

January 16, 2023

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Attention: Councillor Gary Crawford, Chair, Budget Committee

Dear Councillor Crawford and Members of the Budget Committee,

Toronto Downtown West BIA supports Mayor Tory's 2023 budget and specifically its focus on community safety.

A 24/7 neighbourhood with over 2,500 businesses, Downtown West BIA is a significant contributor to Toronto's economic vitality. In the past 15 years the residential population of Downtown West grew from 1,500 to over 35,000 people, we have a daily working population of 100 thousand, and 20 million visitors come annually for dining, sports, attractions, performing arts and nightlife. As growth continues the population in our BIA is expected to double over the next 20 years.

Maintaining a safe community to live work and visit, must include the necessary police resources to keep pace with the complexities of our growing neighbourhood.

We support the proposed 2023 budget increase for community safety which includes the addition of 25 police officers dedicated to the downtown. Additional police resources and improved police response times along with the commitment to continued funding and the expansion of the Community Crisis Service providing non-police responses to persons in crisis are important factors for our community safety and wellbeing.

Toronto Downtown West BIA is pleased with the steps to address community safety and the police resource gaps through this 2023 budget.

But this is only one step in much needed resources. Our BIA is committed to advocate in support of the City's efforts for safe and vibrant communities including requests for substantial increases in provincial and federal funding for social services programs, addictions, mental health treatment and prevention coordinated with increased supportive housing development.

Thank you,

Janice Solomon
Executive Director,
Toronto Downtown West BIA