

## Supporting the Growth of the Night Economy

**Date:** November 14, 2023

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Patrick Tobin, General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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The night economy – which accounts for an estimated 300,000+ jobs<sup>1</sup> across a range of sectors – includes all activities taking place between dusk and dawn: dining, community and special events, performing arts, recreation, live music, festivals, shift work, retail, transit and emergency services. A healthy night economy that supports the needs of residents, visitors, and workers requires a proactive municipal approach to lay the groundwork for nighttime business and culture to thrive. A coordinated, strategic approach across City divisions and related external agencies is vital to ensuring that Toronto's night experience is safe, positive, sustainable, and inclusive.

This staff report addresses two distinct but related areas of work in supporting Toronto's night economy: an update on progress of work regarding City Council directives contained in item EC6.8 Strengthening Toronto's Night Economy; and, a summary of key takeaways for the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) Division regarding the 2023 consultations for the multi-divisional *Toronto Night Economy Review: Licensing and Zoning for Restaurants, Bars and Entertainment Venues Public Consultation* (Toronto Night Economy Review, Attachment 1).

This report complements the proposed licensing and zoning changes and by-law amendments for the dining and entertainment sectors of the concurrent reports from City Planning (CP) - *Recommended Amendments to Zoning By-laws for Bars, Restaurants, and Entertainment Venues as part of the Night Economy Review – Final Report* being considered by the Planning and Housing Committee at the November 30 meeting, and from Municipal and Licensing Standards (MLS) - *Recommended Amendments to Chapter 545, Licensing for Bars, Restaurants, and Entertainment Venues as part of the Night Economy Review*, being considered by the Economic and Community Development Committee at the November 28 meeting.

The Night Economy Internal Working Group made up of City Planning, Municipal and Licensing Standards, Transportation Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health, and others was consulted in the preparation of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/8ea6-CityPlanning-Toronto-Employment-Survey-2022-Bulletin.pdf>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. The Economic and Community Development Committee receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no current year or future year financial impacts resulting from the recommendations contained in this report and continued implementation of the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan as outlined in Attachment 2 of this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as presented in the Financial Impact section.

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

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The divisions involved recognize the importance of ensuring that all Torontonians are represented in the discussion of issues impacting nighttime businesses and the needs of people who are active at night. To ensure an equity-based approach to research and consultation, the external vendor, VibeLab, focused on diverse and equitable participation. The Toronto Night Economy Review included targeted outreach to Indigenous, Black, racialized, and equity-deserving communities, including women, 2SLGBTQ+, youth, people with disabilities, and people who live with low incomes.

To ensure financial barriers to participation were reduced, VibeLab provided individual stipends to participants who met specific criteria and were from equity-deserving communities. Upon request, City staff also translated a public opinion online survey into Korean to support participation and engagement of Korean-speaking residents in Toronto. Finally, City staff and VibeLab collaborated to ensure wide geographic outreach by leveraging connections with Business Improvement Areas, Residents Associations, and other organizations in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and downtown Toronto.

The next steps identified within this report are aligned with SafeTO and address community safety and well-being. They also aim to address equity and inclusion barriers to accessing nightlife and enhance livability for everyone who works at night or is interested in cultural or social experiences after dark.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on May 17, 2016, Economic Development and Culture adopted the item 2016.ED12.12, which explores the creation of a Night Mayor Ambassador Program for the City of Toronto.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2016.ED12.12>

At its meeting on July 16, 2019, City Council adopted the item EC6.8 Strengthening Toronto's Nighttime Economy, which advocates for collaboration between various Divisions to enhance social, cultural, and economic activities between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EC6.8>

At its meeting on June 29, 2020, City Council adopted the item EC12.12 City-owned Spaces for DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Music Organizations, which describes how access to City-owned space will advance the needs of equity-deserving communities and support the goals of the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.EC12.12>

