



# TOWN OF LASALLE

## Final Report: Establishing a Business Network

November 20, 2023





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## Introduction

The Town of LaSalle commissioned Mellor Murray Consulting to assess the potential for the establishment of a network to support LaSalle businesses. The objectives of the project included:

- Engaging with the business community, LaSalle Council and senior staff to gain their insights and aspirations on the potential for a business network in LaSalle.
- Consider the various forms of business networks.
- Determine the optimal model for a business network including membership, services, funding and governance.
- Identify barriers to establishing a business network and proactive efforts to address these potential barriers.

The project included the development of an introductory discussion paper and facilitated workshops with LaSalle business owners and operators and LaSalle Council and senior staff. This report is a culmination of the project including the discussion paper, results of the two workshops and recommendations on next steps for the Town of LaSalle.

## Project Process

In advance of the workshops, invited participants received a discussion paper describing three models for local business networks:

- Business Improvement Association:
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business Association

The discussion paper, included in Appendix A, provides a summary of the membership structure, eligibility, fees, governance, and common services of the three models.

The Business and Council/Staff workshops both began with an introduction of the project objectives and a review of the business association models and neighbouring jurisdictions as detailed in the discussion paper.



## **LaSalle Businesses Workshop:**

**October 17, 2023**

Twenty-eight representatives from LaSalle businesses, and regional stakeholders met on October 17 to share their insights and aspirations for a LaSalle based business network. These individuals responded to an invitation from the LaSalle Mayor and Council to discuss a business network and can therefore assumed to be favourably disposed toward its establishment.

The participants identified several challenges facing the business community in LaSalle that could be addressed by a business network. These challenges included limited commercial space for new business or business expansion, a perception of burdensome town regulations and by-laws, taxation concerns, and competition with other businesses in LaSalle, Windsor and online. They referenced limited support and recognition from the Town for the business community. They also discussed the challenge of addressing the distinct needs of the different commercial districts within LaSalle.

The workshop participants recognized several potential benefits from the establishment of a business network in LaSalle. The network, they believed, would contribute to business growth and a thriving community. They saw the potential for business networking activities, partnerships, idea sharing, business referrals and cross-promotion. They also noted the potential for beautification efforts in the Front Road district.

The group proposed various network activities such as shared promotional programs, member discounts, discount booklets, special events, workshops, and the creation of a business directory.

The idea of establishing a business association to address these challenges and capitalize on opportunities received overwhelming support from the participants. The majority favoured establishing a chamber of commerce with voluntary membership with an established membership fee.

The participants said that the association could organize consistent events, offset advertising costs, streamline information, and track successful ideas. The potential benefits included increased visibility, networking opportunities, and a unified voice to advocate for business interests. The participants recommended starting with a low-cost membership fee to get the business network established.

In terms of funding and sustainability, participants suggested voluntary membership with membership fees, collaboration with local government, and gradual scaling of initiatives. They recommended an organizational structure with a board of directors including representatives from the different commercial areas ensuring unbiased decision-making. Collaboration with other local organizations and government entities was seen as crucial. Some potential partnerships included Amherstburg businesses, Windsor/Essex Pelee Island Tourism, and non-profit organizations.

Despite the enthusiasm, the participants expressed some concerns about maintaining momentum, ensuring the longevity of the association and its value to members, political conflict, generating sufficient revenue to be self-sufficient, maintaining low membership costs and ensuring representation for different commercial area in LaSalle.



The group emphasized the importance of volunteer commitment, political neutrality, and sustained effort in overcoming these concerns.

Overall, the meeting showcased a strong desire among business owners to collaborate, promote local businesses, and build a thriving business community in LaSalle.

Detailed notes from the facilitated workshop are included in Appendix B

## **LaSalle Council and Senior Staff Workshop:**

### **November 6, 2023**

The Town of LaSalle Council and senior staff members met on November 6 to get their thoughts on the potential for establishing a business network in the community. The participants were asked to discuss the optimal model of business network including membership, programs and services, funding, and governance. They were also asked to identify the barriers to establishing a business network and identify solutions to those challenges.

A variety of opportunities and issues emerged during the discussion. Some of the opportunities identified included creating a unified voice for all businesses, achieving economies of scale, and improving communication between businesses and the Town. The issues included concerns about mandatory membership, internal politics favouring certain businesses, and scepticism of some businesses regarding the viability and impact of a business network in LaSalle. The desired services, activities, and events proposed by the group included streetscaping/beautification, networking events, community engagement, and various promotional initiatives. Envisioning the future, participants hoped for shared goals and vision, revitalized business districts, increased diversity, and a thriving business hub in LaSalle. Funding and sustainability were discussed, with suggestions including a phased transition from taxpayer funding to member fees and with support from the Town to establish the network.

The workshop participants recommended establishing a chamber of commerce model, although some would like to network to evolve to a Business Improvement Association in the long term. The participants favoured voluntary membership. They recommended a dynamic leadership model, with a board of directors comprised of business owners with support from a municipal representative.

The participants expressed concerns such as the potential for poor leadership, board liability and volunteer burnout. Solutions to address their concerns included ensuring qualified leadership, establishing a code of conduct, providing training, and supporting the network with part-time staff coordination. Overall, the focus group demonstrated a strong interest in establishing a business association to address current challenges and foster a united, prosperous business community in LaSalle.

Details from the Council/staff workshop are included in Appendix C.



