



City of Toronto Executive Committee
12th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

October 22, 2021

Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee Members,

As we enter the fall/winter season in Toronto, the learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic continue to present themselves and shape our city, its policies and its planning for the foreseeable future. With the recent news of financial stress and high-profile failures in the hospitality sector, we appeal that the City of Toronto continue to enact the necessary policies that will undoubtedly determine the financial health of our business and the welfare of our employees and customers.

We would like to thank the City of Toronto Council for all the support they have shown us to date. With the Executive Committee considering a continuation of the CaféTO and CurbTO – Pandemic Response Programs at the upcoming meeting on October 27, 2021, we write to request that the Executive Committee consider and put forward a longer-term proposal for at least 5 years.

The CaféTO program was a tremendous accomplishment for the City of Toronto when it was introduced in 2020 and the response was even more enthusiastic for summer 2021. Eataly was one of the more than 750 restaurants that benefited from this innovative and timely approach to city planning. The overwhelming positive response from all stakeholders over the past two consecutive years presents justification that a longer-term program would be supported by all.

As a cultural capital on the global stage, Toronto is being closely identified with the CaféTO program reminiscent of the world's great open-air markets and cafes. Today, we are witnessing a city with a café culture and open-air program rivaling other cities where Eataly has opened its doors, such as Rome, Paris, London and New York City. As citizens and visitors to these cities cannot imagine life without an outdoor café experience, Toronto too is setting expectations that daily life must include high quality outdoor hospitality experiences. We know from our customers and staff that they would be very sad and disappointed if this program ceased to exist going forward.

With the success of the patio program in mind, we are reaching out to the City's Executive Committee to ask for support and partnership in building on CaféTO's achievements and allowing for multi-season patios under a formal, multi-year program.

The potential benefits of a such a framework are numerous, and directly address many Toronto stakeholders:



THE PEOPLE OF TORONTO

There were numerous benefactors of the City's CafeTO program, but perhaps none more grateful than the Torontonians we served over the past two summers.

On a daily basis, we would hear from customers who were overjoyed to see the city so alive, who were visiting Yorkville for the first time in years or who were given an opportunity to be with family in a safe environment. They were proud of Toronto for its fast action and its support of businesses big and small.

Knowing that, it's easy to imagine how Torontonians would feel should the city make this a longer-term project. It would be a win-win. In the minds of Torontonians, as evidenced from your last report, there is no downside from making the CafeTO program longer term.

THE RESTAURANT SECTOR

There are also the thousands of people who worked on the CaféTO patios. Our Eataly Toronto patio allowed us to bring back over 50 employees temporarily who directly worked on the patio, either in a front of house or back of house role. There were numerous roles also positively impacted indirectly, including facilities, marketing and HR, not to mention the trickle-down effect to outside vendors through our supply chain. If we had a multi-year arrangement, at minimum it would mean 50 more permanent jobs created.

This year was particularly challenging to find qualified workers in the restaurant industry. A temporary program is not a great selling feature to bring hospitality workers back to an exciting environment. A longer term CafeTO program would allow us to guarantee employment year over year and make our business attractive once again to workers with a hospitality background and increased enrollment in Toronto's world-renowned hospitality colleges such as Humber and George Brown.

Such would be the case for other restaurateurs across the city. During a year where the hospitality sector faced financial devastation, a multi-year agreement for would not only create jobs directly within those businesses, but also help stabilize financial health and generate additional work for associated contractors, designers and suppliers.

THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

This past summer, the city's streets and sidewalks felt energized after a long and bleak spring. Block after block, Toronto was buzzing day and night, its sidewalks and side streets animated with pedestrians. While restrictions still existed and were respected, it was a glimpse at what a recovery would entail and, fortunately, it made our neighborhoods shine.



It was easy to imagine the past two summers as a blueprint for a future Toronto; one where patios and cafés are gateways for Torontonians and tourists alike to discover entire neighborhoods.

A long-term strategy is now needed as CafeTO has become a mainstay in the minds of Torontonians. In Bloor-Yorkville, new patios such as those at Eataly, Trattoria Nervosa and Planta joined mainstays such as One, Hemingway's, The Oxley and Alobar in being able to serve diners outside. It gave Torontonians more options, more variety, and more incentive to explore their own city.

Most importantly, it turned Toronto into a café culture. New corners of Bloor-Yorkville, including ours at Bay and Bloor, became culinary destinations and undoubtedly brought traffic to other businesses in the area, from coffee shops to clothing stores.

It is with these considerations in mind that we ask the City to partner with Toronto restaurants in their recovery by championing a longer-term approach to a multi-year patio initiative.

In addition to the positive impact on Toronto residents, hospitality workers and the city's neighborhoods, as listed above, there are several practical reasons why a more established patio program for public land is worthwhile:

- **Return on investment:** the costs associated with temporary patios, including tent rentals, furniture, storage, and electrical are significant. The investment in a physical structure and infrastructure is more financially prudent if the investment had a longer period to recover the initial investment.
- **Operational efficiencies:** the operations of a pop-up and those of a permanent established outdoor restaurant differ greatly. The latter includes installation and strategic location of kitchens, storage, and access to facilities. Longer term programs would provide for additional investments that would otherwise not be made in a yearly pop up.
- **Better customer experiences:** restaurateurs, including Eataly, budgeted available resources over the past two summers to assemble pop up patios and curbside cafés. While diners were not picky during the pandemic, with more time, planning and investment, truly beautiful and inviting spaces would be enhanced to benefit all Torontonians.

Further to these points, and at a high level, a clear, multi-year plan for patios would create a degree of certainty for businesses in a time where uncertainty has prevailed.

The reality of COVID-19's impact is that patio season for the foreseeable future will play a pivotal role for restaurants in Toronto. Not only this year, but for years to come as well, as we all seek every possible channel to recoup the losses we have experienced.



Ultimately, the City and restaurateurs have the same goals: create jobs, stimulate the economy, design desirable spaces and reinforce Toronto as a leading, global city. A longer-term, City-supported strategy for CafeTO would do exactly that.

Sincerely,

Nico Dagnino

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nico Dagnino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Managing Director
Eataly Canada
Nico.Dagnino@Eataly.com
(301) 642-6682