At its meeting on July 14, 2021, City Council adopted Item EX25.4 SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well Being Plan, which is a comprehensive Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan that reimagines core elements of community safety and well-being in order to shift the City's paradigm from a reliance on reactive emergency response to a culture of proactive prevention.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EX25.4>

At its meeting on September 22, 2021, Economic and Community Development Committee adopted the item EC24.6 Emerging Entertainment Areas Outside of the Downtown Core, which outlines how the City will support the growth of night economy activity and cultural vibrancy.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EC24.6>

At its meeting on December 7, 2021, Executive Committee adopted the item EX28.15 Framework for the Review of Licensing and Zoning Regulations for Restaurants, Bars and Entertainment Venues, which identifies that current business licensing regimes and zoning regulations have not kept pace with the evolution of night culture and a review of regulations for restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues supports Toronto's night economy.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EX28.15>

At its meeting on April 6, 2022, City Council adopted the item EC28.14 Toronto Music Strategy. The Music Strategy intersects with the City's night economy work in several areas, including identifying space to support night economy initiatives and working to further involve the Economic Development and Culture Division in developing night economy infrastructure.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EC28.14>

## **COMMENTS**

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Toronto's night economy provides employment opportunities, cultural activities, and entertainment experiences to residents and visitors, while also creating hundreds of

thousands of jobs across numerous sectors. Beyond the economic benefits, a strong night economy increases opportunities for community to gather and strengthen social bonds between residents. Enhancing and safeguarding the experiences of Torontonians between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. not only improves civic pride and sense of well-being, but also strengthens Toronto's position as a leading global economic and cultural jurisdiction.

## **Strengthening Toronto's Nighttime Economy - Progress Update**

In 2019, City Council adopted item EC6.8 Strengthening Toronto's Nighttime Economy, thereby directing the implementation of proposed actions of the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan (attachment 2). Status of Council directives are as follows:

### **1. *Toronto's Night Ambassador - Mayor to designate a Member of Council as Toronto's Night Ambassador.***

Status: complete.

- On November 6, 2019, former Mayor John Tory appointed Councillor Michael Thompson as the City's Night Economy Ambassador.
- On November 24, 2022, former Mayor Tory appointed Councillor Paul Ainslie as Night Economy Champion (the "Champion" role succeeding the "Ambassador" position).
- On August 10, 2023, Mayor Olivia Chow renewed Councillor Ainslie's designation as the Night Economy Champion.
- The current term of the Night Economy Champion extends until 2026, with activities supported by the Economic Development and Culture Division.

### **2a. *Nighttime operations working group - Report on the key priorities of a night economy working group.***

Status: ongoing.

- The Night Economy Internal Working Group (IWG) was formed in the summer of 2019 and met frequently to discuss, advance, and advise on the goals of the Toronto Nightlife Action Plan, including to identify priorities and develop the outreach strategy and consultation process of the Toronto Night Economy Review.
- Presently, the IWG consists of representatives from CP, EDC, MLS, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Toronto Building, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Police Services, Toronto Public Health, Transportation Services, Toronto Transit Commission, SafeTO, and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.
- To advance the priorities determined through the Toronto Night Economy Review, City divisions and organizations such as Corporate Real Estate Management, CreateTO, the Indigenous Affairs Office, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Solid Waste Management Services will also be invited to participate as needed.

Council directive 2a. of EC6.8 also includes specific requests of the IWG:

***i. Work with the Toronto Music Advisory Committee to ensure engagement with music industry stakeholders.***

- The IWG works with the Toronto Music Advisory Committee (TMAC) to engage music industry stakeholders. Information between the two groups is exchanged regularly.
- This work supported the creation of the “Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers” (attachment 3) created by the City’s Music Office in the Economic Development and Culture Division.

***ii. Work with the Toronto Transit Commission to study “10 minutes or better” transit service past 1:00 a.m.***

- In 2023, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) was invited to participate in the IWG.
- Feedback received through the Toronto Night Economy Review consultations expressing transit opportunities, such as enhancing transit service past 1:00 a.m., will be explored with the TTC.