## Findings and Observations

The participants at both the business and the Council/staff workshop were overwhelmingly in favour of the creation of a business network for the Town of LaSalle. The majority favoured the establishment of a chamber of commerce. Some participants saw a chamber of commerce as a first step with the establishment of a Business improvement Association (BIA) as the ultimate goal.

Participants from the two groups indicated the business network should be governed by an independent board of directors with formal representation/participation by the Town.

According to the two groups, the Town could play an important role in the establishment of the business network. Suggestions included free membership, subsidized by the Town initially, moving to a paid membership for those who chose to remain members. The Town of LaSalle would be a member of the chamber. The board of directors would require representation from the three commercial districts in the Town.

According to the workshop participants, the initial activity of the network should be to create a business directory. This directory would be available online and in print for promotional purposes. It would also provide the Town with a way to communicate with the business community in LaSalle. Networking events would also be an important early step in the development of the chamber.

Longer term, the workshop participants identified opportunities for joint promotional programs, member referrals, discount programs, special events, business recognition events, advocacy, business workshops, community building and beautification efforts.

## Next Steps

With the chamber of commerce model defined as the preferred model, the business model for the management of a chamber should be considered.

The community may choose to establish a new separate chamber dedicated solely on the businesses in LaSalle. There may also be opportunities to work with another chamber in the region with a shared service agreement in which a separate LaSalle Chamber contracts for administrative supports from the other chamber. A third option would be to ask a neighbouring chamber of commerce to expand its mandate and service area to include LaSalle. In this regional model the new chamber could have two divisions representing the two geographic regions or it could simply begin incorporating LaSalle businesses, events, and programming into its overall operations.

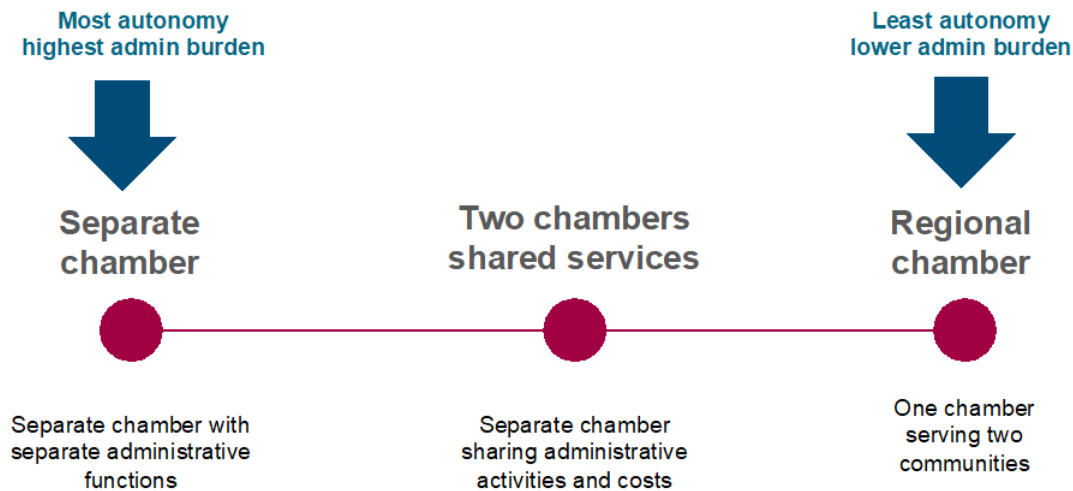
As noted in figure 1 below the separate chamber operation would provide LaSalle's business network with the most autonomy but could be expected to have the highest administrative costs.

A second option would be to contract with a neighbouring chamber or other related organization for administrative support. In this scenario, the LaSalle chamber would benefit from economies of scale but would rely on the established systems and processes of the other chamber.

At the far end of the spectrum, the LaSalle business community would benefit from the lowest administrative and operational costs with the creation of a regional chamber. This model would however mean that the chamber's priorities would be divided between two (or more) jurisdictions.



Figure 1: Business Model Options



There are six main steps in establishing a chamber of commerce:

1. Establish the need/interest in establishing a chamber.
2. Connect with individuals to form the chamber.
3. Create a strategy, bylaws and a business plan.
4. Incorporate the organization.
5. Establish a dues structure.
6. Promote the chamber.
7. Host meetings

### Establish the need

The 28 individuals who participated in the October 17 workshop demonstrated their interest in the establishment of a business network by their participation and feedback. It may be advisable to supplement this qualitative research with a more quantitative approach such as a community survey to confirm there are sufficient numbers to support a new chamber of commerce.

### Connecting with individuals to form the chamber

The chamber will need a team of like-minded business owners and community members to act as champions for the organization and constitute the first board of directors to lead the establishment, growth and maintenance of the chamber.

### Create a strategy, by laws and business plan

The first task of chamber Board will need to establish its mission, values, bylaws and business plan. These governing documents will help define the organizations value proposition to its members and the path to becoming self sustaining.



