



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The Waterfront District is a not-for-profit association. We are jointly funded by the property owners, businesses and the City of Thunder Bay. The Waterfront District is dedicated to the redevelopment and promotion of a vibrant and healthy downtown north core.

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To Our Members

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

Our vision for the Waterfront District BIA is to be *“a vibrant, diverse, mixed-use downtown area where residents and visitors collectively gather to enjoy a variety of business, shopping, entertainment and recreational activities in a safe and beautiful environment”*.

The Waterfront District’s strategic plan and expansion goals align with the City of Thunder Bay’s strategic plan for the revitalization of the downtowns and business areas. Our priority areas continue to focus on maintaining essential services to all its members, and being a partner in addressing downtown development and growth.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Waterfront BIA Board of Management’s goals continue to include demonstrating fiscal responsibility and sound decision making in all of our activities. We worked hard to address areas where we were able to save dollars. Our goal is to continue to find ways to operate all programs and services as efficiently as possible.

2017 OVERVIEW

In 2017, the Waterfront District’s programs and services include a renewed focus in the following areas:

Beautification – We hired a part-time maintenance technician, added 24 new planters to the BIA area for a total of 35 planters, continued efforts with the seagull management program, and repaired the tree lights on Cumberland Street. Currently we are in the early stages of developing a trees and tree lights revitalization/maintenance program in communication and partnership with the City of Thunder Bay Parks Department.



Marketing – We are improving our marketing efforts - started the process of rebranding the Waterfront District, completed phase 1 of a newly designed website including a searchable business directory, and increased our online/media presence. Our key messaging strategy of *“shop.eat.play”* focuses on the vision anchors – people, activities, safety and beauty. It provides the foundation of all our marketing and communications campaigns.

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Membership – We implemented an Ambassador program with an Ambassador designated to every block. Also prepared a member brochure outlining the benefits of our BIA. We are improving our member communications with a bi-weekly newsletter. The format of the Annual General Meeting was changed to include a Members' Networking Session. We are working on the Associate Members package for rollout in the New Year.

Governance – The Board and Staff participated in a Board Governance training workshop. The session was facilitated by Kay Matthews, Executive Director from the OBIAA. A Governance Subcommittee has been formed! Work has started on updating our processes and procedures.



A Noteworthy Event!

Premier Kathleen Wynne and Michael Gravelle, MPP visiting our very own Damascus Donair.



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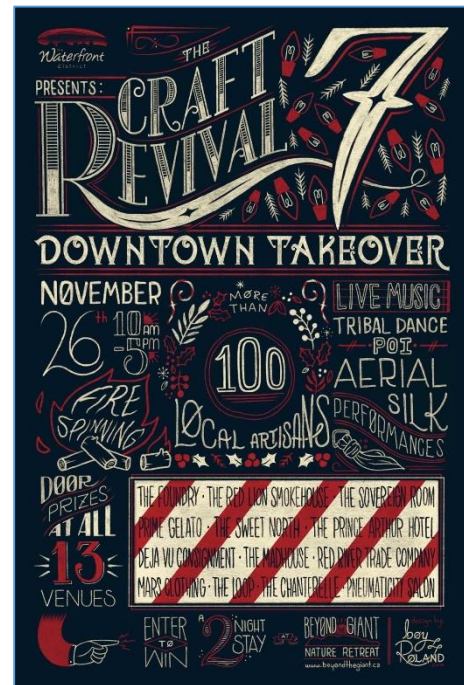
Sponsorships – As a jointly funded business improvement area, the members and our community look to us to give back. We have formalized our Sponsorships and Donations Guidelines with an annual fund to support and/or sponsor our members' projects or events along with community events on a case-by-case basis. Our downtown BIA Bucks are issued as sponsorship donations to encourage spending within the Waterfront District. We offer BIA gift certificates for purchase to experience the variety of services, shops, restaurants, and entertainment in our District.



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Special Events – We supported the following events through hosting or sponsorships along with promotion on our social media:

- Christmas in the Waterfront – fun and activities in partnership with Mapletops and Rooster's Bistro – sleigh rides, Santa, crafts/colouring and face painting
- Second Annual Window Wonderland contest in partnership with Firedog Communications and Thunder Bay Hydro
- Craft Revival 7
- The Hunger 12, Halloween Party, Definitely Superior Art Gallery
- Let It Ride, Special Olympics
- Grub Crawl, Shift Thunder Bay
- Ribfest with Our Kids Count
- Annual Girls Day Out, Charity Golf Tournament, VON
- Welcoming the New Doctors to Thunder Bay, NOSM
- Student Orientation, Lakehead Thunderwolves
- Blues Fest
- Live on the Waterfront
- Charity Chairs, Ruttan Block Canada Day
- Roller Ski Race, National Team Development Centre
- Superior Theatre Festival
- Thunder Bay Chill Soccer Team
- Canadian Lighthouses Fundraiser
- Craft Revival 6
- Golf Tournament, Shift Thunder Bay
- CUPE Delegate Bags
- Snow Day, City of Thunder Bay, Culture Division
- Urban Infill, Definitely Superior Art Gallery



Tourism Award – We strive to and have been recognized for our efforts in providing an exceptional visitor experience. In April, the Waterfront District BIA was honored to be the recipient of the 2017 Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce's Business Excellence - Tourism Partner Award.

