

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM25.5	ACTION			Ward: All
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Creating a Chain Store Retail Strategy for Toronto - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

1. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild, to report to the Planning and Housing Committee in the second quarter of 2021 on an approach to a potential retail strategy that:

- a. ensures new retail uses better address the goals and objectives of the Official Plan;
- b. evaluates similar policies in other cities, including, but not limited to, the 2006 Formula Retail Strategy in San Francisco; and
- c. promotes flexibility and incentivizes variation in both the size and type of new retail spaces on commercial main streets.

Summary

On March 28, 2017, City Council adopted MM27.36, “Creating a Chain Store Retail Strategy for Toronto.” This Motion is follow-up on that request to City staff as they have yet to report back.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our neighbourhoods. Prior to the pandemic, there was concern that the character and vibrancy of many communities was changing as long-time establishments, including small grocery and hardware stores, independent cafes and other unique neighbourhood establishments were being pushed out for larger chain retail establishments. Restrictions and physical distancing caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic is financially threatening many of the remaining small businesses, and nervous landlords may be likely to turn to chain retail to fill new vacancies as they may be seen as more stable tenants.

As per the March 28, 2017 Motion, a formula retail strategy, “would be based on determining the locational appropriateness for the use, and to ensure that any new formula retail compliments the existing aesthetic character of a neighbourhood. The purpose of the strategy is

not to stop new formula retail, but instead to direct it in a manner that both serves the day to day needs of communities, and is in keeping with the character of the streetscape.”

At the October 20, 2020 Planning and Housing Committee, a new Retail Design Manual was recommended for adoption by the committee and is before City Council at its October 27 and 28 meeting. While the great work that staff have done to help shape the form and function of retail spaces in the City is notable, the new Retail Design Manual does not respond to the March 28 2017 request from City Council, which remains outstanding.

While COVID-19 will have long-term impacts on our communities, having a chain retail strategy in place may assist in ensuring our neighbourhoods recover and rebuild into vital and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM25.5