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July 9, 2020

To: Infrastructure and
Environment Committee

Re: Request to provide planter boxes and other street furniture as part of Public Realm design for places of worship.

Last year, given that places of worship were being targeted and attacked by criminal acts of hate, I have moved a motion to request that the Toronto Police Services Board examine a possibility of creating a Task Force to help prevent and deal with threats to places of worship that may be targeted of a criminal attack that would seek to harm innocent members of religious congregations.

Specifically in my own Ward 8, several places of worship requested to enhance and improve safety and security for communities where there is a vulnerability to possible unprovoked acts of hate on religious institutions.

Given that I represent one of the most uniquely religiously diverse areas of our great City that is home to over 100 synagogues and religious school that are finding it more and more financially challenging to provide safety and security for their institutions, on behalf of citizens of Ward 8, I respectfully seek your approval to provide Public Realm improvements and street furniture to enhance pedestrian protection and safety for the places of worship.

Something needs to be done in order to protect our places of worship in the City and ensure the safety of the most vulnerable from these unprovoked acts of hate on religious institutions.

Recommendation:

That the Infrastructure and Environment Committee recommend that

1. City Council direct the Director, Office of Emergency Management work with other City Division to enhance pedestrian protection and safety for the places of worship including:
 - a. making bollards and planters available to enhance pedestrian safety and protection in the immediate vicinity of places of worship.
 - b. exploring, with the General Manager, Transportation Services opportunities to deploy street furniture as means of enhancing pedestrian safety and protection for places of worship.

Thank you,

City Councillor

Ward 8, Eglinton-Lawrence