

Downtown Smiths Falls

a
great
place
to
be!

**Downtown Business Association
(DBA)
Membership Handbook**



**WE WELCOME YOU TO
SMITHS FALLS
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

This handbook is to inform and support you,
as a member of the
SMITHS FALLS
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION.

Our handbook is formatted in a question-answer format
and is part of a welcome package of information
about our membership.

For more information, please contact or visit
The Smiths Falls Downtown
Business Association:

77 Beckwith St. N.
Smiths Falls, ON
K7A 4T6

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E-mail: dba@smithsfalls.ca

<http://www.downtownsmithsfalls.ca>



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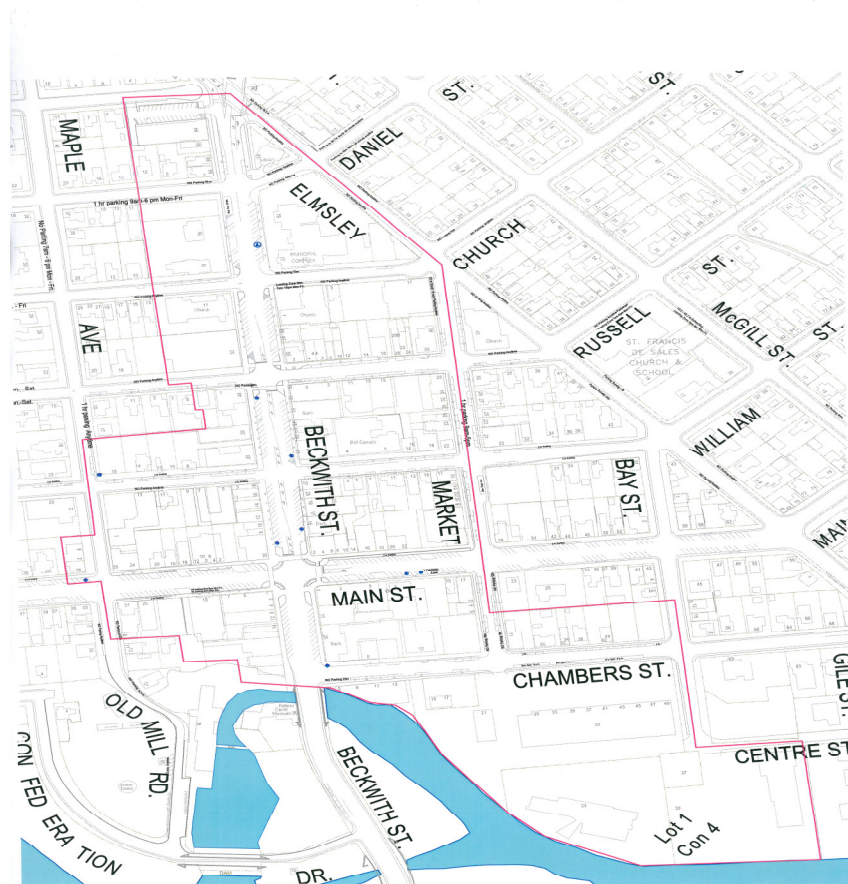
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HOW IT ALL BEGAN

How did you become a Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association Member?

You became a member simply by locating your business within the geographic boundaries of the Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association. These boundaries are defined by By-law #4777-82 (1984) of the town of Smiths Falls. The By-law states that all commercial properties within the DBA geographic area (see map below), and all commercial tenants of these properties, are members of the Downtown Business Association (DBA)





What is the Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association?

The Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association - SFDBA (formerly call Smiths Falls Business Improvement Area - BIA) is a not-for-profit organization representing you, and approximately 160 other business and properties in the Smiths Falls Downtown area.

Our mandate is to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipally and, to promote the area as a business and shopping area.

To do this, the DBA works to ensure a clean, safe, attractive and vibrant environment in the downtown area. It promotes and supports projects and initiatives designed to improve the downtown and get more feet on the streets, for the benefit of downtown merchants and property owners. The SFDBA is also an advocate for core area business and property owners representing the interests of downtown to bodies such as the Town of Smiths Falls.

While the Town of Smiths Falls is ultimately responsible for the core area, SFDBA does engage in specific projects in support of downtown core area beautification, maintenance, and cleaning programs.

