



Wednesday November 25, 2020

Dear Mayor Fred Eisenberger and City Councillors,

The province of Ontario is making extraordinary decisions in its attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19. There is no question that politicians and medical professionals alike have wrestled with how to contain the virus, and public settings are the first to get the chop to limit the spread. As small business owners, we have invested in PPE, educated our staff in proper protocols, and restricted the number of shoppers within our stores. As we see pandemic cases rise throughout the GTHA, it is rare to find cases or outbreaks on the streets of a local BIA. Yet in the government's lockdown model, it's the small businesses that are required to shutter while big box stores continue to operate. The rationale that these stores can sell non-essentials because they are mixed in with groceries or hardware is nonsensical. Big box stores will survive as Hamilton born businesses falter.

As business owners we are struggling under the restrictions of a red zone - lockdown would be something that many of us could not bear. While the Province sets the rules here, we have seen municipalities step forward to plead their case with positive results. In late October, Halton regional politicians argued against going back into a modified stage 2 of COVID restrictions and the province reconsidered. Much more prominent was York region successfully arguing against going into lockdown by enforcing stricter rules, while recognizing the importance of protecting businesses.

Small businesses enliven neighbourhoods and breed familiarity. We support local initiatives - everything from school fundraisers to social causes. We pay property taxes and business fees. It is imperative to our survival that the mayor and councillors of Hamilton have our backs. As small businesses, we have yours.

It's true the province has the final say, but your support goes a long way. Please take this into consideration and keep us in your thoughts.

Tara Crugnale
Chair, Downtown Dundas Business Improvement Area