## **Incorporate**

There are three paths for incorporation:

- The federal government Boards of Trade Act,
- The federal government Canada Not For Profit Corporations Act
- The Ontario government not for profit corporation under the Corporations Act

The requirements for the various types of incorporation vary however the application for incorporation will include the following elements:

- A typed list of the names and signatures of a minimum of 30 charter members
- A map indicating the boundaries of the district that the organization proposes to serve
- The bylaws or regulations of the organization
- The names and positions of the charter board of directors
- Services provided for members
- Financial information
- Organization activities

## **Establish a Dues Structure**

Membership dues are typically structure in two ways. Most have membership levels including individual and corporate membership. A fair share model is based on the number of employees, revenue or business size while an investor model is based on a flat rate plus fees for individual services or benefits. Some chambers establish special rates for targeted sectors such as young professionals. The dues schedule can also vary including monthly and annual collection periods.

## **Promote the chamber**

Establishing a website and related social platforms will be essential first steps in the creation of a more comprehensive marketing and communications plan aimed first at the chamber members and potential members. The website will include information about the aims of the chamber, the chamber members and how to join.

## **Begin hosting meetings**

A launch event and a few other scheduled meetings will show the new chamber in action. These initial meetings are a good opportunity to survey members about the times, dates, locations and activities that will best serve the members.



## Appendix A: Establishing a Business Network in LaSalle

You have been invited to participate in a workshop to explore the potential of establishing a business network or association in LaSalle.

The goal of the workshop is to:

- Determine the services and programs LaSalle businesses need to be successful.
- Consider the various forms of community associations including BIAs, chambers of Commerce (Boards of Trade) and Business Associations.
- Discuss the potential for establishing a business network or association in LaSalle.
- Identify the business network model that would address the needs of LaSalle businesses.

The following pages include background information for your review in advance of our meeting to make the best use of our limited time together.

### DEFINITIONS:

#### **Business Improvement Association**

“An association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the Municipality to create thriving and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses. By working collectively as a BIA, local businesses have the resource capacity (funds and people) to actively enhance the quality of life in their local neighbourhood and the Municipality as a whole.” (obia.com)

#### **Chamber of Commerce**

“A voluntary business organization, supported by its member firms to promote the area’s economic growth and development. Chambers enable businesspeople to accomplish collectively what they may not be able to do individually, creating a pool of professional and business resources from which they can draw inspiration, new ideas, energy, and finances...It is a collective voice that speaks out on policy issues that affect business.” (atlanticchamber.ca)

#### **Business Association**

“Business associations do not have a rigid structure. They are often born from a group of volunteers and usually collect membership fees as a source of funding for their projects. The structure of a business association is defined by the people who run it and the interest they have in their businesses and communities.” (cbdc.ca)

### PRE-WORKSHOP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Please take a moment to consider:

- What you hope to achieve through the workshop.
- Your vision for supporting LaSalle businesses. What will be different in five years if we have successfully established a business network in the Town?



## UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT MODELS OF BUSINESS NETWORKS

	<b>BIA</b>	<b>Chamber</b>	<b>Business Association</b>
<b>Membership</b>	Mandatory (must be approved by 75% of businesses in the designated area)	Voluntary (fee based)	Voluntary (may include a membership fee)
<b>Eligible Members</b>	Building owner and/or designated tenant	Businesses, employees and interested parties	Interested parties
<b>Area served</b>	Defined geographic area	Less defined border, community-wide business network (city, County or even region)	Less defined
<b>Fee</b>	Levy in addition to regular municipal property tax Based on property assessment value	Member dues are typically applied in two ways: Fair share model (based on # of employees, revenue, size or other) or Investor model (flat rate plus fee for individual services))	Varies
<b>Fee paid by</b>	Building owner	Business or employee	Individual member
<b>Governance</b>	A corporation of the municipality regulated under the Ontario Municipal Act. Budgets are submitted to Municipality for approval. The Municipality may establish a board of management to provide direction for BIA efforts.	Non-profit organization governed by a board of directors. Supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce	Varies, could be a non-profit organization or a committee of interested parties with no formal legal standing



## COMMON SERVICES (WILL VARY BY ORGANIZATION)

BIA	Chamber	Business Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Street beautification (banners, plants, seasonal lighting etc.)</li> <li>•Street and sidewalk maintenance and capital improvements</li> <li>•Promotion of the BIA for business, employment, visitors or shopping (business directories, advertising, etc.)</li> <li>•Special events and festivals</li> <li>•Security and crime prevention</li> <li>•Graffiti and poster removal services</li> <li>•Advocate on behalf of the membership</li> <li>•Strategic plans including business recruitment, market studies, capital improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Networking events</li> <li>•Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>•Mayor's breakfast</li> <li>•Business education (webinars, workshops, etc.)</li> <li>•Advocacy with all levels of government</li> <li>•Member discounts</li> <li>•Promotion on behalf of members</li> <li>•Group insurance and benefits provider</li> <li>•Payroll services</li> <li>•Mailing lists</li> <li>•Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>•Economic development initiatives</li> <li>•Surveys/research</li> </ul>	<p>Based on common goals that benefit members and the community. Typical activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Networking</li> <li>•Special events</li> <li>•Advocacy</li> <li>•Education and training</li> <li>•Business promotion</li> <li>•Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>•Business workshops, seminars</li> <li>•Economic development initiatives</li> <li>•Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>•Surveys/research</li> </ul>