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Tourism Designation – We delivered a deputation to City Council in support of a tourism exemption for the Waterfront District BIA. This would allow retail businesses to be open on holidays at their discretion. The exemption will potentially attract more visitors, increase tourist numbers and customer spending in the area on holidays. The next step is a member consultation on increasing summer openings in particular with the BIA restaurants to build a stronger case. Stay tuned for the date of the member consultation.

Workshops – Plans are underway to offer complimentary membership information and training sessions. Most recently with the support of CEDC Thunder Bay Entrepreneur Centre, we offered a Facebook 101 Workshop.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Waterfront District's strategic plan and expansion goals align with the City's strategic plan for the revitalization of the downtowns and business areas. The key expansion areas for the Waterfront District is building on local economic and tourism development including:

Membership

1. **Member engagement** – to continue to build relationships and increased participation.
2. **Member education** – to support existing businesses with the goal to provide and facilitate training seminars in social media and arrange for local experts to host free membership information sessions such as small business best practices.

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3. **Marketing strategy** - to implement a comprehensive marketing plan with a budget for advertising that captures the essence and voice of the Waterfront District to our targeted audiences – local residents and visitors.
4. **Rebranding** – to continue to leverage the Waterfront District BIA's online/media presence including its rebranding campaign to better reflect the transformation that is underway.
5. **Tourism** – to continue our marketing efforts to promote the Waterfront District BIA and the City of Thunder Bay as a tourist destination to bring increased economic activity.

Beautification

1. **Trees & Tree Lights Program** - the trees and tree lights provides great value to the appearance of our BIA area. In cooperation with the City's Parks Department, we are in the process of developing a three-year maintenance program. We have completed an inventory on the trees' condition, tree lights, tree guards and banners. A new standard for installing lights will be implemented. The priorities on this joint initiative include improved communications on tree condition, trimming and lighting work schedules to minimize costs.



2. **Seagull Management Program** – the professional pest bird management and control services was implemented in 2015. This program has significantly reduced the number of seagulls in our downtown area. It has been accomplished by the removal of nests, the sterilization of eggs and the introduction of predator birds. The program's success is measured by the egg sterilization and nest count records.
3. **Walkability Strategies** – we will identify, assess and promote the Waterfront District as a walkable pedestrian focused tourist destination; offering a sense of comfort and safety, and providing a sense of social connectedness. We will partner with the community groups and the City of Thunder Bay to develop strategies to promote walkability.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Here is our management income statement at month ending October 31, 2017.

The Waterfront District BIA Management Income Statement at October 31, 2017

Item	2017 Budget	Oct 31/17 Actual
Revenue		
Taxes Levied	65,000.00	60,583.00
Contributions from City of Thunder Bay	62,000.00	54,467.00
Falcon Donations	0.00	3,200.00
Other Revenue	0.00	12,239.00
Total Revenue	\$127,000.00	\$130,489.00
Expenses		
Construction & Beautification	33,254.08	42,344.00
Advertising & Promotion	43,910.00	36,095.00
Administration & Office-Related Expenses	49,835.92	45,650.00
Total Expenses	\$127,000.00	\$124,089.00

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THANK YOU ...

To our Members for their inspired and shared vision centered on the re-development of the Waterfront District!

To our Corporate Sponsors for supporting our programs and services!

City of Thunder Bay

Firedog Communications

Gridlink

JP Northern Corp

Prince Arthur Hotel & Waterfront Suites

RII Realty Holdings

Sleeping Giant Brewing Company

Sysco Foods

Thunder Bay Hydro

To our Board of Management Team for volunteering their time and sharing of their talents!

Jim Comuzzi, Chair

Maelyn Hurley, Vice-Chair

Dave Richard, Treasurer

Jolene DesRosiers, Director

Sandy Herron, Director

Peter White, Director

Paul Pugh, City Councillor

Andrew Foulds, City Councillor



To our Support Team!

Firedog Communications, Marketing & Social Media

Blair Gagnon, Maintenance Technician

Lynn Gray, BIA Bookkeeper

Colleen Kenna, Project Services

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SUMMARY

The Waterfront District is one of the business districts which represents the image and character of our City. We are proud of our District as it has become a place of interest by offering an authentic and unique visitor's experience. Our District is also known as the Entertainment District of Thunder Bay. Our beautiful heritage buildings, unique shops, hotels, restaurants, night life, Art Galleries, and a Casino encourage our visitors to "*shop.eat.play*". The building of the arts, cultural and entertainment offerings supports our strength as a commercial center. In addition, we are located within close proximity of our City's greatest assets – Prince Arthur's Landing, Lake Superior Waterfront and the Sleeping Giant.

All members of the Waterfront District individually and collectively enhance the visitor experience through their diverse business and service offerings. Our diverse membership base ranges from core retail and personal services to restaurants and professional services. We have a passionate team of entrepreneurs whose positive energy has greatly assisted the Waterfront District in becoming the place to be – to live, work, shop, eat, play and stay.

The Waterfront District is alive and vibrant, and the place where people want to go. This is the kind of downtown we collectively envision for the Waterfront District – a place where people want to be and where businesses want to invest. Together, we are moving in a positive direction and benefit from our partnerships and revitalization initiatives.

Sincerely,

Jim Comuzzi, Chair
November 27, 2017



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CONTACT INFORMATION

The Waterfront District BIA
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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/waterfrontdistrict.bia/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/tbaywaterfront/>

