May 7, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps and Members of Council
City of Victoria
City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

VIA EMAIL

Your Worship and Council:

On behalf of the British Columbia's 14,500 hospitality businesses—including restaurants, bars, craft breweries, and winery tasting rooms—we are writing to request your urgent support to aid the survival of local hospitality businesses and thousands of livelihoods during this pandemic crisis. Specifically, we are requesting your assistance for flexible, innovative, and expedited patio permitting.

British Columbia's hospitality industry is facing collapse. While the global COVID-19 pandemic has reverberated throughout our economy, our industry's local small hospitality businesses were hit first, hit hardest, and will be among the last to recover. The majority of BC's restaurants, bars, and tasting lounges have closed, laid off staff, and are facing bankruptcy and financial collapse. Even those businesses remaining opening during this pandemic to offer limited takeout and delivery services and are experiencing dramatically reduced revenues and are struggling to survive.

The collective economic disruption in our sector has been staggering:

- Job losses within the restaurant sector alone are estimated at 121,500.
- At least 1 in 10 restaurants have already closed forever with associated permanent job losses.
- Over 50 per cent of smaller independent restaurants say they will be bankrupt within three months from the start of this crisis (i.e. by June of this year).
- 80 per cent of BC's hospitality businesses have been forced to temporarily lay off the vast majority of BC's 192,000 foodservice employees.
- 80 per cent of Liquor Primaries (i.e. pubs, bars, nightclubs) are closed.
- Liquor Primaries who remain open for take-out/deliver services have experienced 90-95 per cent decline in revenues.

.../2

- Over 70 per cent of BC's hotels are closed.
- BC's tourism sector has laid off 70 per cent of all employees totaling over 130,000 workers.
- All 197 craft brewery tasting rooms in BC are closed, reducing average brewery revenues by over 80 per cent.
- All 366 licensed BC winery tasting rooms in BC are closed, reducing average revenues by over 50 per cent.
- 83 new breweries opened in BC since 2017, including 28 in the last 12 months. These new or recently opened businesses face the biggest threat of permanent closure for our industry.
- Over 250,000 hospitality and tourism workers have already been laid off in BC since the start of this COVID crisis.

While we are working with our provincial and federal governments partners on protocols for a gradual and phased reopening of our sector, BC's local communities have a key role to play in supporting economic recovery. We ask you to support our industry with fast, flexible, and nimble permitting and business services to help our industry get back up and running.

The first opportunity to offer concrete support is with regards to patios, as they offer a hospitality experience within the relative public trust of outdoor space. We ask that your municipality work creatively and collaboratively with operators to help expand current patio areas, add new patios quickly, and permit dining, liquor service and manufacturer's sampling in controllable public spaces.

Specifically, we request your support to:

1. Increase flexibility for patio types and sizes (including consideration for pre-detailed designs and formats), expedited permitting including applications and renewals, as well as the number of patios allowed;
2. Increase the space use of existing patios or picnic areas to allow chairs to be spread out to meet distancing requirements (i.e. many patios have more space than the current floor plans allow them to use);
3. Allow pop-up outdoor dining and manufacture sampling spaces;
4. Allow and increase the use of parklets and public space for dining;
5. Allow any increase in patio, picnic area or outdoor space be considered a continuation of an establishment's existing approved alcohol service area or manufacture's sampling area to provide samples and not require additional endorsements or authorizations.
6. Coordinate with any relevant bodies—such as the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, Fire Department, WorkSafe BC, etc.—to reduce red tape and speed approval timelines wherever possible.

As a sample, we have attached a recent motion from Vancouver Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung that is resoundingly supported by BC's hospitality businesses.

…/3

It is our sincere hope that we can work with your council to find significant and meaningful measures to ensure our critical industry survives. We recognize that some of these measures may make sense temporary … Our industry has never before faced a crisis of this magnitude. The very survival our industry's small businesses and the jobs they create now depend on urgent leadership and bold action from our government partners in communities such as the City of Victoria.

Thank you in advance for your support. We would also like to offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to Council and staff for your diligent work to keep British Columbians healthy and safe during this provincial state of emergency and global crisis.

We remain at your disposal to offer advice and perspective on these issues. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,



Ian Tostenson, President & CEO
BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association



Jeff Guignard, Executive Director
Alliance of Beverage Licensees



Ken Beattie, Executive Director
BC Craft Brewers Guild



Miles Prodan, President & CEO
BC Wine Institute

Cc:

Hon. Carole James, Minister of Finance
Hon. Harry Bains, Minister of Labour
Hon. Adrian Dix, Minister of Health
Hon. Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture
Hon. David Eby, Attorney General
Trevor Hughes, Deputy Minister of Labour

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

Flexible, Innovative & Expedited Patio Permitting

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted significant negative economic impacts with many Vancouver businesses including restaurants, tourism businesses, hotels, and personal-care services such as hair stylists, nail salons and dentists, forced to close or severely limit operations due to health and physical distancing restrictions;
2. Restaurants have been one of the most immediate and hardest hit sectors, and small business operators are struggling to survive with many limited to takeout offerings and attempting to make it through the pandemic;
3. Small businesses like restaurants are vital to the fabric and character of Vancouver neighbourhoods and support complete communities;
4. Small businesses like restaurants are key contributors to Vancouver's economic health generating jobs and tax revenue;
5. The City has a key role to play in supporting economic recovery. Speed flexibility and nimbleness in permitting and business support services will be instrumental to helping businesses get back up and running and survive;
6. Patio season is a critical revenue generator for restaurants and upon us now. Expedited patio permitting must be turnkey when restaurants are able to reopen to table type service;
7. An outcome of Covid will likely be the need for some continued physical distancing processes in businesses. Customers will also be cautious about being in close quarters to others.
8. Patios provide the health benefit of fresh air and sunlight.
9. There is opportunity to be innovative and redefine patios such as pop-up standing patios for quick service type offerings, expanded size to enable physical distancing and more open-air dining, as well as utilization of street or laneway space for extensions where it doesn't impede transit, emergency or service vehicles or traffic.
10. Currently, patio permitting can require a combination of licensing, development permits and permits to enable operations.

THEREFORE

A. BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to prepare options and report back as soon as possible to support more flexible patio types and sizes (including consideration for pre-detailed designs and formats), expedited permitting including applications and renewals, as well as the number of patios allowed, in order to support the economic recovery of Vancouver's restaurant sector;

B. THAT such options be considered for the duration of the COVID-19 response and recovery, recognizing that innovation will provide for valuable learning towards operations and adaptation in a new, post-Covid world.

C. THAT this motion be shared with the Council Pandemic Response and Recovery Working Group for the purpose of enabling them to seek or share further information from the restaurant sector as may be beneficial to and aid this work.