



April 13, 2018

Dear Economic Development Chair and Members,

Re: Support for small businesses with cost of Toronto Hydro wire covering

Over the past several years, I have heard increasing concerns about the rising costs of covering and isolating Toronto Hydro distribution wires for simple maintenance of building facades. One property was quoted \$19,351 for a 17 foot wide property. Another was quoted \$43,825 for the same distance. Such costs can make simple tasks, like painting the facade, unaffordable to most.

The escalating costs seem to stem from two factors. Firstly, the privatization of this service from Toronto Hydro to an outside contractor, and secondly, the costs that come with improved standards to isolate wires for the protection workers. We cannot jeopardize the safety of workers in our city, but since we are the majority shareholder of Toronto Hydro, it is incumbent upon us to evaluate how we can ensure small business owners are protected from the runaway costs of building improvements.

On behalf of the West Queen West BIA and other small business owners who are trying to improve their property and our streets, we need the City to be looking for a solution to these rising costs.

Recommendation:

1. Economic Development Committee request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to consult with appropriate City Staff and Toronto Hydro, and report to the Economic Development Committee in the second quarter of 2019:
 - On measures that can be taken to reduce the costs of covering distribution lines for small businesses in the City, including restoring the role of Toronto Hydro to complete line covering and isolation
 - On ways to improve the pole attachment and renewal permit process
 - No longer permitting Ground Fault Interrupters
 - On timely BIA notification of rule changes
 - On the potential benefits of moving toward classifying BIAs as a local city board and not a third party

Thank you,

Councillor Mike Layton
Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina