

January 20, 2025

**BLOOR**YORKVILLE



**TO:**

City of Toronto Budget Committee  
Councillor Shelley Carroll, Chair



**FROM:**

Downtown Toronto BIAs



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**RE: SUPPORT FOR 2025 BUDGET AND PROGRAMS FOR THE  
VIBRANCY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF TORONTO'S DOWNTOWN CORE**

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Dear Councillor Carroll and Members of Budget Committee,

We are writing in support of the City of Toronto's 2025 Budget and its programs to improve the vibrancy and competitiveness of our downtown core, including most urgently the on-going issues related to downtown congestion, crime and theft, and encampments and mental health and addiction that are visible on our streets and on public transit.

Our six Downtown Toronto Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) represent Canada's largest employment centre with over 11,500 businesses, \$50 billion of commercial real estate, and nearly 650,000 employees; its busiest transit hub; and concentrations of retail, finance, hospitality, arts, culture, and tourism. As stewards of our downtown neighbourhoods, we collectively advocate for safe and inclusive streets; investment in infrastructure, including transit; economic competitiveness; and the development of our downtown as a destination for visitors, workers, residents and students.

We remain sympathetic to the circumstances of our city's most vulnerable community members and encourage on-going and expanded service to support them in times of need. We must also emphasize that there is a significant continuing perception that our downtown neighbourhoods and public transit are unsafe within the general public due to the visibility of crime and theft, mental health and addiction issues, as well as encampments. This perception was magnified during and following the pandemic and our abilities as Business Improvement Areas to maintain and promote the downtown core as a vibrant place attracting visitors, workers and residents has been made more difficult as a result.

We are supportive of efforts in this year's budget, including:

- Working with the Province of Ontario to establish Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs to provide proactive on on-going supports for the most vulnerable.
- Increasing the police budget, including Neighbourhood Community Officers.
- Expansion of the Traffic Agents program to assist with traffic congestion.
- Additional investment in transit to address congestion, increase service hours, and improve cleanliness of stations.
- Continuing reductions of the commercial-to-residential tax ratio (down from 3:1 in 2015 to 2.3:1 in this proposed budget) to increase our global competitiveness in attracting and retaining investment.
- On-going measures and recommendations in the recently approved *Sidewalks to Skyline: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy*.

We look forward to continuing to work together to support the City of Toronto's improvement efforts in collaboration with other levels of government as well. For further consultation with our group of Downtown BIAs, please contact Tim Kocur, [tkocur@waterfrontbia.com](mailto:tkocur@waterfrontbia.com).

Best regards,

*Al Smith*  
Executive Director  
**Old Town Toronto BIA**

*Briar de Lange*  
Executive Director  
**Bloor-Yorkville BIA**

*Amy Harrell*  
Executive Director  
**Toronto Financial District BIA**

*Janice Solomon*  
Executive Director  
**Toronto Downtown West BIA**

*Pauline Larsen*  
Executive Director  
and Chief Operating Officer  
**Downtown Yonge BIA**

*Tim Kocur*  
Executive Director  
**The Waterfront BIA**

cc: Paul Johnson, City Manager