We've have the chosen the phrase "**A Great Place to Be!**" as our slogan with the '**be**' changing to '**shop**', '**dine**', '**work**', '**play**', '**invest**' and '**live**' depending on the campaign. This phrase works two fold; it says to businesses that Downtown Smiths Falls is a great place to invest and prosper, while for the public it says we are a great place to spend time and money.

Who manages the Association?

The Board of Management is the governing body of the SFDBA. The volunteer Board of Management is elected from its members and works on behalf of its members.

Our Board of Directors (made up of volunteers from the business community) is the decision making body of the organization. The Board meets regularly to oversee policies, financial decisions, and general management. The Board's powers and responsibilities include: selecting the Executive, reviewing committees, hiring staff, establishing organizational polices, and initiating and assessing programs and projects. Any property owner or business owner within the SFDBA has the opportunity to apply for Board Directorship.

In addition, this organization employs an Office Clerk and maintenance staff who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the DBA.

What does the Association office do?

Together with the staff, the Board of Management and the SFDBA committees determine the activities that the DBA undertakes each year and their budgets.

The Association's staff implements, facilitates and monitors all of the SFDBA's projects and initiatives.

The responsibilities of the staff include:

- Carrying out all projects and programming as set by the Board
- Addressing the concerns of and issues facing our membership. We are the front line of information-sharing between you; the members, the Board, and other community stakeholders
- Organizing, facilitating and contributing to the SFDBA's committee meetings
- Managing and administering the Association's financial affairs: bookkeeping, accounting reports, annual budgets
- Maintaining regular contact with membership: updating the DBA property & business owner database records
- Providing regular, timely member communications (newsletters, special mailings, announcement e-updates)
- Responding to requests for information and concerns from you as members, from the local community and from other local organizations
- Hosting and organizing general meetings of the Association such as

- the Annual General Meeting
- Cooperating with our community partners to promote and enhance the Downtown business community.

ALL ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP

What is the relationship between the DBA and Town Hall?

The Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association is “at arm’s length” from the Town of Smiths Falls. We are a community stakeholder group that advocates on behalf of our paying membership.

The Association enjoys a co-operative relationship with the Town and its various departments and staff. This is vital, as some issues require input and support from Town Staff.

At the yearly Annual General Meeting (AGM) the Board presents its yearly budget to the entire DBA membership. This budget is then presented to Town Council for ratification. The bottom line is that responsibility for the fiscal affairs of the DBA rests with your Board of Management, made up of members like you.

What does my Membership Cost?

The cost of your membership is based upon your commercial assessment. Since assessments vary, there is no “fixed cost” but all members pay the same levy rate for your membership. The Town of Smith Falls collects this levy through the property owner.

The formula for determining your levy is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Your Property Assessment}}{\text{Total Assessment of DBA}} \times \text{DBA Budget} = \text{Your DBA Levy}$$

The Town of Smiths Falls Finance Department calculates the levies each year based on the commercial assessments of the properties within our Downtown boundaries.

A specific levy is added to the property taxes of every owner designated as either Commercial or Industrial located within the boundaries of the DBA. This means that every property owner is a member - as is the commercial tenant who pays any portion of the property taxes.

If you have questions about your business levy contact the Finance Department at the Town of Smiths Falls: 613-283-4124.

In 2009 the SFDBA Board of Directors approved a plan to add "Associate Members" to our membership to allow those businesses on the fringe of the SFDBA boundaries (due to our irregular boundaries) to become a member of the DBA for an annual fee of \$200.00. They enjoy all the benefits of membership but do not have voting rights and they cannot participate in our beautification or maintenance programs.

What Can I Expect as a New Member?

Expect a welcome visit from our Office Admin. Clerk or one of our Board of Directors. You will be provided with a Welcome package and subsequently, regular updates and correspondence from the Association's office. Your business information is maintained on our database so that we can correspond. It is important that we continually have your updated information to stay in regular contact with you. As well, we produce a Dining Guide and a comprehensive Business Directory, and list your main business contact information on our website: www.downtownsmithsfalls.ca

**WHAT DOES THE ASSOCIATION DO FOR DOWNTOWN
BUSINESSES AND FOR YOU?**

The DBA is mandated by municipal law to undertake two responsibilities:

- To improve, beautify and maintain public lands and buildings within the DBA, beyond that which is provided by the municipally, and

- To promote the Downtown as a business and shopping area. Since 1984, the DBA has evolved, taking on numerous projects and activities to benefit our membership. A few of them are Marketing, Events, Communications, Beautification and Advocacy.

