



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Downtown Kitchener BIA launches Patio Project for Business Recovery and Beautification.

The Downtown Kitchener Business Improvement Area (BIA) is launching one of its most significant projects to date. In late 2020, the BIA looked for solutions to raise the bar for outdoor dining, solidifying Downtown as a destination for culinary and live entertainment. Through consultation and member feedback, the Board of Directors approved a sizeable financial commitment to outdoor spaces. This 2021 investment will enhance or expand twenty-three (23) patios and create three (3) new community spaces for small businesses and patrons. Linda Jutzi, Executive Director, notes, "Enhancements include wooden decking, railings, sails or tents to provide shade, planter boxes and new furniture. We also had the pleasure of committing funding towards enhancements on existing patios." Jutzi goes on to say, "the Downtown Patio Project will not only enhance our streetscape but help kick start business recovery for our district"

Roy Singh, a partner at Mark's Caribbean Kitchen, said, "This is a great idea and something that needs to happen to improve the Downtown experience and bring people to the downtown area. It will allow us to use our patio effectively."

Pop-Up Street Patios Inc. was selected to complete the project, bringing extensive expertise in municipal requirements, installation and removal of seasonal patios, and accessibility features. Construction begins this week and can be expected to be completed by early May, putting our businesses in a great position to safely re-open once restrictions have lifted.

Darren Becks, Manager, Downtown Development and Innovation for the City of Kitchener, says, "The BIA and City of Kitchener worked together to support downtown businesses. We are doing whatever we can to support them through our collaborative efforts and streamline processes." Becks goes on to say, "We look forward to seeing

the life and energy return to downtown; the patios and our shared beautification efforts are a solid first step."

In 2020 the Downtown Kitchener BIA launched an extremely successful Downtown Art Walk. With the addition of the Patio Program, Jutzi is confident it will help the community reconnect safely with our core.

Mehmet Kulekci, the owner of Big Fat Pita, said, "We look forward to this new patio concept being implemented with excitement. We have been here for 10 years and would like to be here for at least another 10. This will be amazing support from the BIA for small businesses like us to survive these very challenging times."

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