



## REVISED

### NOTICE OF MOTION

#### **Public Realm Planters on Yonge Street: Interim Management and Long-Term Governance**

Moved by: Councillor Lily Cheng

Seconded by: Councillor Josh Matlow

#### **SUMMARY:**

Yonge Street through North York Centre is an important civic, commercial and cultural corridor in Toronto. It is the largest concentration of office space outside the downtown core, home to major civic destinations including Mel Lastman Square and the North York Civic Centre, and serves as the front door to thousands of residents, businesses, workers and visitors every day. It is also a key destination for festivals, community events and economic activity in the heart of North York.

Despite its significance, many public realm planters along the corridor have fallen into disrepair. Vacant tree pits, overgrown weeds, accumulated root balls and litter create an appearance of neglect that undermines the City's investment in the area and detracts from the vitality of one of Toronto's flagship urban centres. This can undermine the efforts of office building owners who are still trying to bring tenancies back to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, uncertainty regarding maintenance responsibilities and enforcement mechanisms has made it difficult to ensure these public realm features are properly maintained.

With Transform Yonge still years away, there is an urgent need to improve the corridor in the interim while establishing a clear governance framework that ensures future public realm investments remain attractive, well maintained and accountable over the long term.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, the Executive Director,

Municipal Licensing and Standards, and the City Solicitor, to report back to the Executive Committee in Q2 of 2027 on options to assign maintenance responsibility and establish enforceable maintenance standards for on-street planters and boulevard tree pits, including amendments to the Toronto Municipal Code and other mechanisms, as appropriate.

2. City Council request the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, to confirm interim actions in 2026 within available resources and provide an update to the councillor in July 2026, and identify funding requirements for a longer-term solution to be included in the 2027 budget submission pending the implementation of Transform Yonge, including:
  - a. the removal of material preventing replanting;
  - b. interim planting of vacant planters where feasible, pending an assessment of available maintenance capacity or implementation of community-led maintenance agreements;
  - c. consideration of removing or consolidating planters that are no longer functional or that are redundant due to their proximity to other planters; and
  - d. coordination with other City landscaping initiatives to improve the overall appearance of the corridor.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, to prepare an inventory of public realm planters along the Yonge Street corridor, identifying ownership, maintenance responsibility, applicable agreements, current condition, and identifying locations where responsibility is unclear or unenforceable, and report back to the Executive Committee in Q2 of 2027.
4. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, to review opportunities for interim beautification measures prior to the commencement of Transform Yonge, including temporary plantings or other enhancements that could be relocated or repurposed during construction, pending an assessment of available maintenance capacity and provide an update to the councillor in July 2026.
5. City Council request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report back to the Executive Committee in Q2 of 2027 on partnership models and funding opportunities that could support public realm stewardship on major commercial corridors.
6. City Council direct the City Manager to convene a cross-divisional working group consisting of Transportation Services, Urban Forestry, City Planning, Toronto Building, Economic Development and Culture, Municipal Licensing and Standards and other relevant divisions to develop a long-term governance framework for public realm planters and landscape features installed through development approvals, including recommendations respecting ownership, maintenance and funding and report back to the Executive Committee in Q2 of 2027.

**APPENDIX:**

Attachment 1 - Planters on Yonge Street, North York

June 24-26, 2026