***iii. Review the need for increased access to public restrooms at night.***

- The need for increased access to public restrooms at night was identified within the Toronto Night Economy Review. The IWG will share the findings with relevant divisions to advocate for solutions to the issue.

***2b. Best practices to enhance inclusive social culture - Collect advice from nightlife and creative sector for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises, do-it-yourself event organizers and equity-seeking groups to enhance inclusive social culture across Toronto at night.***

Status: complete. The process of reporting on and implementing the next steps based on the advice is in progress.

- The communities identified in this Council direction were invited to participate in the Toronto Night Economy Review consultations.
- Advice on best practices is listed in Part 2: Toronto Night Economy Review: Public Consultation Summary of this report.

***2c. Permitting pilot - Pilot an arts event permit to host pop-up performances in unconventional spaces.***

Status: in progress and is anticipated to be completed in Q1 2024.

- EDC has explored the possibility of piloting an arts event permit to host pop-up performances in unconventional spaces<sup>2</sup> with MLS, CP, and Toronto Building (TB).
- Through the Toronto Night Economy Review, event organizers and cultural producers expressed the need for the City to better support temporary events in flexible use spaces (related to licensing and zoning use compliance).
- In recognition that the Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements may pose challenges for code compliance in flexible event spaces, TB (in consultation with Toronto Fire Services) has hired a Building Code Consultant to identify any potential alternative solutions to allow pop-up events in unconventional spaces.
- Once the Building Code Consultant identifies the alternative solutions (if any), relevant divisions will work to incorporate the alternative compliance options into the broader strategy.

***2d. Town Hall - Organize a free annual Toronto Nightlife Industry Town Hall to help set priorities.***

Status: scheduled for January 2024.

- Hosted by the IWG, the event will invite Residents' Associations, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), entertainment, tourism, and hospitality professionals, harm reduction groups, cultural event producers, and more.
- Stakeholders will provide input on the completed night economy work to date, learn about Council-approved licensing and zoning changes, SafeTO: A Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and City-authored resources such as the "Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses", and help to determine the future priorities of the IWG.
- Participants will have an opportunity to discuss supports needed in anticipation of the zoning and licensing changes prior to implementation, recommendations for the City to advance the Night Economy, and how the public can collaborate with the City in shaping, planning, and protecting the night.

***3. Review of zoning and business licensing - Align the review of zoning and business licensing regulations to clarify the requirements for venues regularly presenting live music.***

Status: complete.

- The zoning and business licensing regulations related directive will be addressed by the concurrent CP and MLS report.
- Recommended licensing and zoning by-law amendments will be presented to the Economic and Community Development and Planning and Housing Committees in Q4 2023.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "unconventional" in this recommendation was interpreted by staff to mean spaces not currently zoned for entertainment use (for example, light industrial properties, warehouses, and other spaces often appealing to DIY event organizers)

**4a. and 4b. Guides and principles - Develop an industry guide incorporating safer spaces best practices and a list of good neighbour principles for late-night businesses.**

Status: in progress and anticipated to complete in Q4 2023.

- In collaboration with multiple City divisions and external agencies, EDC is developing a Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses (Guide) to provide information and resources to late-night businesses such as live music venues, nightclubs, bars, restaurants, etc., on operating a safe establishment that is also an asset to the surrounding community.
- Topics will include creating safer spaces and working environments; minimizing sound and noise impacts; encouraging responsible alcohol consumption; fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion; and following general good-neighbour principles.
- The Guide will be posted on the City's Night Economy, Music Office, and Festival and Events Calendar webpages, and emailed directly to private sector stakeholders including music venues.

**5. Emerging entertainment areas outside of the core - Identify emerging entertainment areas outside of the downtown core that support entertainment uses at night and the future growth of nightlife in Toronto.**

Status: in progress.

