

Re: Request for Full Funding of the Downtown East Action Plan

On behalf of the Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area, Old Town Toronto Business Improvement Area, and Church Wellesley Village Business Improvement Area, we collectively **represent more than 3,500 businesses and property owners** along Toronto Centre's main streets, with **\$3.74 billion in assessed commercial and industrial property value** in the downtown core. **We are writing in support of full funding for the Downtown East Action Plan in the 2026 Budget.**

Together, our districts form a **vital tourism and economic corridor**, welcoming visitors from around the world to destinations such as St. Lawrence Market, Allan Gardens, Berczy Park, Riverdale Park and Farm, and the Church–Wellesley Village. **As Toronto prepares to host the FIFA World Cup**, we are deeply concerned that the challenges facing the Downtown East may leave visitors with an impression of Toronto that does not reflect the vibrant, safe, and welcoming city we strive to present.

Research from the [TMU Centre for Urban Research and Land Development](#) confirms what our businesses experience daily: escalating challenges related to safety, cleanliness, mental health, and homelessness are undermining downtown Toronto's ability to thrive. On our main streets, these challenges are no longer abstract. We are seeing increased incidents of broken windows, more businesses forced to hire private security, and a growing number of calls from business owners concerned about the safety of their staff and customers.

We are asking the City of Toronto to honour its commitment and fully fund the Downtown East Action Plan, specifically the following priorities:

- **Enhanced Cleaning Service Levels (1.1):** Continue enhanced cleaning in hotspot areas including Yonge–Dundas, Sherbourne–Dundas, and Church–Wellesley, and extend these services to Cabbagetown and Old Town Toronto, which are not currently serviced despite clear need.
- **Safe and Inclusive Downtown East Grant Program (1.4):** Maintain funding for overnight outreach, crisis intervention, and relationship-building services in Moss Park, Yonge–Dundas, and Church–Wellesley, and expand these services to Regent Park, Cabbagetown, St. James Town, and Old Town.
- **Washroom Enhancement Program (1.6):** Undertake a comprehensive city-wide review of park washrooms and advance year-round access and new builds where feasible.
- **Storefront Supports for Businesses (1.8):** Provide financial supports through grants or the Capital BIA Office Cost-Share Program to address vandalism, public realm concerns, and glass replacement.
- **Community and Clean Streets Initiative (1.9):** Implement a targeted, sustained clean-up program in coordination with Downtown East BIAs and community agencies in high-traffic areas.

- **Community Engagement Teams (1.10):** Continue support for the Community Engagement Team in the Yonge–Dundas area and expand teams to other Downtown East BIAs. This expansion has yet to receive funding.

In the proposed 2026 budget, the Downtown East Action Plan **loses the additional \$750,000 previously pledged** - funding that is essential to addressing these gaps.

Our BIAs have stepped up. Over the past year, The Cabbagetown BIA, Old Town Toronto BIA, and Church Wellesley Village BIA have invested **nearly \$500,000 in enhanced cleaning and maintenance**, more than **\$660,000 in streetscape projects** ahead of FIFA, and **over \$750,000 in events and activations** to bring positive vibrancy to our neighbourhoods. We have spent nearly **100 hours working directly with social service agencies**, housing providers, and neighbourhood community officers to address mental health crises, encampments, and public drug use. We have also distributed crisis response resources to businesses, shared meal program schedules with vulnerable residents, and regularly host safety, de-escalation, and situational awareness training.

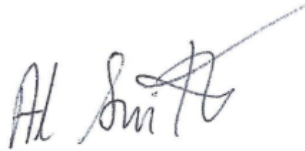
We are doing our part, but small businesses cannot continue to absorb the impacts of homelessness, mental health crises, and addiction alone, particularly as Toronto prepares to welcome the world.

We respectfully urge the City of Toronto to fully fund the Downtown East Action Plan.

Sincerely,



Matthew Mohan
Executive Director
The Cabbagetown BIA
matthew@cabbagetownto.com



Al Smith
Executive Director
Old Town Toronto BIA
alsmith@oldtowntoronto.ca



Jaret Serada
Executive Director
Church Wellesley Village BIA
jaret@churchwellesleyvillage.ca