## **Appendix B:**

### **Detailed Notes Business Workshop, October 17, 2023**

**What are the most significant challenges that businesses in our community currently face?**

- Discrepancy between Malden & Front Road
- Community Centre
- Malden road is saturated
- More exposure for Front Road
- Exposure
- Pricing (keeping up with rising prices)
- Networking
- Town's regulation / by-laws
- Governance
- Operating hours in LaSalle
- Access & Parking
- Internet
- 3 different areas (Marinas, Malden, Outlet)
- Promote local business (lack of)
- Advertising / networking / promoting.
- Geographical dynamics - rural vs. urban
- where you are in LaSalle (location) - feeling of lesser business if you are not on Malden
- Commercial Space - limited size & availability
- Cost of advertising
- Dispersed (large region)
- Competition with the Town itself
- Taxes/cost of rent
- Online business
- Proximity to Windsor (competition)
- Lack of identity (bedroom community)
- Minimal Support & recognition from the Town in support of businesses
- Initiatives: Facebook, Instagram

**2. What opportunities do you see for businesses in the community to thrive and grow?**

- Front road is a true opportunity - the water calls people and businesses
- Beautification & gentrification of Front Road
- Buy the gas station
- Networking, partnerships, shared ideas
- Businesses supporting businesses - referrals, cross promotion
- Group discount & Card program (website)
- Discount Booklet
- Hosting events (ex. Financial Fitness onsite)
- Demographics



- Processionals, Residential Wealth
- Growing Town
- Event Centre: New Anchor
- More networking
- More community events
- Compensation
- Supporting Each other
- Broadcasting
- Open Streets
- Restaurants
- Promoting local business
- Handing out brochures with all businesses or an app with all LaSalle Businesses
- The populous wants to deal locally
- Loyalty
- Business Directory - mail drop
- Front Road
- SEO the business directory, higher hits. ([www.lasallebusinessdirectory.com](http://www.lasallebusinessdirectory.com))
- Networking
- Best of
- Networking / advertising / promoting - event centre, team sponsor, turtle club
- Loyalty - Shop Local, already see it with Alok (LaSalle Community Facebook group)
- QR code LaSalle Only
- More community events - Christmas parade, local can drive like during COVID
- School Functions / events for the community - new residents welcome lots, aka. Welcome wagon
- Bring your pet to work
- Bring children to work
- Business of the month
- Hold community vote for business -business excellent awards

**3. Do you think a business association would help address these challenged and opportunities? How?**

- Organizing consistent events
- Offset cost of advertising (large group rates)
- Streamline info
- Follow through
- Track what works
- Ideas executed from #Q2
- Visibility across town
- A good start
- Low Cost
- Good for networking
- Building block to become Chamber / BIA
- Yes!!!



- Awareness and Branding
- Formalised Group to Advocate
- Stronger Voice
- Partnership & Collaboration with Town
- Organizing
- Yes - bring people together (networking)
- Leadership
- Promoting Local
- Reach a wider audience
- Economic development especially as LaSalle grows
- Yes - listening to businesses and their needs
- Promoting
- All businesses needs are different
- Social Media pages for LaSalle businesses
- Yes - LaSalle wants to support local
- Leadership
- Centralised voice advocates for growth
- Promote one another - cross promotion

**4. Would you be interested in becoming a member of a business association? Why or why not?**

- 5/5 in support of joining
- 4/5 yes
- 6/6 - because we all want exposure & to build our network
- 5/5 vote 'yes' to a business association
- Yes
- Participate in networking events and idea sharing and cross promotion / advertising
- Tax dollars should go to promoting business
- Recognition
- Connections
- Common voice
- No cost/volunteers
- Needs to be active
- Listen to the businesses
- Could happen sooner than later
- Pros: cost (low), networking, leadership, shared ideas/ common interest, local
- Cons: cost (tax levy), will benefits be worth it? Time, leadership (is it fair), commitment
- Why not: Cost only \$



**5. What factors would influence your decision to join or not join?**

- Is it worthwhile? Return on investment
- Benefits vs. the cost
- Time commitment
- Popularity
- Competition
- Bias (geographic)
- Leadership

**6. What services or activities would you like to see a business association offer?**

- Social Media - Facebook, app, group
- Community Involvement (businesses, groups, etc)
- BIA \$
- Calendar of events
- Holiday shopping guide
- Local discount promotions
- Frequent events (networking & other things)
- Booklet of all businesses & a blurb about what they do
- New homeowner "welcome" package to promote our businesses
- Contribution to marketing \$\$
- Awareness / info
- Save money through browsing discounts / promos
- Regular meetings & social events
- Speakers - content experts
- Getting the next generation involved
- Rotary & Youth
- Open Streets
- Parade
- Discounts
- Promotions
- Guest speakers - business
- Meet & Greet opportunities
- Networking
- Social media presence
- Community Events
- Youth programs / sports
- Monthly spotlights (free promos)
- Business directory
- Can drives
- Walks/ runs / biking fundraisers
- Trails / waterfront on Front Road - more fun
- More summer festivals / events



**7. Are there specific events or initiatives that would benefit the community?**

- Division of districts
- Varying priorities - Front vs. Malden
- Livelihood of businesses to service community
- Allowing us to thrive and the community to be served
- Save money through browsing discounts / promos
- Awareness / info
- Businesses should be able to accept other businesses in our area (channels to determine eligibility)
- Community Billboard
- Business Event & Event Centre - meet your local businesses and offer discounts and promotions.

