

Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping and Tourist Area Exemptions

2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee

Public and Stakeholder Consultations
Economic Development and Culture

February 18, 2025





Overview

1. Council Directive ([2023.EC3.17](#))
2. Public and Stakeholder Consultations
3. Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping By-law
4. Feedback from Past Consultations
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Council Directive

In 2023, [City Council directed City staff](#) to:

- 1. assess whether to retain as is or change the list of nine holidays** specified in the Holiday Shopping By-law, Chapter 510 of the Toronto Municipal Code; and
- 2. develop criteria and a process for the designation of “Tourist Area Exemption.”**

The criteria and process, if established, would create a pathway for retail businesses to apply to open on holidays.

Public and Stakeholder Consultations



Key Informant Interviews

January, 2025



Focus Groups

February, 2025



Virtual Town Hall

20 February, 2025
6-8pm



Online Survey

Opened January 20
Closing February 20

We are here!

The outcome of the consultations is important.

Your feedback will help inform City staff's recommendations to the Economic and Community Development Committee and City Council.

Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping By-law

On certain holidays, retail businesses in Toronto are not allowed to open.

Currently, many retail businesses (including shopping centres, grocery stores, medium to large retail stores outside shopping centres such as clothing store chains, etc.) are required to close on nine specified holidays. These nine holidays are:

- 1) New Year's Day
- 2) Family Day
- 3) Good Friday
- 4) Easter Sunday
- 5) Victoria Day
- 6) Canada Day
- 7) Labour Day
- 8) Thanksgiving Day
- 9) Christmas Day

Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping By-law

But there are some exemptions.

Small businesses and essential goods and services

One set of exemptions is based on the type of store, the size of store, and the number of employees. For example:

- small retail businesses with less than 2,400 square feet and no more than three persons serving the public, that sell only tobacco, foodstuffs or fresh fruits, magazines, books, or antiques, etc.;
- laundromats, gas stations, and businesses that repair boats or vehicles;
- premises selling prepared meals; and
- pharmacies that are less than 7,500 square feet and accredited under the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act.

Note: these are only some examples. Please consult Chapter 510 for the complete list of current exemptions.

Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping By-law

Tourist Area Exemptions

Another set of exemptions is called Tourist Area Exemptions.

The five existing Tourist Area Exemptions are:

- 1) Queen's Quay Terminal (207 Queen's Quay West)
- 2) Toronto Eaton Centre and the Hudson's Bay Company
- 3) Downtown Yonge Street Business Improvement Area
- 4) Bloor-Yorkville Business Improvement Area
- 5) Distillery Historic District

The five Tourist Area Exemptions are a legacy from a previous version of the legislation. There is no formal process to add new Tourist Area Exemptions.

Chapter 510, Holiday Shopping By-law

- With the City of Toronto Act, the City **enacted Chapter 510 in 2006** to regulate holiday closure for retail businesses in Toronto.
- **Previously**, Toronto was **subject to the regulation of the provincial legislation**, the Retail Business Holidays Act. The five Tourist Area Exemptions are a legacy from that time.
- Unlike the provincial legislation, Toronto's **Chapter 510 does not provide a process or criteria** for areas or businesses to apply for new Tourist Area Exemptions.

Feedback from Past Consultations

- Council has considered the issue of holiday shopping on multiple occasions since 2008, and more recently in 2017 and 2023.
- Consultations were conducted in the past to seek input from various stakeholders, including retail businesses, retail workers, and residents.
- Feedback was collected through different methods, such as surveys, as well as stakeholder and public meetings.

Feedback from Past Consultations

Need for a level playing field for retail businesses (across businesses and municipalities)

Need for retail workers to have common holidays to spend time with family and friends

Potential loss of revenue for different types of businesses in different scenarios

Need for adequate protection for retail workers

Need for a clear regulatory framework

Need for businesses to stay competitive

Need for recognizing Toronto's diversity

Need for adequate support services, e.g. child care, transit

The City is looking to have an updated assessment of the public and stakeholder opinions on this issue.

Your input matters!

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Would you want to see changes to the current holiday closure requirements? For example, in terms of the days on which retail businesses are required to close, the types of retail businesses that are required to close on those days, etc.)**
- 2. What is your view on the Tourist Area Exemptions—including having tourist areas as an exemption category? Why?**
- 3. What are the most important considerations in any future criteria and process that would allow retail businesses to apply for Tourist Area Exemptions?**

Additional Feedback

Interested in providing additional feedback, you can:

1. **Fill out an [anonymous online survey](#).** The survey asks similar questions as those discussed today. The survey closes on February 20, 2025. Please share with others!
2. **Participate in a virtual public Townhall on February 20, 2025.** More information about the townhall will be available on the City's website at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/public-notices-bylaws/bylaw-enforcement/holiday-shopping/> (or Google: "Holiday Shopping City of Toronto")
3. **Email your written feedback by February 20, 2025** to Stephanie Oakes, Policy Development Officer, Economic Development and Culture Division at Stephanie.Oakes@toronto.ca

Thank You!

