

City Council**Motion without Notice**

MM24.36	ACTION			Ward: All
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Supporting Black-Owned and Operated Businesses and Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Eglinton Avenue West's "Little Jamaica"- by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Michael Thompson, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Province of Ontario to introduce rent control legislation for commercial units along Eglinton Avenue West to protect Black-owned and operated businesses from unfair or drastic increases to their rent.
2. City Council direct the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild to engage with the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business to develop a tailored and phased approach to help support Black-owned and operated businesses, specifically along Eglinton Avenue West, on their stabilization reopening, recovery and rebuild strategy and to report to Executive Committee by end of the fourth quarter of 2020.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to:
 - a. explore measures to provide financial relief, including property taxes, license renewal, late tax payment, deferred tax payment with the deferred amount gradually remitted to the City post-construction, or upon the sale of the property, and other measures as appropriate to stabilize Black-owned and

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 - a. explore measures to provide financial relief, including property taxes, license renewal, late tax payment, deferred tax payment with the deferred amount gradually remitted to the City post-construction, or upon the sale of the property, and other measures as appropriate to stabilize Black-owned and

operated businesses along Eglinton Avenue West before the end of the first quarter of 2021;

b. explore options to ensure that measures identified to provide financial relief can also be made available directly to business operator tenants as appropriate;

c. collaborate with the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business, BlackUrbanismTO, Reclaim, Rebuild Eglinton Avenue West, Black Futures on Eglinton, York-Eglinton Business Improvement Area, Fairbank Village Business Improvement Area, Eglinton Hill Business Improvement Area and community members to investigate opportunities, including holding a community consultation process, to rebrand the area of Eglinton Avenue West from Marlee Avenue to Keele Street that reflects the Jamaican-Caribbean history before the end of 2021; and

d. develop a plan with the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business, BlackUrbanismTO, Reclaim, Rebuild Eglinton Avenue West, Black Futures on Eglinton, York-Eglinton Business Improvement Area, Fairbank Village Business Improvement Area, Eglinton Hill Business Improvement Area and community members that focuses on bringing back previous, and develop new, culturally-focused events and initiatives that will celebrate the Jamaican and Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage of Eglinton Avenue West before the end of 2021.

4. City Council request the Toronto Parking Authority Board to request the Acting President, Toronto Parking Authority to consider developing an enhanced, comprehensive and user-friendly Toronto Parking Authority system on Eglinton Avenue West that incorporates and consolidates Toronto Parking Authority lots into new developments, addresses short, medium and long-term parking issues and develops appropriate fee structures that take into consideration ongoing construction and business client needs and to report to Toronto Parking Authority Board by the end of the fourth quarter of 2020.

5. City Council direct the City Manager to request Metrolinx and Crosslinx Transit Solutions to give Black-owned and operated businesses on Eglinton Avenue West first right of refusal for any retail spaces opening in any of the LRT stations located along Eglinton Avenue West from Marlee Avenue to Keele Street.

6. City Council request the Province of Ontario to require property owners in the subject area to provide Black-owned and operated businesses with a first right of refusal on retail spaces upon transfer of land.

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7. City Council direct the City Manager to report back on the status of recommendations listed in MM16.8 to the October 21, 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee.

8. City Council direct the City Manager to create a team of dedicated staff from Economic Development and Culture, City Planning, Community Planning, Urban Design, Heritage Planning, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, the Indigenous Affairs Office, the Housing Secretariat, the Office of Partnerships, Transportation Services, Transportation Planning and other appropriate key divisions to implement an inter-divisional approach to the work and deliverables directed in the below recommendations.

9. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to collaborate with the inter-divisional team to develop a Cultural District Plan, using an equity lens, for the neighbourhood that includes the following, and to report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee with an interim report within six months and final report within one year of the date of this Motion:

- a. officially recognizes, delineates and designates the neighbourhood as a Jamaican- Caribbean Cultural District;
- b. highlights the cultural landscape of the neighbourhood through the creation of a high profile cultural district that will enhance business and tourism;
- c. delineates cultural zones based on local character and the existing or historical business landscape;
- d. explores private and public sector support and partnerships to develop the cultural zones identified in the Plan;
- e. identifies and incorporates any heritage properties, legacy businesses, cultural landscapes and potential archaeological resources as important elements of the Cultural District;
- f. identifies, incorporates and celebrates the rich history and contributions of Jamaican and other immigrants of Afro-Caribbean decent;
- g. identifies and incorporates the Indigenous history within and near the Cultural District;

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- g. identifies and incorporates the Indigenous history within and near the Cultural District;

h. promotes local businesses that are a key part of the cultural heritage landscape including restaurants and juice bars, grocers, barbershops, hair salons and beauty supply shops, fashion retailers, recording studios and music stores, and, civic, creative or art-focused institutions;

i. identifies locations to establish new parks through acquisition and transfer of City-owned lands to address the gap in parkland in portions of the Cultural District;

j. develops a framework and implementation plan to allow for micro-retail uses, operated by the City within new or existing parkland within the Cultural District;

k. develops a Retail Strategy and Implementation Plan that reviews the current state and future of Eglinton Avenue West and potential policies and programs to support Black-owned and operated businesses;

l. identifies initiatives to celebrate and commemorate local historical people, events and buildings marking Jamaican-Caribbean presence and contribution;

m. identifies quick start actions that can be implemented in the short to medium term;

n. considers other City and third party studies and plans existing or on going within the Cultural District; and

o. retains a public consultation consultant that has significant experience engaging with African-Canadian, Black and/or Caribbean communities, equity-seeking groups, marginalized and diverse communities, business owners, as well as demonstrated experience of effective virtual and in-person consultations.