**8. How do you think a business association should be funded and sustained over time?**

- Voluntary membership chamber
- Board of directors with representation of all the districts and collaboration with councillors
- Baby steps/ formal
- Funding
  - Small Business vs. Large Business
  - # of employees
- Welcome Wagon
- Take care of our own \$\$
- Membership fee - quarterly / you can choose
- Scale slowly
- Leverage social media - chamber
- Annual fee
- Tax rate off property taxes

**9. What type of organisation structure do you think the business association should have?**

- Districts (waterfront. Malden, heritage)
- Districts of representation (Front Rd, Malden, Heritage)
- Offer collaboration - non voting for all or anyone
- Town of LaSalle - voting rights, create collaboration
- BIA & BA
- Board of directors
- Unbiased (non-business owner & business owners mixed)
- We can make decisions by voting
- Chamber – not a business association



**10. How should it be governed? What type of leadership and decision-making processes should it use?**

- Members in each district
- Offer collaboration
- Voting for all or anyone
- Personable people - make decisions for the good of the community
- Diverse group
- Not sure

**11. Do you think the business association should collaborate with other local organisations or government entities? Why or why not?**

- Rotary?
- The Town of LaSalle Town reps yes
- Signage Issues
- Loosen the limitations
- Main street development community
- Yes - we would have more success
- Yes - Tourism Ontario
- Want to take care of district, not just LaSalle
- Yes - real estate association, tangible brochure
- Yes - Social Media (yelp, etc)
- Yes - non-profit organisation

**12. Are there specific groups you believe the association should partner with?**

- Amherstburg
- Town of LaSalle
- Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island
- Fire/Police
- Yes - real estate association, tangible brochure
- Yes - Tourism Ontario
- Yes - social media (yelp, etc)
- Yes - non-profit organisations
- Reluctant to partner with others until our own identity & brand is identified and established

**13. Are there any concerns you have about the establishment of a business association?**

- Longevity & value (benefits) - commitment, survival
- Politics or segregation
- Costs vs. Benefits
- Sustaining it (time & effort)
- Politics (organization)
- Participation & volunteers
- Representation of 3 main commercial areas
- Costs
- Management, maintaining fees



## Town of LaSalle business workshop: Assessing the need for a business association



October 17, 2023



# Introductions

## Agenda

- Today's objectives
- BIAs, chambers & business associations
- Environmental scan
- Your insights
- Next steps



## Today's Objectives

- Discuss the potential for a business network in LaSalle
- Determine the optimal model
  - Membership
  - Services
  - Funding
  - Governance
  - Partnerships
- Identify barriers to establishing a business network



## Business Improvement Associations (BIAs)



- Commercial property owners and tenants working together
- Defined area
- Established by the municipality
- Mandatory levy provides funds for programming and beautification efforts



## Chambers of Commerce Board of Trade



- Voluntary
- Promotes the area's economic growth and development
- Provides professional and business resources
- Collective voice that speaks out on policy issues



## Business Association

- No rigid structure
- Volunteer based
- Membership fees to support projects
- Defined by the people who run it and their interests



## Comparing models

	BIA	Chamber / BOT	Business Association
<b>Membership</b>	Must be approved by 75% of businesses in designated area Mandatory once established	Voluntary (fee based)	Voluntary (may include a membership fee)
<b>Eligible members</b>	Building owner and/or designated tenant	Businesses, employees and interested parties	Interested parties
<b>Area served</b>	Defined geographic area	Less defined border, community-wide business network (city, County or even region)	Less defined
<b>Fee</b>	Levy in addition to regular municipal property tax Based on property assessment value	Member dues vary: • Fair share model (based on # of employees, revenue, size or other) • Investor model (flat rate plus fee for individual services)	Varies
<b>Fee paid by</b>	Building owner	Business or employee	Individual member
<b>Governance</b>	Corporation of the municipality regulated under the Ontario Municipal Act. Municipality approves budget. The Municipality may establish a board of management	Non-profit organization governed by a board of directors. Supported by Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce	Varies Non-profit organization or committee of interested parties with no formal legal standing

## Common services

BIA	Chamber / BOT	Business Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street beautification (banners, plants, seasonal lighting etc.)</li> <li>• Street and sidewalk maintenance and capital improvements</li> <li>• Promotion of the BIA for business, employment, visitors or shopping</li> <li>• Special events and festivals</li> <li>• Security and crime prevention</li> <li>• Graffiti and poster removal services</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Strategic plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking events</li> <li>• Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>• Mayor's breakfast</li> <li>• Business education</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Member discounts</li> <li>• Member promotion</li> <li>• Group insurance and benefits</li> <li>• Payroll services</li> <li>• Mailing lists</li> <li>• Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>• Economic development initiatives</li> <li>• Surveys/research</li> </ul>	Activities that benefit members and the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Special events</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Education and training</li> <li>• Business promotion</li> <li>• Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>• Business workshops, seminars</li> <li>• Economic development initiatives</li> <li>• Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>• Surveys/ research</li> </ul>

## Local BIAs

	Population*	Business Count**	BIA members	Levy	BIA Staff
Leamington	29,680	882	102E	\$130,000 to \$140,000	1 PT
Kingsville	22,119	674	205E	\$110,000	1 PT
Essex (Town)	21,216	575	393E	~\$140,000	1 PT
LaSalle	32,721	764	-	-	-

\*2021 Census

\*\* Businesses with employees

## Local Chambers

	Population*	Business Count**	Chamber members	Chamber Staff
Leamington	29,680	882	250+	2 FT
Amherstburg	23,524	507	117E	1 PT
LaSalle	32,721	764	-	-

\*2021 Census

\*\* Businesses with employees



## Questions and observations



## Your insights

### Membership and participation



4. Would you be interested in becoming a member of a business association?  
Why or why not?
5. What factors would influence your decision to join or not to join?

