

January 30, 2023

City of Toronto Executive Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON

Dear City of Toronto Executive Committee Members,

RE: ITEM EX2.4 CAFETO 2023 AND BEYOND

At a time of great need, the City of Toronto stepped up to help Toronto restaurants to stay in business by providing free patio space through the CafeTO program. It was a well-received lifeline for many restauranteurs. While the restrictions of the pandemic are now well behind us, unfortunately the debt that was created by Covid is not and many of our restaurant members are working harder still to stay afloat and to pay off debts created by Covid. The pandemic also brought about more remote work, on a permanent basis, so our members' bottom lines are missing the weekly office lunch crowd, which makes recovery just that much more challenging for them. Increases to minimum wage and much higher food costs are also squeezing very thin margins, which already exist in the industry. High inflation rates are also reducing disposable income for diners and tourist numbers are not back to their pre-covid levels.

As you are aware, the Federal government recognized that many small businesses could not pay off their Covid loans by the end of 2022 and have agreed to extend the deadline to the end of 2023. We are asking that the City of Toronto offer the restauranteurs in the CafeTO program a similar concession, by **reducing the Administration Fee** for CafeTO participation and **not charging the per square meter charge** until such time, that business is back to a more normal level of activity and restauranteurs have had some recovery time from the repayment period.

Please recognize that the costs to build out platforms, with engineered drawings to meet OADA standards is a costly endeavour, on top of purchasing plant materials, seating, tables, umbrellas, fencing and then storing it all in the off season. These costs alone may deter some restaurants from taking advantage of the CafeTO program, which many Torontonians have embraced and enjoyed. **Please give the restaurants the required time to get back to some balanced state of finances and defer the per square meter patio costs and reduce the administration fee.**

Your understanding of the current state of the restaurant industry is much appreciated.

Yours truly,



Briar de Lange
Executive Director
Bloor-Yorkville BIA