



ST. LAWRENCE MARKET  
NEIGHBOURHOOD BIA

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

RE: Budget support for BIA members

To the Members of the Budget Committee,

As a result of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, a number of issues have arisen within the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA that need immediate attention.

Many of our business members have been suffering over the last two years, not only due to closures and lack of business but also due to the associated issues related to the pandemic.

These issues include:

**1. Vandalism to restaurants/stores/businesses:**

- Over hundreds of incidents has occurred during the last two years. Vandalism includes break ins, smashed windows, broken doors, and destruction to business interiors. Items stolen or damaged include laptops, iPads, point of sale equipment, restaurant assets such as glasses, china and liquor, amongst other things. Used drug paraphernalia are occasionally found as well.
- Vandalism outside stores: this includes flower arrangements as well as patio items

**2. Area asset vandalism:**

- Heightened Graffiti issues on poles, walls, businesses, barricades and city property.
- Damage to BIA programs such as landscaped and beautified treepits and hanging flowers, due to theft or other unseemly actions.
- Increase area asset inventory has been needed to monitor increased issues
- City parks have been an increased safety risk due to used drug paraphernalia. Increase clean-up is needed.

**3. Safety and Security:**

- Safety of both business and residents are a primary concern. Costs for security and patrols have risen greatly amongst many building owners, so much so that this item has risen 100-fold.
- Patrols are an essential item, due to the increasing attacks on pedestrians, not only on the streets but on busy patios as well. Nights are no longer safe in our neighbourhoods and many people will not walk outside at night.
- The clustering of temporary shelters in the area has exacerbated safety issues
- There is a lack of fulsome police presence. More robust police presence and patrols are needed around the clock to stem any potential violence and vandalism



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#### **4. Shelters and Mental Health issues**

- While the BIA supports the need for temporary shelters, the clustering of these shelters into certain areas has become problematic. A more integrated program with a wider shelter distribution in the city is needed with associated wraparound mental health and addiction programs. As drug use has been commonplace on our streets and in fact directly in front of visitors, it does not bode well for a proper economic recovery when we finally make it to the other side of the pandemic. The stories associated with this are already making its way through social media.

#### **5. CaféTO patio and new non-commercial spaces (such as Parklettes) support**

- The CafeTO program has been a program that has at the very least extended the life of many of our restaurants, and hence has brought some life to the area. Financial support for this program would be a welcome addition for our businesses.
- During this program the option to create public spaces such as parklettes have been available. Support for these programs would also be meaningful and essential.

#### **Estimated costs associated with these issues include:**

Vandalism and break ins: \$300,000

Area asset vandalism:

Additional Graffiti issues \$20,000

BIA programs: \$100,000

Additional Asset monitoring: \$20,000

Parks and streets clean up: \$200,000

CafeTO and non-commercial public spaces: \$200,000

*Police Patrols for Safety and Security: Full time additional patrols*

The total costs range in the \$850,000 range (not including additional police patrols) over the past few years. When highlighting safety and security, our role is to create inviting spaces that will attract appropriate use which will overwhelm any negative behaviour. In order to support our businesses and on-going area issues, we would request that this money be allocated within the budget to assist our area businesses in fording through this difficult time.

Yours Truly,

Al Smith  
Executive Director  
St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA