

April 15, 2026

TO: Toronto City Council

FROM: The Downtown Toronto BIA Alliance



RE: EC 27.2 REVIEW OF TORONTO'S STREET VENDING AND ARTISTS BY-LAWS

The Downtown Toronto BIA Alliance (DTBIAA) represents a community of businesses that generates \$117 billion in GDP (11.3% of Ontario's GDP) and nearly \$40 billion in tax revenues for all levels of government.

The DTBIAA welcomes the review of Toronto's Street Vending and Artists By-Law. The direction is understandable and aligned with broader City goals around vibrancy and entrepreneurship.

However, there are concerns and challenges we would like to highlight in regard to some of the changes proposed. For the BIAs and businesses, these vendors compete with brick-and-mortar operations who also pay for space as well as commercial taxes to host their clientele. Businesses also clean and maintain their areas, and for the most part do not rely on city services for waste disposal, seating and space to consume the same products the vendors are allowed to sell. Many retailers are still struggling to recover from the pandemic, and Moneris research shows that Canadian restaurant spending is down 11 percent since the same week (w/o March 21) last year.

This change (removal of most restrictions) could result in:

- increased vendor concentration in high-traffic park-adjacent areas
- more direct, full-day competition with storefront businesses
- added pressure on curb space, pedestrian flow, and event programming
- reduced flexibility in managing the public realm over time
- noise and garbage issues

The fees that vendors pay are not redirected to the local BIAs who must provide the space as well as the enhanced maintenance and deal with the other impacts of this focused benefit to the vending community. Consideration should be given to directing some of the permit fees to the BIAs to offset these impacts. Permits should only be permitted if there is no competition with brick-and-mortar services in the same area.

Prior to enacting these changes, the DTBIAA would like to propose working with City staff on addressing these challenges, and a way forward that benefits Street Vendors, Artists, BIAs and Brick-and-Mortar businesses alike.

Sincerely,

Al Smith
Executive Director
Old Town Toronto BIA

Janet McCausland
Executive Director
Bloor-Yorkville BIA

Amy Harrell
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Toronto Financial District BIA

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Carbon copy to: Mayor Olivia Chow, City of Toronto
Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York
Councillor Chris Moise, Ward 13, Toronto Centre
Councillor Dianne Saxe, Ward 11, University-Rosedale
Paul Johnson, City Manager
Gadi Katz, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards
Joanna Hazelden, Director, Policy and Strategic Support
Kevin Lurkhur, Director, Business Licensing and Regulatory
Anna Fernandes, Director, By-law Enforcement

ABOUT THE TORONTO DOWNTOWN BIA ALLIANCE

The Downtown Toronto BIA Alliance (DTBIAA) is a coalition of six Business Improvement Areas working together to champion the vitality, innovation, and economic resilience of Toronto's core. Representing Bloor-Yorkville BIA, Downtown Yonge BIA, Old Town Toronto BIA, Toronto Downtown West BIA, Toronto Financial District BIA, and the Waterfront BIA, the DTBIAA advocates for policies, partnerships, and investments that enhance public space, support local businesses, and foster inclusive urban growth. Through collaboration and leadership, the DTBIAA ensures downtown Toronto remains a vibrant, world-class destination to live, work, and visit. www.DTBIAA.ca.