

Good morning. I'm Gay Stephenson, co-coordinator of the DECA/WoodGreen Pop-up Shop Project. I first deputed to this issue in 2012 as a commercial property owner and DECA volunteer. Today, I would like to show you a video which shows that property owners hold the key to this important work. We must incent them to rent their vacant stores.

Many recommendations have been made for change to the vacant unit rebate, including one by OBIAA in Oct. 2015, identifying a possible solution.

"OBIAA identified an Attraction Rebate as a possible solution in 2014. MMAH asked OBIAA how an 'Attraction Rebate' could be implemented. OBIAA presented an overview of a new "Main Street Class" (non office towers) which would provide relief to main streets, without impacting the office towers of our urban centres. The Attraction Rebate would include a declining rebate over four years as well as stricter guidelines to be used as a tool by Municipalities."

The DECA/WoodGreen Pop-up Shop Project has filled empty stores on Danforth East with vibrant businesses since 2012. Pop-up shops have been proven to increase foot traffic. Since our last update to this committee in Nov. 2015, the commercial vacancy rate has been further reduced on Danforth East from 9% to 6%.

- 15 vacant storefronts have been leased
- 6 small enterprises have been incubated by this project
- 32 pop-up shops have been hosted since Oct 2012
- The commercial vacancy rate on Danforth East has decreased steadily over the past four years, from 17% to 6%.
- In April 2016, the Ted Rogers School of Retail Management at Ryerson received an innovation award to create a virtual knowledge commons for pop-up shops. We are working with them to share our learnings, resources and videos.

Gay Stephenson, Community Economic Development Coordinator, WoodGreen Community Services, The DECA/Woodgreen Pop-up Shop Project, Deputing to Economic Development Committee, item 2016.ED13.10, Vacant Commercial and Industrial Tax Relief Program.

Good morning. I'm Gay Stephenson, co-coordinator of the DECA/WoodGreen Pop-up Shop Project. I first deputed to this issue in 2012 (as a commercial property owner and DECA volunteer). Thank you for all your work on this issue.

Today, I would like to show you a video which we have just created to illustrate why it's so important to reform the vacant unit tax rebate for retail stores. In its present form, it can act as a disincentive. Some property are inclined to keep their shops empty and retain the rebate, rather than taking a chance on an entrepreneur who could bring new vibrancy to the street. This is a photo of the shop featured in the video during the time that it was vacant (six months).



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