planning to do in the near future to improve the tourism experience that they offer

### **3.1.2 Objective 2 – To Identify BIAs that are Successful in Attracting Tourists**

Having identified the overall nature of BIAs’ involvement in tourism, the second objective was to identify those BIAs that are successful in attracting tourists. This was accomplished by creating a typology of BIAs, based on the extent of their involvement in tourism. The typology itself was created using some of the data that was collected to meet objective one. This objective also involved comparing the typology to the population size of the municipality where the BIAs were located, to see if population size was related to the level of tourism involvement of Business Improvement Areas.

### ***3.1.3 Objective 3 –To Identify the Characteristics of BIAs that Make Successful Tourism Destinations***

The third objective began with selecting four BIAs, which the typology showed to be more involved in tourism, for case studies. Since these BIAs were more successful in attracting tourists, the objective was to identify the characteristics that enabled them to be successful. Each of the four BIAs were selected from a different population category to ensure that the findings were generalizable to BIAs in municipalities of all sizes. The case studies investigated:

- How the BIA became involved in tourism (whether it was planned development or a result of other factors)
- How the BIA further developed into a tourism destination (investments that were made, partnerships that were formed, etc.)
- Whether the BIA has a tourism champion or leader
- How the BIA's tourism activities are developed, managed and financed
- The nature of the BIA's appeal to tourists
- How the BIA can improve as a tourism destination
- The challenges to tourism development that the BIA faced
- The lessons that the BIA has learned through its tourism efforts
- What features the BIA representative believes a BIA needs to have to be successful in attracting tourists

From the case studies a number of common characteristics were identified that played an important role in the BIAs' success as tourism destinations.

### ***3.1.4 Objective 4 – To Create a Template that Assesses BIAs' Tourism Potential***

The fourth objective was practical and applied. Based on the characteristics identified in objective three, a set of guidelines was created to assess how suited a BIA is to tourism development. The guidelines take the form of a template that a BIA can use to assess its current tourism potential based on its characteristics. The template also acts as a set of recommendations that can assist BIAs that are interested in developing tourism within their boundaries.

### 3.2 Phase One: Data Collection for Objectives One and Two

The first phase of data collection involved the distribution of a four-page survey questionnaire to BIAs across Ontario. The survey was relatively short and double-sided, since a longer survey would be less likely to be completed by busy BIA managers (or BIA Chairs/Directors, since not all BIAs can afford to hire a manager). It consisted of questions that sought to fulfill the first research objective.<sup>2</sup>

The questions that were included on the survey form were largely close-ended. This type of question has certain benefits. It ensures that the questionnaire can be completed quickly and easily by respondents. The listing of fixed answers clarifies the questions' meaning, thus avoiding any potential misunderstanding. Another benefit of using close-ended questions is that they allow for the comparison of answers, both directly and through the tabulation of frequencies and percentages (Neuman, 2006). The close-ended questions also ensure that there are fewer irrelevant or confused answers. However, because these questions do not always give respondents the option of giving the best answer, those on the survey always included an "other" category, where the respondents could provide their own answers.

One open question was used to assess BIAs' plans for the future. The open format allowed for unanticipated findings to emerge, and for respondents to give more detailed explanations (Neuman, 2006). Open questions were also used to supplement several of the closed questions. For example, respondents who said that they had a committee dealing specifically with tourism were asked what its main responsibilities were. Unfortunately, these open-ended questions were often ignored by respondents, or were answered with just one word, thereby limiting the value of the information collected.

The order of the survey questions was determined with the respondents in mind. The goal was to minimize the potential for confusion. This was done by titling the sections of the survey with short

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<sup>2</sup>A copy of the questionnaire is provided in **Appendix A**.



explanatory statements (e.g. Questions for BIAs *NOT INVOLVED* in Tourism), and by grouping the questions according to common topics. The survey began with an explanation of its purpose, and a definition of tourism to help inform BIA managers' responses. It then contained an opening question that was simple and easy to answer. Neuman (2006) explains that this eases respondents into the questionnaire, rather than discouraging them with boring or threatening questions.

The questionnaire was administered using the mail-out method. This method was chosen for a number of reasons. It was affordable, could be conducted by a single researcher, and could reach a wide geographical area (Neuman, 2006). Mail-out surveys also give the respondent flexibility in terms of when they choose to complete the questionnaire. Further, mail out surveys avoid interviewer bias, and can receive high response rates when the target population is well-educated or has a strong interest in the topic (Neuman, 2006). Thus, this approach seemed suited to BIA managers who are likely to have an interest in the subject being examined.

However, because mail-out surveys often face low response rates, a number of measures were taken to address this challenge. First, the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA) and the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) were asked to assist in distributing the questionnaires. They did this in two ways. First, representatives from both organizations provided the address information of all their members to confirm or add to the researcher's address database. Second, OBIAA provided space in their June newsletter for the researcher to write an article explaining the purpose and value of the study. The article strongly encouraged BIA representatives to complete the questionnaire so that the results would be comprehensive and reflective of the entire Province, enabling OBIAA, TABIA and individual BIAs to make the strongest case possible to policy makers from the findings.

Second, the BIAs were given two choices for responding. They could either respond by fax to the University of Waterloo, or by using a postage-paid and addressed return envelope that was given to

them in the survey package. Third, a cover letter on University of Waterloo stationary was sent out to request respondent cooperation, guarantee confidentiality, explain the purpose of the survey, and give the researcher's name and contact information. The cover letter also included the signatures of representatives from the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA) and the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA), to indicate their knowledge of, and support for, the research project. The letters indicated that the findings of the survey would be shared with OABIA and TABIA in the form of an executive summary, which would also be shared with any BIA that provided an e-mail address for feedback on their completed survey form. In addition to these measures, each BIA that had not yet responded was sent one follow-up e-mail two weeks after the first letter was mailed, as a reminder for them to complete the survey. This follow-up e-mail contained the researcher's contact information, in case the BIA manager had lost the original survey and wanted another copy mailed or e-mailed to them. In several cases, the BIA representative who received the e-mail had not even heard about the study as another BIA board member had received the mailed-out survey package. However, many of them were interested and quickly responded to the questionnaire by e-mail. Ultimately these methods were successful in increasing the response rate to the questionnaire. In total, 92 responses were received out of the 259 questionnaire packages, yielding a 35.5 percent response rate. Unfortunately, two of these responses were unusable as they contained contradictory information or were incomplete. This resulted in 90 useable questionnaires, or 34.7 percent of those that had been mailed out.

The sampling method used was purposive sampling, as the mail-out surveys were sent to all possible cases that could be reached and fit particular criteria (Neuman, 2006). In this case, the goal was to send the questionnaire to all Business Improvement Areas in Ontario. To do so, the researcher

compiled a list of all 259 BIAs in Ontario<sup>3</sup>, using the most recent address information that was available online. This involved comparing data from the 2004 *BIA Operating Handbook* produced by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, with the OBIAA and TABIA lists of their member BIAs, as well as numerous BIA websites and municipal documents. When the lists conflicted by providing two different addresses, the researcher resolved this by recording both addresses in a database. The address that appeared most recent was mailed to first, and if the package was returned by Canada Post it was then re-mailed to the alternate address.

To ensure the survey questions were clear to respondents, the questionnaire was pilot tested twice. The researcher gave complete copies of the questionnaire to both a TABIA and OBIAA representative, to ensure that it could be easily understood by BIA managers, and completed in a reasonable length of time. Both representatives were BIA managers as well as directors of BIA associations, giving them a wide variety of experiences to draw on in their feedback. The OBIAA and TABIA representatives provided a number of suggestions to clarify the questions that were being asked. The unclear or misleading questions were then improved by the researcher before the questionnaire was mailed out to the Business Improvement Areas. Their suggestions to collect additional information were also incorporated where space allowed, by altering or adding to the questions asked. Finally, the improved questionnaire was presented by Secretary of OBIAA to the OBIAA Board for approval. It was approved and received the support of the Board, which represents over 100 of the Province's Business Improvement Areas.

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<sup>3</sup> While six other Business Improvement Areas were identified, further probing confirmed that three were no longer in existence, two were still at the proposal stage, and one had just formed (and was without contact information at the time).

### **3.3 Phase One: Data Analysis for Objectives One and Two**

The surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, as the first research objective was descriptive in nature. This included frequency counts and percentages; three measures of central tendency, means, medians and modes; as well as three measures of dispersion, standard deviations, minimums and maximums; although each could only be used where they were appropriate descriptors of the data collected. The answers to each question were organized into charts in Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), to allow for easy tabulation. All of the answers to the closed questions were then tabulated.

The researcher also noted the written answers, which the respondents had provided, in the “other” category that many questions included. Along with the frequency counts, percentages, and measures of central tendency and dispersion, these answers were recorded in a Microsoft Word file under their respective question heading. This allowed all of the data collected in phase one to be considered in a simplified, yet complete, format.

Using this Microsoft Word file, the few open-ended questions on the survey were analyzed according to themes that emerged in the answers. First, the data for each open-ended question was grouped together by the researcher. Then the short open-ended questions, which generally had one or two word answers, were coded into themes by grouping the answers into common subject areas. For example, “flowers”, “hanging flower baskets”, and “floral beautification” were all coded into the theme of “flowers and floral displays.” The respondents’ own words were used as much as possible in creating these common subject areas. The frequency of each theme was then tabulated as an important indicator of the relative significance of the answer (e.g. what are the most commonly mentioned tourism attractions that BIAs have invested in creating?). However, the less frequently-mentioned themes were not ignored in the analysis, as they also provided important insights.

The researcher printed out all of the responses to the one open-ended survey question that allowed for longer answers (question 20, see **Appendix A**). This was to allow for a rigorous coding process to take place, similar to that used when creating a grounded theory<sup>4</sup>. After first reading over the answers provided to gain an overall understanding of the data, the researcher began the initial coding phase by writing a code, or label in the margin of the page, for each line of text. The goal was to succinctly capture each idea that the respondents presented, using their own words as much as possible (these are called in vivo codes) (Charmaz, 2006). As Daly (2007) suggests in her discussion of grounded theory, this does not necessarily mean giving a label to every line of text, but rather labelling all the meaningful segments of data. Next, the researcher began a focussed coding process, by looking for commonalities and consistencies among the codes. Six possible themes were identified and noted during this initial focussed coding process. The researcher then moved back into Microsoft Word to use these six themes to sift through the data. The possible themes that had been identified already were each assigned a colour, and that colour of font was then applied to each segment of raw data that fit into that theme. This process allowed the researcher to identify data that had been missed in the first focussed coding process, as it was not coloured at all. After a continuous process of sorting through the data to identify the themes that best described the respondents' answers, seven themes were produced. Each theme was accompanied by a description of what they included and involved, using many of the respondents' own words. The frequency with which each of the seven themes was mentioned was also noted as an indication of its significance.

Having completed the analysis necessary to meet objective one, the researcher then began to analyze the survey data with objective two in mind. To create a typology of BIAs showing increased tourism involvement, a cluster analysis was conducted. This type of analysis required the researcher to

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<sup>4</sup> Grounded theory is a method of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher goes through multiple stages of data collection and refinement (called coding) to develop a theory that is grounded (or based) in the data collected (Creswell, 2003). The theory emerges from the categories and relationships that are evident in the data.

convert the answers from every close-ended question into a variable, and to convert alphabetical answers into numerical ones. Originally the researcher attempted to conduct this analysis using SPSS; however, the limitations of the program were soon discovered, as it was unable to indicate the most appropriate number of clusters, and unable to provide cluster membership information. With the assistance of University of Waterloo Statistical staff, the analysis was then conducted using SAS (Statistical Analysis Software). During this process, the limitations of the questionnaire that had been used became evident. The statistical staff at the University explained that the outliers, which caused havoc when SAS attempted to cluster the data, could have been minimized or even avoided if the questionnaire had been designed with their assistance. In addition, because the survey had not been prepared with the needs of a cluster analysis in mind, many of the questions asked did not provide data that could be effectively used in such an analysis. For example, several of the questions had simple yes/no type answers, giving the statistical program few options to use in clustering the data. Also, many of the questions asked allowed respondents to choose more than one answer, as they were asked to circle all of the correct answers. Each possible answer to these questions had to become its own variable to conduct the cluster analysis, with just a yes/no response. Once again, this provided the statistical program with few options to use in clustering the data. Further, it was recognized that asking BIAs for a per capita budget would have been better than asking them for their approximate budget size and rough membership size, as it would combine the two variables into one more valuable piece of information (the amount spent per member in a given year). However, in spite of these problems, it was not feasible to re-conduct the survey because of the cost and time that would be required. The researcher also believed that the respondents would be less likely to participate a second time around.

Two popular types of cluster analysis were considered; Hierarchical clustering, and K-means clustering. The University of Waterloo Statistical staff recommended that Hierarchical clustering be

used, as K-means clustering requires continuous data. Since many of the survey questions produced variables that did not have continuous data, the Hierarchical approach was chosen.

At first the cluster analysis was run through SAS using all of the available variables to see if the data would cluster<sup>5</sup>. Since the data did not cluster well, with over 20 clusters needed to obtain an R squared value near 80 percent, it was necessary to greatly reduce the number of variables included. A number of different attempts were made to determine which variables should remain in the cluster analysis. First the simplistic yes/no type variables were excluded. Second, the variable showing municipal population was excluded as it was making the clustering more difficult. Third, the variables that corresponded to questions that did not indicate how involved in tourism a BIA was were excluded. And fourth, several different combinations of variables were attempted to see which provided the highest R squared values to explain variance in the data. Through this process, three variables were eventually chosen: the approximate percentage of businesses in the BIA that catered to tourists; the number of events and festivals that the BIA hosted in 2007 that were believed to have attracted tourists; and the approximate size of the BIA's yearly budget. These three variables enabled the data to cluster and formed the backbone of the BIA tourism typology.

Having identified different clusters of data, the framework of a BIA typology was beginning to take shape. But to complete the typology, each cluster's answers to different questions were needed, to see if other variables correlated with the clusters. By adding cluster membership as a variable into the SPSS data set, the researcher was able to use cross-tabulations to compare cluster membership to other variables that could be related to the level of a BIA's tourism involvement. This allowed the

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<sup>5</sup> Note: The cluster analysis was only attempted using data from closed questions that were consistently answered in the proper format by respondents. For this reason, the variables relating to survey questions 12 and 20 were not included (these were open-ended questions), and the variables relating to survey questions 6, 14, 15, 21 were also not included (these questions caused varying degrees of confusion, making the answers to them difficult to compare since the question was often interpreted differently or skipped by respondents).

researcher to easily compare the clusters to the data to look for trends, and confirmed a general pattern of increasing tourism involvement in the clusters.

Seeking to gain a deeper understanding of each of the clusters, the researcher analyzed them separately using the same descriptive statistics as had been used to analyze all of the data earlier. The frequency counts, percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion that were obtained using Microsoft Excel and SPSS, were then placed into one Microsoft Excel database. This allowed for the easy comparison of results across the clusters, enabling the researcher to see where trends existed. The open-ended questions were also analyzed by cluster using the same analysis process that was outlined above.

### **3.4 Phase Two: Data Collection for Objectives Three and Four**

The second phase of the study began once the first phase was largely completed, since it built on the primarily quantitative findings of phase one. Its purpose was to use qualitative data to provide a more detailed understanding of Business Improvement Areas' tourism involvement. More specifically, it sought to identify the characteristics of BIAs that have made them successful tourism destinations.

This process involved using the BIA typology to identify four BIAs for case studies. The researcher balanced a number of factors in selecting the four BIAs. First, each BIA had to be seriously involved in tourism, meaning that they were found towards the high end of the tourism typology. Second, each BIA had to convey a certain level of success in their tourism efforts, which the researcher subjectively judged based on their responses to the phase one questionnaire. Third, the BIAs had to be chosen from different municipalities to minimize the potential for any form of location bias. Fourth, to ensure that the study findings were not confined to one particular population category, the BIAs had to be selected from several different population classes (large city, medium-sized city, small city, town). This also ensured that the template, which was later developed to assess BIAs' tourism potential, would



be applicable to BIAs in municipalities of all sizes. Finally, to be selected, a BIA's representative had to have indicated on the questionnaire that he or she was willing to be contacted further for an interview.

Each BIA that was selected was analyzed in a case study format, beginning with an interview with the BIA Manager, Director, or Chairperson. All of the interviews were conducted in person by the researcher, so that visual communication could be noted, the interviews could be recorded, documents that were referred to in the discussion could be picked up, and places that were mentioned could be visited by the researcher immediately afterward. This required the researcher to arrange a suitable time and place for the interviewee, so that they could fit the interview into their busy schedule. In each case, the BIA representative asked the researcher to meet them in their office during the week. The researcher found that conducting the interviews in surroundings that were chosen by the interviewees, ensured that the respondents were comfortable and willing to discuss their BIAs' projects and priorities. Notes were taken on the setting in which the interview was conducted, and on any other observations the researcher made about the interview process.

The interviews were semi-structured in nature, with a list of questions being used to guide the discussion while allowing the interviewee to speak freely. Before each interview began, the researcher asked whether the interviewee was comfortable with his or her name being used in connection with the information being provided, and whether the researcher could record the interview using an audio recorder. In each case the answer was yes to both questions; however, two of the BIA representatives asked that they be allowed to see and approve any publications that used their name in conjunction with their comments. The researcher also reviewed with the interviewee the purpose of the study, and the estimated time required to complete the interview. A consent form was then signed so that interview could commence. While the audio recorder was turned on for the whole interview, in each case the researcher also took notes of key points in the discussion during the interview.

Many of the interview questions sought to build upon the findings from the phase one questionnaire by probing more deeply. In addition, questions were also asked about: whether the BIA has a tourism champion or leader; what the BIA's appeal is to tourists; how the BIA can improve as a tourism destination; what challenges to tourism development the BIA has faced; and what lessons the BIA has learned through its tourism efforts.<sup>6</sup> These questions were asked to both identify the characteristics of successful tourism-oriented BIAs, and to learn from these BIAs' successes and failures in tourism development, management, and promotion.

The researcher made an effort to begin with a simple question that would ease the respondent into the interview. However, the complexity of the responses given demonstrated that the question was not as simple as had been expected. While the researcher's inexperience in choosing and framing the question may have led to longer answers, this did not seem to be a problem, as every interviewee seemed comfortable sharing their experiences. Throughout the interview, the researcher made an effort to probe the respondents' answers. The goal was to encourage the respondent to provide more detail, and with it new insights, into the situations, people, and examples that they mentioned. While the occasional question was not answered because the BIA wanted to keep that information private, the interviewees did not seem uncomfortable with the researcher's questions.

After the interview was completed, the interviewer intended to ask each of the BIA representatives to conduct a transect walk with him through the Business Improvement Area. This walk would be taken to note tourism-oriented stores and facilities, and to provide visual evidence of the points raised in the interview. The researcher intended to take photographs during the walk to further support this method of data collection. However, only one transect walk was conducted, as in the other three cases the researcher felt that it would be imposing too much to ask the interviewee for more of

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<sup>6</sup> See **Appendix B: Phase Two Interview Guide** for a complete listing of the questions used as guidelines in each of the four interviews

their time. The researcher also felt that while a transect walk was a good idea, the key tourism facilities and the characteristics of the area could be just as easily noted by the researcher on his own. Therefore, in the three cases where no transect walk was conducted with an informed BIA representative, the researcher conducted his own walk using a BIA map. Although the researcher was cognizant of the fact that by working on his own he may miss certain insights, he sought to minimize this by discussing his intentions with the BIA representative(s) before leaving their office. This allowed the BIA representative to identify where key tourism facilities and districts were located on the BIA map, and to comment further on them since each of these facilities or districts had already been discussed by the BIA representative(s) during the interview. The researcher was then able to move at his own pace through the BIA, while taking observational notes and photographs of people and places.

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted with local BIA “experts” were a strong qualitative research approach for a number of reasons. First, the face-to face interviews allowed the researcher to observe the surroundings of the interview, and enabled both the interviewee and interviewer to use nonverbal communication (Neuman, 2006). Second, the key informants were able to provide detailed historical data, information about interpersonal relationships in the BIA and wider community, and information about how tourism has and is taking place in the area. Third, the interviews provided an explanation of, and expansion on, the quantitative data collected in the questionnaires, further assisting the researcher in understanding the nature of the BIAs’ involvement in tourism. Finally, the key informant interviews met the fourth research objective by allowing the researcher to generate a template that other BIAs can use to assess their current tourism potential.

However, the researcher also recognized that interviews have a number of disadvantages that need to be guarded against. One of these is interviewer bias, which can be expressed through tone of voice, question wording, and non-verbal cues (Neuman, 2006). To prevent this, the interviewer sought to be aware of the way in which he was expressing himself and responding to the answers of the

interviewee. The interviewer also sought to ensure that the questions asked did not lead the respondent in a certain direction by indicating what was considered to be the most appropriate answer. The disadvantages of increased cost from travel to four different municipalities across Ontario, and of increased time required to complete and analyze the interviews, were borne by the researcher. However, these were taken into consideration when the researcher decided on the number of case studies that would be completed. Finally, interviews also have the potential disadvantage that the interviewee may provide misleading or incorrect information. While this is considered unlikely, as BIA representatives are well informed of their own practices and are unlikely to gain anything by providing false information, the researcher sought to offset this potential disadvantage by checking the information supplied against available newspaper and magazine records to triangulate the data.

In addition to conducting a document analysis of newspaper articles, magazine articles, and BIA documents/promotions material, the triangulation process also involved participant observation. In each of the Business Improvement Areas where the researcher interviewed a BIA representative, the researcher spent several hours observing others and noting their actions on a notepad. As Bowen (2002) found in his use of participant observation in tourism research, the technique is able to generate a vast amount of descriptive and analytical data that goes beyond the somewhat superficial understanding that survey data often provides. Further, Bowen (2002) concluded that the empirical data provided by participant observation can be used to give practical advice to tourism businesses and managers, thereby helping to meet the fourth objective of this study. The researcher found both to be true in this study, as the participant observation that was conducted provided a great deal of descriptive data, and enabled the researcher to provide practical advice based on his observations.

