



JENNIFER MCKELVIE

City Councillor
Scarborough-Rouge
Park
Ward 25

March 22, 2022

Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson and Members
Economic and Community Development Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: 28.2 Supporting Restaurants in Toronto - Recovery and Renewal (Ward All)

It's clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on restaurants throughout our city. Even before the pandemic, restaurants outside the downtown core experienced unique challenges due to geography, reduced foot traffic and increased barriers to participating in existing City programs.

Recognizing the limited number of BIAs in Scarborough, and the few restaurants participating in the 'Licious programs, in 2020 City Council approved a \$100,000 allocation for a restaurant support and promotional initiative, in partnership with the University of Toronto Scarborough.

Between the fall of 2020 and the end of 2021, students involved in the initiative, called Find Dining, facilitated outreach to restaurants and built a promotional website www.finddining.ca. Once in-person events resumed, three successful events were held at Centennial College to promote Scarborough restaurants and the initiative.

The events benefitted restaurants, the public and students. During the first event, community members were taught how to make two curry dishes by Chef La-toya Fagon, from Twist Catering, while hospitality students simultaneously learned how to prepare the dish in the teaching kitchen, which was then served to the community members attending. At the second event, featuring the Port Union Bakery, children were taught by local bakers how to decorate gingerbread cookies, while students supported the event organization. The last event featured a panel of local restaurateurs and food experts who discussed the Scarborough food community and its unique challenges, in front of a live audience.

Despite its successes, Find Dining experienced many delays due to mandated restaurant closures and limits on in-person dining. As a result, the City and its partners were not able to fulfill all the intended program plans by the time the funding agreement concluded at the end of 2021. With establishments open to full capacity once again, and the opportunity for in person events, we are asking for an extension of the Find Dining Agreement to May of 2023.

Recommendation:

1. City Council renew and extend and the agreement between the City of Toronto and the University of Toronto Scarborough, for the purposes of the Find Dining program, to May 31, 2023 to allow for the previously allocated funds to be used.

