



The City of Calgary
700 MacLeod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2G 2M3

September 5, 2017

RE: Highland Industrial Park BIA



Dear Members of the Standing Policy Committee:

Please accept this letter as an expression of Thrive's support for the formation of a BIA in Highland Industrial Park. Thrive urges City Council to approve this proposal, which would represent a positive step toward community-based economic and business development.

As a community leadership initiative of Momentum, a poverty reduction organization that works with low-income Calgarians, Thrive understands the important role of locally minded businesses in building a thriving, resilient and inclusive economy for all.

The Enough for All strategy, approved unanimously by City Council in 2011, has the goal of everyone in Calgary having the income and assets needed to thrive. We see the BIA aligned with the Doing Business Differently strategy that advances community-based approaches to economic development and asset-building. Highland Park is also an identified Strong Neighbourhood, and as such Family and Community Support Services is interested in community economic development from a prevention perspective.

Members from HIPsville, have been working with Thrive over the past 3 years exploring ways to be resident minded and engage the surrounding communities in local issues. For example, they were part of a committee that partnered with James Fowler High School to put on career fairs, exposing students to various employment environments. Conversations with the school also explored work experience opportunities. In 2015, a local business hired one of the students for summer employment through this initiative.


Of particular interest to Thrive, are the intentions of existing business owners to incorporate elements and values of community economic development into the operational framework of the BIA, ensuring that business activities are rooted in community and build on the relationship with community. Additional areas of exploration in the past have been around co-operative formation, local procurement and the hiring of neighbourhood residents.

The concentration of automotive service based businesses poses great business opportunities if coordinated correctly. Through a BIA, business development options can be identified that coordinate members to purchase/hire locally. Through this, discounted or barter agreements could be established, saving members significant money that they would not normally be able to afford if not for the geographical proximity of the businesses to one another.

A great example of a BIA that has done innovative work to retain and attract resources and support business development is the International Ave BRZ. Their work in the Greater Forest Lawn area has included business incubation, entrepreneurial development and business training. These initiatives have supported operational entrepreneurs to stay afloat during the economic downturn and have attracted new business to the area. Thrive has been working with International Ave BRZ for years and is currently one of the site partners for the newly opened EmergeHub, a co-working space for entrepreneurs, providing them with onsite support and resources.

Thrive is deeply appreciative of Council's commitment to reducing poverty in our city. Thank you for consideration of this letter, and we look forward to working with you to move this work forward.

Sincerely,



Philip Lozano, Community Economic Development Coordinator

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