

# MEMO

**To:** Emergency Management Committee  
**From:** Economic Recovery Task Force  
**Date:** May 26, 2020  
**Subject:** On-street Dining Initiative

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## **Objective:**

The Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF) is preparing in advance to support restaurants as they reopen to allow sit down dining. Several restaurateurs, in particular independently owned restaurants, have expressed concern regarding the impact which social distancing may have on their overall restaurant capacity. The ERTF is looking to primarily support these independently owned restaurants, while also exploring ways to support larger/chain restaurants in the pursuit of encouraging the community to “eat/shop local”.

## **Proposal:**

Based on feedback received to date through emails, one-on-one discussions and an intensive round of consultations with various sectors, the ERTF became aware of a potential desire to explore an expansion of traditional businesses by allowing businesses to move into the public realm.

Two very preliminary frameworks have been drafted as a starting point for discussions and are further detailed below. The ERTF is looking to undertake further consultations with local restaurateurs and retailers regarding these potential scenarios which could be implemented for a pilot period of up to a minimum of two months once restaurants are permitted to open to in-store dining. This consultation will ensure that this initiative is developed by and for Orillia area businesses.

### *Ensuring City-wide support*

Both scenarios would include a dedicated marketing campaign to highlight restaurants (especially those outside of the downtown) that have patios, called “See you on the Patio” whereby we’d feature restaurants on social media which have patio space. The ERTF would explore reallocating rented billboards to areas which have multiple patios (such as West Orillia) to simply say “See you on the Patio #EatLocal” with an arrow towards the cluster of restaurants.

### *On-Street Dining Initiative – Scenario 1*

This scenario would allow restaurants and potentially retailers to spill out into the public realm through road closures on Mississaga Street East from Front to Peter, on

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Mississauga from West Street to Andrew Street, and on Peter Street from Mississauga Street East to Colborne, on Saturdays and/or Sundays.

- Parking and street spaces would be set aside for outdoor patio space for the duration of the pilot project.
- Businesses would be responsible for providing ramps.
- Patio furniture would need to be removed every night.
- Could include additional municipal seating along the road (would require sanitation crews).
- May allow retailers to move into the public realm as well.
- Recommend the waiving of patio licence fees and parking space lease fees (estimated impact of approximately \$30-\$40k).
  - This would require Council approval to waive the lost traffic and parking by-law fees and lease fees.
  - The ERTF would likely recommend that this come out of COVID relief funds.
- Businesses will continue to be required to provide an insurance certificate and execute a patio licence agreement.
- Restaurateurs would be responsible for determining if they wish to serve alcohol and if so, would continue to be responsible for acquiring a liquor licence, and they would be required to meet all other approvals typically required of their business (health unit approvals, etc).
- The ERTF would look to hold consultations to gather the input of business owners, and understand if a critical mass could be achieved.
- Road closures eliminate a number of safety concerns related to the operation of non-engineered patios adjacent to active traffic.

## *On-Street Dining Initiative – Scenario 2*

This scenario would be similar to the above, except all roads would remain open for the duration of the pilot program. The following components would therefore differ from the preferred scenario:

- This would result in an additional cost of a few thousand dollars (cost estimates would be further explored as a next step) as the Engineering Division has recommended that jersey barriers be used as a safety barrier between patios and traffic.
- The ERTF would contemplate a one-way street (this would require Fire Department approval).
- Retail operations would likely not be included within this phase, as parking spaces would likely need to be retained for these operations.

Should Council approve this general framework the ERTF would look to undertake consultations with the business community and the health unit, and benchmark

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strategies and programs of other municipalities and gather more feedback (including cost estimates and resource requirements) and report back with a final proposal for consideration. All consultations with the business community would be coordinated with consultations being undertaken by other Phase II Initiatives.

## **Timeline:**

If the EMC supports this first step, consultations would be scheduled for the first week of June and an updated proposal is anticipated to come forward to the EMC the same week. Timing related to the implementation of this initiative will depend upon the final proposal.

## **Accountability:**

This initiative would be overseen by Laura Thompson and will be supported by a team of ERTF members and non-members, including staff from the Planning, Engineering and Legislative Services Divisions, but would rely heavily on the ideas, suggestions and support of the local business community.

## **Anticipated outcomes:**

Should EMC support this initiative this initiative would support Orillia area restaurateurs by allowing them to increase their capacity, and by encouraging the community to shop and dine local.

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