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Hon. Doug Downey
Attorney General
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Jean Major
Chief Executive Officer
Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)
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Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Dear Attorney General Downey and CEO Jean Major,

We hope this finds you well. We are writing to you about the propagation of cannabis retail stores in our riding with seemingly no legislative mechanism in place to consider matters of density and proximity. Many of our office's staffing resources in the last year have gone towards assisting residents who have been either blindsided by cannabis store retail applications opening very close to one another in their immediate neighbourhoods, or by cannabis retail stores opening in condensed areas, such as Kensington Market, where a number of cannabis retailers are already operating in a confined geographic space. Additionally, during COVID-19, many residents were surprised that cannabis retail applications were being approved when residents were home and not able to meaningfully engage or know about active Public Interest Processes (PIPs).

We understand that every cannabis retail store must undergo a thorough PIP, which engages public opinion and considers the factors of protecting public health and safety, protecting youth and restricting their access to cannabis, and preventing illicit activities in relation to cannabis. These criteria factors, though important, do not explicitly address density and proximity of cannabis retail stores to others, and it is normally these very factors that are issues for the locals in our riding.

In the past several weeks, our office has been contacted by residents of Kensington Market and the Friends of Kensington Market (FOKM) group about the proliferation of cannabis retail stores in the market. Residents are increasingly concerned about the growing concentration of vendors in the Market, without any consideration given to density or controlling numbers in a confined geographic area.

We would like the Legislation governing the cannabis retail application process by the AGCO to include a component where matters of density, and proximity to other stores is considered as part of the regular assessment process.

We look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jessica Bell

Jessica Bell
MPP, University–Rosedale

Mike Layton

Councillor, Mike Layton
Ward 11, University–Rosedale

CC:
Friends of Kensington Market
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