### Business challenges and opportunities



1. What are the most significant challenges that businesses in our community currently face?
2. What opportunities do you see for businesses in the community to thrive and grow?
3. Do you think a business association could help address these challenges and opportunities? How?

### Services and activities



6. What services or activities would you like to see a business association offer?
7. Are there specific events or initiatives that would benefit the community?



## Review

### Funding



8. How do you think a business association should be funded and sustained over time?

## Funding



9. What type of organizational structure do you think the business association should have?
10. How should it be governed? What type of leadership and decision-making processes should it use?

## Collaboration and partnerships



11. Do you think the business association should collaborate with other local organizations or government entities? Why or why not?
12. Are there specific groups you believe the association should partner with?

## Reservations



13. Are there any concerns you have about the establishment of a business association?
14. What would alleviate those concerns for you?

## Next steps



15. What should the next steps be in assessing the need and possibly setting up a business association in LaSalle?



## Your insights

## Final thoughts



What stood out for you in today's discussion?



## Appendix C:

### Detailed Notes LaSalle Council & Staff Workshop, November 6, 2023

#### 1. What specific issues and opportunities do you believe a business association could address?

Issues	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not fair to make membership mandatory</li> <li>• Additional time &amp; resources required from Town (BIA)</li> <li>• Internal politics – favouritism of certain businesses</li> <li>• Scepticism</li> <li>• Money/contributions</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• 3 districts/areas of interest – fairness</li> <li>• Communication between business and Town</li> <li>• Walk away wealth (retail leakage)</li> <li>• Too busy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One voice for all</li> <li>• Economies of scale</li> <li>• Able to track which businesses are in town</li> <li>• Networking and promoting each other</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Enhanced economic environment</li> <li>• Keeping residents engaged</li> <li>• Increased exposure to other businesses</li> <li>• Work with municipality (ideas working together)</li> <li>• Business and Town need to do something</li> <li>• Unified voice from the community</li> <li>• Partnering with Town and other businesses</li> <li>• Gaining insight</li> </ul>

#### 2. What services, activities or events would you like to see a business association offer?

- Streetscaping and beautification
- Beautification (flowers, banners)
- Networking
- Networking events
- Networking events
- Events and gatherings (street fest, art show, trail fest)
- Community events/engagement
- LaSalle market (LaSalle businesses)
- Parade
- Booklets/coupons/referrals
- Discounts
- Where can I find things... contacts, services
- Directory online and in paper form provided locally (coupon book for all businesses)
- Pride of local Businesses
- Promotion for each other
- Business excellence awards
- Workshops



- Promotional events
- Advocacy for all businesses to local government
- 3. What will be different in five years if we have successfully established a business association in LaSalle?**
  - Shared goals and vision (union)
  - Revitalized Ford Road district
  - Diversity of business
  - Area unity/cooperation among municipality
  - Business community identity
  - Attracting and retaining business
  - Community Improvement Plan
  - Regular networking
  - Business organizational capacity
  - Less whining
  - Highly integrated business information
  - More businesses come here
  - A thriving business hub
  - Some place on the water to eat ice cream
  - Variety of new businesses will come to town
  - More functions sponsored by business
  - Business association is fully funded
  - Major improvement completed by businesses
  - Better location and communication with local businesses
  - Fewer vacancies
  - A directory that is visited often
  - More tourism and customers from out of town
  - Revitalized Front Road Businesses
- 4. How do you think a business association should be funded and sustained over time?**
  - Voluntary fee based on employee count
  - Honourary upfront membership (nominal fee), renewable every year
  - Partnerships i.e. in-kind services from town
  - At first tax payer funded – transition to member fees
  - Self-funding model
    - % of sales
    - Fixed business support
    - Staffing support
  - Municipal contribution
    - % of commitment to a set maximum
    - Discounts of rates
    - Funding of projects
  - If done well, new members will want to join and existing members will want to stay



- Fund raising events
- Selling business booklets
- LaSalle Loot
- Growth

**5. What type of organizational structure should the business association have? How should it be governed?**

- Chamber
- Join already established chamber
- Governed by Board of directors that consists of business owners
- Operating procedures and policies
- All members can vote – one vote for each business
- Municipal representation at meetings
- Dynamic leadership
- Working partnership between business and Town
- No BIA
- Yes chamber - members and Town of LaSalle support with funding
- Start with a chamber and then move to BIA
  - Prove the return on investment
  - Gain membership
  - Provide exposure
  - Organize events (municipal lead, subcommittee for different areas)

**6. Are there any concerns you have about the establishment of a business association?**

Concerns	How to alleviate concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor leadership</li> <li>• Errors and omissions</li> <li>• Failure</li> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Lack of interest</li> <li>• No participation/ only from a select few</li> <li>• Volunteer burnout</li> <li>• Burden on municipality</li> <li>• Negative voice towards the Town</li> <li>• Representation of only a few businesses and not all business as a whole</li> <li>• Longevity of program/ businesses losing interest over time</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Longevity</li> <li>• Not enough dynamic leadership</li> <li>• Cohesive whining</li> <li>• Who is running it/leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified leadership</li> <li>• Code of conduct</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Education and demonstrate return on investment</li> <li>• Build alliances</li> <li>• Business registry</li> <li>• Automatic members</li> <li>• Hire part-time staff to coordinate</li> <li>• Upfront assistance to establish organization to all them to be self sufficient</li> <li>• Facilitate startup</li> <li>• Town involvement to support stronger commitment</li> <li>• Recognition of members</li> <li>• Capacity building by the Town</li> <li>• Encourage networking</li> </ul>