In September 2021, Economic and Community Development Committee adopted the item EC24.6 *Emerging Entertainment Areas Outside of the Downtown Core*, which identified three steps to support the growth of night economic activity and cultural vibrancy in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and areas of the City of Toronto that are outside the downtown core:

Step 1. Identify and assess spaces outside the downtown core for cultural clusters, pop-up events, and nightlife activities (attachment 4):

- A list of areas was created, suggested by DIY event organizers in which zoning already permits entertainment uses. The list is shared with cultural stakeholders.

Step 2. Develop centralized resource guide:

- The Music Office created and launched a Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers.
- The Resource Guide provides an overview of the resources available, and a summary of processes and permits required for events in a range of spaces. It offers best practices for hosting and executing safe and successful music events while minimizing negative impacts on local residents.

Step 3. Investigate opportunities for alternative compliance to allow for use of dual-use and temporary-use venues:

- A Building Code Consultant has been hired by TB to identify any potential alternative solutions for these types of venues. The work described in the previous section 2c. Permitting pilot provides further detail.

The identification of additional spaces, revised versions of the guide, and potential alternative compliance options presented by a Building Code Consultant will be updated as new information becomes available.

**6. 24-hour licensed venues - Consider the feasibility of 24-hour licensed multidisciplinary venues in suitable locations.**

Status: complete.

- While current licensing does not restrict most business types from operating 24-hours a day, feedback from the Toronto Night Economy Review did not identify consideration of a 24-hour licensed venues as a request from industry or members of the public. Consultation findings also indicate that the necessary supports, such as better than ten-minute public transit and increased public washrooms can better support consideration of this directive.
- Of note, provincial legislation relating to alcohol service also does not permit 24-hour service.

**7. Transportation options - Explore the opportunities for additional transportation options specific to the night economy.**

Status: in progress as priorities and next steps are identified within the IWG.

- EDC will meet with Transportation Services (TS), TTC, and other relevant stakeholders to share feedback from the Toronto Night Economy Review regarding transportation and mobility at night.
- EDC will encourage TS, TTC, and others to explore opportunities for additional transportation options in support of the night economy.

**8. Funding for Night Mayor Ambassador Program - Consider the feasibility of funding the Night Mayor Ambassador Program through a 50/50 split with the City and the nighttime businesses.**

Status: complete.

- No costs are currently associated with the role of Night Economy Champion, which has replaced the initially suggested Night Mayor Ambassador Program. Future costs for a Night Mayor Ambassador Program would be an unfunded pressure for the City.



## **Toronto Night Economy Review**

The City's Night Economy Review had five distinct but related goals. Three of the five goals describe actions that are within the scope of EDC's work to gather advice from implicated stakeholders informing best practices to enhance inclusive social culture:

- Support live music, entertainment, and social culture at night in a way that reflects Toronto's diversity, aligning with Toronto's Official Plan, and EDC's Strategic Directions Report, Music Strategy, and Nightlife Action Plan.
- Explore new ways to activate space and enhance livability for everyone who works at night or is interested in cultural or social experiences after dark.
- Create strategies that promote safe and enjoyable communities for all.

### **Toronto Night Economy Review: Public Consultation Summary**

In March- April 2023, the City-commissioned consultant, VibeLab facilitated the Toronto Night Economy Review, a public consultation series which consisted of an online survey, seven stakeholder focus groups and three citywide public consultation sessions, received input from over 3,300 people. The objective of the consultation was to solicit input towards updated licensing and zoning regulations for bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues, and towards broader approaches to support and enhance Toronto's night economy.

Of note, at the request of Community Councils, City staff organized an extra (fourth) citywide consultation for Residents' Associations in May. As this session was conducted independently of VibeLab's planning and execution, its findings are not reflected in VibeLab's report. However, insights and opinions from this additional consultation are very similar to the findings in the VibeLab report and EDC's next steps are informed by both.

### **Consultation Methodology**

All elements of VibeLab's consultation process were designed in accordance with the City of Toronto Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and in collaboration with the IWG to provide multiple divisional perspectives on content, such as topics, questions, and design format. The size of the focus groups and consultations were capped to allow all participant voices to be heard. Most sessions were virtual to alleviate barriers such as travel and childcare. The survey offered three sections, posing questions to 1) the general public, 2) business owners and operators, and 3) cultural event producers.