One limitation of the participant observation that was conducted was that it did not take place during the primary tourism season (June to September) or during a BIA event/festival, as had been intended. This was because the cluster analysis, which was conducted in phase one, took far longer

than anticipated; leaving the researcher unable to determine what BIAs to contact for interviews until the end of September. While the BIA representatives responded within a week to the interview requests, by then it was too late for the researcher to attend any of their major summer festivals or events. Thus, the interviews were conducted in early and mid October, a time when the weather was still comfortable, but not during the major tourist season.

During the participant observation, the researcher took an observer-as-participant approach. This meant that the researcher interacted with tourists, locals and employees in the BIA while conducting the research. However, no efforts were made to hide the researchers' camera or clipboard, as it was not believed that these would affect the nature of what was being observed. It is unlikely that the tourists, locals or employees would benefit from hiding their activities, as they were simply going about their daily business or having a good time, not taking part in any illegal or illicit activity.

### **3.5 Phase Two: Data Analysis for Objectives Three and Four**

A case study format was used to analyze the qualitative data that was collected to meet objectives three and four. Each case study combined the interview transcripts, pictures and field notes from participant observation, the map and notes from any transect walks, and the information provided by secondary sources to present a more complete picture of the Business Improvement Area's tourism involvement.

The second phase of analysis began by transcribing the interviews, a process that was conducted immediately after they were completed. While the phase one analysis had not been completed at the time of the transcribing process, the researcher felt it was wise to record the data while the interviews were fresh in his mind. In transcribing the interviews, the researcher sought to record the respondents' every word exactly as it was spoken. Notes that were taken during the

interview process assisted in the transcription. Also, the researcher's hand-written participant observation notes were typed into Microsoft Word to facilitate the analysis process.

The interview and participant observation data for each case were analyzed together, using a process of coding and memos similar to that used in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). However, no theory of relationships between themes was generated as too few cases were examined to allow for theory development. Rather, the goal was to simply find consistent themes and practical lessons across the cases. The first step in this coding process was to read each document as a whole to refresh the memory of the researcher as to the ideas that were discussed. This was followed by a line-by-line coding process that focused on coding the ideas that emerged from each line of text. These codes were recorded in the margins of the page alongside the text they corresponded to. The next step in the process was focused coding, where the researcher looked for commonalities and consistencies among the codes. Once commonalities were identified they were used to sift through the rest of the codes in both documents related to that BIA (the interview transcript and participant observation notes). The researcher also wrote a memo about each commonality/category that emerged in the data, using both the researcher's thoughts and a collection of supportive details and quotations from the interview. The fourth and final step was to verify the themes that were identified by comparing them against the information provided by other data sources (transect walks and secondary sources). This ensured that the researcher's understanding of the BIA's tourism involvement was as complete as possible.

Once the findings in each case were integrated and the tourism involvement of the BIA was well understood, the qualitative results were compared to the quantitative findings from phase one. This was done in two ways. First, the qualitative data were compared to the specific quantitative data for that Business Improvement Area. And second, the qualitative findings were compared to the characteristics of the cluster in the tourism typology in which the BIA was found. The similarities and differences that were noted between the two phases were then used to strengthen the BIA typology.

After this process of coding and comparison was completed, the understanding provided by both the qualitative and quantitative results was used to create a template that BIAs can use to assess their current tourism potential. The template was developed by identifying and describing the characteristics of BIAs that are successful tourism destinations, such as their: appearance, attractions, partnerships and planning efforts. The phase two findings were also used to make a number of recommendations to Business Improvement Areas that are interested in tourism development. Both the template and the recommendations were then shared with OBIAA, TABIA, and interested BIAs who participated in the study.

### **3.6 Summarizing the Research Approach**

This study's purpose was to explore the involvement of Business Improvement Areas in tourism. Four objectives were stated to accomplish this task and learn from the findings. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed to meet these objectives. The data for this mixed methods study was collected and analyzed in two phases, with the second phase taking place after the first was substantially completed. The first phase involved the collection of primarily quantitative data through a survey of all the BIAs in Ontario. The second phase involved the collection of qualitative data through key informant interviews and participant observation in several BIAs that are involved in tourism development. The two phases of data collection and analysis provided many insights into the tourism involvement of Business Improvement Areas, which are presented in the following two chapters.

## **CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS: THE NATURE OF BIAS' TOURISM INVOLVEMENT**

This chapter seeks to identify and illustrate the most pertinent data that emerged from this assessment of Ontario BIAs. As this study was broad in scope, all of the findings could not be presented here. Specifically, the chapter deals with the findings that correspond to the first two research objectives. It begins with the presentation of the overall findings of the phase one questionnaire, which identified the nature of Ontario BIAs' involvement in tourism (section 4.1). It then presents the findings related to the second research objective, which involved the creation of a BIA tourism typology (section 4.2). The chapter concludes with a brief summary of these findings.

### **4.1 Overall Findings: The Nature of BIAs' Involvement in Tourism**

The following few pages illustrate the nature of Ontario BIAs' present involvement in tourism. They begin with the broad question of what proportion of the Province's BIAs are involved in tourism, and then consider a number of other questions related to tourism management, promotion and impacts. A brief description of the responding BIAs' characteristics is also provided. Through these findings the nature of Ontario BIAs' present tourism involvement is revealed.

#### ***4.1.1 What Proportion of BIAs are Involved in Tourism?***

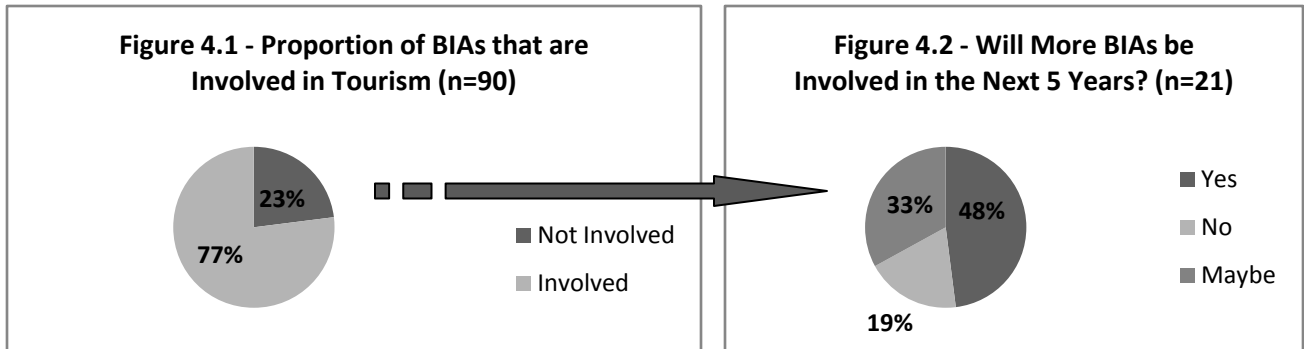
Based on the broad definition of tourism adopted in chapter 1<sup>7</sup>, it was found that more than three quarters of the responding BIAs were involved in tourism (77%), while just under one quarter (23%) were not. Further, of the 23 percent who were not involved in tourism, almost half expected that their BIA would be targeting tourists within the next five years. The high proportion of Ontario BIAs that

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<sup>7</sup> To be inclusive of regional tourists, tourism was defined as "the attraction of visitors to a BIA, who do not live in the same municipality or work in the immediate vicinity of the BIA."

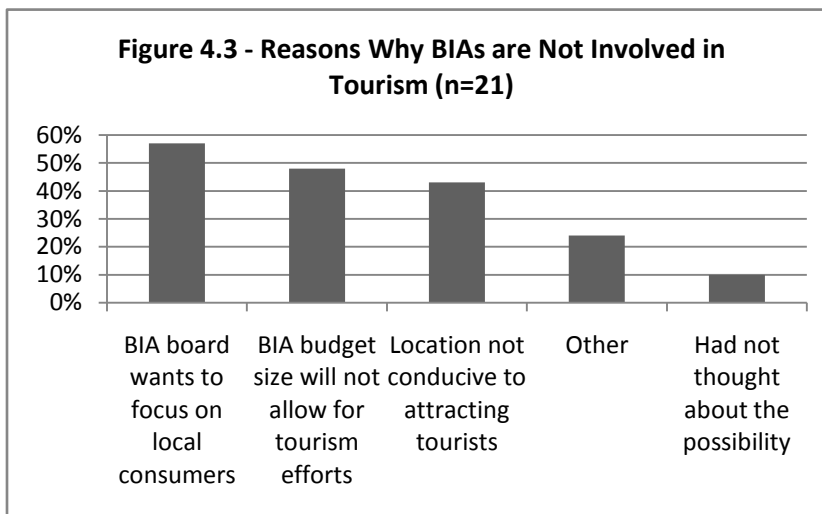


are, or expect to become, involved in tourism, reveals the importance of the growing relationship between Business Improvement Areas and the tourism sector.



#### 4.1.2 Reasons for Tourism Involvement or Lack of Involvement

Respondents that were not involved in tourism were asked why. The most common reason given was that the BIA board of directors had made the conscious decision to focus their efforts on

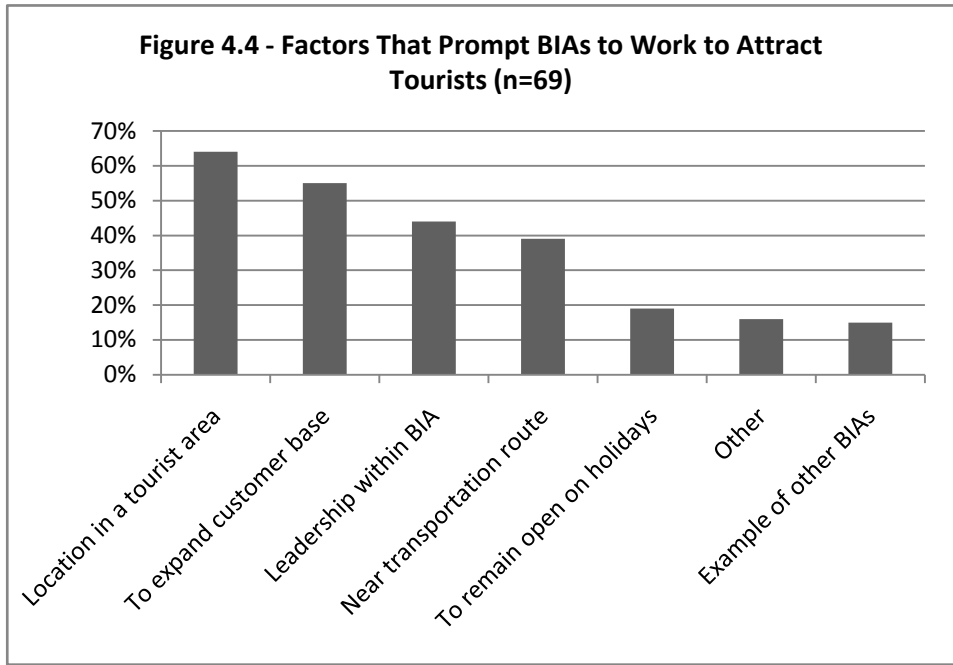


meeting the needs of local consumers (cited by 57% of respondents). Under the “other” category, several explained that they were not involved in tourism simply because they were brand new and had not yet had time to

work on tourism efforts.

The remaining questions were posed to BIAs that are involved in tourism. First, respondents were asked what prompted them to seek to attract tourists. Two reasons were selected by over half of the respondents. The first was that their BIA was already located in a tourist area, and therefore it was logical that they would cater to tourists. As in real estate, it appears that location plays an important

role in whether a BIA will be involved in tourism. The second reason was the desire of many BIA businesses to expand their customer base by catering to tourists. This is quite logical when one



considers that more visitors should mean more customers; especially if those visitors are on foot in an atmosphere designed for leisure shopping. Other important factors included being located

near a major transportation route (selected by 39% of the BIAs), and leadership from BIA members who saw tourism as an opportunity worth pursuing (selected by 44% of the BIAs).

**4.1.3 Tourism Attractions, Promotion, Management and Impacts**

Festivals and special events are an important component of many BIAs’ work to attract tourists. Respondents were asked how many special events and festivals, hosted by their BIA in 2007, were believed to have attracted tourists. While answers varied widely, most BIAs held between two to six events and festivals that drew tourists. The average number was 4.6, or between four and five events and festivals.

While Business Improvement Areas are known for holding special events and festivals, whether they were also investing in other tourist attractions was previously unknown. Over half (52%) of those BIAs who were involved in tourism answered that they had invested in other tourist attractions. The

most frequently mentioned attractions were: murals (often related to heritage), other outdoor art displays and public art, various tours or guided walks (especially restaurant and historic tours), and lighting displays (often seasonal displays, but not exclusively). Some of the less frequently mentioned attractions were bolder and more likely to add to the BIA's appeal to tourists. They included: building skating rinks, attractions that are significant for their contribution to the winter appeal of an area; other construction projects, such as a building a convention centre, promenade, pavilion, boutique hotel, maritime discovery centre, and tourist information booth; renovating to revitalize historic places, including a historic theatre and old market square; choosing a town mascot; laying out a "walk of fame"; and offering free concerts.

To identify the activities, experiences and features of BIAs that have the greatest appeal to tourists, a long list of possibilities was provided for respondents to rank. The question specified that these had to be features found *in* the BIA or on its immediate border – not nearby attractions that could also draw visitors to the BIA. The top six features, as shown in Figure 4.5, that were most frequently listed as *very important* to tourists were: water bodies (70% of respondents), festivals and special events (67% of respondents), fine dining (61% of respondents), performance theatres (58% of respondents), and speciality shops and heritage structures (both with 51% of respondents).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> These percentages and the ones shown in Figure 4.5, reflect only those BIAs that had the activity/experience/ feature; as those who did not could not rank its importance.

**Figure 4.5 - BIA Activities, Experiences and Features and their Relative Importance to Tourists**

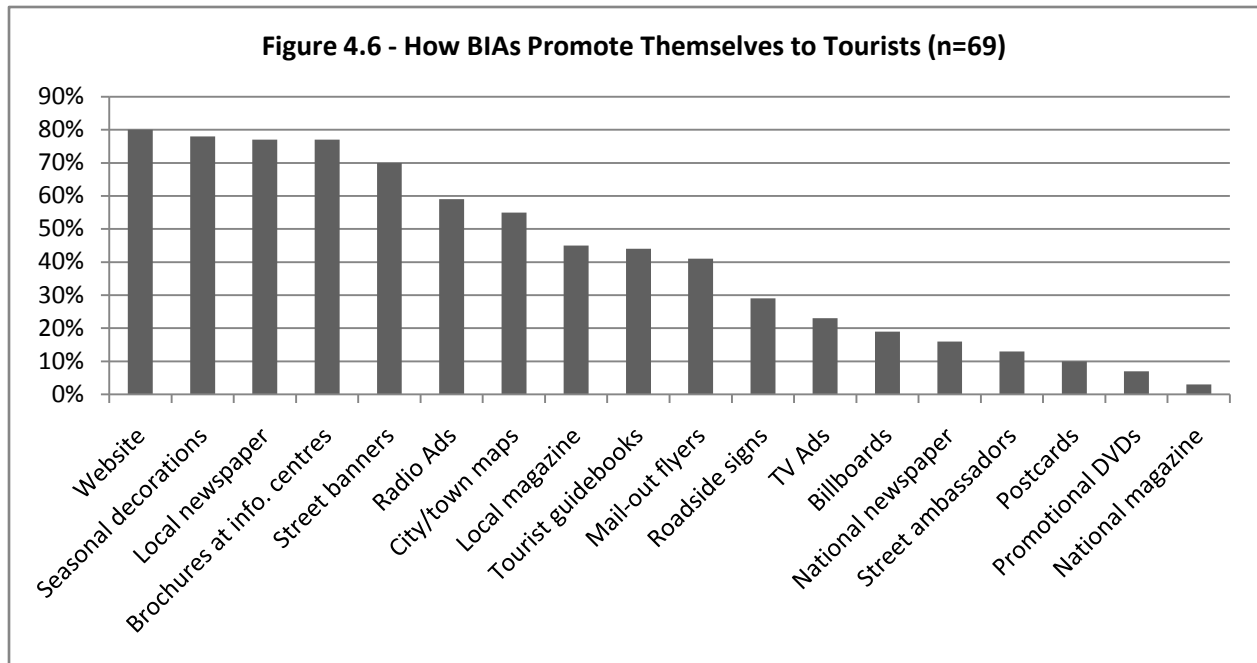
Tourist Activity/Experience/Feature:	Relative Importance in Attracting Tourists (in %) (n=69)				Total
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	
Specialty shops	0	13	36	51	100
Souvenir shops	7	30	42	21	100
Clothing stores	5	23	46	26	100
Fine dining	2	10	27	61	100
Coffee shops/Desserts/Cafes	5	20	32	43	100
Family/Casual dining	4	25	31	40	100
Quick service/Fast food/Delicatessens	13	38	34	15	100
Bakeries	15	42	29	13	100
Pubs	15	14	34	37	100
Microbreweries	20	20	27	33	100
Heritage structures	2	22	25	51	100
Cultural/Ethnic restaurants	13	25	33	29	100
Cultural/Ethnic shops	11	33	33	22	100
Art galleries	2	24	40	33	100
Performance theatres	3	16	24	58	100
Night clubs/Live entertainment facility	9	36	20	34	100
Spas	16	38	27	20	100
Conference centre/Meeting facility	10	40	20	30	100
Festivals and special events	0	5	28	67	100
Water bodies (lakes, rivers)	7	9	15	70	100

Specialty shops are often referred to as popular attractions within a BIA, but the term can include a wide range of businesses. For this reason, a question was asked to find out which types of specialty shops are attracting tourists. Respondents were asked to list specialty shops in their BIA that attract visitors from outside of the municipality. The categories that were mentioned most frequently are provided here with a number of examples:

- 1) **Clothing** (mentioned 22 times) – custom or specialty lingerie, formal wear for weddings/proms, custom clothing, kids, seniors, ethnic, brand name/designer, surf, hats and footwear
- 2) **Specialty Foods** (mentioned 13 times) – chocolate, cheese, candy, local foods, organic foods, vintage wine, and a brewshop
- 3) **Giftware & Art** (mentioned 13 times) – custom framing, art galleries, artisan shops
- 4) **Recreation & Sports Gear** (mentioned 11 times) – camping, hockey, golf supplies
- 5) **Hobby Shops** (mentioned 10 times) – collectibles, crafts, custom iron work, needle point, embroidery
- 6) **Cultural/Ethnic** (mentioned 8 times) – Dutch, Scottish, Italian, foods/groceries, imported items

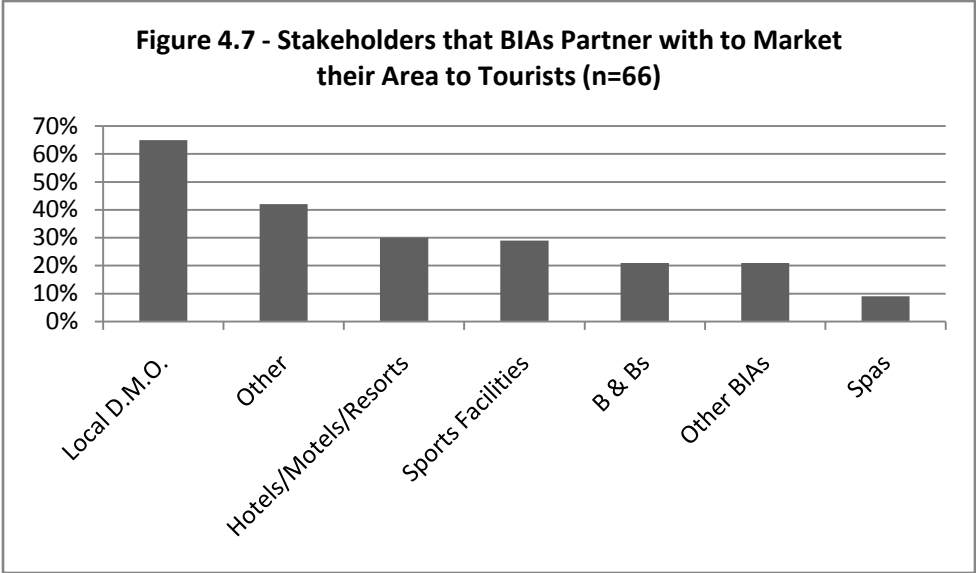
The sale of environmentally-friendly products and clothing is one type of specialty shop that seems to be an emerging retail theme. Two of the BIAs listed specialty shops like this.

It came as no surprise that every Business Improvement Area that was involved in tourism promoted itself to tourists. The most common promotion methods, shown in Figure 4.6, were also fairly predictable. They included: websites (cited by 80% of respondents), seasonal/festive signage and decorations in the BIA (cited by 78% percent of respondents), local newspaper ads, and brochures at tourist information centres (each cited by 77% of respondents), and street banners in the BIA (cited by 70% of respondents). The least common promotion methods were those that seem to be the most expensive: national magazine ads (cited by 3% of respondents), promotional DVDs (cited by 7% of respondents), postcards (cited by 10% of respondents), street ambassadors to greet and guide visitors (cited by 13% of respondents), and national newspaper ads (cited by 16% of respondents). Other promotion methods that were listed by respondents included: advertisements in the Greyline Guide, special events, tours of points of interest, coupon books, music society newsletters, being featured in WHERE TV, beautification efforts, promotions during other municipal/downtown events, and contact with service and sports clubs.



