

**Re Item EX28.15 Framework for the Review of Licensing and Zoning Regulations
for Restaurants, Bars and Entertainment Venues**

Executive Committee December 7th

Submission by Tracy Jenkins, Lula Lounge, tracy@lula.ca 416 797 4890

For distraction to committee members

Dear Executive Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input as venue operators, and to share our views regarding what we think would best for our business, as well as for the economic and cultural health of our city.

We would like to begin by thanking city staff and committee members for their work to address the issues with the existing licensing framework.

As venue operators with more than 20 years of experience, we would welcome a live music venue designation that replaces the current restaurant license under which many live music venues are currently forced to operate.

In our opinion, live music venues provide a unique experience to their clients and have a unique role in supporting the musical culture of the city and the country.

We urge you to ensure that the upcoming consultation regarding the licensing and zoning regulations for restaurants, bars and entertainment venues includes ample detailed conversations with the businesses that will be most affected by the zoning/ licensing system and that a wide and culturally-diverse range of bars, restaurants and live music venues are consulted.

In our opinion, a new framework would need to be flexible to ensure that it reflects the ways in which live music businesses actually operate, and is not based merely on theoretical ideas of what a music venue “should” look like.

In our experience, the business models of live music establishments are always evolving, and often incorporate diverse uses of venue space. In an attempt to be economically viable, most venues host a very wide range of musical genres. As a result, we don't see it as practical to try to categorize venues by genre as is suggested in the document as a possible approach.

Many venues have developed business models that involve moving fluidly between different uses including dining, concerts of many genres, dancing, comedy, film screenings, private events, fundraisers and more. We believe that this mix of uses both increases the viability of our individual businesses and contributes to the vibrancy of the city and its music scene through cross-cultural pollination.

We'd like to see a framework that is focussed on education, best practice sharing, dialogue, flexibility, problem solving, conflict resolution and supporting the live music venues that are the foundation of the Canadian music scene, as opposed to a framework focussed on regulation, enforcement and fines.

We feel strongly that with a collaborative approach that fosters responsible operators, live music businesses have an important role to play in making neighbourhoods great places to live, visit and work.

Since we want to encourage live music to be part of the cultural fabric across the city, we believe that it is important to ensure that the new framework doesn't make it harder for appropriately-sized local music venues to exist or be created in residential or mixed-use neighbourhoods.

The "agent of change" principle, as adopted as part of the city-approved venue protection measures in 2018, should be extended to all areas of the city and guide new recommendations with respect to licensing and zoning changes.

We are happy to see that the staff report recognizes the drastic, negative affects of the pandemic on our industry. As we all are struggling to recover, this would be a particularly bad time to increase costs, regulations or red tape. We hope that this will be reflected in final recommendations.

Thank you for your time in considering this submission and thank you again for the opportunity to provide input to this process.

Sincerely.

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