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April 24, 2023

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

Re: Amendment to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 510-5 "Tourist Area Exemptions" for Holiday Shopping for Yorkdale Shopping Centre

SUMMARY:

I write to the Economic and Community Development Committee to correct a long overdue anomaly in the retail landscape in the City of Toronto. Yorkdale Shopping Centre has long sought approval to open for business on six of nine statutory holidays, not only to put themselves on equal footing alongside nine other shopping malls across the GTA, but also in recognition of the significant role they play in Toronto's tourism sector. The City was granted this authority in the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and then subsequently passed legislation to allow such exemptions in Municipal Code Chapter 510-5. Simply put, this action is long overdue.

With 4.5 Million of its 18 Million total annual shoppers, Yorkdale welcomes more tourists each year than other top attractions such as Canada's Wonderland, Ripley's Aquarium, and all three of the CN Tower, ROM and AGO combined. Yorkdale has invested \$3 Million in its tourism strategy including hiring a full-time manager and a dedicated marketing and advertising campaign to attract domestic and international visitors including the provision of amenities such as luggage check, currency exchange and hotel and car service. Yorkdale is a member of Destination Toronto, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, all who have submitted letters of support for this action by Toronto City Council.

The retail landscape has shifted dramatically since this issue was last visited. Brick and mortar retail is under siege as never before from off-shore, online shopping and even more acutely since the impact of COVID 19. This slow erosion of in-person shopping also puts a strain on maintaining Toronto's critical commercial tax base as well as the vital but shrinking retail workforce. Finally, Yorkdale needs equitable treatment with this exemption, otherwise regional shoppers and tourists will continue to flock to malls in the 905 region such as Vaughan Mills and Square One which has results in \$64.7 Million in lost sales and \$4.73 Million in lost wages to Yorkdale's 6,000 employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Economic and Community Development Committee recommends that:

1. Council amend Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 510-5 "Tourist Area Exemptions" for Holiday Shopping to permit Yorkdale Shopping Centre to open on holidays under authority of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 (the "COTA");

Thank you,

Mike Colle
Toronto City Councillor
Ward 8, Eglinton-Lawrence