



Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

Cc: Councillor Lily Cheng

The Yonge North York BIA is in support of a motion from Councillor Lily Cheng to have City Council direct the Acting General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to establish an Advisory Committee comprised of members of Neighbourhood Community Associations, the local Councillor, local Business Improvement Area and local Business Association leaders to participate with City staff to identify opportunities to optimize the use of the square to ensure it provides cultural, economic and social benefits to the community.

Working collaboratively with our City and local stakeholders will provide an opportunity to expand the potential offering of the square. This would encourage the Business Improvement Area and community to work together as festivals grow and others are attracted to be hosted at Mel Lastman Square. In addition, this collaboration would allow us to work together to seek solutions to collective challenges, better promote the venue as an entertainment attraction destination, and more. For example, being better informed about the schedule of events would allow us to support the promotion of the square and contributing to their success. Moreover, through our marketing tactics we could assist with attracting new festivals to our area.

Mel Lastman Square is the main central square located in the heart of Yonge North York BIA with access to the subway line, highways, and ample nearby parking. It is situated in an area that is experiencing rapid development, is rich with diverse cultures and newcomers, and supports a main street employment district. Well positioned in North Toronto, it acts as a local and regional destination serving both residents and visitors from around the GTA. (This notion is supported by our recent cell phone data summary reports.) The main square acts as a valued and significant central park and amenity which also plays host to festivals and signature events such as the Toronto Korean Festival which attracts upwards of 60,000 attendees.

Our 2024 surveys at multiple large-scale events that took place at Mel Lastman Square, provided us with evidence that festival attendees visit local restaurants and spend locally at a variety of businesses. This landmark location directly drives economic benefit through local and visitor spending. Through its usage as a venue for festivals and events, it is instrumental in raising the profile of the Yonge North York area.

Yonge North York Business Improvement Area (BIA) works to enhance the business community and is one of the newest BIAs in Toronto with over 1,600 members, 30,000 workers and over 50,000 residents within our district. Our vision is to be the preferred destination in North Toronto for businesses, residents, visitors, and workers to live, work and play.

An advisory Committee would bring many benefits, as such our Board of Directors passed a motion to strongly support Councillor Cheng's initiative and submit this letter to City Council. If you require any further information, please contact [l.burnham@yongenorthyork.com](mailto:l.burnham@yongenorthyork.com).

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors for the Yonge North York BIA