



November 17, 2017

Dear Economic Development Committee Members,

We are pleased that the city is proposing to use pop-up shops to revitalize retail main streets in areas experiencing economic challenges (ED25.6). Our experience on Danforth East shows that this is a proven model, led by the Danforth East Community Association (DECA) in partnership with WoodGreen Community Services.

Our Pop-up Shop Project worked with 11 property owners and hosted 32 pop-up shops over a period of four years with great results; during that time frame the commercial vacancy rate decreased from 17% to 6%. This project required a complex set of skills as evidenced by the dedicated team working with landlords, tenants and local retailers, while drawing on the additional expertise of over 100 volunteers. Complimentary campaigns such as “Shop Local” and digital marketing as well as individual store makeovers were an integral part of our overall efforts on Danforth East – the pop-up shop project went beyond filling empty stores. If newly formed, or perhaps unsophisticated BIAs are being asked to undertake this involved and detailed revitalization work, the recommendation in Phase 3, BIA Capacity Building thru a Local Leadership Program will be a vital component of the proposed plan.

WoodGreen is now working with Ryerson’s Ted Rogers School of Retail Management to develop new materials and sustain our learnings, including an open textbook and a refreshed website. Ryerson is a natural partner in this innovative and important revitalization work.

In closing, thank you for your dedicated work to support our city’s small, independent businesses and emerging entrepreneurs. Your willingness to explore innovative programs to create vibrant, walkable main streets in every part of the city is very much appreciated.

Best regards,

Gay Stephenson

Community Economic Development Coordinator, WoodGreen Community Services