An Investigation of the Dissolution of the Downtown Victoria Business
Association
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Executive Summary

Business hnprovement Associations (BIAs) can be effective tools in improving and promoting commercial districts. In 1991 the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) was fonned to represent the needs ofdowntown businesses and to promote downtown Victoria to the public. The DVBA was one ofhundreds ofBIAs fonned in Canadian cities to attract shoppers to the downtown, to organize programs and special events, to enhance coordination between stakeholders, and to market the downtown. In 2001 the mandate ofthe DVBA required renewal by City Council and a majority of property owners within the district. Although many merchants were satisfied with the association, property owners overwhelmingly opposed the DVBA and the association was dissolved. Victoria is one ofa few cities to have a Business hnprovement Association fold. Through the investigation ofthe Victoria experience, a number of important lessons have been learned that can be applied to other BlAs to better ensure success. Major recommendations for a successful BlA are: those

who pay for the association and those who
benefit from it.

A clear and widely agreed upon mandate must fonn the basis ofa BlA. Strong support for the association and its goals among all stakeholders must be developed from the onset. Objectives and programs to fulfill these goals must be focused with clear deliverables. Stakeholders must feel that the association provides value and is addressing the concerns that are important to them.

Full communication and participation with stakeholders must be developed and maintained. This is particularly important with property owners, as their involvement and support is key to the ongoing existence and success of a BlA. Participation of property owners can be developed through their presence and contribution in BIA general