

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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April 9, 2017

Framework and Consultation Plan for a Harmonized Sidewalk Cafe and Marketing Bylaw: PW20.9, at April 12, 2017 Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

To the City Clerk:

On behalf of the Harbord Village Residents Association (HVRA), this is to give our strong support for the Staff Recommendation, with one reservation.

We have reviewed the *Framework for the Toronto Sidewalk Café Design Manual*, and are very impressed with it.

This Report not only stresses the priority of the *Pedestrian Clearway* in providing universal accessibility on Toronto sidewalks, but it provides a wide range of design options and support services to assist business owners with transition to the new standards. This is a Staff Report to be proud of.

However, based on extensive experience with these concepts, we are concerned with the principle of Stepped Compliance with the Manual and Bylaws.

Starting in 2000, HVRA was actively involved in the *College Street Revitalization Project* (Bathurst to Spadina): a project that saw major, pedestrian-focused road reconstruction between Spadina and Bathurst, with much wider sidewalks and 90 new trees.

To help manage this new space, HVRA piloted the *Pedestrian Clearway* concept that led to development of Toronto's *Vibrant Streets Guidelines*.

As well, in 2007, HVRA proposed a *Curbside Pilot Patio Project* that would assess the potential for relocating obstructive patios and marketing displays from the new Pedestrian Clearway.

At the time, and based entirely on objections from café owners, the Curbside Patio Pilot Project wasn't supported by Community Council -- and Pedestrian Clearway obstructions have remained in place to this date.

But now, fully 10 years later, the situation is very different:

- Toronto has the *Commitment to Creating an Accessible City*, with "removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities and becoming a barrier free city";
- Staff have produced an excellent report that introduces a broad range of design options for cafes and marketing displays, and extensive support to assist business owners with the transition;
- *Complete Streets Guidelines* have been developed with extensive stakeholder involvement, further highlighting the criticality of a straight, clear, continuous *Pedestrian Clearway* in the design of city streets;
- Toronto City Council recognizes the importance of investment in improving the safety of active transportation; for example, investing \$150,000 in capital, and foregoing \$221,000 of annual parking revenue, to upgrade the Harbord Street and Hoskin Avenue Bicycle Lanes (PW31.6, June 2014). And the Public Realm Reserve Fund provides a logical source of funding to make the Pedestrian Clearway a reality.

However, *Principle #3* suggests a standard 3-year grace period (to 2021) for all non-compliant patios, and the potential of further delays for situations identified for "red-circling", or grandfathering the current obstructions.

We respectfully suggest that Toronto can and should do better.

And that it's time to proudly and respectfully put pedestrians first on city sidewalks, and to have the same high standards that would be offered for a transit lane, traffic lane or cycle track.

We therefore ask that the upcoming consultations focus on design options and financial incentives to minimize delay in achieving a straight, clear, unobstructed Pedestrian Clearway -- and to aggressively reach resolution of situations where grandfathering might be considered.

Other great cities have done this successfully; Philadelphia, Boston, Washington DC, Paris, New York and many others. Toronto can as well.

Sincerely,

Rory 'Gus' Sinclair
Chair