



Office of the Mayor

Town of Oakville

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Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General
Ministry of the Attorney General
11th Floor McMurtry-Scott Building, 720 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9

May 29, 2020

Minister Downey,

I am writing to you on behalf of Oakville's Economic Task Force and the foodservice industry in Oakville to request urgent action to ensure the safe re-introduction of patio service for restaurants in Ontario. The Alcohol and Gaming Commission (AGCO) is currently not reviewing patio applications and this may result in catastrophic delays and bottlenecks that may end in restaurants missing the entire patio season when the Province lifts its provincial restrictions.

I agree that public health should be at the forefront of any reopening decision, however the Province and the AGCO should prepare now for the anticipated demand for patio applications by updating its policies and processes.

The Provincial government and the AGCO can help the foodservice industry by:

- Immediately commence its review of patio applications from restaurants in anticipation of the provincial order being lifted to ensure restaurants can safely maximize their patio season
- Waive the provincial fee of \$815 associated with the application for *Changes and/or Additions to Existing Licensed Areas*
- Streamline the application system to expedite notifications, reviews and approvals to minimize the weeks or month-long processing period for restaurant owners

In order to be in a ready stance for when Provincial restrictions on restaurants are lifted, Oakville Town Council passed a motion that will enable the provision of temporary commercial services outdoors, including patios or pop-up facilities associated with existing restaurants. The motion also waived the municipal portion of patio and bistro application fees for 2020. In addition, Town staff is streamlining our internal approval processes.

Time is one resource that restaurant owners, who have been hard-hit financially, do not have. I am available to further discuss this matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Mayor Rob Burton

Commercial Recovery Initiative

Moved by Councillor Haslett-Theall

Seconded by Councillor Chisholm

Whereas the economy of Oakville has been drastically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with provincially mandated business restrictions and closures, resulting in limited operations, employee lay offs, and financial hardships.

And whereas commercial areas in Oakville form a key component necessary to ensure that Oakville is a complete, livable community.

And whereas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayor formed an Economic Task Force, comprising representatives from the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, BIAs, Visit Oakville, and Economic Development, to provide immediate short-term relief measures to the business community, as well as explore options to support Oakville's long-term economic recovery.

And whereas the Province has entered into Phase One of reopening under the COVID-19 state of emergency and communities are preparing for the restoration of services.

And whereas public health officials advise that two metre distancing is a critical tool to slow the spread of COVID-19.

And whereas the reopening of commercial businesses will require interim adjustments to methods of service delivery to maintain physical distancing requirements related to COVID-19 and meet the needs of the community.

And whereas the Economic Task Force has collaborated to develop the *Commercial Recovery Initiative* to support the town-wide reopening of commercial businesses in a practical manner that supports the safety of the community, employees and members of the public.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

1. That staff, in cooperation with members of the Economic Task Force, be authorized to implement the *Commercial Recovery Initiative*, designed to re-invigorate economic activity within the Town while simultaneously protecting public health and safety, which includes the following:
 - Making town lands in and adjacent to commercial areas available at nominal cost to enable the provision of temporary commercial services outdoors, including patios or pop-up facilities associated with existing restaurants and retail businesses, or outdoor sale or display of merchandise meeting the objectives of the program, subject to permitting requirements;

- Incorporating physical distancing measures in commercial areas to address safety such as dedicated queueing or pedestrian areas;
 - Providing assistance through the Economic Task force to the BIA's, Chamber of Commerce and Visit Oakville with the development and implementation of a coordinated marketing campaign that encourages residents and visitors to support local businesses;
 - Expedited processing of permits which assist existing businesses in adjusting to the delivery of their services through alternate means;
 - Temporary exemptions from providing required parking under section 40 of the *Planning Act* granted at nominal value to accommodate outdoor patios, or outdoor display areas on private property;
 - Any use of town land or other permits being subject to compliance with physical distancing or other requirements applicable as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, insurance and indemnities, and any other restrictions necessary to protect public safety, meet accessibility requirements and avoid undue interference with the use of public lands by the general public or impacts on adjacent residents.
2. That the application fees for requisite approvals associated with the Commercial Recovery Initiative, be waived for 2020.
3. That authority to implement the *Commercial Recovery Initiative* is delegated jointly to the Commissioner of Community Development and the Director of Economic Development.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
on a recorded vote,
Council voting as follows:

Recorded Vote

Yeas

Councillor Sandhu
Councillor Parmar
Councillor Lishchyna
Councillor Adams
Councillor Grant
Councillor Knoll
Mayor Burton

Nays

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'Many are already facing closure': Oakville restaurants and small businesses can use town lands as outdoor space

Initiative would not take effect until province lifts restrictions

NEWS 12:00 PM by [David Lea](#)  Oakville Beaver



A busy downtown Oakville in 2016. - Graham Paine/Torstar

When provincial restrictions lift, many restaurants in Oakville will have an opportunity to open more patio space to accommodate customers while still respecting social distancing rules.

Oakville council voted unanimously on Monday, May 25 to pass a Commercial Recovery Initiative that will allow businesses, like restaurants, to temporarily use town lands in and adjacent to commercial areas at normal cost.

Existing restaurants and retail businesses can use this town land to offer outdoor commercial services, including expanded patio service or pop-up facilities.

According to the motion, the space can also be used for an outdoor sale or to display merchandise.

The initiative is subject to permit requirements and will come into effect once the relevant provincial orders prohibiting in-restaurant dining and other outdoor activities are lifted.

Ward 1 Coun. Sean O'Meara spoke about the importance of giving restaurants, in particular, this extra space.

"From what we hear in some of the jurisdictions that are opening up is that restaurants are only going to be allowed about a 25 per cent occupancy rate. When you speak with restaurateurs, those numbers don't add up to a successful business. Many are already facing closure," he said.

"They need these types of resources, they need to be able to expand their footprint in order to protect the health and safety of the patrons, of people walking by, and to ensure they can still run a successful business model."

The initiative will incorporate physical distancing measures in these areas to address safety.

"Town council and Oakville's Economic Task Force want to be proactive and identify opportunities to support small businesses and restaurants. Converting available outdoor space to allow customers to shop or dine, while following proper physical distancing, will restore confidence in in-person shopping and dining when the provincial order allows restaurants to restore their full services," said Oakville Mayor Rob Burton.

"In line with recommendations from our local BIAs, the town will also be waiving the municipal portion of patio and bistro application fees. We know restaurants have been among the hardest hit as a result of the emergency order relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and we will continue to do everything we can to support our local restaurants who are an essential part of our community and local economy."

The mayor said he would also be writing the province to request that the Alcohol and Gaming Commission start processing these applications in anticipation of provincial restrictions being lifted.

He said he would also request that they streamline this application process and waive any provincial fees for restaurants and small businesses.