In the tourism sector, partnerships between stakeholders play an important role in drawing visitors. Attractions, accommodations, and service businesses often work together to package and

market tourism experiences. The results showed that most BIAs have also been partnering with other stakeholders to market their area to tourists. 94 percent responded that they were partnering with other stakeholders, with the local destination marketing organization (D.M.O.) being their most common partner. Figure 4.7 shows that other common partners included the accommodations sector and sporting facilities, both of which were cited by about 30 percent of respondents.

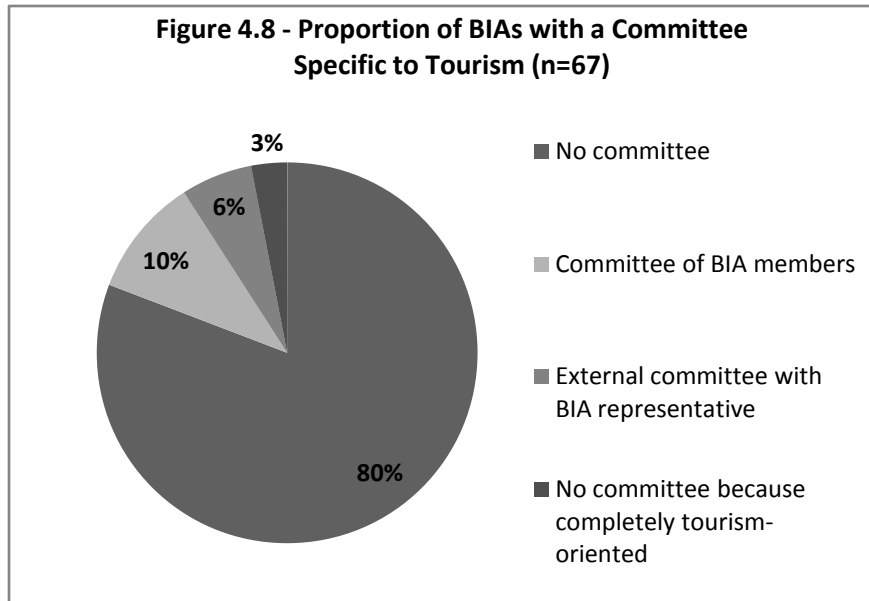


The “other” option provided to respondents revealed a wide range of common marketing partners that were not included on the questionnaire. Forty-two percent of respondents listed other partners, including: municipalities and municipal bodies (mentioned 12 times); local community organizations, clubs and businesses in the arts, philanthropy, sports and culture (mentioned 10 times); chambers of commerce and other retail merchant associations (mentioned 9 times); other attractions such as museums, festivals, malls, an art gallery, and a convention centre (mentioned 9 times); and other tourism associations such as a tourist and convention bureau, Ontario Travel, and an association of accommodations partners (mentioned 3 times).

BIAs that consider tourism to be a priority in their regular decisions are likely engaged in efforts to manage it. Two types of tourism management were tested. Respondents were asked whether they

had a committee to direct their tourism efforts, or a tourism strategy that provides goals for BIA staff to work towards. However, the responses given showed that both were uncommon.

Figure 4.8 shows that approximately 80 percent of the respondents said that their BIA had no tourism committee. An additional three percent said they had no need for a committee, since all of their actions were tourism-oriented because they are located in a major tourist destination (these BIAs

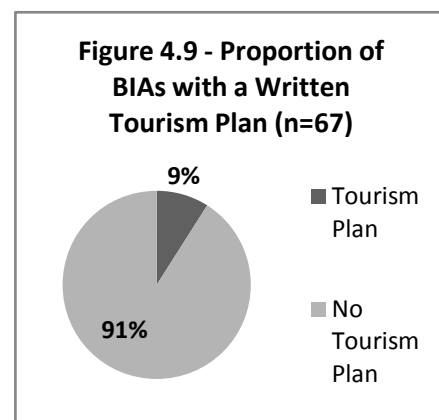


were located in the same city). The remaining 16 percent of respondents had a tourism committee, with 10 percent consisting of BIA members, while the other six percent had a BIA representative sitting on an external committee (a

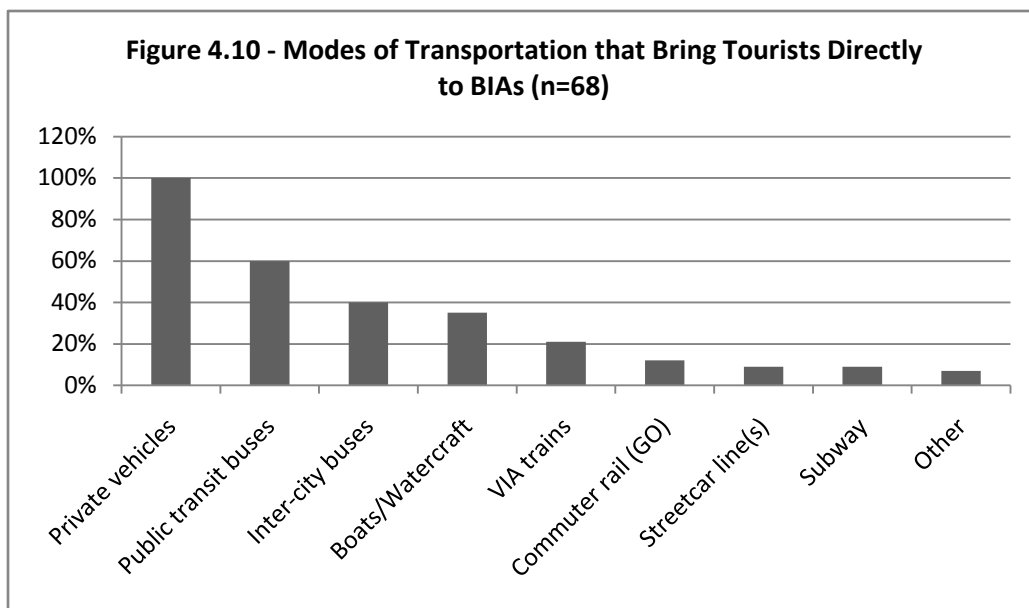
tourism committee with other stakeholders).

Figure 4.9 shows that the vast majority of respondents did not have a written tourism strategy (91%). Further, several of those who did have a strategy explained that these took the form of general marketing plans, rather than tourism plans (which go beyond marketing to include social and environmental considerations).

This may be because BIAs simply have not thought about creating tourism plans, because marketing plans are seen as sufficient, or because investing in the development of a tourism plan is not considered to be a wise use of their limited resources (in staff time and/or money).



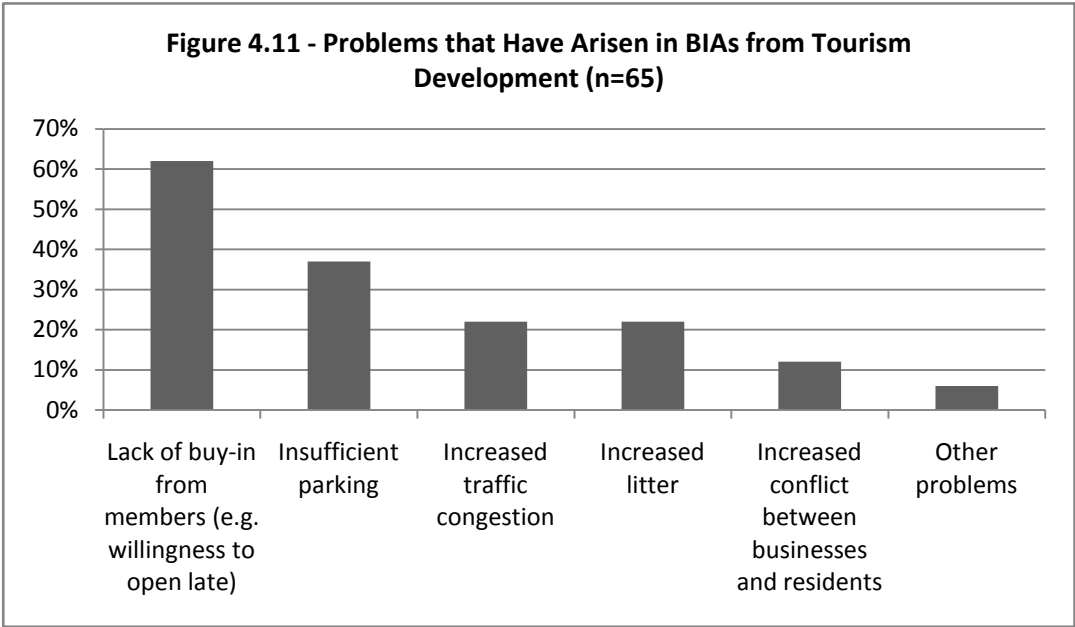
Destination accessibility is an important component of tourism management. Respondents were asked what modes of transportation tourists could use to come *directly* to their BIA. Not surprisingly, Figure 4.10 shows that private vehicles could be used as a mode of transportation in every case. What is interesting is the significance of boats and other watercraft as a means of transportation, with 35 percent of respondents listing the option as a possible mode of access. The “other” category included several additional options: a heritage train, tour buses, and airline limousines that travel to and from downtown hotels.



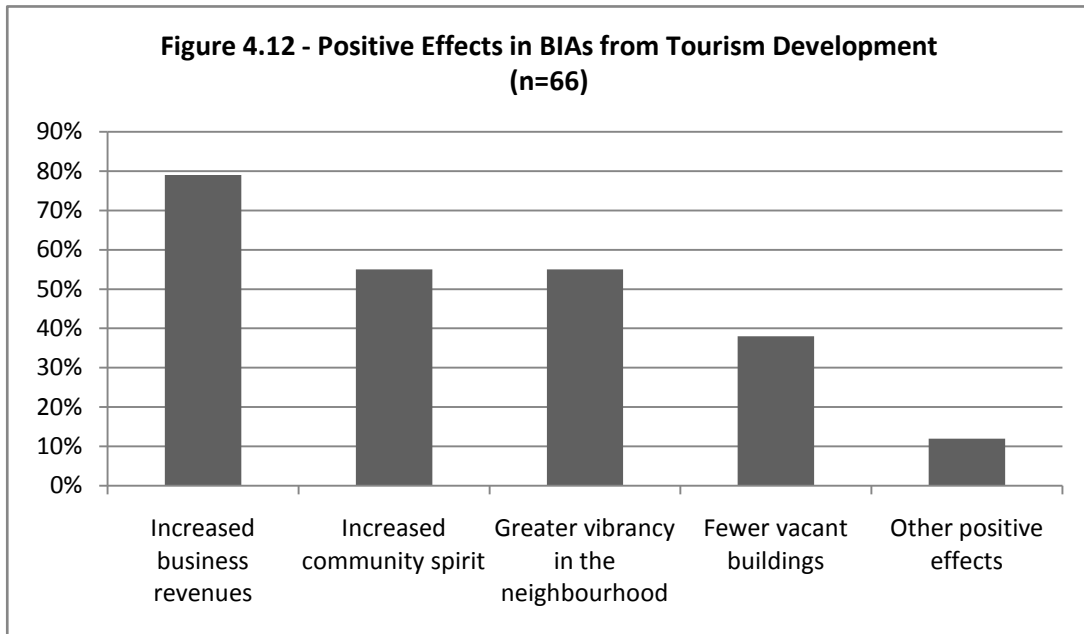
While tourism often brings about economic benefits, it can also have social and environmental costs if it is not managed appropriately. For this reason it is important to ask what problems have arisen in BIAs as a result of tourism development. The most common problem cited by respondents was increased conflict between BIA members, as some bought in to tourism efforts, while others did not (e.g. some businesses will stay open later on weekends and holidays to cater to tourist traffic, while others prefer to shut down). This willingness to support tourism efforts may be a reflection of the nature of the member’s business, and whether or not the proprietor believes that their business will benefit from tourism. The second most common problem was insufficient parking (or the perception of



insufficient parking) during peak times. It is also interesting to note that 17 percent of the respondents said that their BIA had no problems from tourism development. This could be because of careful tourism management, but could also be because some of these BIAs do not receive enough visitors to have a noticeable effect.



Just as tourism can cause problems, it can also bring about a number of positive effects. To see whether tourism development has actually had positive benefits on Business Improvement Areas, respondents were asked which of a list of positive effects (if any) had taken place in their BIA. Three positive impacts were noted by over half of the respondents. Almost 80 percent answered that their business revenues had increased, while 55 percent noted both increased community spirit and greater vibrancy in the neighbourhood. Other positive effects that were given by respondents included: a greater variety or diversity of businesses, a larger community tax base, increased cultural respect for a minority group, higher amenities for local residents, and an increased regional profile for the BIA.



#### **4.1.4 Plans to Improve as Destinations**

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on their BIA's short term plans to improve as a tourism destination. No pre-arranged answers were suggested, so the responses varied widely. Here are the five most common themes that were pulled from their answers, as well as some examples pertaining to each.

##### **1. Improving and Increasing Marketing Efforts (mentioned by 24 BIAs)**

- *General efforts* – develop a town brand, market to region for day-trip tourists, market to a larger area, develop an arts and entertainment approach to marketing, promote as an urban entertainment district, create marketing plans.
- *Specific advertising methods* – new downtown map, "swag" in conference delegate bags, co-op advertising within room hotel guides profiling downtown businesses, launch or re-launch website, event marketing, new brochures, new highway billboards, BIA dollars, tourism maps and guides, improve "way finder signage", seasonal banners, tourism brochures at tourism destinations, make website more "event driven", retail promotions.

##### **2. Forming and Strengthening Partnerships (mentioned by 22 BIAs)**

- *For promotions* – shop local program, advertisements in various forms
- *For tourism planning* – Premier Ranked Tourism Destination Framework, waterfront development strategy, area revitalization, Community Improvement Plan
- *With various stakeholders* – chamber of commerce, municipality, local businesses, accommodations facilities, convention centre, other BIAs, local D.M.O., sport and service club.

### 3. Improving and Increasing Festivals and Events (mentioned by 21 BIAs)

- *Pedestrian-only days* – street mall, car show, closing street to automotive traffic
- *Better events schedule* – new/more frequent events, larger events, more consistent events, creating signature events and festivals, applying for festival funding, coordinating a music and food festival with a sidewalk sale
- *Creating more activity in the BIA* – Roman Festival, more evening events, block parties, using natural features like water bodies.

### 4. Improving the Streetscape(mentioned by 15 BIAs)

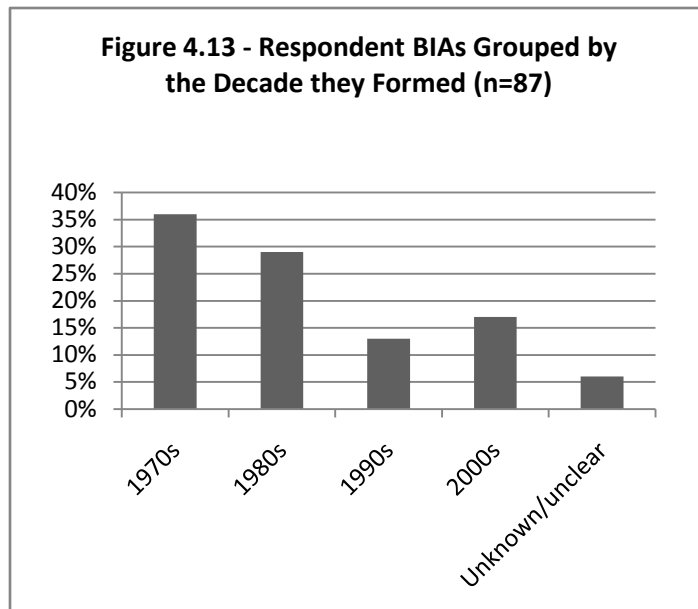
- *Why invest in the street?* For walkability, increasing foot traffic, to create nodes and village atmosphere, to be more aesthetically-pleasing, to improve pedestrian safety.
- *What should be done?* Regulations for new development (no set-backs from sidewalk, commercial space on ground level, parking at rear), remove clutter of hydro and TTC poles, remove vandalism and graffiti, add benches, improve facades, green areas, add hanging flower baskets.

### 5. Investing in Attractions (mentioned by 11 BIAs)

- *Examples* – painting murals on buildings, adding holiday lighting, building a convention centre, offering public entertainment, reconstructing a heritage log cabin, organizing an art walk, creating an outdoor art gallery, setting up special window displays.

#### 4.1.5 General Respondent Information

The last few questions on the survey gathered general respondent information to determine if it was related to BIAs' tourism involvement. Respondents were asked about the year when their BIA formed, the number of businesses in their BIA, the approximate size of their current yearly budget (2008), and the current number of paid BIA staff. The first of these questions, shown in Figure 4.13, was



designed to determine when each BIA was formed, as a measure of how long they had been active. However, because several respondents were unsure of the exact year, it became necessary to group the BIAs by decade. Most respondent BIAs formed during the 1970s and 80s, however they have continued to form in recent years.

Respondents were also asked approximately how many businesses were presently in their BIA.

Figure 4.14 shows that as of mid-2008, over half of the respondent BIAs had between 50 and 150 businesses. It is also significant that almost 10 percent of the respondents had over 500 businesses. Thus, it appears that while most BIAs are fairly small, there is also a significant group that are quite large.

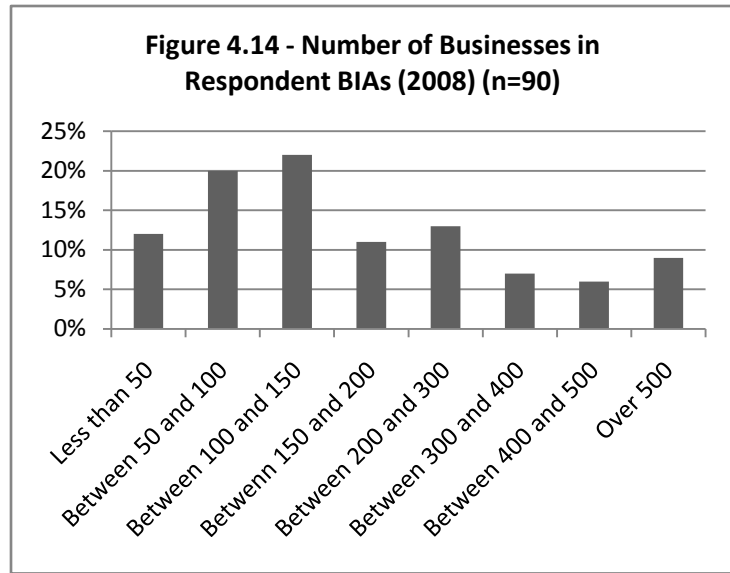
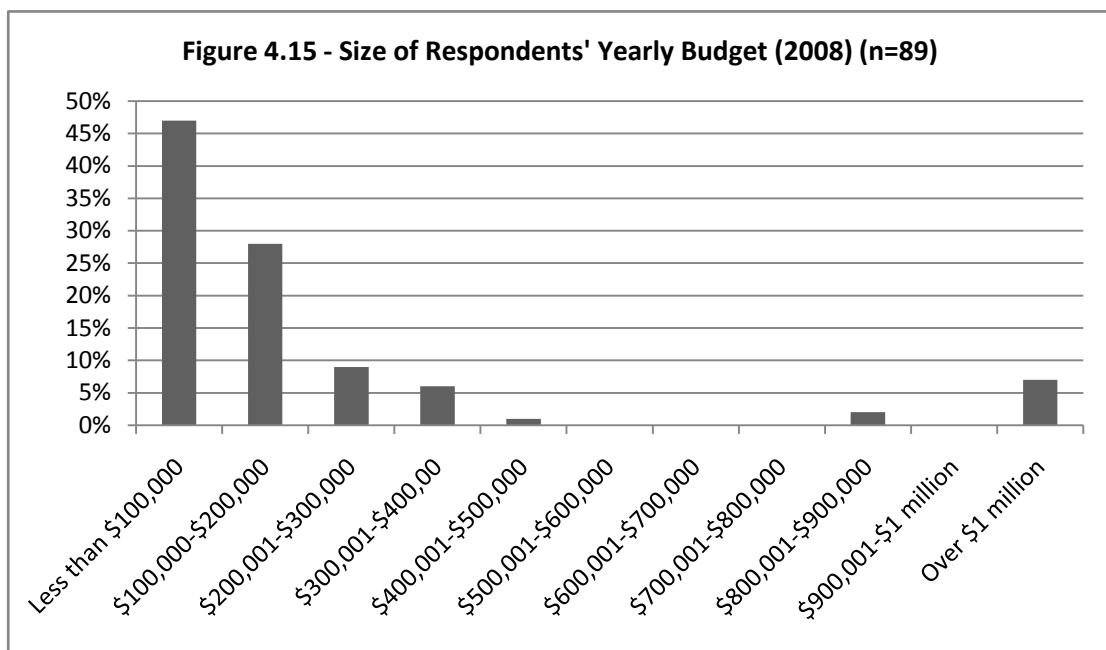
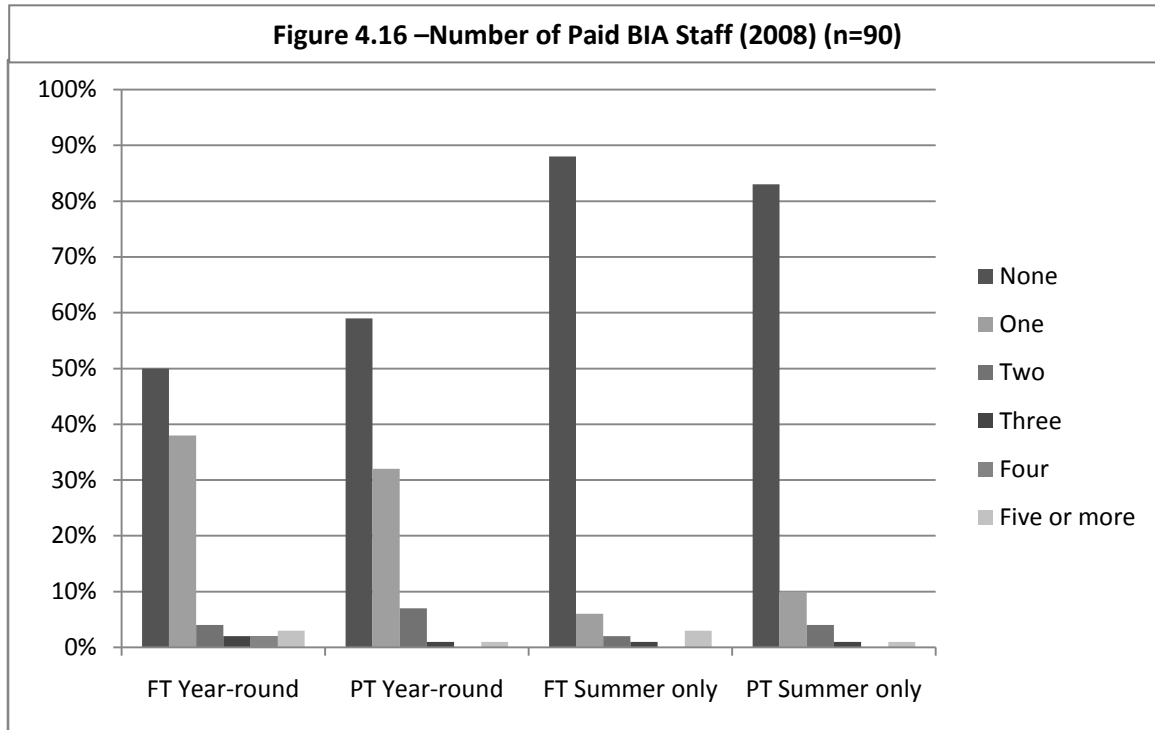


Figure 4.15 shows the sizes of respondents' yearly budgets in 2008. Almost half of the BIAs had a budget of under \$100,000, and over 75 percent of them had a budget of under \$200,000. Only nine percent had a budget over \$500,000. This is bound to limit their capacity to make the investments that will attract tourists. However, BIAs can (and do) get around this challenge by relying on partnerships with other community, municipal, or regional stakeholders.



