

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Support for Continuation of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Program

From: Susan Pennie

Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 3:51 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Support for Continuation of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Program

Dear Councillors,

On behalf of the Waterdown Business Improvement Area, I would like to express our strong support for the continuation of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Program for 2022 (and potentially beyond).

So many of our small businesses have really struggled over the past two years to remain viable in a very challenging environment. Our restaurant sector, in particular, has been very hard hit by extended closures and consumer hesitancy to eat indoors. The Temporary Outdoor Dining Program was a lifeline to hardworking restaurateurs struggling to stay afloat when their capacity was slashed and when takeout failed to deliver the margins of traditional dine-in. BIA members who participated in the outdoor dining program invested heavily in equipment, structures and heaters to ensure they could accommodate customers safely, keep staff employed and maintain a presence in the community.

One of the unique upshots of the program to the community as a whole was the enhancement of the overall vibrancy of our BIA area. Expanded outdoor patios brought liveliness and a wonderful 'European' vibe to our business districts, driving more reasons to walk and enjoy the BIA.

While it is our hope that health restrictions continue to ease, the last two years has proven over and over again how unpredictable the COVID-19 virus is and how difficult it is to plan for any type of 'business as usual' scenario. Consumer confidence in participating in indoor activities could take some time to rebound. Our restaurants are out of reserves – they cannot dig further into their pockets or their personal stamina – to weather any increases in costs or decreases in customer counts.

We strongly encourage you to support the Outdoor Dining Program again in 2022.

Sincerely,

Susan Pennie

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