Marketing

A range of ongoing and special services are provided:

- Advertisements and marketing efforts with local media and guidebooks
- Production of updated Downtown Smiths Falls brochures such as our Business Directory and Dining Out Guide

Events

Our whole business community benefits from the event programming that takes place in Downtown Smiths Falls. While the DBA is generally not in the business of funding or organizing major events:

- We provide updates on how your business can take advantage of the events that take place around our Downtown
- We organize seasonal, member-based events like our Spring Fling and Christmas Open House

Communications

Member communications are fundamental to the success of the Smiths Falls DBA. These initiatives include:

- Monthly newsletters delivered by hand and email
- A corporate website providing you and the world with a window to our Downtown business community
- E-mail updates on issues and programming concerning you and your business
- Welcome packages to welcome newcomers to our Association
- An Annual General Meeting to share with you these programs that we execute on your behalf

Beautification

Providing a customer friendly downtown through:

- Streetscape improvements such as street furniture, hanging baskets, planters, banners and murals.
- Our Downtown Maintenance Worker keeps our downtown looking great by trimming the grass, pulling weeds, graffiti removal, garbage pick up, and many other duties.
- Seasonal Decorations to create a unique and pleasant environment for customers and staff of all businesses, retail and non-retail, through the use of decorations that are appropriate to the season and holiday.

Advocacy

“Advocacy” is the way by which the DBA responds to your concerns and it is the means by which those concerns are presented to stakeholders. Stakeholders include community agencies, government, and your business peers in the Downtown.

Advocacy involves creative problem solving on issues such as, but not limited to: Parking; Urban Design/Façade Enhancements; Other issues related to the economic development of our community.

In order for the DBA to maintain a competitive edge for business and properties Downtown, it is very important that you share your opinions and thoughts with us. Responses to our requests for feedback are necessary for us to advocate on your behalf with other stakeholders.

What can I do to get the most from my Membership?

Your business or property can utilize the many opportunities created by the DBA by:

1. Reading your DBA mail and e-mail.
2. Informing your staff and customers about the latest DBA newsletter
3. Simply talking to your business neighbours - there is such a wealth of experience, insight and creativity within our business

- community.
4. Attending the Annual General Meeting to hear what the DBA has done over the last year and what they are planning for the upcoming year
 5. If your business information changes (e.g. new owner, new business name, new contact person) or if you know of another member whose information has changed, please contact the Association office.
 6. If you are a property owner with tenants, inform the DBA office with the name, address and contact person for the businesses at your property.
 7. Telling your advertising representatives that you want your ads placed in conjunction with the DBA whenever possible. This maximizes the impact of all our combined advertising efforts.

When you think about what the Association does for your business, also keep in mind that your participation is critical to maximizing the benefits of your membership. This organization is mainly made up of YOU: Downtown Businesses. We work best together in creating a more healthy, viable, dynamic Downtown.

Participation means noting the information we send to you. Share the points with your tenants, staff, management team, and your business neighbours.

Participation can also mean donating your expertise and your time on the Board of Management or as a committee member.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Association is run by its staff, but the work plan is coordinated with the assistance of Downtown volunteers. These volunteers are the engine that makes this organization successful! They give their time and talents toward the execution of programs, benefiting the entire Downtown business community.

The best way to get involved in the development of our Business Community is by joining a volunteer working Committee. Here is an explanation of our Committees:

Promotion and Marketing Committee – this group works towards the mandate of effectively promoting and marketing Downtown Smiths Falls to the residents, other businesses and tourists through a variety of media as a vibrant business and shopping district attracting people to shop, dine, work, live and gather. Initiatives include: Downtown Business Directory, Downtown Dining Guide, DBA Handbook, Welcome Package for new businesses, developing and managing the corporate website, special events i.e. Spring Fling, monthly newsletters, advertising campaigns and Mural Walking Tour.

Beautification and Cleanliness Committee – this group works towards the mandate of “beautifying” the Downtown: developing and carrying out programs aimed at making the core a more aesthetically pleasing place to visit, shop, dine and do business. The primary goal of this committee is to ensure a safe and beautiful environment Downtown with projects and partnerships that span all seasons. Initiatives include: planting of 8 nodes, placement of planters and hanging baskets, Downtown maintenance worker, seasonal decorations and banner program.

