

It's a pleasure to join you here to celebrate BIA week.

Toronto has been the leader in the BIA movement for nearly 50 years.

The BIA movement began with a group of merchants along Bloor Street West who fought for the introduction of the world's first BIA legislation and the creation of the world's first BIA – Bloor West Village.

BIA's are a "made in Toronto" model for making commercial main streets vital places to work, shop, dine, live and be entertained. It is a model that is now copied across Canada and around the world.

Our BIA movement continues to grow. Just this week, Council approved Toronto's 83rd BIA in the Yonge & St. Clair area. We are first in the world in the number of BIAs in the city.

The contributions that our BIAs make to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of our neighbourhoods and our City are impressive:

- \$30 million invested annually to make our neighbourhoods places where business and culture can thrive;
- \$26 million spent on beautification projects in the last 5 years;

- 700 volunteer Board members contributing 42,000 hours of work free to their communities;
- And 160 annual festivals, attracting over 7.4 million visitors annually. I am immensely proud that my own Wexford Heights BIA holds the three-day-long Taste of Lawrence festival that attracts 200,000 visitors each year.

Your achievements continue to amaze, inspire and energize our City! BIAs are a major reason why Toronto is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities

I would like to thank TABIA for arranging BIA Week to showcase the great work that BIAs have undertaken.

You can rest assured that the City appreciates your efforts and will continue to support you in the years ahead.

Thank you.