Further consultation methodology details, such as accessibility, design, and outreach, are outlined in Section II: Methodology of the Toronto Night Economy Review (attachment 1).

### **Summary of Respondents**

The focus groups and consultations engaged 224 individuals representing 23 of the 25 wards. 3,116 individuals responded to the survey and represented all City of Toronto

wards. Over 1,500 survey respondents provided optional demographic information.

To engage focus group participants, VibeLab and City staff compiled a list of contacts for outreach. Contacts included Residents' and Community Associations, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), entertainment, tourism, and hospitality industry professionals, harm reduction groups, Local Arts Service Organizations, unions, cultural event producers, night business owners, operators, and staff. Toronto Police Services (TPS) and Toronto Public Health (TPH) reviewed the City's stakeholder lists for comprehensiveness and to ensure that varied perspectives on public health and safety were included in the consultations.

In addition to the general public, residents, and the focus group contacts listed above, promotion of the survey and public sessions were sent to equity-deserving, youth-oriented, and geographically varied organizations, such as youth arts organizations, economic-development non-profits dedicated to improving outcomes for racialized communities, and regional businesses associations.

A full list of participating organizations is available in the Toronto Night Economy Review Appendix under B. Participating Organizations (pg. 108 of Attachment 1).

## **Key Consultation Findings**

The consultation findings of Toronto's Night Economy Review, outlined below, will help guide EDC's ongoing approach to support Toronto's night economy. Key findings specifically related to licensing and zoning are not reflected here but can be found in the concurrent staff reports of MLS and CP.

- Torontonians participate strongly in hospitality and arts at night: 92% go to restaurants, 85% to bars, 82% to live music, and 73% to cinema, theatre, and comedy.
- Costs, transportation, and access to nearby activities are the most frequent barriers to participation in nighttime activities. A higher rate of respondents outside the downtown core report a lack of access to activities near them.
- Support for nightlife offerings not centered on alcohol, including family-friendly and outdoor activities, is widespread.
- Conflicts related to sound and noise is one of the biggest concerns shared in consultations by operators, residents, and night economy patrons alike.
- Cultural event producers surveyed often use bars, restaurants, clubs, and coffeeshops for their events, but producers outside of downtown are less likely to do so.
- Particularly for small businesses and DIY event organizers, the high cost of renting space and producing events, the lack of available spaces, and lengthy licensing and permitting application processes are considered prohibitive barriers to the sustainability of creative communities and the ability of nightlife entrepreneurs to enter the sector.

Additionally, findings specifically related to best practices to enhance inclusive social culture across Toronto at night included:

- Expand nightlife beyond downtown, especially when nearer to equity-deserving communities.
- Safeguard affordable spaces for nightlife and cultural gatherings outside of downtown as a priority for marginalized, 2SLGBTQ+, and youth spaces.
- Provide physically accessible spaces.
- Provide flexible space (300- 500 capacity) for DIY events.
- Consider alternative safety solutions for marginalized and equity-deserving communities uncomfortable with police presence at nightlife events.
- Make equity, anti-violence, and harm reduction training available, as “essential” conditions for nighttime businesses.
- Streamline access to land and space for Indigenous communities.
- Support initiatives to promote affordable nightlife options.
- Draw upon the existing expertise and experience of equity-deserving organizers, operators, and patrons in organizing events and operating spaces.
- Improve inventory of accessible, gender neutral, and well-maintained washrooms.

Feedback from the consultation highlights the need for equitable access to safe nighttime services, experiences, programs, and spaces regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, income, or socio-economic status. EDC will explore the considerations that are within the divisional mandate and advocate for the support required by other City divisions to advance inclusive nightlife. Utilizing public education initiatives, such as Toronto for All, EDC will connect industry with resources that will enhance their knowledge and skills to identify and remove systemic barriers.

