



Thursday Jan 26, 2023

Regarding: EX2.4 - CaféTO 2023 and Beyond

Dear Mayor Tory and members of Executive Committee,

It is true that, "The CaféTO program has provided financial, administrative and technical assistance to Toronto restaurant and bar operators and has been a key economic recovery support program for an industry adversely impacted by COVID-19," as noted by city staff. It is also true that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are still being felt by nearly all industries, especially the hospitality industry.

After speaking with our BIA members who have participated in the CafeTO program, there is great concern that the requirement of the road platforms will preclude many from applying to CafeTO for 2023 and onwards.

Business members that have stated this new requirement would not impact their participation in the CafeTO program are either larger establishments who have already invested in platforms and/or are part of larger chains. Those that have said the requirement of platforms will impact their capability to participate, are smaller independents.

One of our smaller independents communicated that she is heavily relying on using the curb lane this summer for a patio to generate needed revenue. That said, she predicts the needed additional revenue CafeTO will bring her in recovering from the pandemic, will be heavily downplayed by this requirement. The platform will cost her thousands, even when factoring in possible grants.

Platforms are wonderful from both the accessibility point of view and the aesthetic point of view. That said, 2023/24 may not be the right time to implement their requirement if we truly want the CafeTO program to assist our local businesses, especially the smaller ones. They are still attempting to regain their footing. Maybe we should not cause the earth to tremble right now, while also introducing application/permit fees, which for many will be in the thousands.

Furthermore, we have concern for the new standard of limiting a CafeTO size to match only the width of a business' facade. Many frontages are very narrow and if this footprint is followed, will limit the amount of tables and therefore profits, in some cases by 50% or more. In 2022, the CafeTO program allowed for these smaller frontages to take on more space and had maximums that were to be followed. This allowed businesses to



succeed, while still respecting the need to share the space with others. This issue is exacerbated when an address has a restaurant on the main level, and a second restaurant on an upper or basement level. The result would be each only receiving up to half of the frontage for patio space.

CafeTO has the opportunity to continue to help transform our streets into destinations that attract residents and tourists to dine and explore our city, while being a lifeline to local businesses, still recovering from the many challenges of the pandemic. The proposed changes identified in this letter will limit the program's potential and deter businesses from participating. At this time, we should be striving to improve and encourage the CafeTO program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SM', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Stephen Maciejowski
Director of Operations & Special Projects
St Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area