



CASE FOR SUPPORT

Expanding the Old Town Commercial Association Special Assessment Boundaries

Old Town Today

The Old Town Commercial Association (OTCA) is making a real difference. The OTCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Lansing's Old Town through socio-economic development, historic preservation, business recruitment and community outreach. Rich and vibrant streetscapes provide a gateway to our livable, walkable and family-friendly community.

Residents, business and property owners of Old Town and surrounding neighborhoods are invested and engaged in the success of the Old Town community. On an annual basis, the OTCA is responsible for the following outcomes:

- Draw thousands to the district with festivals and special events; 2024 special event/festival attendance totaled 19,503 visitors, not including Old Town residents
- Create collective marketing and advertising
- Serve as an information center for businesses, residents, and visitors
- Provide neighborhood-level strategic planning
- Maintain our curated outdoor spaces
- Foster business collaboration and networking
- Facilitate Match on Main and many other grants
- Support Small Business Saturday
- Coordinate beautification and clean-up efforts
- Provide market data and analysis

Old Town's Goals

Old Town Lansing is a premier arts and culture, shopping and dining destination that is sustained and strengthened by its collaborative business community and the OTCA'. Our goals are:

- To offer the community unique experiences through special events, festivals, incredible people, eclectic boutique shops, gourmet dining and our rich history.
- To value our heritage, volunteers and stakeholders who dedicate their resources to make Old Town a destination.
- To maintain a vibrant business community in Lansing's historic Old Town district by providing services and opportunities that foster economic growth and community engagement.
- To be a premier Main Street America participant and to model best practices in placemaking and community development to benefit our members and community.

Background

The Principal Shopping District (PSD) was created in the City of Lansing in the mid-1990s. It covers a corridor from downtown Lansing to Old Town. Today, two organizations spearhead activities inside the PSD boundaries including economic vitality, promotion, and beautification efforts, Downtown Lansing, Inc. (DLI)



and the OTCA. DLI captures PSD assessments paid by commercial property owners in all zones and in recent years has provided the OTCA with Zone B assessments.

In the mid-1990s when the PSD was formed, Old Town looked a lot different than it does today. In the '90s there was a high vacancy rate, fewer businesses and residents, more crime and certainly fewer visitors.

Three decades later, Old Town is vibrant, has more than 50 retail storefronts, nearly 300,000 annual visitors and currently receives Zone B PSD assessments that the City of Lansing collects on behalf of the PSD. Note that the existing Zone B remittance to the OTCA is just \$32,000 annually. This means that we fundraise for the vast majority of our budget each year which is used for staffing and to provide services to the Zone. An expanded assessment capture would mean additional resources that we can reinvest into the community.

Proposed Change

In 2024 the OTCA, in partnership with DLI, requested data to understand the impacts of an increase in the size and shape of various portions of the PSD zones to reinforce further revenue flowing to the OTCA. Improved revenue is vital to the continuing operations of the organization and to fund the services it provides to the neighborhood.

Expanding our boundaries will include commercial properties that already identify as being located in Old Town and benefit from the services and activities being developed and provided by the OTCA. Residential and rental properties under 4 units *are exempt* from the PSD assessment and will be unaffected.

Impact by the Numbers

Property owners can calculate their assessment as follows:

Structures

$$(\text{First floor square feet} \times .09949) + (\text{remainder of floors square feet} \times .0373) = \text{Total}$$

Surface Parking/Vacant Land (if no structures only)

$$\text{Square Feet} \times .04974 = \text{Total}$$

Average Impacts:

- Property owners who are currently paying the Zone B assessment will see *no change* to their assessment or services delivered.
- Property owners who will move *from Zone C to Zone B* will experience a modest increase in the existing assessment. There are 79 parcels in this group with the average increase per parcel of approximately \$126 per year. These parcels will also see an increase in services delivered.
- Businesses not in any Zone that will be in the *new Zone B* will have the largest change. There are 131 parcels impacted with the average per parcel of approximately \$687 per year. These parcels will begin seeing services delivered where they previously had none.

NOTE: All residential homes and rental buildings 4 units or under are *fully Exempt* and not impacted at all or included in the above analysis.

Investing in a Thriving Old Town – A Commitment to Property Owners

Old Town is more than just a business district—it's a destination, a community, and an economic driver for Lansing. The OTCA has been dedicated to preserving the historic character, enhancing the business climate and increasing property values through targeted initiatives that benefit all property owners.



To ensure continued growth and sustainability, we are expanding the special assessment boundaries to better reflect the areas where the OTCA is actively working and will be working in the near future. This expansion ensures fairness, allowing all benefiting properties to contribute to the improvements and services that make Old Town a great place to do business.

What Your Assessment Supports

Your investment in the special assessment directly funds:

- **Historic Preservation:** Protecting and maintaining Old Town's unique architecture, increasing the appeal of the district.
- **Marketing & Promotion:** Driving foot traffic and attracting new customers through events, social media, and advertising.
- **Beautification & Public Spaces:** Enhancing streetscapes, improving public spaces and maintaining seasonal décor to create a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Business Advocacy & Support:** Representing property owners in policy discussions, providing resources and ensuring a thriving business environment.
- **A Dedicated Staff:** Overseeing these programs, maintaining momentum and ensuring effective execution.

What This Means for You

For newly assessed property owners, you will directly benefit from the improvements and initiatives that drive customers to your businesses, enhance safety and preserve the character of the area. The OTCA will be ***expanding outreach and service delivery to the new Zone B areas***. This also gives you and your organization a voice and a role in the process of improving these new areas.

Why Your Support Matters

Old Town's growth has been a collective effort, and this assessment expansion ensures a sustainable future for our district. By investing together, we can:

- Strengthen property values through improved infrastructure, occupancy and density.
- Work with developers to attract more mixed use developments (nearly 150 units have been committed over the next three years) on what is currently unused property.
- Work with economic development leaders to attract more neighborhood amenities
- Attract more visitors, shoppers and businesses to the district.
- Maintain Old Town's unique character while fostering economic growth.
- Expand the reach of Old Town and the OTCA to new areas not currently served by the District.

We understand that any financial change brings questions, and we are committed to transparency. The OTCA will host informational meetings, offer one-on-one discussions and involve both existing and new Zone B members in planning for the future of the expanded area.

A Stronger Old Town Starts with You

Your support of this expansion helps preserve Old Town's historic charm and ensures it remains a top destination for businesses, residents, and visitors. We appreciate your investment in the district's future and look forward to working with you to make Old Town stronger than ever.