



Budget Committee  
City of Toronto  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Tower  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

January 17, 2026

Attention: Councillor Shelley Carroll  
Chair, Budget Committee  
By email: [buc@toronto.ca](mailto:buc@toronto.ca)

Dear Councillor Carroll and members of the Budget Committee,

This letter is submitted to support investment in urban revitalization initiatives in the City generally and Downtown Yonge specifically, with an emphasis on community safety and well-being, cleanliness, improved transit service and mitigating traffic congestion.

**For the City's 2026 Budget , we would specifically like to support the continued funding of two important initiatives: the CORE Pilot; and the Downtown East Action Plan (DEAP).**

Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA), with a membership of some 2,000 businesses and commercial property owners, and a combined commercial property value of \$7.2 billion, is one of the City's largest BIAs. We note that the business community in Downtown Yonge generates an estimated \$850 million a year in fiscal revenues for different levels of government, including *inter alia* commercial property taxes.

DYBIA takes a very intentional and collaborative approach to community safety and well-being - and has done so for more than a decade. For instance, we have funded a full-time outreach program since 2018, which our police partners have been engaged with since the beginning. Since 2021, we have coordinated weekly partnered outreach in Downtown Yonge with eight partner agencies, striving to allow for optimal services to be offered to clients on street.



DYBIA has seen the positive impact that the CORE Pilot and the DEAP have had on our neighbourhood and hope they will both be fully funded going forward.

**The highly innovative CORE Pilot** is a proactive street outreach team led by Toronto Public Health nurses and supported by specially-trained Toronto Police Service officers. Launched in January 2025 in the Yonge-Dundas neighbourhood, the aim of the pilot is to provide services for vulnerable community members, which we believe it is successfully achieving.

In a neighbourhood where community safety and well-being has been a concern for some years, the CORE team has made a significant impact on both the access to services for their clients, as well as on the sense of care and safety in the broader area. In 2025, DYBIA's annual *Safe & inclusive Neighbourhood Survey* found that CORE was known to 21% of all respondents and 5% had interacted with them:

**CORE Team: Awareness & Interaction**

	Business owner	Commercial property owner	Employee	Resident	Student	Visitor
Interaction	14.3%	33.3%	10.7%	1.5%	0%	0.6%
Heard of	21.4%	62.5%	27.9%	21.2%	21.7%	14.4%

Creating this level of community awareness and engagement in a one-year pilot is an exceptional achievement and should be continued - if not expanded to other high-need neighbourhoods.

DYBIA actively works to support the CORE Pilot in a number of ways, including sitting on the CORE Advisory Committee.

**The Downtown East Action Plan (DEAP) is a program focused on the Downtown East (DTE), bringing together different stakeholders to address vulnerability and safety.** Originally launched in 2018, and then updated in 2024 for the period 2025-2030, the DEAP has created a series of tables, interventions and programs to actively address community safety and cleanliness in the Downtown East.

DYBIA has likewise actively engaged with or participated in many of these initiatives, including:

- Co-Chairing the DTE leadership table since 2025;
- Participating in the DTE FOCUS table as an outreach provider;
- Regularly attending and working with the Yonge-Dundas Safety Network since its inception; and
- Partnering since 2023 with SafeTO on the SafeTO BIA program, which is funded through the City, but based at DYBIA.



While the foregoing refers to programs that particularly impact Downtown Yonge, the broader goals of community safety, safe and reliable transit and focusing on downtown revitalization are reflected in the advocacy position of the Downtown Toronto BIA Alliance (DTBIAA). Formed in 2025 by the six largest BIAs in Downtown Toronto to advocate for the downtown, the DTBIAA focuses on collaborative investment across all levels of government. The report is posted here: [Downtown Investment — Downtown Toronto BIA Alliance](#)

The DTBIAA's position is informed by extensive quantitative research conducted by The Centre for Urban Research & Land Development at Toronto Metropolitan University in partnership with the Schulich School of Business at York University.<sup>i</sup>

Based on the foregoing, we would especially like to applaud the following items in the proposed 2026 Budget. These will generate positive impacts for the downtown as whole:

- An additional \$237 million and 258 new emergency positions supporting response times
- An additional \$170 million and enhanced crisis services on the transit system
- 27 additional Traffic Agents

As always, DYBIA stands ready and willing to play our part in both economic revitalization and success, and community safety and well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments on the 2026 Budget and we look forward to a successful and busy year ahead.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pauline Larsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "L".

Pauline Larsen

Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer

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<sup>i</sup> [Research Reports - Centre for Urban Research and Land Development - Toronto Metropolitan University \(TMU\)](#)