## Town of LaSalle Council workshop: Assessing the need for a business association



November 6, 2023



# Introductions

## Agenda

- Today's objectives
- Investment readiness
- BIAs, chambers & business associations
- Environmental scan
- Your insights
- Next steps



## Today's Objectives

- Discuss the potential for a business network in LaSalle
- Determine the optimal model
  - Membership
  - Services
  - Funding
  - Governance
- Identify barriers to establishing a business network



## Investment Readiness Checklist - 1



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	<b>Designated contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiar with land use planning, development approvals, OP, zoning &amp; approval process</li><li>• Ability to respond to business inquiries</li><li>• Contact/info on land use planning and development</li></ul>
	<b>Land use Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to date OP and Zoning by-laws, on website</li><li>• Clear guidelines for basic land use categories</li><li>• Detailed OP and zoning info (aerial photos and maps)</li><li>• OPAs not required for most developments</li><li>• Flexible by-laws allow wide range of businesses (incl. home based)</li><li>• Clear process, timelines and cost guidelines for typical developments</li><li>• Economic development addressed in OP</li><li>• Planning staff coordinates with economic development</li></ul>
	<b>Information sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contacts with utilities for technical questions</li><li>• Regular communication with federal/provincial agencies</li></ul>

## Investment Readiness Checklist - 2



6

	<b>Engaged business community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular meetings with businesses</li><li>• Regular meetings with Chamber/ business association</li><li>• Business retention and expansion program</li><li>• Business Improvement Area</li></ul>
	<b>Industrial land inventory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All available land (esp. industrial)</li><li>• Regular updates</li><li>• Cost, site servicing, transportation, ownership, location and size</li><li>• Connected to GIS</li><li>• Regular contact with real estate agencies</li></ul>
	<b>Joint ventures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnering with independent business groups to market the community</li><li>• Jointly funding economic development initiatives with neighbouring communities</li></ul>

## Investment Readiness Checklist - 3



	<b>Economic development capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established economic development committee</li> <li>Staff and/or consultant retained to address economic development matters</li> <li>Economic development budget</li> </ul>
	<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community profile completed and online                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business expansions/ new business</li> <li>Economic and demographic data</li> <li>Local business groups</li> <li>Vision statement</li> <li>Land inventory</li> <li>Mapping, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development section</li> <li>Downloadable community profile</li> <li>Key contact information</li> <li>Available land inventory</li> </ul>



## Business networks & associations

## Business Improvement Associations (BIAs)



- Commercial property owners and tenants working together
- Defined area
- Established by the municipality
- Mandatory levy provides funds for programming and beautification efforts



## Chambers of Commerce Board of Trade



- Voluntary
- Promotes the area's economic growth and development
- Provides professional and business resources
- Collective voice that speaks out on policy issues



## Business Association



- No rigid structure
- Volunteer based
- Membership fees to support projects
- Defined by the people who run it and their interests



## Comparing models



	BIA	Chamber / BOT	Business Association
<b>Membership</b>	Must be approved by 75% of businesses in designated area Mandatory once established	Voluntary (fee based)	Voluntary (may include a membership fee)
<b>Eligible members</b>	Building owner and/or designated tenant	Businesses, employees and interested parties	Interested parties
<b>Area served</b>	Defined geographic area	Less defined border, community-wide business network (city, County or region)	Less defined
<b>Fee</b>	Levy in addition to regular municipal property tax Based on property assessment value	Member dues vary: • Fair share model (based on # of employees, revenue, size or other) • Investor model (flat rate plus fee for individual services)	Varies
<b>Fee paid by</b>	Building owner	Business or employee	Individual member
<b>Governance</b>	Corporation of the municipality regulated under the Ontario Municipal Act. Municipality approves budget. The Municipality may establish a board of management	Non-profit organization governed by a board of directors. Supported by Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce	Varies Non-profit organization or committee of interested parties with no formal legal standing

## Common services

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BIA	Chamber / BOT	Business Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street beautification (banners, plants, seasonal lighting etc.)</li> <li>Street and sidewalk maintenance and capital improvements</li> <li>Promotion of the BIA for business, employment, visitors or shopping</li> <li>Special events and festivals</li> <li>Security and crime prevention</li> <li>Graffiti and poster removal services</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Strategic plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking events</li> <li>Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>Mayor's breakfast</li> <li>Business education</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Member discounts</li> <li>Member promotion</li> <li>Group insurance and benefits, payroll services</li> <li>Mailing lists</li> <li>Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>Economic development initiatives</li> <li>Surveys/research</li> </ul>	Activities that benefit members and the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking</li> <li>Special events</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Education and training</li> <li>Business promotion</li> <li>Community engagement (charity drives, local events, community clean ups, event sponsorship)</li> <li>Business workshops, seminars</li> <li>Economic development initiatives</li> <li>Business Excellence Awards</li> <li>Surveys/ research</li> </ul>