The last question that was asked of respondents asked them to identify their current number of paid staff, within four employment categories. The responses in Figure 4.16 show that most BIAs have only one or two paid staff persons, and that they are more likely to be year-round staff than summer help. However, several of the BIAs with larger budgets were able to hire more full-time and summer-only staff.



#### 4.2 A Typology of Business Improvement Areas

A typology was created in two stages to identify those Business Improvement Areas that are successful in attracting tourists. In the first stage, the five-cluster typology was created, based on a cluster analysis. An additional cluster was then appended for the BIAs that are not involved in tourism. In the second stage, the clusters were analyzed to complete the typology. First, cross-tabulations were used to compare cluster membership to variables from the survey data to identify trends. Second, descriptive statistics were used to provide a deeper understanding of each individual cluster. Based on

this analysis, a more detailed typology was created. The overall results of these two stages are now presented.

#### **4.2.1 Stage One: Developing the Basic BIA Typology**

In section 3.3, three variables were identified that enabled the data to cluster<sup>9</sup>. An analysis was then run using these three variables to determine the number of clusters that would best explain the variability in the data, while keeping the number of clusters reasonable in size<sup>10</sup>. Five clusters were chosen, as SAS predicted that this would allow for 87 percent of the data to be explained by the model. Unfortunately, when the final cluster analysis was run, the five clusters only explained approximately 70 percent of the data, showing that the model's ability to explain the variability of the data was less than had been expected.

Figure 4.17 shows the five clusters from the cluster analysis, with an additional cluster that was created for those BIAs that are not involved in tourism. A serious limitation is immediately evident, as clusters three, four and five contain very few cases. Since decreasing the number of clusters would further reduce the model's ability to explain the data (the R Sq value), it was decided to keep the clusters as they were. Further, a test run showed that the top clusters would remain very small in size even if the number of clusters was decreased. When considering the final BIA typology this limitation must be remembered, as it may have impacted the accuracy of the typology. For example, in the next stage of the model's development, the clusters were compared to other variables to look for trends. Since there are so few cases in the top three clusters, it was difficult to know whether trends were

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<sup>9</sup> These three variables were: the approximate percentage of businesses in the BIA that catered to tourists; the number of events and festivals that the BIA hosted in 2007 that were believed to have attracted tourists; and the approximate size of the BIA's yearly budget.

<sup>10</sup> The printout from this analysis is provided in **Appendix C**. See the R Sq. values under the cluster history section of the analysis.

present, or the cases were outliers. Where trends seemed to be present, one could not be confident that they were. Likewise, when trends did not seem to be present, the possibility remains that they would be if the clusters contained more cases.

**Figure 4.17 – The Basic Typology and the Number of BIAs in Each Cluster (n=90)**

Cluster Number	Number of BIAs (Cases)
0	21
1	34
2	29
3	2
4	3
5	1

#### **4.2.2 Stage Two: Developing the Detailed BIA Typology**

The five clusters in the basic BIA typology were described in more detail using cross-tabulations and descriptive statistics. First, the clusters were compared to variables that could be related to the level of a BIA's tourism involvement, using cross-tabulations. The variables included: the percent of businesses in the BIA that cater to tourists, the number of events and festivals held by the BIA in 2007 that are believed to have attracted tourists, whether the BIA invested in other attractions besides festivals and special events, the total number of promotion methods used by the BIA, the total number of partners that the BIA worked with to market the area as a tourism destination, the total number of direct transportation options to bring tourists directly to the BIA, and the total number of positive developments in the BIA that have resulted from tourism.

As expected, the variables that best showed increasing tourism involvement across the clusters were the deciding variables that had been used to create the clusters in first place: the percent of businesses in the BIA that cater to tourists, and the number of events and festivals held by the BIA in 2007 that are believed to have attracted tourists. One other variable that showed the same trend was whether the BIA had invested in other attractions, besides festivals and special events. However, many

of the variables did not clearly show a trend of increased tourism involvement from clusters one to five. Some provided little evidence of a trend, while others showed the desired trend with a few clusters standing out as exceptions. This may have been a result of the small size of clusters three to five, which made it difficult to see trends in some cases, and to confirm trends in others.

More importantly, the cross-tabulations began to reveal some interesting patterns. First, there was a clear distinction between the tourism involvement of clusters one and two in comparison with clusters three to five. The last three clusters seemed to be more involved in tourism, with a higher percentage of their businesses catering to tourists, more events and festivals that attracted tourists, more marketing partners, more promotion methods, more positive developments from tourism, and with a higher percentage of BIAs being located in areas that were already tourist districts. At the same time, the difference between clusters one and two, and between clusters three and four, was often small. In contrast, cluster five stood apart and could have been categorized separately. However, because it only featured one BIA it was treated as an exceptional case, and grouped with clusters three and four in its general level of tourism involvement. For these reasons, the typology labels clusters one and two as “somewhat involved in tourism”, and clusters three to five as “involved in tourism”.

However, even with these similarities, the characteristics of clusters three to five also indicated some interesting differences. For example, the BIAs in cluster four had a lower percentage of their businesses catering to tourists and fewer marketing partners than cluster three. Thus, while clusters three to five were all significantly involved in tourism, it seemed that each approached tourism differently. To investigate this possibility, descriptive statistics and qualitative data were used to provide a deeper understanding of each of the five clusters. The five clusters were then compared to one another.

Clusters one and two are compared in Figure 4.18, using a number of descriptive statistics. It shows that the BIAs in cluster one had the lowest percentage of businesses that catered to tourists;



significantly less than those in cluster two. When compared to cluster two, they also had less of a market orientation to tourists, hosted fewer events and festivals that were believed to have attracted tourists, were less likely to invest in tourist attractions other than events and festivals, had fewer marketing partners, were less likely to have a tourism committee or written tourism strategy, had fewer positive developments as a result of tourism, and had fewer plans to invest in streetscape improvements or new attractions in the near future. While the differences between the two clusters vary in size from variable to variable, it is clear that the BIAs in cluster two make more of an effort to be involved in tourism than the BIAs in cluster one. Thus, cluster two has been given the title “catering to tourists”, while cluster one has been titled “aware of tourists”.

**Figure 4.18 – Differences Between the Clusters**

<b>Variable:<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>	<b>Cluster 4</b>	<b>Cluster 5</b>
Percent of businesses that cater to tourists	22%	65%	93%	30%	60%
Average market orientation to tourists <sup>12</sup>	-0.95	0.48	2.00	-2.33	0.00
Average number of events & festivals believed to have attracted tourists	2.76	3.24	1.00	8.67	100.00
Percent of BIAs that invested in tourist attractions other than events & festivals	41%	61%	50%	67%	100%
Average number of marketing partners to promote the area as a destination	2.19	2.55	5.00	3.00	8.00
Percent of BIAs that have a tourism committee	12%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Percent of BIAs that have a written tourism strategy/plan	6%	7%	50%	0%	100%
Average number of positive developments as a result of tourism	2.16	2.48	3.50	4.00	5.00
Percent of BIAs that plan to invest in streetscape improvements in the near future	14%	38%	0%	33%	0%
Percent of BIAs that plan to invest in new attractions in the near future	10%	23%	100%	0%	0%

<sup>11</sup> Many additional variables could have been included in this table. However, these ten were selected to illustrate the differences between clusters one and two.

<sup>12</sup> The market orientation of BIA businesses that cater to tourists was measured on a scale from negative five (completely local shopper-oriented) to five (completely tourist-oriented). Thus, those clusters with a negative average served local shoppers more than tourists.

The cluster comparison also provided support for the separation of clusters one and two from clusters three to five. While slightly different, clusters one and two had similar characteristics in many variables, especially in light of the significant gap between their characteristics and those of the three clusters above them. For example, the average number of positive developments from tourism in clusters one and two was two, while in clusters three to five, an average of four or five positive developments were noted. Also, clusters three to five had significantly more paid staff both year-round and in the summer<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the cluster comparison supported the categorization of clusters one and two as being “somewhat involved in tourism”, in comparison with clusters three to five that were “involved in tourism” to a greater extent.

Clusters three to five seemed to have different forms of tourism involvement, as was noted above. Cluster three’s approach to tourism is best explained as “benefiting from nearby tourist attractions.” Major tourist attractions in or near the BIA are responsible for the cluster becoming a successful tourism destination. Because major attractions are the most powerful tourist draws, it was logical that the BIAs in this cluster had the highest percentage of their businesses catering to tourists (93%) as well as the strongest market orientation to tourists over local shoppers (far above that of clusters four and five). While cluster three was higher than clusters four and five in those two variables, its BIAs only averaged one festival or special event that attracted tourists, compared to an average of nine and 100 for the BIAs in clusters four and five respectively. This drop in the number of events and festivals (cluster two had an average of three) can be explained by the role of location. Since these BIAs draw tourists by virtue of their location near major attractions, they have no need to invest in large events to attract visitors. For the same reason, a smaller percentage of the BIAs in cluster three have

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<sup>13</sup> Clusters three to five were noted to have greater resources than clusters one and two in terms of budget size and paid staff. In general, this may be linked to the fact that they tended to have more businesses in their BIAs. While these characteristics are not necessarily related to tourism, BIAs with greater resources are able to be more active in efforts to attract and benefit from tourists.

invested in creating other tourist attractions. Further, an examination of these attractions shows that they are subsidiary to existing major attractions. Thus, they have likely been created to benefit from existing tourism attractions.<sup>14</sup>

BIAs in cluster four demonstrated a completely different approach. Rather than being focused on tourism, these BIAs are concerned with their appearance, and work to create an environment that will attract shoppers of all kinds – whether locals or visitors. These BIAs are not concerned with who they attract, as long as they are drawing people who will spend money. This explains why, on average, only 30 percent of their businesses cater to tourists. It further explains why their businesses are the least tourism-dependent of all five clusters (their score on the market orientation scale revealed that the majority of their customers are local residents). It is also interesting to note that, on average, they use fewer promotion methods and have fewer marketing partners than the BIAs in clusters three or five. Furthermore, this is the only cluster in which no BIAs have a written tourism plan. Qualitative data further supports these findings, showing that their investments in other attractions are all appearance-oriented. Examples include the addition of murals and public art, and the creation of a new parkette. Similarly, according to some survey respondents, many of their specialty shops cater to high income local residents (examples provided included an orthodontist and a custom thin-lens glasses designer). Finally, their plans to improve the tourism experience of their BIA are primarily concerned with streetscaping efforts.

The approach of the BIA in cluster five can be labelled “offering urban entertainment to tourists.” In contrast with cluster four, this BIA was very tourism-focused. That is not to say that the needs of local residents are ignored. In fact, about 40 percent of their businesses cater to this target market. However, this BIA has made a conscious decision to provide a calendar of events and festivals

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<sup>14</sup> While examples could be provided here to verify this claim, doing so would reveal the identity of the BIAs involved to anyone familiar with Ontario’s tourism industry. This is not acceptable since participants were assured that their survey responses would remain confidential.

to attract tourists throughout the year. In 2007, for example, 100 tourism events and festivals were hosted by this BIA. This compares with an average of nine events and festivals hosted by the BIAs in cluster four. This BIA also distinguishes itself by using 18 different promotion methods to attract tourists, more than double the number used by the nearest cluster. Likewise, with eight marketing partners, this BIA has significantly more than the next highest cluster (which has five partners). Both of these marketing variables show that cluster five utilizes promotional efforts more than any of the other clusters. This is quite logical, since their appeal as a tourism destination lies in the urban entertainment that they personally offer, and therefore also need to promote.

While the cluster comparison and the cross-tabulations provided enough information to create the first draft of a BIA tourism typology<sup>15</sup>, the question of whether municipal population<sup>16</sup> is related to a BIA's involvement in tourism still needed to be considered. Originally, it seemed plausible that BIAs that are located in more populated areas would be better able to attract tourists, and therefore be more involved in tourism. However, during the cluster analysis it became evident that municipal population was unlikely to be related to a BIA's level of tourism involvement, since the municipal population variable had to be removed from the analysis to help the data to cluster. Further, the cluster comparison showed that the cluster with the largest average population was the non-tourism cluster, with the remaining order from largest to smallest being cluster three, four, one, two and then five. Thus, the average municipal population of the clusters showed no observable trend. To further confirm this finding, the researcher compared the five clusters to the population size of the municipality in which each BIA is located, as Figure 4.19 shows. The figure demonstrates that there is no distinguishable relationship between a BIA's level of involvement in tourism and the population of the municipality that it is located in.

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<sup>15</sup> The typology shown in this chapter is the final version, which includes the slight modifications that were made to strengthen the typology after analyzing the case study data.

<sup>16</sup> Municipal population data was collected from Statistics Canada's 2006 Canadian Census.

**Figure 4.19 – Comparing Municipal Population (2006) to BIAs' Tourism Involvement (n=90)**

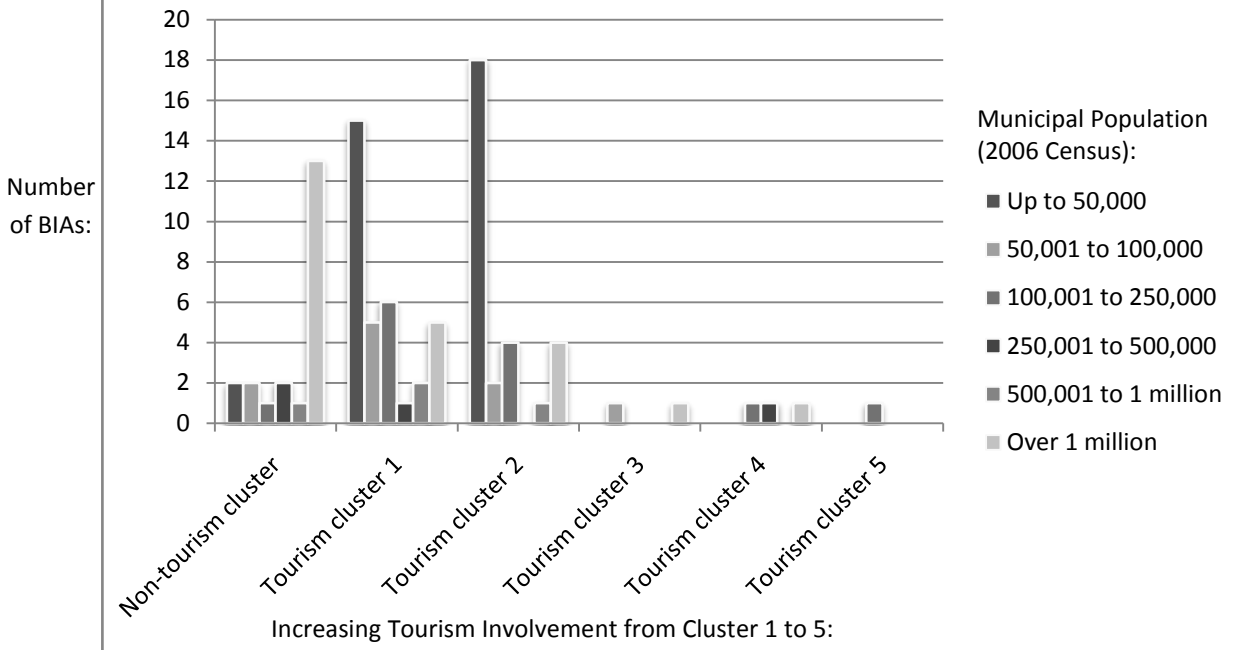


Figure 4.20 – A Typology of Business Improvement Areas’ Tourism Involvement

Trend of Increasing Tourism Involvement → → → → →

	Not Involved in Tourism	Somewhat Involved in Tourism		Involved in Tourism		
	CLUSTER 0 – Not Involved in Tourism	CLUSTER 1 – Aware of Tourists	CLUSTER 2 – Catering to Tourists	CLUSTER 3 – Benefiting from Nearby Tourist Attractions	CLUSTER 4 – Creating an Attractive Environment for All	CLUSTER 5 – Offering Urban Entertainment to Tourists
<b>Description:</b>	There are a number of possible reasons for this, including: -BIA is new -BIA lacks the characteristics to draw tourists -BIA Board wants to focus on local consumers	These BIAs have some tourists visit and make a limited effort to attract tourists.	These BIAs cater tourists in a greater way than the BIAs in cluster 1. More of them invest in streetscaping, events and festivals, and in creating attractions to draw tourists.	Location is the primary factor in these BIA’s success as tourism destinations. They shape their efforts to benefit from nearby tourist attractions (that the BIA did not create).	These BIAs are not really focused on tourists. Instead, they seek to create an atmosphere and appearance that will draw local or visiting shoppers. Who comes is not what matters, as long as people come and spend money.	These BIAs use a calendar of events and festivals as their primary method of attracting tourists. Their board of directors has a strong tourism orientation that affects staff responsibilities.
<b>General Budget Size:</b>	Fairly Small (Avg. = \$200,000-300,000)	Small (Avg. = \$100,000-200,000)	Small (Avg. = \$100,000-200,000)	Very Large (Avg. = \$1 million plus)	Large (Avg. = \$900,000-1 million)	Very Large (Avg. = \$1 million plus)
<b>% of Businesses that Cater to Tourists:</b>	n/a	0-40% (Avg. = 22%)	45-80% (Avg. = 65%)	85-100% (Avg. = 93%)	20-40% (Avg. = 30%)	60% (Avg. = 60%)
<b>Av. # of Events and Festivals Hosted by the BIA That Attracted Tourists (in 2007):</b>	n/a	2.8	3.2	1.0	8.7	100.0
<b>% that have Invested in Attractions Other than Events and Festivals</b>	n/a	41%	61%	50%	67%	100%
<b>Av. # of Promotion Methods Used:</b>	n/a	7	7	9	8	18
<b>Av. # of Marketing Partners:</b>	n/a	2	3	5	3	8
<b>Av. # of Positive Developments from Tourism:</b>	n/a	2	2	4	4	5
<b>% of BIAs in a Location that was Already a Tourist District</b>	n/a	50%	72%	100%	100%	100%

### **4.3 Summarizing the Findings**

This chapter has presented the findings of the first two research objectives. It began by outlining the nature of Ontario BIAs' tourism involvement, shedding light on BIA tourism attractions, promotion methods, management efforts, and tourism impacts. A discussion was then provided to explain the creation of a BIA tourism typology. The typology shows that BIAs can be involved in tourism at a range of different levels, and through a number of different approaches. The next chapter builds on these findings by identifying and studying four BIAs that were found towards the high end of the tourism typology.

## CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS: CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL TOURISM-ORIENTED BIAS

This chapter presents the findings that are associated with the third and fourth research objectives of this thesis. It begins with four case studies of successful tourism-oriented BIAs (section 5.1). The characteristics that have made these BIAs successful in attracting tourists are identified in each case. A template is then presented that BIAs can use to assess their current tourism potential. The chapter concludes with a number of recommendations based on the template and lessons learned in the case studies.

### 5.1 Case Studies of Four Successful Tourism Destinations

Four case studies were conducted to identify the characteristics of BIAs that have made them successful tourism destinations. Figure 5.1 shows the four BIAs that were selected for analysis, their place in the tourism typology, and the municipality where they are located. The typology classified three of the BIAs as being “involved in tourism”, indicating that these BIAs are successful in the tourism industry. While the Creemore BIA was only classified as being “somewhat involved in tourism”, it was chosen as an example of a reasonably successful small-town BIA (since no small town BIAs were found in the top three clusters of the typology). The findings of each of these studies are presented below, with an emphasis on identifying the characteristics of each BIA that have enabled it to succeed as a tourism destination.

