

Insert Letterhead if available

February 25, 2025

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

My name is **Gent Dakoli** and I am the **owner** of Your Gelato Inc. , a business at **2009 Avenue Road** in the proposed Upper Avenue BIA area.

I am writing to you today to strongly support the City staff report recommending the formation of the Upper Avenue BIA that is being considered by your committee.

Business Improvement Areas are the backbone of Toronto's small business environment. In addition to providing increased coordination, a democratic voice for businesses, and the ability to leverage additional direct investment from the City for local improvements within the business district, BIAs provide a unified voice for business owners in dealing with the City to ensure that city services like adequate parking, snow removal, and clean streets and sidewalks are delivered to support the area and its businesses.

Deputy Mayor Colle has gone above and beyond over the last two years, not only as a champion to support local businesses but also for the creation of this vital new BIA for Upper Avenue Road. He has knocked on countless doors listening to our priorities like creating adequate parking to support businesses and to make Avenue Road a destination for shoppers with more animation and foot traffic. He even held a summit to combat the wave of break and enters experienced on Avenue and visited our businesses handing out window signs and working with police to educate us about POS terminal theft and fraud.

Deputy Mayor Colle also attended various meetings held by the City about the BIA and he even organized two street festivals to raise awareness about the proposed BIA and the process to get it approved.

As we continue to face the ongoing effects of the post-COVID-19 pandemic world, and the uncertainty brought by the threat of tariffs from our largest trading partner – having a business improvement area can bring great investment and attention to small businesses. BIAs, and their related organizations, can bring financial support, government grants, and events that can only be facilitated through BIAs.

Given the strong support that businesses provided during the BIA Poll with a vote of 66 - 8, I am looking forward to seeing the new Upper Avenue Business Improvement Area move forward without delay and deliver the much-needed benefits and support for our local businesses.

Sincerely,

Gent Dakoli

Gent Dakoli