

June 15, 2021

Mayor and Council  
City of Victoria  
#1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6  
[mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca)

## **Re: Making Permanent Victoria's Street Patio Policy**

The last fifteen months have been devastating for local businesses in Victoria. Small businesses, the lifeblood of our local economy, are facing uncertain times. The hospitality industry in particular has carried the disproportionate brunt of restrictions and public health orders. Our businesses have been repeatedly shut down, and we have faced the stark reality of losing everything we have worked so hard for. And many did. On behalf of the restaurants of Fernwood Village, I implore your support to make permanent the street patios of Gladstone Avenue and Fernwood Square.

We are grateful that early on in the pandemic, our elected officials and staff at the City of Victoria snapped into action, pivoting to tear down red tape to allow us to quickly expand our outdoor spaces into the boulevards, sidewalks, and streets. This agility has been vital to our restaurants surviving the pandemic.

Two unexpected things happened: first, we collaborated closely with the City. We hope that this is a trend that continues. Second, adding outdoor seating to Gladstone Avenue has not only been essential to our survival, Fernwood Village has as a result transformed into a lively, sunny, streetscape. We are proud of the vibrant street culture on Gladstone Avenue that we all helped to cultivate.

Our expanded patios have fundamentally changed the way that our neighbours interact with each other and with us. Patios are not only essential to ensuring our survival in a post-COVID-19 world, but our neighbours and patrons love them, too! Sleepy Gladstone Avenue is now vibrant, walkable and as many of our patrons have noted, rather European. Our restaurants now sell outstanding food and drink, as well as a memorable community-based experience of intimate outdoor dining on Gladstone Ave.

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We are both thrilled and humbled to read in a recent City survey that our little Fernwood Village was recognized as one of the top spaces that the public cares

about for more economic input and support. This economic boost has allowed us to hire over more than 100 staff. Our employees in turn live, work and spend at other local small businesses in Victoria. We need our expanded patios to keep hiring employees, growing our businesses.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the City; to not only aid in this recovery, but to make the changes necessary to build back better. We implore you: do not forget about us, the local small business. The impending end of COVID-19 is really only the end of our beginning. It will take us years to fully recover from the effects of this pandemic. COVID-19 has dumped a giant bag of lemons on the restaurants of Fernwood Village. We would love to take this opportunity to make sweet lemonade to serve on our patios for years to come!

Please, when the time comes: vote to make the current the outdoor patio seating a permanent addition to Gladstone Avenue, ahead of the current policy expiring in October 2021.

Thank you,

The Restaurants of Fernwood Square