



**RE: Letter of Support
EC26.2 - Toronto's
Festival Strategy 2026 -
2031**

TO:

Economic and
Community
Development
Committee

DATE:

February 19, 2026

Dear Councillor Bravo and the Economic and Community Development Committee;

The Waterfront Business Improvement Area (WBIA) is writing to express our support for EC26.2, *Toronto's Festival Strategy 2026-2031*. The waterfront is one of Toronto's most significant and visible public-realm environments and a central platform for the City's festival and events ecosystem. The area's network of generous, high-impact parks and public spaces, signature multi-modal corridor along Queens Quay, and home to major cultural anchors including Harbourfront Centre, The Bentway, the Canada-Ireland Foundation's soon-to-open Corleck Building, and new destination spaces in such as Biidaasige Park provide the ideal platform for city-defining events. .

Taken together, these assets position the waterfront as an unmatched opportunity to support a wide range of city-wide and community-oriented festivals, uniquely combining scale, transit accessibility, and high-quality public space in a manner that directly advances the Festival Strategy's objectives around sustainability, coordination, and economic impact, while also strengthening Toronto's visitor economy. This combination enables the waterfront to host major events at scale, managing high visitor volumes efficiently and with minimal impact on the city's broader transportation network.

The Waterfront BIA is particularly supportive of the Strategy's focus on advocating with other orders of government for increased festival and event operational and security funding, as well as improving coordination and streamlining City permitting processes, including the continued development of clearer, centralized systems that reduce barriers for event organizers.

Building on the important actions outlined in the strategy, the Waterfront BIA will encourage and support the further development and expansion of events that highlight Toronto as a 'Waterfront City' across the 10-km opportunity from Ontario Place and Exhibition Place in the west through the downtown central waterfront and emerging Port Lands. This opportunity as a whole is highlighted in the Toronto Region Board of Trade's report [Ripple Effect: Unlocking Toronto's Waterfront Potential](#). International comparator events that Toronto can aspire to as the waterfront continues to grow include [Vivid Sydney](#), a coordinated, multi-level government investment in a multi-week major waterfront festival. These types of events can deliver significant visitor draw, economic impact, and global brand recognition over a multi-week period.

Sincerely,

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CC: Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, Ward 10
Councillor Paula Fletcher, Ward 14