<b>Figure 5.1 – Four BIAs Selected for Study as Examples of Successful Tourism Destinations</b>		
<b>BIA Name</b>	<b>Cluster Number and Level of Tourism Involvement</b>	<b>Municipality and Population (2006 Census)</b>
<b>Downtown Kingston BIA</b>	<b>5 – Involved in Tourism</b>	City of Kingston - 117,207 (Small City)
<b>Downtown London BIA</b>	<b>4 – Involved in Tourism</b>	City of London - 352,395 (Medium-Sized City)
<b>Downtown Yonge BIA</b>	<b>3 – Involved in Tourism</b>	City of Toronto - 2,503,281 (Large City)
<b>Creemore BIA</b>	<b>2 – Somewhat Involved in Tourism</b>	Clearview Township - 14,088 (Town)



In a related study titled *The Successful Few*, researchers Filion, Hoernig, Bunting, and Sands (2004) sought to identify what features made some downtowns successful while others struggled. They found that the top three characteristics of successful downtowns were an active retail scene, a pedestrian environment, and cultural activities. However, the successful downtowns of mid-sized cities often had other characteristics that put them at an advantage. These included: the close proximity of a university, a strong historical character, easy accessibility to a body of water, and state or provincial capital buildings.

This chapter is concerned with a related subject, identifying the characteristics of Business Improvement Areas that are successful in drawing tourists. While there is likely some overlap between the two studies, as successful BIAs tend to be located in successful downtowns, this study focuses on discussing the characteristics of the BIAs themselves, which are not necessarily physical in nature.

### **5.1.1 Downtown Kingston BIA**

The City of Kingston is located on the shores of Lake Ontario, halfway between the major urban centres of Toronto and Montreal. With a population of over 117,000 (Statistics Canada, 2009a), it is a significant urban area. However, only about half of the municipal population lives in the original city area. The rest of the population reside in the predominantly rural former townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh, which were amalgamated with the City in 1998 (City of Kingston, 2008b). This gives the impression that Kingston is a larger urban area, when it is really a small city. While small in size, Kingston has played an important role in the Canadian military and political history, perhaps most famously as the home of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonal. Today, many of Kingston's downtown buildings reflect the City's storied heritage and prestige in Canadian history.

The Downtown Kingston BIA began in 1973, but did not become involved in tourism efforts until the Cataraqui Town Centre Mall opened ten years later. In response to this competitive threat, the BIA

hired a staff person and began working to revitalize downtown Kingston. The newly active BIA realized that Kingston's tourism industry had been neglected. Rather than attempting to take on the task of supporting the sector themselves, they worked with the Mayor's office to create a tourism task force that would deal with the issue. As a result, tourism management and promotion became the responsibility of the local economic development commission, K.E.D.C.O. Since that time, the BIA has successfully engaged in tourism efforts to differentiate itself from other retail areas (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Ten characteristics are responsible for this BIA's success as a tourism destination. The first is that the Downtown Kingston BIA forms partnerships to create more successful tourism efforts. While the BIA often has a vision of what it hopes to achieve, it no longer moves forward on its own. As Managing Director Doug Ritchie explained:

Once I took training in the field of association management, one of my maxims would be, that you yourself are rarely the right person to get accomplished what you want to get accomplished. So it would always be partnerships and different champions, strategically selected, issue-by-issue (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

This approach to tourism efforts has permeated much of the BIA's work. Rather than taking the lead on projects, they select partners and leaders through a stakeholder analysis. For example, in 2008 the BIA partnered with K.A.P. (Kingston Accommodations Partners), the Grand Theatre, and the K-ROCK Centre to create Arts and Entertainment Week. The event, which was designed to showcase the newly opened K-ROCK Centre and the newly renovated Grand Theatre, included at least a dozen events over a ten-day period. Together, the four partners ran a co-operative advertising program that targeted the region within a two-hour drive of Kingston. Each partner contributed about \$4,000, for a combined cost of \$16,000 (in addition to the costs each partner incurred to run events) (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The BIA also uses partnerships in events and entertainment to provide funding for their tourism efforts. In fact, the BIA only funds about a quarter of its several million dollar budget through the levy,

as the remaining money comes from sponsorships and partnerships. Years ago, the BIA realized that charities were starting to run events as fundraisers, so they began to work to make downtown the place where charities wanted to hold their events. This has led to several charity-BIA partnerships. Chili Fest, hosted each year in September by Hospice Kingston and the Downtown Kingston BIA, is one current example (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The BIA is willing to look around to find the best partner for its events. Although an event may have started with one partner, the BIA is willing to end that partnership and seek a new one if the original group or charity is not adding value to it. Good charitable partners have high-quality executive directors and provide energetic volunteers, allowing the BIA to run events at reduced cost (in terms of time and money). They also provide a noble cause that will draw people to downtown Kingston (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Other regular partners include those organizations with similar interests, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Commission (K.E.D.C.O.), the Kingston Accommodation Partners (K.A.P.), arts groups, and a musicians' union (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). However, the BIA does not limit itself to working with its regular partners, as the volunteer committee for its 2009 winter event demonstrates. Feb Fest's volunteer committee included the following partners in addition to the BIA: Kirk Muller (a former NHL player), K.A.P., K.E.D.C.O., Queen's University, and the City of Kingston (Downtown Kingston! BIA, 2009). Through these partnerships, Downtown Kingston is able to create more successful tourism efforts.

A second characteristic that has led to success is the BIA's focus on differentiating themselves from other shopping areas through events and entertainment. Back in the 1980s, the BIA was ahead of its time in recognizing that the downtown area could not compete with super malls and big box stores on the basis of price. Rather than fighting against larger retailers through sales and promotions (as other BIAs were attempting to do), Downtown Kingston began to focus on differentiation. They turned

their efforts to running events, such as a July busker's festival that continues today, and by offering entertainment in the form of music concerts, competitions, and street dances. While their intention was to improve the appeal of downtown as a shopping area, these efforts simultaneously improved downtown as a tourism product (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Related to this was the BIA's conscious decision to focus on certain market segments. Rather than trying to attract the general retail market, Downtown Kingston chose to focus on leisure travelers (tourists) and students, by growing in restaurant and entertainment functions (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). They realized that the key to a successful future lay in focusing on the markets that would be attracted to differentiation and character. Today, downtown shows the wisdom of this approach. Its main streets are busy with students and tourists, and its general retail stores have almost all been replaced with hotels, restaurants, popular clothing stores, and independent retailers.

A number of secondary sources show that this decision has been good for downtown Kingston. Filion, Hoernig, Bunting and Sands (2004) note that marketing and event programming are one way to increase the visibility of any downtown area, regardless of whether it benefits from natural amenities or a historical character. Speaking of Kingston itself, they acknowledge that its success is partially attributable to different community organizations using it as a venue for summer events. The City of Kingston's (2008a) *Downtown Action Plan Report Card* provides pedestrian counts showing that downtown events are attracting visitors year-round. For example, it points out that pedestrian traffic at Market Square is higher on market days than non-market days. It also provides 2007 visitor estimates for various events and festivals throughout the year (some are shown in Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2 – Visitor Estimates for Events and Festivals in Downtown Kingston (2007)**

<b>Events and Festivals:</b>	<b>Visitor Estimates:</b>
Feb Fest (February)	30,000 (approx.)
Limestone Half Marathon (May)	2,000
Music in the Park (All summer)	8,000
Movies in the Square (Eight Thursday nights)	5,000
Canada Day (July)	25,000
Busker’s Rendevous (July)	125,000
1000 Islands Poker Run (August)	10,000
Limestone City Blues Fest (August)	50,000
Chili Fest (October)	7,000
Night-time Santa Parade (November)	25,000
Springer Market Square Rink (December to March)	30,000

Clearly, the BIA’s decision to focus on differentiation through events and entertainment is working. As a result, plans are in place to continue this focus. For example, one current proposal suggests adding to the appeal of the Market Square farmer’s market through events related to wellness, diet and exercise. It is hoped that these efforts will capitalize on recent trends in culinary tourism and the local/organic food movement (Ritchie & Fluhrer, 2007).

Thirdly, Downtown Kingston’s success can be attributed to the recognition that experiences are the best tourism product that a BIA can offer. While goods, services and attractive streetscaping may be part of these experiences, they are not the experience in and of themselves. For this reason, Downtown Kingston spent considerably less on streetscaping initiatives than other BIAs during the 1980s. They realized that streetscape improvements are only the backdrop for the experiential product that they wanted to promote. Instead, they began to create unique experiences by investing in various forms of street animation, including: festivals and events, concerts, a roving town crier, clowns with balloons, and businesses operating to serve visitors. As Managing Director Doug Ritchie explains,

Being clean and safe and looking a little better... It’s kind of like you know, saying, “If we got new million dollar brocade curtains at the live performance theatre, everything would be better.” But it still would depend on what shows you put on, and how you promoted them. And if you also had a fabulous stage and wonderful curtains, great, that’s part of the whole package. But, you’ve got to put on the show (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Similarly, rather than trying to compete as a commercial district, the BIA began to promote itself in the 1980s as a people-place. By doing so, they demonstrated that their real product was experiential. This recognition occurred a decade before marketing gurus began saying the same thing in different terminology (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The BIA has recently added to its experiential tourism product through the construction of a skating rink in Market Square. Not only has this allowed the BIA to host a winter event (Feb Fest); it has also added to downtown's winter appeal by giving Kingston the image of a liveable winter city. Doug Ritchie described the venue as a stage curtain for downtown experiences, saying:

We do run a Feb Fest there and it definitely does attract tourists. But the skating rink is more like the stage curtain. Somebody walking from a hotel or bed and breakfast to the restaurant, to the theatre, or to the K-Rock Centre... They're going to go by hundreds of people enjoying just pleasure skating, and so the whole vision of a liveable winter city... Instead of just struggling out against the elements to get to the restaurant, you'd start to see – "Wow, there's a whole bunch of people in the city that enjoy the outdoors, even in the winter months." So we're trying to make our mild lake effect winter a benefit instead of a negative (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

By investing in experiences, Downtown Kingston has engaged in a form of tourism that is not dependent on government subsidies for survival. Recognizing that services, such as hotels and convention centres, are not able to compete without a strong experiential component demonstrates wise economic development. Bustling sidewalk patios, a healthy downtown farmer's market and busy streets testify to the wisdom of the BIA's approach.

Planning ahead is reflected in the next five characteristics that are responsible for Downtown Kingston's success. The first is that the BIA is committed to the long-term goal of becoming a tourism destination. Rather than being deterred by the conflict that arises around each proposed change, the BIA has stuck with a long-term vision that is in the association's best interests. For example, the BIA has persevered through the challenge of transitioning from selling goods to experiences, in spite of the loss of major businesses, like downtown department stores (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). The BIA's commitment to a long-term vision also enabled it to overcome resident resistance to

tourism proposals. For instance, when public meetings were held about downtown patios, residents argued that no one would use them, no one wanted to inhale car exhaust while they were eating, it was immoral because children should not see people drinking in public, and that downtown could not afford to lose the parking by widening the sidewalks for patios. As Managing Director Doug Ritchie explains,

...what would see absurdly obvious as a hugely popular mainstay of the new Downtown now, was contentious back then. And the same as every issue all the way along. So it's a managing change, instituting change process that is difficult and long-term. You need a long-term commitment to a plan to institute the changes to become a tourist district (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Lengthy delays in gaining municipal support can also deter a BIA from attempting any large-scale tourism projects. In the case of the newly opened K-ROCK Centre, it took more than a dozen years of BIA lobbying to overcome resistance and municipal delays (Baldwin, 2005; D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008; Kingston Concerned About the LVEC, 2005). Fortunately, many of those who did not originally support the BIA's efforts have begun to come on board and support the transition (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The BIA's decision to use a full marketing cycle to develop their events is a second characteristic that falls under the category of planning ahead. The association started by creating small events, evaluating them, and then improving and expanding them. However, it has since switched to a model of conducting research first, which allows them to start with large full-scale events. Their new model of event development involves the full marketing cycle – from market research, to product development, to stakeholder analysis, to communications and promotion, to sales, and then finally to event attendance and other evaluation measures that feed back into the start of the cycle. The Limestone City Blues Festival is one event that was developed using this full model. The process began with a year of research and focus groups. Hoteliers were asked when they had room capacity. Weather and market availability were also investigated to determine when the event should be held. The last week of August was chosen because of the favourable weather and people's availability (most major holidays are

finished and back to school trips are still a week away). The planning process also involved determining what type of festival would be held. After discussing several different types of music festivals as possibilities, the BIA tested out the Blues and Jazz concept. They found that many people would enjoy listening to Blues music outdoors on a summer day. Through this event development process, a Blues music festival was chosen for the last weekend in August. It has proved to be a highly successful event, filling hotels year after year (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The importance of research and planning in event development was also identified by senior economist Alexander Fritsche of the Conference Board of Canada. In a presentation on Kingston's tourism industry, Fritsche pointed out that the baby boomer market is presently in their prime travel years. They present an opportunity because they are fairly affluent, less dependent on economic cycles, and are looking for experiences like those offered by the BIA (in the arts, entertainment, culture, history, food, and wine) (Fritsche 2008). Downtown Kingston has been conducting market research to know and respond to these desires (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). The BIA's event development process has enabled them to target certain markets, start events at a high level, and schedule them at times that take into consideration the needs and business cycles of their members (Downtown Kingston! BIA, 2001; D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

A third characteristic of success related to planning, was the BIA's decision to invest in attractions that can be leveraged for events. Since Downtown Kingston has an events and entertainment focus, maximizing event benefits is important to their success as a tourism destination. For this reason, the BIA board chose to be proactive and become involved in running major event venues, rather than sitting back and leaving things to other stakeholders. They invested in the newly opened K-ROCK Centre, a large sports and entertainment complex, and in the revitalization of Market Square, becoming a stakeholder in both attractions. Now, the BIA board is working to leverage the three big projects in downtown Kingston for events: the K-ROCK Centre, Market Square, and the Grand



Theatre (also just renovated). By doing so, the BIA has found a way to strengthen its tourism season between September and May, since two of the venues are indoors, while Market Square provides a facility for outdoor skating (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The three facilities have already proved their worth as event venues. The Grand Theatre was booked every weekend in the 2008-2009 season by the time it re-opened, for music, theatre, and dance performances (Matyas, 2008). The BIA's restaurants and cafes especially are likely to benefit from visitors enjoying a meal or a drink before or after the performances. Similarly, the City of Kingston's (2008a) *Downtown Action Plan Report Card* shows that Market Square has already hosted a summer Farmer's Market, Feb Fest, Movies in the Square, and a winter ice rink in addition to providing a venue for other festivals (e.g. the Limestone City Blues Festival). Feb Fest especially reveals the value of the BIA's investment, as the event has grown in length and size over the five years that it has been running. This past year's event lasted six days, and included: celebrity figure skaters and hockey players, hockey games between NHL alumni and military players, a shinny tournament featuring celebrity players, public skating, a snow sculpture competition, a concert, and ice sculptures among other displays (Downtown Kingston! BIA, 2009). Finally, while some experts believe that Kingston's newly-opened K-ROCK Centre will not help downtown retailers, others assert that the venue will bring a positive contribution. They attribute this belief to the health of Kingston's downtown core, the dispersal of parking that encourages visitors to walk through the downtown area, and the ability of the BIA to create marketing campaigns that will enable retailers to benefit from events (Baldwin, 2005).

Downtown Kingston uses both staff and volunteer strengths to best plan and manage their events. While this may seem like a strange characteristic to identify, it has made the BIA's events and festivals more successful. The BIA begins by giving all staff members a leadership role over a certain event(s). By distributing responsibilities among the staff, everyone is involved in distinguishing the BIA through its entertainment focus. Wisdom is also shown in the way in which the responsibilities are

divided. Newer staff members are placed on older events so that a new set of eyes can improve on established ideas through innovation, creativity and enthusiasm. Older and more experienced staff members work on new events, which tend to use the three major venues mentioned above. They ensure that the new events being held are good for business, tourism and the City as a whole. The BIA also relies on volunteers, from the downtown business community, charitable partners, affinity groups, and other organizations. A committee of volunteers is often used to get events up and running. The committee may include local experts – such as a concert promoter with experience in booking bands for the Blues Festival, or Blues music lovers and professional musicians to help choose the bands. Later on this committee is replaced with staff running the events; but staff still depend on former committee members for advice, information and volunteers. The BIA is able to plan and manage a busy year-round events schedule by using staff and volunteer strengths wisely (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Downtown Kingston's final characteristic related to planning ahead, is that the BIA operates under the overarching goal of becoming known as the region's urban entertainment district. This way the BIA ensures that all of its efforts are in unison. Downtown Kingston is seeking to build this reputation so that Ontarians, and baby boomers especially, will regularly check the BIA's website to find out what interesting events are coming up. The hope is that those living in the region will not be considering whether they will visit Kingston, but rather, when they will visit next. As Managing Director Doug Ritchie explained,

So that's what we're trying to do. Is train a whole bunch of people in a two hour radius that Downtown Kingston's now an entertainment district. And they should just keep periodically checking the websites and deciding when they're coming (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Downtown Kingston's goal is to be known as an attractive alternative concert destination to Toronto and Ottawa. With its strong historical character, waterfront, restaurants and bed and breakfasts/hotels located within easy walking distance of events and shows, year-round events schedule, and increased

affordability through event and accommodations packages, the goal is for Ontarians to think of Kingston as an urban entertainment district (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008).

The BIA's goal is in-keeping with visual observations of the historic and vibrant downtown area. Kingston's core features a busy waterfront area with many boat slips, a band shell for performances, a tourist information office located inside a historic train station, important historic sites like the Shoal Tower (a historic tower fort) and Kingston City Hall, and several major hotels. Tourists can ride the



**Illustration 5.1** – Three scenes of downtown Kingston (from left to right): the Market Square farmer's market with historic City Hall in the background, the Grand Theatre on Princess St., and the waterfront band shell with boat slips and the Shoal Tower in the background.

Confederation Tour Trolley (a historic red bus), which gives tours of the City's historic sites, or walk through the core area themselves to read the historic plaques and take in the numerous historic buildings. The Grand Theatre, Market Square and K-ROCK Centre are within easy walking distance of one another, as well as accommodations, shops and restaurants. The City's sidewalk patios are being enjoyed, its farmer's market is a busy destination even during daytime hours, and tour buses are parked on its streets even in October. It appears that the BIA's goal is both realistic and being realized.

The ninth characteristic of Downtown Kingston's success as a tourism district is quite simple – a willingness to make whatever changes are necessary to improve. This characteristic is not so much an activity but a mindset, as the BIA continues to search for ways to improve. For example, the BIA began offering tourist packages of entertainment and accommodations for the first time this past year (2008). They arranged deals with the Grand Theatre and K-ROCK Centre, and hope to improve them and sell more of them in the future.

This characteristic is also seen in the BIA's readiness to listen and consider others' advice. For example, because they believe that cultural tourism decisions are often made online, the BIA wants to create one central tourism website that people will go to for events information in Kingston. However, rather than assuming that they are the best organization to create and run such a website, they want experts to tell them what will be best for getting internet hits. They are willing to listen to the advice of those who know, and then check their suggestions with the BIA's membership for approval (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). Further evidence of this characteristic is supplied by a 2007 memo, in which the BIA's Managing Director asks for public input on a proposed strategy to integrate events in Kingston (Ritchie & Fluhrer, 2007). This willingness to seek others' advice goes hand-in-hand with the BIA's efforts to improve as a tourism destination.

The final characteristic of Downtown Kingston's success is that the BIA's promotion efforts stem from an accurate assessment of who they are and what they have to offer. Rather than seeking to create a tourist district by prettying up and theming themselves, the BIA worked to be real and authentic in their offering. They did this by defining themselves using a four part branding statement. They identified that they: are a full service business district; prominently feature restaurants, specialty retail, and entertainment functions; function as a community gathering place; and are located in a historic waterfront district. This four clause statement provides criteria for the BIA to score their current and proposed efforts to ensure that they reinforce the BIA's appeal, will attract sponsors, will help the BIA's members, and increase the prestige of downtown Kingston. Doug Ritchie explains,

So we'd say, "Ok. Does this help or serve a broad portion of our membership? ... Does it do anything good or bad for the full-service business district? And then clause two, ok... specialty retail and restaurants, are they going to sell stuff? Is it a cultural activity that will create a sizeable gathering? And do we somehow link it with our physical assets, which are historic buildings and a waterfront. So we have scoring charts. We'll use a committee at a wrap-up session... or considering a new proposal, and we'll remind them. You know, here's how we've been successful, by trying to see if this fits what we think is the accurate and attractive definition of the product called Downtown (personal communication, October 7, 2008).

Downtown Kingston has best been able to project themselves to tourists by understanding who they are. Their self-assessment seems to be accurate, since they appear to be a healthy, full-service business district. Kingston's downtown remains a place where the community gathers, people want to live and work (Armstrong, 2001), and where most goods and services can be purchased. The BIA also acknowledges that they think of themselves as "a little upscale, white collar, adult, dining-out, more sophisticated than you'd think for a town with this population kind of place" (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). Downtown's strong restaurant and entertainment functions show the accuracy of this perception, enabling the BIA to market itself to baby boomers as an upscale destination (Fritsche, 2008).

Managing Director Doug Ritchie emphasized self-awareness when asked what features a BIA needs to have to be successful in attracting tourists. He advised that BIAs should be authentic and true to themselves, rather than trying to sell themselves based on a made-up theme. Focusing efforts on the positive aspects of a BIA's past and present provides an image that will draw people over an extended period of time, while not offending local residents who may find strange festivals annoying. BIAs can do this by taking advantage of community assets. Historic architecture should be preserved, and waterfront land should be opened to the public. Downtown Kingston capitalized on their British history through both an annual buskers' festival and competition to select a town crier, who now appears at important events (D. Ritchie, personal communication, October 7, 2008). BIAs that offer events and entertainment that are authentic to their locale will be able to attract tourists over an extended period of time, without harming their relationship with the local community.

