



April 13, 2022

City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON. L7R 3Z6

RE: Burlington Food Truck Festival

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for bringing forward the current concerns of the Burlington Downtown Business Association and Burlington Restaurant Association. I have had an opportunity to review the email that was sent to Council from Brian Dean and watch the recorded video stream of the April 7, 2022 Council Meeting and I would like to comment and clarify a few points that have arisen from the subsequent discussions.

Canadian Food Truck Festivals is a non-profit organization that has been producing the Burlington Food Truck Festival in Spencer Smith Park since 2017. In September 2021 after a long hiatus, our organization was fortunate to be granted permission to produce a live festival in Spencer Smith Park. The organization created a new health and safety plan to address the challenges and concerns surrounding live events during the pandemic. The goal was to ensure that event attendees and staff could participate safely, while still offering a free and fun festival. The event was attended and inspected by numerous Regional and City Officials, who concluded that the event met all City and Regional requirements and was safe to proceed. The event took place September 10-12, 2021 and was an overwhelming success!

The 2021 edition of the Burlington Food Truck Festival saw an influx of approximately 27,500 attendees who ate, shopped and stayed overnight in Burlington. Approximately 43% of those attendees (Tourists) came from outside Burlington. We have prepared an Economic Impact Report through the use of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. The figures calculated in the report were generated by the Ministry's TREIM model.

Unlike a single food truck or group of food trucks that "roll-in (to the Downtown Core), serve 100 meals and roll-out", Canadian Food Truck Festival invests in each and every municipality that we work in. Each year, the organization allocates approximately \$145,000 in marketing and media buys across our four festivals. These marketing initiatives bring visitor from across Southern Ontario to each event

Canadian Food Truck Festivals
Calories don't count on the Weekend!



location. To ensure maximum coverage and market penetration, we cross promote all festivals through our extensive marketing campaigns each year. It should also be noted that the marketing cost outlined above do not include staff costs (marketing manager, graphic designer or web designer).

CFTF understands the challenges that have plagued the BDBA and BRA over the past 2-years, as the festivals and events industry has also been decimated by the Covid Pandemic. Both of these two Associations & CFTF work with hard-hit businesses. We have all had the same struggles and sadly some of our members have had to close down their brick & mortar shops. We fully understand and appreciate the challenges that have rained down on the service industry due to Covid.

Unfortunately, to-date no one in our organization has ever been approached by anyone from either Association to try and create a partnership or even relay their concerns directly to a member of our Team. We would like to suggest the creation of a mutually agreeable promotional partnership that benefits everyone.

Examples of a promotional partnership during the festival weekend could include:

1. BDBA/ BRA closes down Brant Street and holds a Streetfest
2. BDBA/ BRA businesses place tents (both retail & food) and other activities out front of their businesses.
3. BDBA/ BRA businesses activate inside the festival site for a discounted fee.

****All of these options would be promoted through the festivals extensive marketing campaign.**

CFTF has observed the following direct benefits to local businesses:

- Tens of Thousands of visitors to the City of Burlington
- Showcasing the vibrant and beautiful downtown core to new patrons
- Sold out hotels room nights at local hotels
 - Festival staff, event workers book hundreds of room nights
- Heavy pedestrian foot-traffic throughout the downtown business area
- Very busy bars & restaurants (observed by CFTF staff after the event has ended each night: 2017-2019)

We have also been made aware that there is a concern regarding our charitable partner: SickKids Foundation. When the organization was created in 2013, we wanted to give back to the community and thought the events would be a great opportunity for us to raise funds for a worthy cause, provide volunteer opportunities to high school students so they could work towards their community service hours needed to graduate and gain transferable job skills that could be used later to find gainful employment opportunities.



Our position is that SickKids Hospital is an international research and teaching hospital, where best practices are learned and disseminated across Ontario and the World. We believe that SickKids Hospital works in cooperation and not in competition with other hospitals in Ontario. That said, we would be happy to explore new local charitable partnerships for the Burlington Food Truck Festival.

It's been made clear that the BDBA and BRA want to cancel the Burlington Food Truck Festival because of the perceived adverse effects the event is having on 50 local restaurants. It is the position of CFTF that the Burlington Food Truck Festival brings tens of thousands of visitors/ tourists to Burlington's beautiful downtown core, where they get to explore the waterfront and vibrant business area that features 407 businesses that are represented by the BDBA. 357 of those businesses are not food based and they benefit from the tourism and economic stimulus that the festival creates.

The 2022 event was approved in December and since that time, staff has been hired, partnerships have been created, permits have been secured, all Food Truck spaces have been sold, bands have been booked and a substantial amount of time and money has been spent. Canceling this event will hurt hundreds of businesses.

It is our hope to continue to produce the Burlington Food Truck Festival at Spencer Smith Park and create new promotional partnerships with local businesses this year and beyond.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the coordinates below.

Best Wishes,

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