## **Next Steps**

Based on the responses from the VibeLab consultations, EDC is undertaking the following next steps:

### *Resources, Supports, and Communication*

- Consultation participants expressed a desire for stronger and clearer communication channels. To streamline and expedite external communication intended for City staff, the [nighteconomy@toronto.ca](mailto:nighteconomy@toronto.ca) email account will be monitored to direct incoming inquiries to the applicable City contact and/or webpage.
- EDC will continue to make arts and community organizations aware of available opportunities related to access to space, funding, or business-to-business connectivity, provide tools and resources for the sector, and explore possible night economy supports with relevant divisions.
- EDC newsletters will promote professional development opportunities with industry partners and inform night economy stakeholders of applicable information.
- EDC’s BIA Office will be further engaged in communicating regularly and effectively with nighttime businesses.
- EDC's digital Festival and Events Calendar will conduct outreach to support community and cultural events at night.
- EDC will engage the Event Support Network to assist communication amongst event producers and with applicable City staff (as requested).

- The Office for Creative Space in EDC will continue to support BIPOC and DIY producers to access unconventional space for culture, building on the success of the pilot with It's Okay at 468 Queen Street West.
- The IWG will host the Night Economy Town Hall, serving as the first such annual outreach event. The Town Hall will provide an opportunity for the public and nighttime business operators to hear from City officials, promote awareness of SafeTO: Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and additional EDC resources, and identify additional sector-specific needs.
- Consultation participants suggested making training centred around equity, anti-violence, and harm reduction training available for nighttime businesses. EDC will consult with appropriate City agencies (e.g., the 519) and/or external (e.g., Native Canadian Centre of Toronto) organizations to explore training opportunities for the nightlife industry that could be provided at future Town Hall events.
- EDC's Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses will be updated regularly to provide late-night businesses with information, resources, and best practices such as, creating safer spaces and working environments; minimizing sound and noise impacts; encouraging responsible alcohol consumption; fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion; and following general good-neighbour principles. EDC's next step is executing wide distribution (e.g. launched at the Night Economy Town Hall, made available on applicable City webpages, and distributed electronically to stakeholders) to help make its principles common practice.
- The Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers provides a summary of processes and permits required for music, community, and cultural events in a range of spaces. The Resource Guide answers common questions, provides links to additional information and forms, and identifies required steps and best practices in hosting and executing music events that are successful and safely run, while reducing possible negative impacts on the surrounding community and local residents.
- If the proposed zoning amendments are adopted, resulting in an increased entertainment space within restaurants, EDC's Music Office will assist restaurants wishing to host performances by providing information on relevant City business supports and as-needed advice on production and booking (including connections with performers from equity-deserving groups).

### *Alignment with SafeTO and Relevant Initiatives*

Residents, patrons, and operators taking part in the VibeLab consultations recognized safety as an essential element in supporting and enhancing the night economy. Concerns were expressed about issues such as late-night public transit, accessibility to spaces for communities experiencing marginalization, street lighting, police presence, and the need for community-based safety strategies and harm reduction teams.

SafeTO is a provincially legislated, City Council-directed comprehensive community safety and well-being plan for Toronto that works to build individual and community resilience, improve services and systems of care, and positively impact the lives of all Torontonians. Social Development, Finance and Administration is coordinating the first phase of SafeTO implementation and have presented their plan to CP, MLS, and EDC. SafeTO will also be joining the Night Economy Internal Working Group (IWG) to provide advise on how the working group can leverage the SafeTO goals and actions for safety and well-being planning and connect with multi-sectoral partners.

