

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM27.36	ACTION			Ward:All
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Creating a Chain Store Retail Strategy for Toronto - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Growth Management Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee in the first quarter of 2018, with a potential retail strategy that:
 - a. ensures new retail uses better address the goals and objectives of the Official Plan;
 - b. evaluates similar policies in other cities, including, but not limited to, the 2006 Formula Retail Strategy in San Francisco; and
 - c. promotes flexibility and incentivizes variation in both the size and type of new retail spaces on commercial main streets.

Summary

With the rapid pace of change underway in many Toronto neighbourhoods, there is an increasing concern that the character of many communities may be overwhelmed by an influx of formula retail establishments, otherwise known as chain stores.

A formula retail strategy would be based on determining the locational appropriateness for the use, and to ensure that any new formula retail compliments the existing aesthetic character of a neighbourhood. The purpose of the strategy is not to stop new formula retail, but instead to direct it in a manner that both serves the day to day needs of communities, and is in keeping with the character of the streetscape.

San Francisco adopted a Formula Retail Strategy in 2006 that required all new formula retail proposals to complete a conditional use process, and be approved by the municipal Planning Commission. Of San Francisco's 36 neighbourhoods, only three ban formula retail entirely,

while the remaining 33 require new applications to undergo a conditional use process.

For example, San Francisco defines formula retail as a retail sales establishment that has eleven or more locations globally, including proposed locations. Formula retail also possesses two or more of the additional characteristics including a standardized selection of products, facade, signage, decor, colour scheme, staff uniforms, and a trademark or servicemark.

In San Francisco, a five-fold test is used to determine appropriateness which includes considering of the existing concentration of formula retail in the area, the availability of similar uses nearby, the compatibility of the formula retail proposal with the current architectural and aesthetic makeup of the streetscape, nearby vacancy rates, and composition of existing retail serving daily needs within walking distance of the site.

This has allowed San Francisco's neighbourhoods to retain their character, to exert some control over the type of new formula retail establishments, and to maintain a vibrant and diverse streetscape that is aesthetically consistent and built on a human scale. San Francisco has been particularly successful in preserving local retail serving the daily needs of residents, such as hardware stores, greengrocers, and independent grocery stores.

Toronto should consider a similar strategy to grant neighbourhoods the ability to shape their communities directly, rather than leave them vulnerable to be shaped by chain stores.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM27.36