## Local BIAs

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	Population*	Business Count**	BIA members	Levy	BIA Staff
Leamington	29,680	882	102E	\$130,000 to \$140,000	1 PT
Kingsville	22,119	674	205E	\$110,000	1 PT
Essex (Town)	21,216	575	393E	~\$140,000	1 PT
LaSalle	32,721	764	-	-	-

\*2021 Census

\*\* Businesses with employees

## Local Chambers

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	Population*	Business Count**	Chamber members	Chamber Staff
Leamington	29,680	882	250+	2 FT
Amherstburg	23,524	507	117E	1 PT
LaSalle	32,721	764	-	-

\*2021 Census

\*\* Businesses with employees



## Business community workshop

## Business Owner / Operator Workshop What we heard

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- October 17, 2023
- 27 participants
- Representing health care, childcare, restaurants, financial planning, car dealership, specialty food, travel agency, personal care, health club, marina, specialty retailers, economic development, banking, etc.



## What we heard: Challenges

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- Distinct needs and communities (Malden & Front Rd.)
- Competitive factors (Windsor, within town and with online businesses)
- Municipal factors (limited support & recognition, regulations, governance)
- Costs (rising prices, advertising costs, rent, taxes)
- Connectivity
- Operational challenges (operating hours, access & parking, limited commercial space)
- Bedroom town image





## What we heard: Opportunities

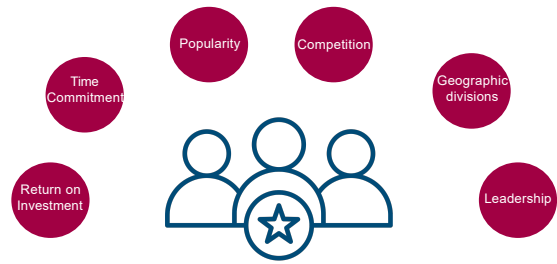
19

- **Community factors**  
(growing, residential wealth)
- **Beautification**  
(Front Road waterfront, beautification efforts)
- **Promotion**  
(referrals, cross promotion, group discounts, card programs, advertising, business directories, online tools)
- **Networking**
- **Community events**  
(LaSalle event centre a new anchor, community engagement, local business loyalty)
- **Business development**  
(new partnerships, idea sharing, increased support for business)



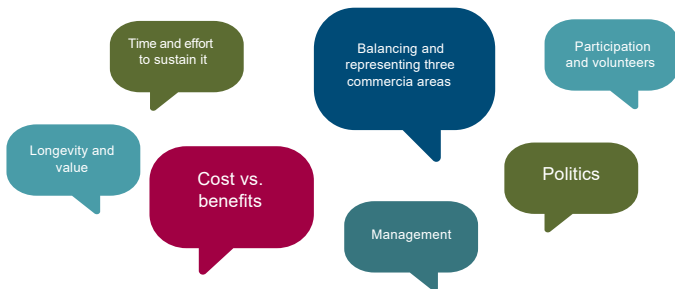
## What we heard: Factors influencing membership

20



## What we heard: Concerns

21



22

## Questions and observations



23

## Your insights

## Business challenges and opportunities

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1. What specific issues and opportunities do you believe a business association could address/
2. What services, activities or events would you like to see a business association offer?
3. What will be different in five years if we have successfully established a business association in LaSalle?



## Review

## Funding & Governance



4. How do you think a business association should be funded and sustained over time?
5. What type of organizational structure should the business association have? How should it be governed?

## Reservations



6. What concerns do you have about the establishment of a business association?
7. What would alleviate those concerns for you?



## Review

## Final thoughts



15. What should the next steps be in assessing the need and possibly setting up a business association in LaSalle? Are there any partnerships that could assi

## Thank you!



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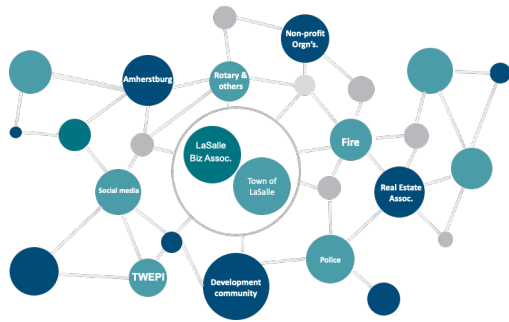


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## What we heard: Partnerships

31



## What we heard: Benefits of a Business Association

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- **Better coordination**  
(consistent events, streamline info, track what works, formal structure)
- **Promotion**  
(offset ad costs, promote local businesses, cross-promotion)
- **Networking**  
(low-cost networking)
- **Town relationship**  
(centralized voice for advocacy and town collaboration)



## What we heard:

Services a business association could offer

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Image: Town of LaSalle

- **Community events**
  - Parades
  - Fundraisers
  - Youth programs
- **Member events**
  - Networking/ meet and greet
  - Guest speakers
- **Calendar of events**
- **Promotion**
  - Shopping guides
  - Local discounts
  - Business directory
  - New homeowner welcome packages
  - Social media
  - Monthly business spotlights



## What we heard: Funding & Governance

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### Funding

- Voluntary membership
- Price structure (# of businesses)
- Annual fee
- Scale up
- Budget managed by the association



### Structure/ Governance

- 3 districts (Front, Malden, Heritage)
- Chamber model (for majority of participants)
- Board of directors
- Role for the Town (non-voting?)