



Kensington Market BIA
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For distribution to the City of Toronto's Executive Committee

January 21, 2022

Letter re: EX29.2 SafeTO Implementation Plan

We are writing to address the urgent need to approach the multifaceted mental illness, addiction, violence, overdose and homelessness crisis in Downtown BIAs and to support the SafeTO Implementation Plan.

Increasingly our BIAs are experiencing day to day reports, calls and emails from main street businesses and community members in distress, concerned about their safety and of our marginalized community members. We have received 40 plus incident reports and emails from local businesses and residents who are experiencing issues everyday in Kensington Market.

We know this is a deeply complicated issue to address, however there is a strong need for new approaches and programs to allow local businesses and main streets to thrive, staff and residents to feel safe and to provide our marginalized community members with accessible, supportive programs. **We want to encourage Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Enforcement as a full circle approach** to mental illness, addiction and abuse which typically lead to violence, homelessness and the loss of lives in our communities.

We are looking to a SafeTO plan that helps us collectively see progress toward:

(Sourced from the DYBIA Action Plan)

- **Coordinated/Cross Collaborative Service Delivery;** *End the silos – all relevant agencies and departments, at all levels, must work together*
- **Wrap-around services; not ONLY harm reduction alone;** *Stop treating harm reduction as an isolated focus and integrate prevention and rehabilitation supports*
- **Support services across the GTA;** *Intensive social service supports are disproportionately located in the downtown core/ downtown east areas. They should be decentralized, which would enable more stable delivery and ease the strain on downtown neighbourhoods.*
- **Measure outcomes; Track investments, objectives and results;** *All levels of government are contributing public funds toward community safety programs and initiatives, but these investments are piecemeal. They need to be more strategic, targeted and cohesive.*
- **Decisions based on reality, not ideology;** *Provide help for those who need it and prosecute those who exploit them. Engage with communities to move forward inclusively, not focusing solely on the needs of one part of the population.*

We NEED to prioritize an innovative and cross-collaborative approach that properly addresses safety and inclusion in all Toronto communities. We welcome continued opportunities to be involved in helping shape policies, programs, and tangible actions through SafeTO.

Sincerely,

Gwen Bang,
Chair of the Kensington Market BIA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gwen Bang".