### **5.1.2 Downtown London BIA**

London is a mid-sized city of over 352,000 residents located in south-western Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2009a). The City lies just north of the 401, a major provincial highway, placing it just two hours

away from the cities of Windsor and Detroit at the Canada-U.S. border. London's proximity to the 401 also places it just two hours away from Ontario's largest urban area, Toronto. The City's growth as an urban centre began in 1826 when it was made the regional administrative centre for south-western Ontario. Through the years the City grew with the establishment of a military garrison, the expansion of the railroad, and the development of manufacturing industries (Tourism London, 2009). Today, downtown London testifies to these historic beginnings through the preservation of many pieces of its heritage.

Unlike the Downtown Kingston BIA, the Downtown London BIA is clear that they are not working to attract tourists. However, the revitalization of London's core area has made the BIA a tourist destination, with visitors now coming to see London's major attractions and downtown specialty shops. As a result, the association works to maximize the benefits of tourism by encouraging visitors to spend more time and money in the downtown area. This reality is seen in the seven characteristics that have led to Downtown London's success as a tourism destination.

The first characteristic of London's success is that the BIA is active, flexible and creative in finding ways to benefit downtown merchants. While the BIA was not always active and flexible (Cobban, 2003), this seems to have changed with the creation of a downtown revitalization corporation called Mainstreet London. This arms-length organization is a partnership between the City of London and the BIA. It uses the same staff as the BIA, and works to benefit the downtown area that includes the BIA. It can borrow, lend and grant money, as well as buy and sell buildings, enabling it to take part in activities that a traditional BIA is unable to. BIA businesses with greater tourist appeal are eligible for enhanced incentives, grants and loans from the organization. The uniqueness of this flexible approach becomes evident when one considers that in Ontario, only the City of Brampton and its downtown BIA have a similar development corporation (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

The BIA's creativity is also seen in their funding model for events and festivals. In response to downtown businesses saying that festivals were not benefitting them, the BIA began to fund festivals using a combination of cash and downtown dollars. These certificates, which count as cash with downtown merchants, bring people who attended events and festivals back downtown to discover great places to shop (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Further, the BIA is active and creative in working to draw convention-goers into the rest of downtown. They send street ambassadors to major conventions to hand out information about restaurants and events that occur that same week (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008). The BIA attributes their success to their flexibility as an organization, and their willingness to do whatever will make downtown better. They are flexible enough to consider any idea, regardless of whether or not it is in their strategic plan, as long as it will make downtown London active and alive (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

Another characteristic of the Downtown London BIA is that they empower others to do work that benefits the downtown area, rather than trying to take on every task themselves. The best example of this is the BIA's decision to support events and festivals, instead of trying to run them. The organization's staff of four to five people are busy enough managing other aspects of the BIA's business, so they let it be known that funds are available to support events that will bring people downtown. Rather than becoming long-term event sponsors, the BIA supplies seed funding that helps events get started or grow. Festival organizers are asked to supply a budget, a list of event activities, and a description of the target market. The BIA then assesses them to ensure that the proposal will benefit downtown London. New event and festival proposals continue to come in from both for profit and non-profit groups, showing that the model is working (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

One example of the success of this event management approach is L.O.L.A., the London Ontario Live Arts Festival. This free four-day event has run for the last three years. The festival showcases local

and international visual art and music outdoors around the city centre, giving people a reason to come downtown and wander around. It is exactly the kind of event that the BIA wants to attract, since it has been tremendously successful in bringing people downtown to enjoy and appreciate the high-density urban environment. It has also drawn youth that until recently had not gone downtown in significant numbers, since there were only a few cafes and outdoor public spaces to draw them (Ellingson, 2008).

Downtown revitalization is the third characteristic of Downtown London's success as a tourism destination. While the City of London has led these efforts, the BIA has contributed to the revitalization process. Beginning in 1996, the City began to invest back in its downtown area, contributing \$110 million to various projects, including: recreating the historic Covent Garden Market, the construction of a sports and entertainment complex called the J.L.C. (John Labatt Centre), the development of a new central library in a retrofitted former Bay store, and the creation of a park with a splash pad and historical signage at the Forks of the Thames. At least two of these projects, the Covent Garden Market and J.L.C, have become major downtown tourism attractions. The J.L.C not only draws tourists and locals to downtown London, but has also led to the opening of new downtown businesses, especially restaurants on the streets surrounding it (personal communication, October 3, 2008). The J.L.C. also illustrates the supportive role of the BIA in the revitalization process, as they fought to ensure that the venue would be built downtown, rather than near the 401 (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Today, a Community Improvement Plan continues to offer incentives for the revitalization of historic building facades in the downtown area. While not all of these investments are directly related to tourism, they have all brought life back into the downtown core, a necessary precondition for tourism (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008). As a result of the revitalization, London's core area is now more welcoming and safe. Visitors have evidently responded to these changes, as London's Grand Theatre's subscription rate has increased since the revitalization process began. In addition, nightclubs have been replacing bars as the evening scene



becomes more sophisticated, and several new restaurants have opened in the downtown core (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

The BIA's primary contribution to the revitalization process has been partnership-building. By creating partnerships that work to revitalize downtown London, the BIA has gained a reputation as "the axis around which downtown runs" (J. MacDonald, personal communication, October 3, 2008). The BIA begins partnerships by building relationships with the individuals who work for key organizations. Through the relationships that are formed, political will for change is developed; a necessary precondition for any major revitalization project to take place. One tourism-related partnership that the BIA has is with the London Convention Centre. The Convention Centre provides the BIA with information on the various events and conventions that it hosts. This enables the BIA's street ambassadors to greet visitors at break times and give them information that will encourage them to explore the rest of the downtown area. London's major post-secondary institution, Western University, has not been willing to partner in the revitalization process by creating a downtown campus. However, the BIA has convinced smaller post-secondary institutions to locate in the Galleria Mall, making the downtown area more alive and attractive to visitors (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008). The BIA continues to pursue partnerships that will further the revitalization process, by acting as a facilitator to match downtown landlords with potential lessees (Downtown Task Force, 2008).

A fourth characteristic of London's success is that it has focused its efforts on tourist retention and spending, rather than tourist attraction. Believing that attracting tourists is the responsibility of the local Destination Marketing Organization (Tourism London), the BIA works to maximize the benefits from tourists that have come to see events or attractions. They do this in a number of ways, several of which have been already mentioned. One of these is giving downtown dollars to festival organizers, so that those who receive them will return to the BIA at another date to shop. A second way is by

providing information to convention-goers about restaurants and events to draw them into the rest of downtown. In these, and other efforts, the BIA works to keep tourists downtown, and encourages them to make return visits. As Manager Janette MacDonald explains, “It’s our job to make sure that, that we get to the people who do bring them in, and provide them with enough information to keep them downtown” (personal communication, October 3, 2008).

The fifth characteristic of Downtown London’s success as a destination is somewhat surprising. Tourism is not the BIA’s *raison d’être*, as would be the case in a more tourism-dependent BIA. Rather, the organization believes that meeting the needs of London residents and workers is the priority, while tourism is simply a positive by-product. As a result, the BIA’s efforts have a wide focus, with downtown residents and suburban Londoners being equally important to tourists. The BIA shows this broad focus in a number of ways. First, they view suburbanites as tourists and work to identify and serve their needs to draw them downtown (L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Second, they use downtown dollars to promote the area to wealthy London residents at charity events, such as golf tournaments with silent auctions. Third, they work to make downtown London a place that will attract knowledge workers, aiming to keep post-secondary graduates in the City, and more importantly, living and working downtown. Thus, rather than focussing on tourists’ needs, the BIA tries to offer something to everyone –from students, to residents, to employees (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008). This strange characteristic of tourism success has helped to turn the City’s struggling downtown into an area where tourists feel comfortable.

A walk around the City’s core confirms the BIA’s broad focus. A visitor will notice business people and their places of employment, teenagers engaging in fundraising efforts, and students in and around the educational institutions located in the Galleria Mall. Secondary sources confirm the BIA’s efforts, such as an UrbanMetrics report (2007) that describes downtown London as an active business centre with a workforce of around 30,000 people, an increasingly popular place to live, an important

post-secondary educational area, and a place with cultural and entertainment functions. The Downtown Task Force's 2008 report noted that the BIA wants a downtown that is "appealing to workers, shoppers, visitors and seekers of pleasure" (p.1). Further, Daniszewski (2008) describes how the downtown Galleria Mall reinvented itself as mixed-use office complex after failing as a retail centre. His article lists some of the Mall's commercial, educational and health and well-being tenants, and explains that the BIA is happy with the change since the Mall now provides office workers who they attempt to attract into the rest of downtown. Clearly the Downtown London BIA is not dependent on tourists, but instead, caters to the needs of a variety of different groups.

The sixth characteristic of the BIA's success is related to the previous one. The BIA is not tourist-driven, but appearance-driven. Just as the association does not operate for the sake of tourists, they are also not driven by tourism. Rather, what motivates their efforts is the desire to improve the appearance of downtown London. As Manager Janette MacDonald explained,

We want to attract investment in our downtown. We want the best possible businesses in our downtown. We want our buildings rehabilitated so they last a lot longer. We've the best heritage... in London in the downtown. ... We want to keep it because it's what sets us apart. Appearance is what we're all about (personal communication, October 3, 2008).

Improving the appearance of downtown includes many different components of revitalization. In addition to streetscaping investments, the BIA supports festivals, events and concerts to increase the area's street life, and also works to attract quality shops to locate in the downtown area. One of the desired results of the BIA's appearance focus is word of mouth advertising. Those that have come to the area are often so impressed that they tell others to visit (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

There is visual evidence of the BIA's efforts to improve its appearance. Murals have been painted on barren walls to show ownership of the area and discourage graffiti. Mainstreet London's website lists other appearance-focused activities. It mentions that they: offer a number of programs to help landowners improve their buildings, work to attract new destination-type businesses downtown,

seek to manage perceptions about safety in the downtown area, and invest in the visual quality of downtown through beautification and cleanliness efforts (London Downtown Business Association, 2007). Belanger (2006) provides an example of these efforts. He explains that the BIA recently spent \$200,000 to install brightly coloured wrought-iron trees around the downtown area. The trees brighten the atmosphere while fitting with London's brand as 'the Forest City'. This investment was praised by London Councillor Cheryl Miller as something that may not only draw people, but tourists: "I think this could put London on the map... It's so creative, so outside the box. It's bright, colourful, fun and it's public art" (as cited in Belanger, 2006, para.29-30).



**Illustration 5.2** – Two of Downtown London's attractions – the Covent Garden Market (left), and the John Labatt Centre (right). Note the metal tree installed in front of the J.L.C.

The final characteristic of Downtown London's success as a tourism destination are the three features that draw tourists to the BIA – its location, attractions, and specialty shops. The BIA benefits from its location halfway between two major urban centres – Detroit and Toronto – each of which are about two hours away down the 401, a major highway. The City's location between these two markets, and along such a major transportation route, is one reason why the J.L.C. is able to bring in celebrity performers like Bon Jovi, Sheryl Crowe, Elton John, Billy Joel, Cher, and Sting. Of the BIA's attractions the John Labatt Centre is the most important, as it hosts both the London Knights (a Junior A hockey team that plays before a full stadium of 9,300 people every Friday night), and concerts with international stars. The BIA works to encourage the locals and tourists who come to eat, drink, and shop

before or after. Other downtown attractions include: the Grand Theatre, which is one of Canada's oldest performing arts theatres; Orchestra London, which plays at Centennial Hall; Museum London; the London Convention Centre; the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame; the Covent Garden Market; and various events and festivals in the downtown area. Finally, specialty shops and restaurants also play an important role in attracting tourists to the BIA. Examples of the unique shopping that is available in the BIA include: the largest ceramic gallery in Canada on Dundas Street, the oldest department store in southwest Ontario – King's Mills, the only Rolex gallery outside of Toronto - Nash Jewellers, and a thriving jewellery district consisting of 14 independently-owned jewellery stores. Some of these shops draw customers from all over Canada and even internationally as a result of the quality of their products. Specialty shops and restaurants have also enabled the BIA to attract automobile travellers along the 401. Whereas travellers used to prefer hotels located immediately off the highway, the BIA's fine restaurants and shops have begun to entice travelers to downtown hotels (J. MacDonald and L. Thomas, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

While these three features attract visitors to the BIA, an UrbanMetrics (2007) study is careful to point out that there remains room for improvement. It notes that while downtown London has a small entertainment hub around the J.L.C., it lacks a significant non-event driven attraction that can draw visitors year-round. It adds that the high number of vacancies and the poor commercial mix in some areas of downtown detract from the tourism-supportive environment. The study suggests a stronger tourist offering can be formed by preserving heritage and building new cultural facilities. The authors further suggest that unique niche retailers should be added to ensure the future success of downtown as a tourism destination (UrbanMetrics inc., 2007).

### **5.1.3 Downtown Yonge BIA**

Toronto is the largest urban area in Canada, with a population of over 2.5 million people (Statistics Canada, 2009a). The City is the capital of Ontario, making it an administrative and political hub, with major hospitals, universities, and government offices. Toronto is also an international economic centre, known for its role in many industries, including business services, telecommunications, media production, publishing, medical research, and finance. Further, the City is home to a number of major sporting franchises, museums, performance theatres and cultural centres. Downtown Toronto reflects the City's diverse roles, with an accumulation of office complexes, educational institutions, and leisure facilities that testify to its importance as an urban area.

The Downtown Yonge BIA became involved in tourism the year after it formed, as it is located in a major tourist area – downtown Toronto. The BIA immediately benefited from the tourist attractions that were located in and around it, and began to work to capitalize on its location (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Centred on Yonge Street, the longest street in the world, it was easy to attract visitors. As one writer points out, “Yonge Street is one of the few Canadian streets that resonate nationally, known for its Guinness Book length (1,896 kilometres) and as a civic symbol” (Gillmor, 2008, para.1). Just as importantly, the BIA has the Toronto Eaton Centre located within its boundaries, the number one tourist destination in Toronto (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2007). The BIA also features two other malls, nine hotels, three subway stops, three major theatres (Massey Hall, Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre, and the Canon Theatre), the Hockey Hall of Fame, several significant heritage structures (including old City Hall and St. Michael's Cathedral immediately outside the BIA boundaries, and Maple Leaf Gardens and Mackenzie House within the BIA), and many major retail stores (Buffalo, Roots, etc.). In its first years of operation, the BIA championed the City of Toronto's efforts to clear a block of businesses and replace them with a public open space. In 2003, after much controversy, Yonge-Dundas Square opened in the heart of the BIA, offering a place for

celebrations, performances and product promotions (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2008b). Intended as a gathering place and event facility, the Square does perform this function; however, it is also alive with advertising, with numerous billboards and ten large video screens pumping out information (Gillmor, 2008).



**Illustration 5.3** – An entrance to the Toronto Eaton Centre (left), and stores on Yonge Street with the billboards and video screens of Yonge-Dundas Square in the distance (right).

While the BIA cannot take credit for creating these attractions, it has worked to benefit from them. In 2002, the association sought and received designation as a tourist district, enabling all of its businesses to remain open on statutory holidays (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2008; M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, February 17, 2008). The BIA also created a mobile ambassador program to answer visitors' questions and provide walking tours of its historical and cultural attractions each summer (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Toronto Mayor David Miller described the program as "a great complement to the Downtown Yonge area's strong offering of business, shopping, and entertainment" (Canada NewsWire, June 13, 2007). The BIA recognizes that attractions are the primary reason why tourists come to Downtown Yonge, and has capitalized on them through programs that present the area as a cohesive tourist district.

Not long after it was created, the Downtown Yonge BIA began to form partnerships with other stakeholders to improve its tourism offering. Since tourists were already coming to existing attractions (theatres and the Toronto Eaton Centre), it made sense for the BIA to work with them. The BIA also

partnered with the City of Toronto to regenerate the area, a process that included the opening of Yonge-Dundas Square. Now the BIA has an on-going partnership with the Square's management team to plan events, such as Summer Serenades and concerts, which enhance the atmosphere of the district (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Creating partnerships has been a key component of the BIA's work to strengthen its tourism offering. For example, the BIA has formed a number of partnerships to benefit their signature event, Winter Magic. They have worked with Festivals and Events Ontario to evaluate its economic impact, with certain media companies who gain exclusive rights to promote the event, with sponsoring businesses who pay to have their name associated with it, with Ryerson University students (from the faculties of Fashion Design, Hospitality, and Retail Management) to increase the area's vibrancy during the event (Canada NewsWire, 2007c), and with their members to create a tourist package during the event (a room at the Pantages Hotel and a 15 percent discount at the Hudson Bay store). This last partnership was welcomed by the D.M.O. (Tourism Toronto) and the Provincial Ministry of Tourism since it drew overnight visitors, thereby ensuring a greater economic impact.

In another recent partnership, the association worked with three other downtown BIAs, St. Lawrence Market, Bloor Yorkville, and the Entertainment District, to have a strong and united voice in municipal decisions relating to tourism. The four BIAs created a strategic plan to guide their efforts in the same direction, and hope to expand this partnership in the future (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Other partnerships have been formed for different purposes, including: offering bus tours of the City, informing hotel visitors of things to see and do in the BIA, promoting Toronto in New York State, keeping the streets clean and litter free, and redeveloping a tired portion of Yonge Street (Canada NewsWire, 2003; M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008, Torstar News Service, 2008).



A third major characteristic of Downtown Yonge's success is its work to create a clean and safe environment. The area's transition from an intimidating downtown area into a cohesive tourism destination began with a regeneration effort led by the City and BIA. Although it was once the place to be in Toronto, by the 1990s Yonge Street had declined into a mass of cheap and questionable retail uses. The street was lined with dollar stores, pawn shops and body-rub parlours, largely as a result of the Toronto Eaton Centre's internal focus, which cut off the Mall from the street. Criticized by the Mayor for its ugly retail spaces, and by the local councillor for its lack of aesthetic value, it was evident that something needed to be done (Hendley, 1999). For this reason the BIA formed in June 2001, with the stated goal of making the area safer, cleaner and more inviting (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2008b). The BIA began by investing in public spaces, such as the redevelopment of a block of stores into Yonge-Dundas Square. They hoped to transform the district into one that resembled New York City's Times Square. The association also worked to set a standard of appearance for the area in terms of cleanliness and safety, through streetscaping efforts that included almost three million dollars worth of investment by 2007 (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2007). To deal with the criminal reputation that the area gained during the 1990s (Canadian Press Newswire, 2005), the BIA hired off-duty police officers for foot patrols. The officers' presence was to increase police visibility, reduce the opportunity for individuals to engage in disorder, and reduce the fear of crime (Gavendo, 2006). Seeing that the area was undergoing a renaissance, the Toronto Eaton Centre voluntarily redeveloped their Yonge Street facade, opening up the Mall to the street (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008).

This incredible transition has given the area a fun atmosphere, as visitors can enjoy the clean environment without having to worry about their safety. It has also spurred other redevelopment projects in downtown Toronto, providing evidence that people want to live nearby. Today the BIA continues to invest in clean and safe initiatives. Among other efforts, they hire staff to remove graffiti,

sidewalk litter and posters, and show their member businesses how facade improvement grants can be used to improve their properties (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Reflecting on their efforts, Marketing Manager Monica Kocsmaros commented that before BIAs can focus on tourism, they need to ensure that they are clean and safe (personal communication, October 2, 2008).

Downtown Yonge's success as a destination is also attributable to being self-aware. This characteristic allows them to better promote themselves to others. The BIA realized early on that they had valuable attractions within their boundaries (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). By making the most of this location they became a successful tourism destination. They also recognized their weaknesses, realizing that there was a need for regeneration and a standard of appearance before tourism growth could occur. Since that time, the BIA has identified their tourism niche and worked to strengthen their appeal to visitors.

Surveys have shown that people come to Downtown Yonge for two primary reasons; first to shop, and second to enjoy the atmosphere. To build on these strengths, the BIA has invested in a team of street ambassadors that provides directions and shopping or dining recommendations to visitors, as well as historical tours of the district. In their green "ASK ME" shirts, this team of six multi-lingual staff are easily identified by tourists (Canada NewsWire, 2007b). Aware that the downtown Toronto area was being frequented by a growing number of Central and South American visitors, the BIA ensured that the team of street ambassadors included a Spanish-speaking member (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). Being self-aware has also allowed the BIA to identify potential partnerships, by knowing what other organizations or businesses are located in the BIA, or have an interest in the same objectives (e.g. Ryerson University). For the purposes of marketing, pedestrian counts and other statistics have been gathered through surveys or by consultants. These provide the BIA with the information necessary to sell sponsorship packages and spend their promotions dollars wisely. The BIA has also used focus groups to inform their marketing efforts, by asking the group why

people come or do not come to Downtown Yonge. All of these efforts demonstrate that it is important for a BIA to know itself before promoting itself to others. Marketing Manager Monica Kocsmaros describes it as identifying and strengthening the BIA's niche, something that she believes every BIA knows the moment they are founded (personal communication, October 2, 2008).

A related characteristic of Downtown's Yonge's success is that they offer tourists a fun and vibrant atmosphere year-round. The district is alive with students from Ryerson University (on the edge of its boundaries), office workers from the numerous office towers downtown, shoppers in the Eaton Centre and along Yonge Street, and visitors from all over the world. In addition to the BIA's attractions, Yonge-Dundas Square features events year-round, from promotions, to concerts, to movies and shows at all hours. The BIA offers tourists the unique urban experience of being in the heart of the City, with street performers of all kinds, subway entrances that are constantly spewing out people, tourist information booths, sightseeing buses, hotdog stands, and a new scramble intersection where pedestrians can cross in all directions. Downtown Yonge's fun and vibrant atmosphere is confirmed by both visual observation and secondary sources. One writer described the BIA as a long outdoor mall because of its commercial focus and signage. He then added that it is more vibrant than a traditional mall because of its beautiful heritage buildings, theatres, cafes, 24-hour stores and unrestricted themes (Gillmor, 2008).