WHO BENEFITS FROM HAVING A DBA?

Business operators:

A DBA can benefit more than just local retail businesses. All businesses in the area, whether professional, dining, entertainment, finance, or retail, may benefit from the improved local atmosphere and ambience that a successful DBA helps to create.

It is the responsibility of each business to build upon the activities of the DBA and ensure that the customer receives the best value in an efficient and courteous manner. An expanded customer base depends on the successful partnership between the activities of the association and individual businesses.

Property owners:

DBA-initiated improvements and activities may lead to an increase in

property values. Improvements help to create and sustain a more vibrant and viable economic environment within the local area. This attracts both commercial and service sector businesses to the area that, in turn, may lead to an increased demand for retail and office space, and a subsequent increase in property values.

Non-retailers also benefit:

DBA improvements and activities help to create a more vibrant local community and a more prosperous local economic environment. A more vibrant community attracts more visitors and retains more local customers for all types of services – including dining, entertainment and professional services. In addition, a more vibrant community creates a more inviting atmosphere that clients and customers will enjoy visiting.

Other benefits of being a member of the Downtown business area?

A Downtown Business Area:

- Builds the image of a downtown and promotes it in an effective and coordinated manner;
- Attracts and maintains customers for the area;
- Provides a greater spirit of co-operation and enthusiasm with the business community;
- Generates greater community interest and pride in the Downtown;
- Increases municipal involvement in the Downtown;
- Provides a secure source of funding for undertaking short and long term projects in a planned and orderly fashion;
- Is an information and resource centre for business related issues;
- Make the Downtown a more attractive place to shop, work and do business!

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency Numbers

Police/Fire/Ambulance (emergencies only)	911
Ambulance	613-283-6266
Smiths Falls Police	613-283-0357
Smiths Falls Fire Services	613-283-5869

Information Services

Smiths Fall Town Hall	613-283-4124
Smiths Falls & District Chambers of Commerce	613-283-1334
Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital	613-283-2330
Smiths Falls Crime Stoppers	613-283-2274

MEDIA CONTACTS

Radio Stations:

Jack FM. (Smiths Falls)	613-283-4630
Lake 88.1 (Perth)	613-264-8811

Newspapers

Smiths Falls This Week	613-283-6222
Smiths Falls Record News EMC	613-283-3182
Brockville Recorder and Times	613-342-4441

Television Stations

Cogeco Cable 10	www.tvcogeco.com	613-283-8404
A-Channel	Fax 613-734-2061	613-734-3301
CTV Ottawa		613-224-1313

It's OUR DOWNTOWN

Downtown Smiths Falls has historically been a gathering place., and still is.

Many people have a stake in the downtown in some way. Whether you dine out in one of the many restaurants Downtown, visit the library, work or do business downtown, or simply enjoy walking the tree lined streets of Downtown Smiths Falls, downtown has a vital, beating heart because of all of us who have a stake in it. It's time to take up the downtown banner once more. It's time to stop waiting for change to happen, and start to make it happen.

Those living in Smiths Falls need to come to the point where it's okay to love our downtown again! That starts with us - the stakeholders who are the most heavily invested in the downtown. For those of us who have a business here, own a property here, or are working towards making the downtown better in countless other ways, it's our downtown and it's the only downtown we have. We can abandon it, sit back passively and wonder what happened, or we can embrace it and work towards making it better. Together, we are the downtown. Together we can make it better.

If you don't like the downtown, we invite you to be part of the change. We need to stop saying "somebody should do something" and realize that any one of us may just be one of the "somebodies" who has the power to change it. There are lots of positive ways to make a difference. Just ask us how!

When we all pitch in and get behind OUR downtown, it can only get better.



To learn more about the services that the
Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association
provides please visit our website at

www.downtownsmithsfalls.ca

The Smiths Falls Downtown Business Association is proud to have you as a member of our Downtown community. We are a stronger organization because of the wealth of business leaders who make Downtown Smiths Falls their home. We hope you find this to be a helpful resource as you learn more about your community of businesses Downtown.

If you would like more information, please contact our helpful staff:

Office Admin. Clerk
613-283-4124 ext 1114
dba@smithsfalls.ca