

Status Update on Development of the Night Economy Plan

2023 Consultation Strategy





Purpose

- Economic Development and Culture (EDC) has been directed to provide the Toronto and East York Community Council (TEYCC) with an update on the development of the Nighttime Economy plan as it pertains to the duties of Community Council.

Background – “Night Economy”

- describes the social, cultural, and economic activities that take place between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. in Toronto:
 - entertainment: attending cultural events (theatre, live music, etc.);
 - social culture: restaurants, bars, recreation facilities
 - practical necessities like grocery shopping, and performing actual employment
- a healthy night economy strikes a balance in supporting all the needs of its residents and businesses at night
- building the night economy into municipal planning is essential – taking a strategic approach to managing and planning for the night, also allows the City to be proactive in addressing concerns with increasing night activities, such as noise and safety

Background – Cross-divisional Project

Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), City Planning, and Economic Development and Culture (EDC) are collaborating on a consultation process that includes:

- A review of zoning and licensing for bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues (**City Planning and MLS**)
- An exploration of how the City can support the night economy, nighttime businesses, and a safe, inclusive social culture after dark (**EDC**)

The three divisions have jointly engaged a third-party vendor, **VibeLab**, to conduct industry and public consultations and write a report. VibeLab is a leading global consultancy that has conducted nighttime research and consulting projects and in 22 cities, including New York City, Tokyo, Stockholm, and Montreal.

Roles and Responsibilities

VibeLab:

- work with City staff to plan consultation sessions, including populating stakeholder lists and achieving diverse public engagement
- facilitate all consultations; summarize and report on findings

City Planning:

- produce a report for the Planning and Housing Committee focusing on zoning by-law

MLS:

- produce a report for the Economic Development and Culture Committee focusing on licensing by-law

Economic Development and Culture:

- Consult and contribute content to both reports, relating relevant elements of the findings to the Night Economy.

Issues Identified

- Licensing and zoning regulations do not always capture evolving business models, especially in bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues that host nighttime culture.
 - For example, entertainment uses, such as live music or dancing, are often co-located in restaurants and current zoning regulations restrict the permitted maximum area for accessory entertainment uses in a restaurant to a limited area of the space.
 - Live music venues (LMVs) are neither restaurants nor nightclubs – but current licensing categories mean owners must choose one imperfect fit or the other.
- MLS and Planning have been directed to modernize and clarify the rules to align with these evolving business models and provide flexibility and support for businesses, while providing an appropriate level of regulatory oversight to reduce potential community nuisance and public safety issues.

Additional Considerations

Council has also requested City staff to explore and report back on the following:

- feasibility of 24-hour licensed venues in suitable locations, and whether these venues could be multidisciplinary (e.g. combining bars, galleries, and co-working spaces)
- viability of improvements to nighttime public transit, e.g. “10 minutes or better” service after 1 a.m. and/or 24-hour transit on selected routes
- need for increased access to public restrooms at night

Consultations – Key Topics

The consultation will explore approaches to:

- Modernize, clarify, and streamline zoning and licensing regulations to better reflect business operations
 - Ensure that zoning regulations and a new modernized licence regime work in a more coordinated fashion
 - Support nighttime business activity by increasing flexibility for entertainment uses in establishments across Toronto, so that regulations are more easily understood and consistently applied
- Work to support public safety after dark, nighttime transit, and community nuisance issues
- Align with objectives in Toronto's Music Strategy and Toronto's Nightlife Action Plan
- Enhance Toronto's night economy by creating conditions for a safe, inclusive, and diverse social culture, including communities in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke
 - Explore options to expand cultural space and vibrancy, extending access to culture and performance opportunities throughout the city.

Stakeholder Groups for Consultations

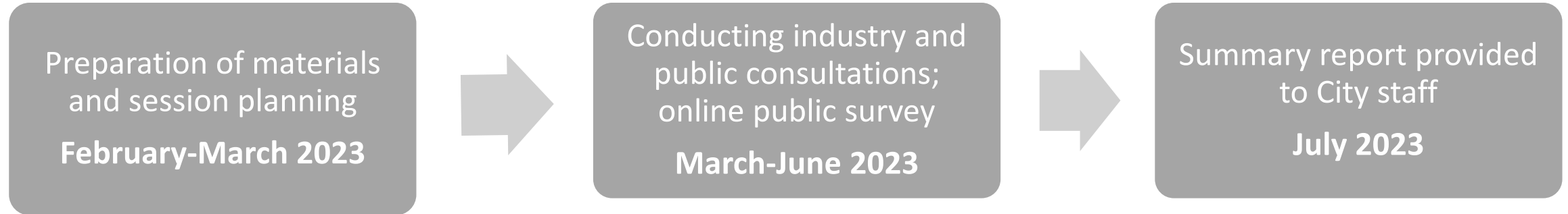
Consultations will prioritize engagement of stakeholders who are Indigenous, Black, people of colour, women, young people, and 2SLGBTQ+, and include:

- Licensed business owners / operators
 - Bars, restaurants, live music venues, nightclubs, event spaces, other cultural and social spaces
- Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), businesses, unions, and workers active at night
- Industry associations in hospitality, trades, music, arts, and culture
- Residents, including communities in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, young people, and people employed in the hospitality and entertainment sectors
- Grassroots cultural event organizers

Consultation Methods

- **Small group facilitated discussions** with the identified stakeholder groups (total of 7)
- **City-wide public consultations** that will also target hard-to-reach populations – e.g., young people, equity-deserving groups, individuals living outside the downtown core (total of 3 sessions)
- **Online public survey** for business owners and the general public, hosted by the City and jointly promoted by the City and third-party consultant vendor
- **Information session** (one session)
 - in-person meeting to close out the consultation process and provide an opportunity for City staff to share general information and themes from the small group and public consultations

Timeline



- Staff Reports to PHC / ECDC (September)
 - MLS reports to ECDC – focus on licensing bylaw
 - Planning reports to PHC – focus on zoning bylaw
 - EDC contributes to both reports
 - Staff reports informed by vendor's final report (to be included as attachment)
- Night Economy Town Hall (October 2023 – tbc)

Night Economy Champion

2022: Mayor Tory appointed Councillor Paul Ainslie as Toronto's "Night Economy Champion."

The role intends to:

- establish a cohesive, respectful harmony where both residents and Toronto's night economy will thrive
- provide a public presence for the City's ongoing work in supporting the night economy

Thank you!

