

## DS-22-63

Attention Hailey Wright, Director of Economic Development Services

I'm writing to you today as an extremely frustrated entrepreneur who has recently invested in building our business in The City of Oshawa.

In January of 2021, my family and I made the decision to close Pickering Markets after it's rich 50+ year history in Pickering due to pandemic related closures, and rising costs. When we looked into new locations, we found our current home at 555 Simcoe St. S in Oshawa. This building has sat vacant for many years and been an eyesore for travelers leaving Oshawa and heading toward Toronto on the 401 west ramp located across the street. We didn't see an eye sore. We saw a community that needed something to rally around, something that with the right amount of work, would be a major tourist attraction and bring visitors to an area that did not draw people.

We reached out to economic development before signing our lease and were insured that this was something the City of Oshawa would support and saw as a major benefit to the growth and revitalization of an otherwise dark and vacant area.

With a renewed energy that we had the City behind us, we put pen to paper, pulled out our wallets and got to work. This company is made up of 4 individuals – myself, my girlfriend, my aunt and my uncle. This is a family business, not a large corporation with deep pockets. Since we signed the lease, there has been absolutely zero support from the City. Actually, quite the opposite. Constant red tape, lack of help or accommodation on pretty much anything we ask, and a general disregard for anything business related. All we keep being told is no, or handed a bill.

Before we first signed our lease, we were told about the "Simcoe Street South Renaissance Community Improvement Plan". This was a program that aims at supporting and encouraging investment in this area. During a time where business was tough, and businesses were throwing in the towel, we got to work. We have personally invested close to a million dollars to renovate, rejuvenate and bring this future landmark up to code as well as make it fully accessible for the public. For anybody that saw the interior of this building before we started, you know what kind of task this truly was.

We've created something amazing. A home for 200+ businesses and growing (when fully open, we will be home to about 600 businesses). A place that will draw around 15,000 customers a weekend, many from outside of Oshawa. The exact aim of this program.

We've filled out our SSSCIP application and received the following response from Hailey Wright, head of economic development. "Please do note that CIP programs will only fund work to be completed, not work already completed – so you may need to adjust based on that. Let me know if you have any questions."

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“The **Simcoe Street South Community Improvement Plan** offers financial incentive programs to encourage development, redevelopment and the revitalization of buildings and properties within the Simcoe Street South corridor, between John Street and Bloor Street. “

We are now being told that because we didn't wait the 6 months between the time applications opened (September and March), and the undetermined period to decide what grants are given, we are no longer eligible for these programs.

Who is this program aimed at? Large developers who will only do work if given money? Developers who can sit on land for years until they decide to move forward with a program? If we would have waited to start our project until we knew IF we received an undetermined amount of funding, we would have lost around 1 million dollars in rent.

This application process makes it impossible for the people truly ready to invest in your city to get any aid from the City. We put our money where our mouths were (unlike many of the developments that get announced and that don't happen) and created something this City should be proud of.

Our ask is that the Development Services Committee consider retroactive approval of the work and investment made to the facility between the last closing date of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and the current deadline of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

The scope of work completed between the September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 deadline and March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 deadline is as follows:

Construction Materials: \$114,685.45  
Permits/Engineering: \$45,628.75  
Fire/Life Safety upgrades to code: \$66,241.79  
Electrical: \$43,448.18  
Garbage Removal: \$6540.55  
Labour: \$82,909.21  
Plumbing: \$118,100  
HVAC: \$3435.20  
Security: \$4,643.31  
This is a total to date renovation investment of \$485,632.44

All invoicing, payment receipts and proof of work can be provided upon request.

At a time where so many businesses have struggled, or closed their doors, we should be promoting small business and investing in our community, not creating barriers to funding and constant red tape and excess fees.

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I hope common sense prevails on this matter and The City of Oshawa truly decides to invest in small business.

Respectfully,

Erik Tamm  
Owner  
The Oshawa Markets  
<M.F.I.P.P.A Sec. 14(1)>