

**March 22, 2023**

**Re: Item 11.2 – 2023 Temporary Outdoor Patio Program Fees**

As President & CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, I have the privilege of speaking for our nearly 1,000 member organizations that employ over 75,000 people in our community, including dozens of local hospitality and restaurant establishments. I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for Councillor McMeekin's Motion, "2023 Temporary Outdoor Patio Program Fees," and recommend its endorsement by the General Issues Committee.

It is no secret that the hospitality sector has endured significant economic hardships over the past several years and continues to experience lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the revolving operating restrictions, to the ongoing supply chain related cost increases, to the significant labour shift that saw thousands of hospitality workers seek employment in new sectors, our hospitality economy has weathered a unique storm and requires ongoing tailored supports to boost business and business confidence.

In response to this specific need and in recognizing the importance to the vibrancy and vitality of our community, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce has created a specific membership class for hospitality sector organizations. This class only charges an introductory member rate to join the Chamber to help create and leverage new business opportunities for them and their employees, while simultaneously providing them significantly discounted access to Chambers Insurance Plan, that provides comprehensive benefits coverage to over 30,000 organizations nationwide. We strongly believe in supporting our hospitality and restaurant members through the unique economic challenges they continue to face.

The success of the Temporary Outdoor Patio Program is evidenced enough by Council's decision in 2022 to make the program permanent and moreover by the significant participation in the program that has seen well over 150 local hospitality and restaurant organizations register since the program began in 2020. It is also noted, however, that the administration and set-up costs associated with the program are significant and can potentially otherwise compromise a successful revenue stream.

The Motion as presented will help offset a generous portion of these costs, roughly to the tune of \$1,400 per establishment. This is a significant and positive investment in our community that will not only help Hamilton's hospitality sector by cutting administrative red tape, but also to create economic opportunity and jobs for Hamiltonians. For comparison's sake, the City of Toronto's CaféTO program in 2021 generated \$206M in economic activity, served approximately 5 million customers at 940 participating

organizations, and analyses estimate that approximately 36% of all restaurant sales during that period were from the CaféTO program ([2021 CaféTO Economic Benefits Study](#)). While operating at a smaller scale, one can clearly see the parallel positive economic impact of the City of Hamilton's Temporary Outdoor Patio Program locally.

Looking to the past, we can recall on the rejuvenated vibrancy that this program brought to our community at a very challenging time. For so long North America has yearned for the outdoor dining districts and open-air patios of Europe, and we have taken positive steps towards realizing this vision for our community. Looking to the future, let's continue this new tradition of transforming our public spaces during the short spring and summer seasons we have in Canada where Hamiltonians of all ages can enjoy their community in unique ways. Moreover, let's continue this tradition of creating new opportunities for restauranteurs and other entrepreneurs in our community to bring Hamilton to life with their partners at the municipality.

In closing, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce would like to express its support for the motion as drafted and believe that this is a productive investment into Hamilton's hospitality industry that will generate significant social and economic returns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dunnett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Dunnett  
President & CEO