Another factor in the BIA's success as a destination has been their wisdom in investments. Rather than spreading their spending widely, the BIA has focused their investments and efforts on a few priorities. In the summer, when the area is booming without significant BIA investment, the association uses the aforementioned street ambassadors to support the area's shopping, entertainment, restaurants and attractions by helping visitors find their way around. Knowing that people are less likely to choose to be outside in the winter, the BIA saves their signature event for this time of year to get people outdoors where they will see the BIA's shops and restaurants. Winter Magic uses lighting

displays, festive window displays, and weekend and evening events to draw people outdoors and enhance the atmosphere of the BIA during the month before Christmas – the peak shopping season (Canada NewsWire, 2006). How the BIA spends its advertising budget also shows wisdom. The association focuses on a specific market, which is then reached through a variety of media (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008).

The Downtown Yonge BIA is constantly looking for ways to improve its ability to attract visitors. This characteristic is really a choice not to be stagnant, but active and creative in pursuing ideas for improvement. The organization's willingness to change in bold ways was evident in their first years of operation as they pursued the creation of Yonge-Dundas Square. The dramatic change and even the Square's design caused a great deal of controversy, but the BIA was right in believing that it would attract tourists and become a great event venue. Since that time the BIA has made numerous other improvements that have been mentioned above, such as asking Ryerson students to become involved in their events to contribute new ideas (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). In addition, the BIA has shown a willingness to experiment with new technology in hopes of attracting visitors. In 2008 they launched Mobile Yonge, a cellular marketing campaign that sends cell phone messages to those who sign up online, giving them news of events and special offers. The program is a BIA-first, and seeks to capitalize on society's growing on-demand culture (Canada NewsWire, 2008).

The last characteristic of Downtown Yonge's success is that their tourism activities are a group effort. No individual played a dominant role in their increasing tourism involvement; rather, the BIA as a whole has come together to turn goals into reality. As Marketing Manager Monica Kocsmaros explained, the BIA board works together to set goals, achieve them, and maintain them (personal communication, October 2, 2008). In the beginning, the BIA formed to create a standard of cleanliness and streetscaping that they have continued to maintain. This unity of purpose and effort continued in their efforts to create Yonge-Dundas Square. In addition, the BIA board made the decision to pursue

designation as a tourism district in 2002, an idea that was supported by its member businesses (Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, 2008a; M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, February 17, 2008). Likewise, rather than being an individual staff or volunteer effort, the BIA board approved a marketing plan that described all aspects of their signature event. Together, the board chose what the event would be, when it would take place, and what it would include (M. Kocsmaros, personal communication, October 2, 2008). While different staff members have different responsibilities, tourism activities and investments are ultimately board decisions. By working together, the Downtown Yonge BIA has developed and improved its tourism product to become the successful tourism destination that it is today.

#### **5.1.4 Creemore BIA**

The town of Creemore is located just over an hour's drive north of Toronto. With a population of around 1300 residents (Vanderwerf, 2008), it is one of several communities in Clearview Township. Prior to the 1980s, Creemore was far from being a tourism destination. The rural town had long functioned as a central commercial area to local farmers, who brought their livestock to town until the railway through it closed in the 1950s. As a result of the town's decline in importance, local business struggled in the 1960s and 70s, and soon found themselves unable to compete with larger retailers in bigger urban areas. However, the late 1980s brought a number of positive changes to Creemore, including the establishment of a BIA and the founding of the Creemore Springs Brewery (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008).

Without a doubt, the Creemore Springs Brewery is the most significant reason why Creemore has become a tourism destination. The brewery changed the town's fortunes, and introduced its declining commercial centre to the benefits of the tourism industry (Stren, 2006). As BIA President Craig Simpson explains,

What really changed the landscape here was the opening of the brewery in 1987. ... the brewery is an absolute divide. Now I mean it took time for it to get going and all that, but if you really want to mark, what's the beginning of the modern era ... which includes, you know, the art tours, and the tourism kind of thing, it's the brewery. Because it's still the number one draw. It's what brings people here (personal communication, October 14, 2008).

The Creemore Springs Brewery was established in an historic building on the town's main street in 1987.

The microbrewery draws visitors to town to see the beer being made (Southern Ontario Tourism

Organization, 2006). The brewery's original marketing campaign was also instrumental in bringing

tourists to the town, as it was all about the place that the beer came from. Today, Creemore is known

across Ontario for its beer – a positive reputation that the BIA could not have created on its own.

Further, the brewery has started two annual events that attract tourists; a celebration of the brewery

and town called the Copper Kettle Festival, and a local film festival called the Creemore Mocks Film

Festival (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008; Gennings, 2008a). The brewery

remains the BIA's number one attraction, and is the defining characteristic of the BIA's success as a

tourism destination.

As a small BIA in a small town, Creemore has struggled to bring about positive change. Although tourism efforts have made the business association more effective, it is individuals who have played the most important role in making Creemore a successful tourism destination. In Creemore, two entrepreneurs deserve much of the credit for tourism and commercial growth; John Wiggins, the key founder of the microbrewery, and Craig Simpson, a founder of the community newspaper and current BIA President. As entrepreneurs, both men have a willingness to take risks in their investments and energies, as well as an obvious interest in the success of local business. John Wiggins deserves credit for a number of reasons. First, it was his idea to start a microbrewery in a quiet dying town ("Tiny village of Creemore", 1999). Second, it was his decision to market the beer and the town together, by emphasizing the Town's rural roots and water supply in promoting his product. Third, he actively supports the BIA, including designing its logos and signs, as well as proposing the revitalization of the

town's streetscape through historic preservation and extension. Fourth, it was clear in all of his efforts that his plan was always to build his brewery by building up the town. As Craig Simpson explains,

Those who come after him I think very much attribute much of what Creemore has become to him. I certainly do. ... there is no question his activism went beyond the brewery. It was very much that early kind of, come up and visit Creemore. It was very much what he was about. It wasn't a damn the town, I'm going to build my brewery. It was, part of how I'm going to build the brewery is to build this town, and you know, freshen it up and so forth (personal communication, October 14, 2008).

The current BIA President, Craig Simpson, is a second important individual in Creemore's success as a tourism destination. Originally a weekend resident of the area, Craig became a full-time resident when he and a partner resurrected the town's dying community newspaper in 2001. Although it was a risky investment of his time and energy, Craig correctly believed that the newspaper could be a positive influence on the town. While the newspaper's newfound health has not impacted tourism directly, its resurrection led to the revitalization of the town's website, [creemore.com](http://creemore.com), which is now used in advertisements to promote Creemore as a tourism destination. As BIA President, Craig has also brought about a number of other positive changes. First, he began to use the word tourism to define associate membership in the BIA. Businesses in the community that are located outside of the BIA's boundaries, but are involved in tourism – such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and art galleries, can now become associate BIA members. Second, Craig has used his presidency to form closer relationships with other organizations in Creemore, believing that they can be more effective by working together. For example, the BIA now runs a beer tent for the brewery at the Copper Kettle Festival, thereby both supporting the event and raising money for other BIA initiatives. Third, Craig's past management experience as a former CEO has enabled him to be more active in tourism efforts than past BIA presidents who lacked similar experience. In one recent case, he called for the reconstruction of the town's main street to take place at a later date, so as to avoid harming the town's primary tourism season (McLeod & Holden, 2008). At present, his vision is to target tourists at Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, & Blue Mountain, by promoting Creemore as an authentic nearby destination (personal communication, October 14, 2008).

A third characteristic of Creemore's success as a destination is that it remains an authentic small town. Creemore has been preserved from changes to its small-town feel due to the closure of the railroad in the 1950s and its location five minutes away from the main road. It remains a small town with heritage buildings, independent stores, a main street, and friendly people. Simpson describes it as evocative of small town life, a place where people can enjoy a slower lifestyle and greater personal interaction with their neighbours (personal communication, October 14, 2008). He asserts that this is one of the main reasons why people like coming to Creemore, saying:

People like it. They come here and they go, 'What a neat place.' ... I think the appeal is it's real, and not... it doesn't look like Disneyworld, or Niagara-on-the-Lake. ... it's a little town, and people are friendly, and it's... you kind go out and this place seems real (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008).

As was the case with the Downtown Kingston and Downtown Yonge BIAs, Creemore is aware of this strength and promotes itself on this basis. The BIA advertises its small town charm by appealing to tourists' sense of adventure and desire for escape. In addition to selling the fact that the town has no main highway through it (Creemore Business Improvement Association, n.d.), they offer visitors a quiet place to stroll and relax, a scenic drive, and a destination that is "off the beaten path" (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008). This type of advertising has been carried on by newspaper and magazine writers, who have described the town as "an attractive location for people looking to escape the bustle of big-city life" (Rusk, 2006, para.2), and as a hamlet with "a sleepy, lost-in-time feel" that has retained its original character (Stren, 2006, para.4). The BIA has also taken advantage of the town's original culture and heritage by starting the Big Heart Festival in February. This event plays on the word Creemore, which means "big heart" in Gaelic (Weatherall, 2009). The BIA hopes to further strengthen its authentic heritage offering in the near future, by restoring and opening a historic log cabin next to its old stone jail (believed to be the smallest in North America) (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008). By emphasizing the authenticity of Creemore's tourism product, the BIA has strengthened the town's appeal to tourists.



A related characteristic of success is that the BIA has focused its efforts on what makes it distinct. This required a realistic assessment of what they had to offer to tourists, as Craig Simpson explains:

You have to start acknowledging that this tourism thing is a very competitive deal. I mean there are no shortage of places to go. So ... What do we offer that's distinctive? ... What, ideally, can you only do in Creemore? (personal communication, October 14, 2008)

The BIA is aware that their small size and limited resources restrict their ability to attract tourists. Consequently, it has focussed its promotion efforts on distinctive events that attract tourists (e.g. the Fall Colours Studio Tour and the Copper Kettle Festival). Neither of these events are BIA-run; however, they are worth promoting because they are more unique than the events staged by the BIA (e.g. Canada Day, Hallowe'en). As previously mentioned, the BIA also promotes itself as unique since the town does not have a major highway as its main street. Other distinctive features of the town include: the Creemore Springs microbrewery, the beautiful heritage buildings that line its main street, the town's historic jailhouse, the lack of chain stores in the commercial district, and, to some extent, its quality as a



**Illustration 5.4** – Two distinctive features of Creemore: the Creemore Springs Brewery (left), and the town's historic stone jailhouse (right).

shopping destination (Creemore Business Improvement Association, n.d.; C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008). It seems that the BIA has the right idea, as these distinctive features are what the town is known for (Gennings, 2008a; McLaughlin, 2006; Southern Ontario Tourism Organization, 2006).

The Creemore BIA has also benefited from the large population of weekend residents who live in the area. Affluent Torontonians have built cottages and weekend homes around the town because it is located in a scenic area just an hour from Toronto. As BIA President Craig Simpson explains, to understand Creemore one needs to understand the two population groups that consider it home – full-time residents and wealthy weekenders (personal communication, October 14, 2008). Weekend residents are one of the major reasons why tourists come to town. They often bring family and friends with them to spend time at their country homes, shop on Mill St., and see events in Creemore. One recent survey of tourists at a Creemore event identified that only a quarter of those present were from Toronto. The majority were friends or relatives of local residents who travelled from more distant locations, including Europe (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008). Further, many of the businesses in Creemore likely opened to take advantage of this tourist market. Businesses such as the high quality bookstore, restaurant and art galleries would not typically locate in a small, rural place, given the insufficient consumer base (Contenta, 2007). While the owners of Creemore’s new 100 Mile Store claim that they serve all walks of life, not just tourists and weekenders, their store hours show the importance of this population group as they are only open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays (Gennings, 2008b).

## **5.2 Developing a Template to Assess Current Tourism Potential**

The four case studies above segued into the final objective of this thesis. A template that BIAs can use to assess their current tourism potential was created based on the common characteristics and lessons that the case studies revealed. BIA representatives can use the template to provide a realistic assessment of how suited their organization presently is to tourism development.

The case study analyses identified seven common characteristics that played an important role in the development of BIAs as tourism destinations. The characteristics had to be evident in at least

three of the cases to inform the development of the template. While one characteristic, utilizing planning and teamwork, was only applied to tourism in two of the case studies, it was included as it was evident that the tourism efforts of the other two BIAs would have benefited from it (e.g. in Creemore individuals played a key role because the BIA and town are so small, but the interviewee made it clear that the BIA would be more effective if more members would become involved). Figure 5.3 lists the common characteristics that were identified. Check marks (✓) show when the characteristic was clearly evident in the case study, while X's show when it was not. In cases where the characteristic was only somewhat evident in the BIA, a ~ symbol is inserted, along with a brief note of explanation.

A number of bullet points were used in the template to expand on each of the seven common characteristics. Each is worth one point in the template's scoring system, with a few exceptions. Those features that were found to have a greater influence over a BIA's success as a destination, such as the quality of its attractions, were assigned one or two additional points to reflect their significance.

**Figure 5.3 – Common Characteristics of Successful Tourism-Oriented BIAs**

	Downtown Kingston BIA (Cluster 5)	Downtown London BIA (Cluster 4)	Downtown Yonge BIA (Cluster 3)	Creemore BIA (Cluster 2)
<b>Work at their Appearance</b>	✓	✓	✓	~ (Yes, but Township does most of this)
<b>Capitalize on Major Attractions</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Provide Unique Experiences</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Show Innovation &amp; Creativity</b>	✓	✓	✓	~ (Shown by key individuals)
<b>Demonstrate Self-Awareness</b>	✓	X	✓	✓
<b>Form Partnerships to Maximize their Tourism Potential</b>	✓	✓	✓	~ (Fewer partnership opportunities)
<b>Utilize Planning and Teamwork</b>	✓	~ (Yes, but not evident in tourism efforts)	✓	X

It is important to add a disclaimer before presenting the Current Tourism Potential Assessment Template. The template does not claim to include a complete list of the characteristics that make BIAs

successful tourism destinations. It is likely that other factors are also of importance. These might include the number and type of businesses that a BIA has, and its location relative to major transportation routes and urban areas. However, BIAs tend to have little or no control over these characteristics. Therefore, this assessment template primarily deals with characteristics that a BIA can influence. This study indicates that the more of these characteristics a BIA has, and the stronger that these characteristics are, the more likely it is that the BIA is a successful tourism destination. A BIA's current tourism potential is greater if a high score is attained after completing the assessment. Finally, it is important for BIA representatives to be objective when using this tool. Overly-favourable self-assessments may make a BIA feel good about itself, but will not enable it to improve as a destination.

**Figure 5.4 – Current Tourism Potential Assessment Template**

<i>Characteristics of BIAs that are Successful Tourism Destinations...</i>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Key Points:</b> (Worth one point each unless otherwise stated)	<b>Points Tally:</b>
<b>Work at their Appearance</b>	Appearance matters if a BIA wants to attract tourists or benefit from them coming to nearby attractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer the appearance of safety</li> <li>• Offer a consistently clean appearance</li> <li>• Very few vacant commercial units</li> <li>• Work to be welcoming (e.g. street ambassadors) (1 point for each separate effort)</li> <li>• Feature identifying and uniting features to distinguish the BIA, such as: banners, BIA names on street signs, sidewalk treatments, etc. (1 point for each)</li> </ul>	
<b>Capitalize on Major Attractions</b>	BIAs can capitalize on tourist attractions that are in or near the BIA, by working to get these tourists into the rest of the BIA to spend money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature a minor tourist attraction that will draw people living in the surrounding area (1 point for each attraction)</li> <li>• Feature a regional tourist attraction that will draw visitors from a few hours away (2 points for each attraction)</li> <li>• Feature a major tourist attraction that will draw visitors from other provinces as well as international tourists (3 points for each attraction)</li> <li>• Invest in efforts that will draw tourists from nearby attractions into the BIA</li> </ul>	
<b>Provide Unique Experiences</b>	BIAs cannot compete with shopping malls and box stores in terms of the price and selection of goods and services that they offer. To attract tourists they must distinguish themselves by the experiences that they provide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian oriented built form – with small blocks, low building set-backs from the street and wide sidewalks (worth 1-3 points, 1 point for each aspect)</li> <li>• Public spaces for regular entertainment and events (1 point for each public space)</li> <li>• Vibrancy, a people place drawing students, office workers, residents and tourists (1 point for each group of people)</li> <li>• Historic architecture (1 point for having some historic structures, 3 points if more than 50% of the buildings are historic)</li> <li>• Access to a waterfront in the BIA or on its immediate border</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monuments, public art, water fountains and other public displays (1 point for each)</li> </ul>	
<b>Show Innovation &amp; Creativity</b>	Associations that are creative and willing to pursue innovative ideas will be better able to attract tourists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIA board is always looking for ways to improve</li> <li>• BIA board is active and flexible</li> <li>• BIA board is willing to seek and consider others' advice</li> <li>• BIA staff or lead volunteers pursue new ideas, rather than sticking with the status quo</li> </ul>	
<b>Demonstrate Self-Awareness</b>	BIAs that are aware of how they look and what they are, can focus their efforts and investments to build on their strengths and improve on their weaknesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIA is aware of its niche appeal (why people come, what makes the BIA different and authentic)</li> <li>• BIA undertakes efforts that build on what makes it a distinct or authentic place (e.g. a festival that ties in to the BIA's cultural or historic roots) (1 point for each separate effort)</li> <li>• BIA is aware of who their current visitors are, and shapes its' efforts to appeal to them (1 point for knowing, 2 points for knowing and shaping its' efforts)</li> <li>• BIA is aware of other groups that can be realistically targeted as tourists, and is working to attract them (1 point for being aware, 2 points for being aware and working to attract them)</li> <li>• BIA has conducted a consulting exercise to identify its' strengths and weaknesses (1 point for a verbal exercise, 3 points for a verbal process that lead to a written plan)</li> </ul>	
<b>Form Partnerships to Maximize their Tourism Potential</b>	Partnerships enable BIAs to maximize their tourism potential by doing more with their limited resources (partners contribute finances, expertise, volunteer hours, and add additional influence over decision makers). They have led to: cooperative advertising and package deals, the development of larger events, and greater physical improvements to appearance of the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIA board recognizes the importance of partnerships and pursues them</li> <li>• BIA has an on-going partnership with nearby tourist attractions (1 point for each partnership)</li> <li>• BIA has an on-going partnership with the accommodations sector in the area</li> <li>• BIA has an on-going partnership with the local D.M.O. (destination marketing organization)</li> <li>• BIA has an on-going partnership with other major businesses, non-profit organizations, or local college/universities (1 point for each partnership)</li> <li>• BIA has identified future tourism-related partnership opportunities based on who is located in the BIA and who comes to the BIA (1 point for each good partnership opportunity that has been identified)</li> </ul>	
<b>Utilize Planning &amp; Teamwork</b>	BIAs boards need to think and plan long term if they are to make the transition into a more tourism-oriented place. By setting out a long-term vision, the BIA staff and/or volunteers can work as a team towards realizing it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIA board has created and/or approved a vision of what the BIA wants to become that includes tourism</li> <li>• BIA board has plans in place to work towards realizing that vision</li> <li>• BIA board is prepared to remain committed to this vision in the long term (in spite of opposition that arises to change)</li> <li>• BIA staff and volunteers' strengths and expertise are identified, and used to best manage events and tourism-related efforts</li> <li>• BIA staff and/or volunteers support other individuals and organizations that are doing work that contributes to the BIA's vision</li> </ul>	

### **5.3 Recommendations for BIAs Interested in Tourism Development**

Important practical lessons can be learned from the results of this exploratory study. It seems wise to conclude this thesis by reflecting on a few of them. The following recommendations are presented in the hope that they will enhance BIAs' ability to make informed decisions about developing or improving on their tourism product.

Empirical evidence indicates that the primary tourist market for BIAs is spatially restricted. While there are some exceptions (notably the Yonge Street BIA), in most cases the BIAs studied attracted the majority of their tourists from an area extending about two hours from the community. Based on this finding, it is recommended that marketing efforts be geared to residents living in this area. These efforts may be extended, however, if the BIA is located in a region with a remarkable attraction or feature, such as Niagara Falls.

BIAs would also be wise to target their promotions to tourist groups that are known to be in the area. This includes cottagers, boaters, tourists staying at nearby destinations and resorts, and tourists who are driving through the municipality. The possibility of benefiting from the boating tourist market is especially interesting, as 35 percent of the survey respondents said that boats and other watercraft could come directly to their BIA.

All BIAs should remember that commitment is necessary for their area to become a tourism destination. Efforts to change will cause conflict and resistance, as both the Downtown Kingston and Creemore case studies revealed. This is one reason why planning and teamwork is a characteristic of successful tourism-oriented BIAs. Successful organizations have a vision that they are committed to, and action plans to make it a reality, which allow them to progress despite opposition to change.

Small BIAs may be discouraged from attempting to attract tourists because they believe that they lack the resources to do so. But the situation is not necessarily that clear cut. A BIA that is located near a tourist attraction can still capitalize on the visitors that the attraction draws. The Creemore BIA

that was studied has relatively few businesses, few volunteers, and a small budget. However, by investing these limited resources in tourism efforts, their businesses not only made money, but their business association itself gained support. Tourism in Creemore led the municipality to invest in streetscape improvements that the BIA could not afford on its own (historic-looking streetlights). It also enabled the BIA to raise money by bartending at a local festival run by a nearby attraction (C. Simpson, personal communication, October 14, 2008). A tourism-oriented BIA can encourage municipal investment for the sake of local economic development, and by its efforts can add to its limited resources.

Business Improvement Areas that want to develop as tourism destinations need to first assess their present condition. The Current Tourism Potential Assessment Template makes this process fairly simple, as it indicates what characteristics are of primary importance in a BIA tourism assessment. The template also makes it easy to identify ways to improve, since a BIA needs only to reflect on those points in the assessment that it could not earn at the present time. For example, BIAs who are not aware of potential tourist groups who they could target in their marketing efforts, could hold a brainstorming session to identify them.

