

July 6, 2020

To: Chair Michael Thompson and Members, Economic and Community Development Committee

**Re: Expediting the Formation of a Business Improvement Area (BIA) in Willowdale**

The steering committee for the BIA in Willowdale has asked that I present a motion to the Economic and Community Development Committee to expedite the process to be designated an official Business Improvement Area (BIA) in Willowdale. Their specific request is that City Council consider waiving the requirement to hold an interest meeting to establish a general sense of support for a BIA among businesses in the area:

**MC 19-2.2 A(3)(e): Notice and polling – new business improvement areas**

A. A steering committee shall be formed to undertake the following with the assistance of City staff:

(3)(e) "Decide on whether to request the General Manager to proceed to a formal public consultation meeting."

City Council has authority to waive requirements of the Code particularly when it is in the public interest. Council has done so in the past. In this case, an expedited process will better equip the local business community to address the severe impacts of COVID as an issue requiring urgent and immediate attention. For this reason, the waiving of the interest meeting has been requested in consultation with the Manager of Toronto BIA Office by the Willowdale BIA Steering Committee, which has already done extensive consultation with the local business community including a flyer delivered to 1,800 businesses in the area earlier this year, as shown in Attachment 3.

That public interest meeting outlined in MC 19-2.2 culminates with a secret ballot made by all business representatives in attendance. Though the usual procedure of a physical meeting is unable to be followed at this time due to COVID the City has no protocol for conducting a secret ballot through a virtual meeting. Moreover, the City also depends on the steering committee to drop off notice to business tenants which is unwise in a pandemic.

These factors create a unique importance and urgency for expediting the BIA process at this time. The notice and polling conducted by the City Clerk would still be required as the next step.

Based on the work of the steering committee to date, and the number of businesses who have expressed firm interest and support, I fully endorse their request and agree that it is in the best interest of businesses in Willowdale that a BIA be formed as soon as possible to help with the immediate need of economic recovery and the long-term commercial vitality in the area.

Therefore, I respectfully submit the following:

**Recommendations**

1. City Council direct the Steering Committee for the BIA in Willowdale and the City's BIA Office staff to bypass the requirement that the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture conduct a formal public consultation meeting as required under subsection 19-2.2A(3)(e) and the requirements under subsection 19-2.2 C to H of Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code and proceed to notice and polling under section 19-2.3 of Chapter 19 of the Toronto Municipal Code.

2. City Council state its intention to designate the area as the Willowdale Business Improvement Area (BIA) under Chapter 19 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code.
3. City Council direct the City Clerk to send out a notice of City Council's intention to pass a by-law designating the area as the Willowdale Business Improvement Area (BIA), in accordance with Chapter 19 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code.
4. City Council direct the Chief Technology Officer to prepare designation by-law maps of the area, and submit them to the City Solicitor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Fillion". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Fillion

Toronto City Councillor, Ward 18 - Willowdale

- Attachment 1: Letter from Willowdale BIA Steering Committee
- Attachment 2: Description of Proposed BIA in Willowdale
- Attachment 3: Willowdale BIA promotional flyer
- Attachment 4: Additional letters of support for BIA in Willowdale