

April, 7, 2026

Councillor Alejandra Bravo
Chair, Economic and Community Development Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
ecdc@toronto.ca

Re: Item EC27.2 – Review of Toronto’s Street Vending and Artists By-law

Dear Councillor Bravo and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

On behalf of the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA), I am writing to express our support for the City’s proposed updates to Toronto’s street vending and artists by-laws. TABIA and our member BIAs share the City’s objective of fostering vibrant, dynamic, and inclusive main streets. Street vendors and artists play an important role in animating public spaces, supporting entrepreneurship, and enhancing the cultural fabric of Toronto’s neighbourhoods. We are encouraged by the City’s efforts to modernize the regulatory framework, reduce barriers to entry, and create new opportunities for small businesses and creative expression.

BIAs are stewards of Toronto’s main streets, working collaboratively with local businesses, property owners, and the City to invest in streetscaping, public realm improvements, marketing, and programming that attract visitors and support local economic vitality. As such, we offer the following recommendations to ensure that the expansion of street vending is implemented in a way that maintains balance, fairness, and the long-term health of our commercial districts.

TABIA strongly supports maintaining and reinforcing vendor separation requirements, as outlined in the *Review of Toronto’s Street Vending & Artists By-laws* on March 24, 2026. The existing standard of a minimum 25-metre distance from licensed eating establishments and businesses selling similar goods is critical to mitigating direct competitive pressures on brick-and-mortar businesses, which operate with significantly higher fixed costs, including rent and property taxes. These separation rules are essential to ensuring a fair and sustainable business environment for local main street businesses.

TABIA also recommends that consultation with local BIAs be formalized as part of the permitting process. BIAs have deep, localized knowledge of their districts, including pedestrian flow, event programming, streetscape constraints, and business mix. Requiring vendors to consult with BIAs prior to establishing operations, and embedding BIAs as partners in implementation, will help ensure that vending is integrated thoughtfully into each unique main street context.

We ask that the City consider the impacts of expanded vending on BIA-led programming and events. BIAs invest significant resources in organizing festivals, activations, and promotions that drive foot traffic and support local businesses. Uncoordinated vending during these events can undermine curated experiences and existing vendor participation models. We recommend that the City establish clear

mechanisms to coordinate vending activity with BIAs during permitted events and activations. This can be addressed in the formalized permitting process noted above.

In addition, TABIA emphasizes the importance of strong and consistent enforcement as these changes are implemented. BIAs already experience challenges related to non-compliant and unlicensed vending in some areas, and an expansion of permitted activity will increase the need for clear enforcement protocols, adequate resourcing, and timely response mechanisms. Ensuring that all vendors operate within the rules is critical to maintaining fairness, public safety, and confidence in the regulatory framework.

As the City introduces new permissions for non-food vending and extends operating hours for mobile vendors, we encourage careful monitoring of impacts on existing businesses and public realm conditions. These changes represent a meaningful shift in the competitive and operational landscape, particularly for retail and food service businesses in main street environments. A commitment to ongoing evaluation and adjustment will be important to ensuring that these changes achieve their intended outcomes without unintended consequences.

Finally, TABIA recommends exploring mechanisms to ensure equitable contribution from vendors operating within BIA boundaries. BIAs fund and maintain many of the amenities and enhancements that make main streets attractive destinations, including streetscaping, beautification, marketing, and events. Vendors benefit directly from these investments through increased foot traffic and improved public spaces. As such, we believe there is an opportunity to consider a fair and proportionate contribution model, such as a location-based surcharge or other mechanism, that recognizes the shared value of these investments and supports the sustainability of BIA-led place-making.

In closing, TABIA supports the City's efforts to modernize the street vending framework and expand opportunities for entrepreneurs and artists. With thoughtful implementation and collaboration, we are confident that these changes can enhance the vibrancy of Toronto's main streets while maintaining a fair and balanced environment for all businesses.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the City and are pleased to support these efforts with the recommendations outlined above.

Sincerely,



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