Aligning the priorities of the night economy with the SafeTO plan is critical to create a culturally vibrant and inclusive city. SafeTO is in phase one of its implementation plans which includes four prioritized actions and identifies emerging priorities. The SafeTO prioritized programs and services below will be promoted within the Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses, at the Night Economy Town Hall, and through communication channels with operators, event producers, residents and neighbourhood associations, and additional industry stakeholders:

- BIA involvement: The Downtown Yonge BIA, Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFa), and the BIA Office of EDC have partnered on the SafeTObia pilot project.
- TTC response: The TTC is collaborating with the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and SDFa divisions, TPS, TPH, and community partners to advance SafeTO goals and actions and improve community safety and well-being on public transit.
- Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) launch: TCCS is a new, alternate approach to crisis response that focuses on health, prevention, and well-being. The service provides an alternative to police response; creating a community-based, client centred, trauma-informed response to non-emergency crisis calls made to 911 or 211.
- Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP) promotion: CCRP works across Toronto providing support and resources to communities impacted by violent and traumatic incidents. By providing immediate supports, the CCRP mobilizes local resources to address individual/group needs, coordinates community responses, and facilitates information sharing to support communities with the recovery and healing process.

### *Harm Reduction*

Harm reduction was a recurring topic throughout the VibeLab consultations. Examples include requests for industry staff to partake in mandatory harm reduction training and the need for more harm reduction resources.

- Toronto Public Health (TPH) has developed Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto, a comprehensive city-wide strategy to reduce the health and social impacts of substance use related harms and promote the mental health and wellbeing of every Torontonian (forthcoming Q4 2023).
- The strategy offers several recommendations of interest to businesses and organizations focused on the night economy, such as, expand and support continuous and comprehensive harm reduction outreach in entertainment spaces, including electronic dance parties, raves, events, festivals, clubs, and bars as well as strengthen community connections through art programming, festivals, and other community-led initiatives.
- Once the strategy has been released, EDC will support TPH to connect with entertainment spaces and cultural producers within the night economy. The strategy will also be promoted within the Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses.

- The Works at Toronto Public Health supports over 60 agencies across Toronto to offer harm reduction supplies and services at 100+ locations and access points. EDC will provide the list of agencies and information on The Works Van (street outreach) to event producers and nightlife industry and assist in identifying which agency is closest to their festival, event, and/or venue. Information on The Works will also be included in the Good Neighbour Guide for Late-Night Businesses.

### *List of City-owned spaces*

Consultation participants communicated a continued need for access to affordable space. An assessment of underused spaces (during the night) and review of City-owned properties that could be used for cultural and community events was suggested by participants.

- Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM), CreateTO, EDC, and other relevant divisions will continue to further the work (as per Council direction in EC12.12 and EC27.15) of identifying an inventory of City-owned spaces suitable for below-market-rate leases to music entrepreneurs and DIY music organizations.
- EDC will encourage CREM and other relevant divisions to compile a directory of City-owned spaces that could be used for cultural and community events.
- The directory will include City-owned spaces close to late-night transit options, zoned for the correct uses, and located outside of the downtown core.
- The Office for Creative Space in EDC will continue to support BIPOC and DIY producers to access unconventional space for culture, building on the success of the pilot with It's Okay at 468 Queen Street West.

### *Transit and Transportation*

Consultation participants expressed that public transit is a major barrier to accessing nightlife. Hours of operation, frequency of service, and cost were particular obstacles. It was also noted that street lighting and safety during night transit is a recurring concern of respondents.

- EDC will include public transit, transportation, and mobility interests and concerns (vehicle and pedestrian) as standing items on the meeting agenda for the IWG.

### *Parks, Forestry and Recreation*

Consultation participants communicated a need for greater physical accessibility of parks, access to a streamlined permitting system, improved lighting, and washroom access.

- EDC will participate in any working group or staff consultations around permitting and other parks uses as it relates to the feedback collected during the Toronto Night Economy Review.
- EDC will invite Parks, Forestry and Recreation to be a member division of the IWG to ensure participant feedback is effectively communicated and that parks and recreation are embedded into the inclusive support of the night economy.

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## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Patrick Tobin  
General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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- 1 - The Toronto Night Economy Review
- 2 - The Nightlife Action Plan
- 3 - Resource Guide for Music Event Organizers
- 4 - Identification of Spaces Outside the Downtown Core