The question could be asked as to whether all BIAs are suited to tourism development, or whether some need to recognize that their location and/or lack of amenities make such efforts unrealistic. Based on this study, the researcher would suggest that while all BIAs cannot become “tourist destinations”, all BIAs can and should seek to benefit from tourists. The distinction is an important one. There are a variety of reasons why some BIAs cannot become or are not interested in becoming tourism destinations; however, it is still to these BIAs’ advantage to have additional customers (tourists) visiting them and spending money. This does not necessarily require major investments on the part of the BIA, since simple efforts like adding highway signage, investing in the streetscape, and conducting some regional advertising can draw in visitors. Further, these investments not only direct

tourists to the BIA, but also strengthen its identity in the minds of local shoppers. The Downtown London case study shows that the reverse is also true. Efforts to attract local and suburban shoppers, by making the BIA more appealing as a destination, will also attract tourists. To ignore tourists is to waste a valuable business opportunity in a society that loves to travel.

#### **5.4 Summarizing the Case Study Findings**

This chapter has presented four case studies of successful tourism-oriented BIAs. The characteristics that have led to each business association's success were discussed and supported by examples. A template that can be used to assess a BIA's current tourism potential was then proposed. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion of how BIA's can apply these findings to improve or develop as tourism destinations.



## **CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION**

This study has ventured into a largely unexplored area of academic literature to broaden our understanding of Business Improvement Areas. Previous studies have shown the link between leisure shopping and tourism, and have confirmed the role that business associations have played in the management and evolution of retail districts. However, only one study was found that looked directly at the role of the Business Improvement Area model in tourism. This research was conducted at a preliminary stage of BID development in the United Kingdom. Thus, the research was limited in its comprehensiveness and applicability to North America, leaving this area of research open for further study.

To address this gap in the literature, this study has provided information about Ontario BIAs' involvement in tourism. Four objectives were explored: to identify the nature of Ontario BIAs' involvement in tourism, to identify BIAs that are successful in attracting tourists, to identify BIA characteristics that make them successful tourism destinations, and to create a template that can be used to assess a BIA's current tourism potential. The first two objectives were presented in chapter four, while the third and fourth were explored in chapter five.

### **6.1 Summarizing the Study Findings**

This thesis has clearly demonstrated that the majority of Ontario's Business Improvement Areas are involved in tourism. Further, many BIAs that are not presently involved in tourism plan to be in the near future. A BIA's location and the desire to expand its customer base were cited as the primary reasons for this involvement. Evidently, BIAs are both interested in tourism, and able to act as tourism promoters.

BIAs use diverse means to promote themselves as destinations. While some methods are costly, partnerships help BIAs of all sizes to maximize their advertising impact. Attractions, accommodations,

destination marketing organizations, profit and non-profit organizations, and municipal bodies are common marketing partners.

Special events and festivals are a common component of BIA tourism efforts. Most held several each year that attracted tourists. But Business Improvement Areas also invest in other attractions. Murals, public art, historical tours, and lighting displays were frequently mentioned, along with other bolder investments. BIAs believe that the most important attractions to draw tourists are bodies of water, festivals and events, fine dining, performance theatres, specialty shops, and heritage structures. The presence of nearby tourist attractions will also have a significant influence on a BIA's drawing power.

Business Improvement Areas are unlikely to engage in tourism management efforts. Tourism committees are uncommon, and actual tourism plans are rare. Future plans to improve themselves as destinations included little mention of management efforts, so this is unlikely to change in the near future. However, the case studies showed that planning and teamwork are advantageous for BIAs that hope to improve as tourism destinations.

Tourism has had both positive and negative impacts on BIAs. More than half of the BIAs noted that it had increased business revenues, community spirit and neighbourhood vibrancy, while also noting that it had led to increased conflict between BIA members who favoured it and those who did not. At this stage it appears that more BIAs have experienced positive impacts than negative ones. However, this may reflect a bias in those who answered the survey, or may simply be because the volume of tourists in many places is too small to cause problems.

Some Business Improvement Areas are more successful than others in attracting tourists. Those that are involved in tourism tend to have larger budgets, invest in attractions, use more promotion methods, have more marketing partners, and be located in existing tourist districts. The population of the local municipality does not appear to be a factor in a BIA's tourism success.

Seven characteristics of successful tourism-oriented BIAs were identified: innovation, self-awareness, appearance, attractions, partnerships, experiences, and planning. Business Improvement Areas that strongly manifest these characteristics are believed to be in good condition to benefit from the industry. BIAs can also use these characteristics to assess their current tourism potential, and to improve as destinations.

## **6.2 Academic Implications**

The findings of this study confirm the work of several urban retail and urban tourism researchers. Many of the BIAs examined (Downtown Kingston, Creemore, etc.) provide proof of the change in urban retail noted by Tam (1994) and Millward and Winsor (1997). In each case the nature of retail businesses changed. The sale of services and specialty items that appeal to tourists replaced the sale of most basic consumer goods. However, as Litvin (2005) suggested, a shopping area must remain viable, meaningful and attractive to both residents and tourists to be sustainable. This reality was emphasized in the efforts of both the Downtown Kingston and Downtown London BIAs. The four case studies also demonstrated the truth of Jansen-Verbeke's (1991) assertion, that destinations that offer a wide range of leisure experiences are most likely to succeed in encouraging tourists to answer their shopping impulses. Further, this study showed that successful tourism-oriented BIAs enter into partnerships to increase the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and the appeal of their tourist offering, confirming the work of Warnaby, Bennison, Davies and Hughes in the United Kingdom (2004). In keeping with Tunbridge's (2001) work in Ottawa, the transition of BIAs to tourism was found to include several of the characteristics of the Festival Marketplace Model. These characteristics include: efforts to combine shopping and entertainment, the creation of festival events, increased management integration, the spatial demarcation of the retail area, and the use of street ambassadors for both security and tourist information. Finally, in terms of BIA-specific literature, this study has confirmed the

importance of Business Improvement Areas in managing and revitalizing retail areas (Grafos, 2001; Millward & Winsor, 1997; Tunbridge, 2001).

In addition to confirming some of the findings in existing urban tourism and urban retail literature, this study makes a novel contribution to our understanding of Business Improvement Areas. It provides descriptive BIA information in a fairly comprehensive way, building on previous studies (Gross, 2005; Houstoun, 2003; Mitchell, 2001a; Mitchell, 2001b; Stokes, 2007). However, this study is unique in that the broad BIA data that it provides is based in the Canadian, rather than the American context.

Yet the primary contribution of this study is at the intersection of tourism and BIA research. The nature of BIAs' involvement in tourism had not previously been explored, even though it was widely mentioned in BIA literature (Hogg, Medway & Warnaby, 2007; Houstoun, 2003; Perez, Hernandez & Jones, 2003). This study stepped into the gap to provide wide-ranging information on the nature of BIAs' involvement in tourism. It also proposed a typology of Business Improvement Areas' according to their tourism involvement, and identified several common characteristics of BIAs that are successful tourism destinations.

The study findings confirm some of the references to tourism in previous BIA literature. One example is Stokes' (2007) note that about a third of San Diego's BIAs produce large-scale street festivals, while others hold special events, restaurant tours, block parties, farmer's markets, and holiday festivals. BIAs in Ontario also host many events and festivals, with 71 percent of the respondents claiming that they held at least one event in 2007 that attracted tourists. It was also found that many BIAs view tourism activities as a form of marketing. This is the case in Downtown Yonge, where Marketing Manager Monica Kocsmaros plans and runs the BIA's events. This finding builds on Hochleutner's (2003) suggestion that all BIDs have four categories of core business activities, one of which is marketing and promotion, by clarifying that this category often includes tourism activities. Gross (2005) found that

BIDs in wealthier areas have multiple customer bases – residents, workers, and tourists. This finding was also supported by the case studies of three wealthier BIAs – Downtown Yonge, Downtown Kingston, and Downtown London, all of which had large budgets (over \$800,000) and a customer base that includes local residents, workers and tourists. The study also seemed to support Stokes' (2007) suggestion that fiscally-strong BIDs are more likely to be involved in commercial promotion and special event production. BIAs' general budget size was one of only three variables that helped the data to cluster to create a typology of BIAs' tourism involvement. In addition, the only BIA case study of a successful business association that lacked a large budget (Creemore), found that the BIA was significantly less involved in place promotion and special event production than the three other BIAs that were examined. Instead, it was dependent on the town's major tourist attraction, a brewery, to promote the destination and produce special events.

Finally, the broad information that this study has provided has confirmed and expanded on the findings of the only other academic source to directly address tourism and BIAs, Ratcliffe and Flanagan's (2004) study in the United Kingdom. The authors showed the relevance of BIAs to the promotion of local urban tourism by identifying four common goals of tourism and BIA management: place management, customer satisfaction, hospitality management, and competitiveness. These same goals were found in the survey findings. The BIAs were concerned with place management (streetscaping efforts were commonly mentioned), customer satisfaction (the second most common reason for attempting to attract tourists was to benefit the BIA's customers, its member businesses, by expanding their customer base), hospitality management (as seen in the provision of street ambassadors), and competitiveness (seen in the BIAs' efforts to compete as business and entertainment destinations within their region of the Province).

Ratcliffe and Flanagan (2004) also asserted that urban areas with BIAs have a competitive advantage over those that do not, in terms of tourist destination management, visitor generation, and

visitor spending. While this study only considered urban areas with BIAs, it came to a similar conclusion. Urban areas with active and innovative BIAs have a competitive advantage over those with inactive business associations. This advantage was seen in both tourism management and benefits. Thus, an urban area with an active Business Improvement Area will be better able to take advantage of the tourist market.

In addition, this study expands on the work of Ratcliffe and Flanagan (2004) by overcoming several of the limitations in their consideration of BIAs and tourism. First, the study takes place in a setting where the BIA model has been in place for almost four decades. This provides assurance that its findings are not just a temporary phenomenon in a newly introduced model of place management. Second, this study shows the applicability of some of their findings to the North American context (see those mentioned above). And third, by providing data on all of the BIAs in a large political jurisdiction (Ontario), this study goes beyond a simple case study approach. The comprehensive data provided here shows that tourism is indeed a relevant and important subject for BIAs to consider, as more than three quarters of them are involved in it in some way. The survey data also reveals the types of tourism activities that BIAs are engaged in, how they became involved in tourism, the impacts that tourism has had on their BIA, and many other pieces of information that were not known previously.

### **6.3 Areas for Future Research**

This study has sought to be comprehensive in its consideration of Business Improvement Areas' involvement in tourism. However, it has not sealed the door to avenues for further research. On the contrary, this study has opened the door to a great deal of future research by touching on many different aspects of BIAs' tourism involvement.

First, the study findings could be tested in another jurisdiction using the same questionnaire. Doing so would verify that these findings are applicable elsewhere. A province such as British Columbia, or an American state that has a significant number of BIAs, would be a good places to repeat the study.

Another possibility for future research is to explore any of the questionnaire topics in further detail. For example, a study could focus on the topic of BIA-run events and festivals. It could consider the types of events and festivals that BIAs host, the average length of each type of event, what the common components of the events and festivals are, how BIAs seek to maximize their financial benefit from the events, how many visitors come to the events, from where visitors come, what motivates tourists to come, and so on. Other topics that could be further explored include: how BIAs fund and create tourist attractions, what promotion methods are most effective in attracting tourists, the benefits and complications of tourism-related partnerships, how tourism impacts can be objectively measured, and what issues BIAs believe need to be addressed in tourism plans.

Further, tourism in Business Improvement Areas should be looked at from different angles. This study has heard from BIA representatives – managers, chairs, and directors. Future studies could consider the perspective of tourists in BIAs through a survey of their experiences and expectations. The attitudes of residents to tourism in their local business area are also worth considering. Finally, researchers could inquire what features tour operators are looking for in a destination that could draw them to a BIA.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

Business Improvement Areas do engage in tourism promotion, tourism development, and to a lesser extent, tourism management. Now, for the first time, a comprehensive study has been conducted that confirms and profiles these efforts. While opportunities remain for future research into the relationship between BIAs' and tourism, this study has begun to fill in the picture. Reflecting back on

the rationale for this study, the overall finding is clear; Business Improvement Areas are involved in creating, nurturing, and shaping tourism within their boundaries.





- c. Leadership from one or a few members of the BIA
  - d. The desire of many BIA businesses to expand their customer base
  - e. The example of other BIAs
  - f. The desire to remain open on Sundays and/or holidays
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many special events and festivals did your BIA host in 2007 that are believed to have attracted tourists? (Estimate if unsure) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Has your BIA invested in creating any tourism attractions besides festivals/special events? (Circle one)
- a. Yes
  - b. No
- If yes, what are these attractions? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How does your BIA promote itself to tourists? (Circle all that apply)
- a. Website
  - b. Television ads
  - c. Radio ads
  - d. Local newspaper ads
  - e. National newspaper ads
  - f. Local magazine ads
  - g. National magazine ads
  - h. Billboards
  - i. Mail-out flyers/advertisements
  - j. Sale of postcards
  - k. Promotional DVDs
  - l. Shown on city/town maps
  - m. Brochures at tourist information centres
  - n. Roadside tourism signs
  - o. Tourist guidebooks
  - p. Street banners in the BIA
  - q. Seasonal/festive signage & decorations in the BIA
  - r. Street ambassadors in the BIA
  - s. None of the above
  - t. Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. Use check marks to indicate the relative importance of the activities, experiences, and features that are present in your BIA, in terms of their ability to attract tourists.

Tourist Activity/Experience/Feature:	Relative Importance in Attracting Tourists:				
	Not Present in my BIA	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
a. Specialty shops					
b. Souvenir shops					
c. Clothing stores					
d. Fine dining					
e. Coffee shops/Desserts/Cafes					
f. Family/Casual dining					
g. Quick service/Fast food/Delicatessens					
h. Bakeries					
i. Pubs					
j. Microbreweries					
k. Heritage structures					
l. Cultural/ethnic restaurants					
m. Cultural/ethnic shops					
n. Art galleries					
o. Performance theatres					

p. Night clubs/Live entertainment facility					
q. Spas					
r. Conference centre/meeting facility					
s. Festivals and special events					
t. Water bodies (lakes, rivers)					
Other:					
Other:					
Other:					

12. If you do have specialty shops in your BIA that attract visitors from outside of the municipality, what types of specialty shops are they? (ex. custom-fitted swimwear) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which other stakeholders has your BIA partnered with to market the area as a tourism destination? (Circle all that apply)

- a. None
- b. The local destination marketing organization (ex. Tourism Kingston)
- c. Other BIAs
- d. Hotels/Motels/Resorts
- e. Bed & Breakfasts
- f. Spas
- g. Sporting Facilities (ex. hockey arenas, golf courses)
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Does your BIA have a committee that deals specifically with tourism? (Circle one)

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what are its' main responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does your BIA have a director(s) that deals specifically with tourism? (Circle one)

- a. Yes – Paid Staff
- b. Yes - Volunteer
- c. No

If yes, what are his/her/their main responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Does your BIA have a written tourism strategy? (Circle one)

- a. Yes
- b. No

17. Which modes of transportation can tourists use to come directly to your BIA? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Private vehicles
- b. Public transit buses
- c. Streetcar line(s)
- d. Subway
- e. Boats/Watercraft
- f. Commuter rail lines (ex. GO transit, O-Train)
- g. VIA trains
- h. Inter-city buses (ex. Greyhound)
- i. Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. What problems have arisen in your BIA from tourism development? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Increased traffic congestion
- b. Insufficient parking

- c. Increased litter
- d. Increased conflict between businesses and residents
- e. Lack of buy-in from members/businesses (ex. willingness to be open late)
- f. None of the above
- g. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

19. What positive developments have resulted from tourism in your BIA? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Increased business revenues
- b. Increased community spirit
- c. Fewer vacant buildings
- d. Greater vibrancy in the neighbourhood
- e. None of the above
- f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is your BIA planning to do in the near future to improve the tourism experience that it offers?

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#### **PART D – General BIA Information**

This information is being collected to provide a context for the above questions. As with all the information collected here, the answers will be kept confidential and anonymous (no individual BIA names and information from this questionnaire will be shared or published without written consent). All answers will be grouped together (aggregated) in published documents.

21. In which year did your BIA form? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Approximately how many businesses are presently in your BIA? (Circle one)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Less than 50        | e. Between 200 and 300 |
| b. Between 50 and 100  | f. Between 300 and 400 |
| c. Between 100 and 150 | g. Between 400 and 500 |
| d. Between 150 and 200 | h. Over 500            |

23. What is the approximate size of your BIA's current yearly budget? (Circle one)

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. Less than \$100,000             | g. Between \$600,001 and \$700,000   |
| b. Between \$100,000 and \$200,000 | h. Between \$700,001 and \$800,000   |
| c. Between \$200,001 and \$300,000 | i. Between \$800,001 and \$900,000   |
| d. Between \$300,001 and \$400,000 | j. Between \$900,001 and \$1 million |
| e. Between \$400,001 and \$500,000 | k. Over \$1 million                  |
| f. Between \$500,001 and \$600,000 |                                      |

**24.** How many paid staff does your BIA have? (Circle one from each column)

<u>Full-time year-round:</u>	<u>Part-time year-round:</u>	<u>Full-time summer only:</u>	<u>Part-time summer only:</u>
a. None	a. None	a. None	a. None
b. One	b. One	b. One	b. One
c. Two	c. Two	c. Two	c. Two
d. Three	d. Three	d. Three	d. Three
e. Four	e. Four	e. Four	e. Four
f. Five or more	f. Five or more	f. Five or more	f. Five or more

**Thank-you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

If you would you like to receive an executive summary of the results of this survey, please supply an E-mail Address:

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Are you willing to be contacted further for an interview and visit to your BIA? The information collected would be used to assist other BIAs in Ontario in developing tourism within their boundaries. If the answer is yes, please supply a contact name and phone number or e-mail address below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: Phase Two Interview Guide

- Thank them for participating and sharing their experiences
- Explain importance and use of research again
- State approximate time of 45 minutes to an hour for the interview
- Present them with information letter and consent form: Are they comfortable with their name being used? With the interview being recorded?
- Have them sign consent form – keep one copy and give them the other
- Turn on recorder (if allowed)

### **Emphasis on learning the characteristics which make the BIA a successful tourism destination:**

*-Remember to probe their answers*

1. On the survey, you've categorized your BIA as one which caters to tourists. Tell me about how your BIA attracted its first tourists?
  - Was it a planned development, or did it just happen because of other factors?
2. Tell me more about the process that your BIA has gone through to develop into a tourism destination (get dates as well).
  - a. What investments were made over time in tourism?
  - b. Have local residents been involved at all in the process?
  - c. Have outside organizations (e.g. post-secondary institutions) assisted in any way?
3. Is there a tourism "champion" (leader) or "champions" in your BIA who have encouraged the businesses or BIA board to take part in efforts to attract tourists? Tell me about this person and what motivates them.
4. How are your tourism activities developed?
5. Who manages your tourism activities, and what kinds of work do they do?
6. How are your tourism activities financed?
  - Are alternative funding sources used besides the BIA's tax levy? (Tell me about them)
  - Are you aware of other funding sources that could be used? (If so, why haven't they been used?)
7. How would you explain the appeal of your BIA to tourists? Why do they come?
8. Do you know where the majority of your tourists come from? (Where and why from there?)
9. How do you feel that your BIA can improve as a tourism destination? (What can and should be improved?)
10. What challenges to tourism development has your BIA faced? Has there been resident/community/business opposition?
11. What lessons has your BIA learned through its tourism efforts? (Past failures, successes)

**12.** Has your BIA lobbied the municipality or Province to support tourism activity in the BIA? If so, how and with what results?

**13.** What features do you believe a BIA needs to have in order to be successful in attracting tourists?

-Thank them again. Ask if I can follow up with further questions by e-mail if they arise.

-Assess if they would be willing to make additional time for a transect walk of tourism initiatives in the BIA. If so, ask.

**APPENDIX C: SAS Clustering Procedure to Determine an Appropriate Number of Clusters**

The SAS System  
09:22 Wednesday, September 24, 2008

1

The CLUSTER Procedure  
Ward's Minimum Variance Cluster Analysis

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	Bimodality
percatertour	-0.0102	0.9903	0.3257	-0.7355	0.4584
eventsfest	0.00974	1.0303	7.5187	58.6616	0.9308
budgetsize	-0.0576	0.9443	2.5667	6.0648	0.8236

Eigenvalues of the Covariance Matrix

	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
1	1.46474783	0.50116759	0.4992	0.4992
2	0.96358025	0.45793513	0.3284	0.8277
3	0.50564512		0.1723	1.0000

Root-Mean-Square Total-Sample Standard Deviation = 0.988934  
Root-Mean-Square Distance Between Observations = 2.422384

Cluster History

T i e	NCL	--Clusters Joined--		FREQ	SPRSQ	RSQ
	20	CL28	CL48	5	0.0015	.985
	19	CL34	CL20	9	0.0018	.983
	18	OB4	OB26	2	0.0020	.981
	17	CL33	CL37	8	0.0020	.979
	16	CL22	CL36	11	0.0021	.977
	15	CL16	CL32	13	0.0023	.975
	14	OB16	CL21	5	0.0024	.972
	13	CL17	CL29	11	0.0033	.969
	12	CL23	CL30	7	0.0039	.965
	11	CL18	OB42	3	0.0039	.961
	10	CL15	CL25	18	0.0061	.955
	9	CL13	OB64	12	0.0075	.948
	8	CL19	CL24	17	0.0109	.937
	7	CL12	CL10	25	0.0135	.923
	6	CL8	CL14	22	0.0192	.904
	5	CL11	OB29	4	0.0314	.873
	4	CL9	CL7	37	0.0701	.803
	3	CL6	CL4	59	0.1945	.608
	2	CL3	CL5	63	0.2006	.408
	1	CL2	OB20	64	0.4075	.000



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