10. City Council direct the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to develop a housing strategy plan and analysis for the area of Eglinton Avenue West from Marlee Avenue to Keele Street with a focus on affordable housing and explores other appropriate affordable housing and work-live spaces that could help support efforts to sustain the Jamaican-Caribbean identity.

11. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to include Eglinton Avenue West station as part of the Phase 1 Protected Major Transit Station Area Study being conducted and to develop a Housing Strategy so that inclusionary zoning permissions can be achieved within the new Cultural District and to work with

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Community Planning to incorporate the Protected Major Transit Stations Areas requirements into a new planning framework.

12. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to collaborate with the inter-divisional team to conduct a comprehensive planning framework study and plan that will reflect the new Cultural District designation and to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee with an interim report within six months and final report within one year of the date of this Motion:

- a. land use, built form and massing;
- b. Protected Major Transit Stations Areas requirements including inclusionary zoning for affordable housing;
- c. develop a Public Realm, Open Space and Public Art Strategy and Implementation Plan that reflects the uniqueness of each Cultural District zones;
- d. develop a Laneway Improvement and Animation Strategy and Implementation Plan for the existing laneway system, including Reggae Lane, within the Cultural District and determine an appropriate body to lead and take stewardship of this asset;
- e. takes into account retail spaces and the built form needs of businesses;
- f. takes into account the Jamaican-Caribbean heritage and cultural heritage potential of the area, including buildings with important historic cultural value and a potential cultural heritage landscape designation;
- g. identifies quick start actions that can be implemented in the short to medium term;
- h. retains a public consultation consultant that has significant experience engaging with equity-seeking groups, marginalized and diverse communities, business owners, as well as demonstrated experience of effective virtual and in-person consultations; and
- i. considers the directions of this recommendation in the review of all development applications.

13. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to develop a Mobility study, in consultation with the Toronto Parking Authority, that:

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13. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to develop a Mobility study, in consultation with the Toronto Parking Authority, that:

- a. supplements work already undertaken by EGLINTONconnects;
- b. examines the existing and future commercial parking needs and considers consolidating parking;
- c. loading and access as Eglinton Avenue West is redeveloped;
- d. re-evaluates existing pedestrian and cycling plans with a focus on reducing automobile dependency; and
- e. aligns study with principles of the new Cultural District and Retail Strategy Study.

14. City Council direct the inter-divisional team and request Provincial Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney to review and implement the recommendations made in BlackUrbanismTO's report titled, "A Black Business Conversation on Planning for the Future of Black Businesses and Residents on Eglinton Avenue West".

15. City Council direct the inter-divisional team to continue outreach with the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business, BlackUrbanismTO, Reclaim, Rebuild, Eglinton Avenue West, Black Futures on Eglinton, and community members to ensure that the foregoing recommendations are informed by their experiences.

Summary

The heart and soul of Eglinton Avenue West, which is colloquially known as "Little Jamaica" or "Eglinton", is home to the highest concentration of Black and Caribbean-owned and operated businesses in Toronto. From the barbershops and hair salons that act as community spaces to the various restaurants that remind many of home, Eglinton Avenue West is an important part of Toronto's Black history.

However, many Black-owned and operated businesses have been fighting a battle against the potential loss of the character, identity and roots of their neighbourhood for years. Due to rising rents, construction of the Province's LRT project and now, the COVID-19 pandemic, a growing number of prominent and historic small businesses have been forced to shutter their doors. While these factors have certainly contributed to the challenges Black-owned and operated businesses along Eglinton face, we must not discount the silent yet significant roles of gentrification, Black displacement and cultural erasure. With such pressures mounting, community groups and projects such as BlackUrbanismTO, Reclaim, Rebuild Eglinton Avenue West, and Black Futures on Eglinton have formed to stand with the Black-owned and operated businesses and local

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residents to call for change.

The City of Toronto must develop a sustainability plan to support the retention and growth of Black-owned and operated businesses, while celebrating the identity, and showcasing the resiliency of the Jamaican-Caribbean community.

The spirit of this Motion and the initiatives called for in this Motion are currently being advanced by the City of Toronto as a legacy project of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, which has its theme: Recognition, Justice and Development. The City proclaimed its official recognition of the International Decade on March 25, 2019.

This Motion is urgent to address the immediate threat to Black-owned and operated businesses due to the pressures exerted by the pandemic and Metrolinx's Eglinton Crosstown construction.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM24.36

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