

New Byward Market Strategy Should Improve Safety and Accessibility for Visitors

The new Byward Market strategy proposed to Ottawa City Council is a giant step forward, but the issues of personal safety and accessibility should be addressed as immediate priorities. The reaction comes from the newly established Capital 2020 Task Force .

The Task Force determined that a priority should be placed on the safety of visitors and employees in the Byward Market walking around, sitting or working in restaurants and shops,” said Doug McLarty, Chair of the Capital 2020 Task Force. “One out of six people in the National Capital Region has a disability which makes going to the Byward Market impossible for them, their friends and families. That is a significant number of visitors and employees not able to participate in what the current Byward Market has to offer.”

The Task Force applauded the efforts of Peter Hume and his committee in their recommendations of a Municipal Corporate Structure to oversee the operations of the Parkdale and Byward markets, the inclusion of local produce and products, pedestrian pathways and new, modern infrastructure.

“For the many people with a variety of disabilities, the fear of not being able to navigate busy, cluttered and visually-oriented environments is a major barrier to participation in Byward Market life,” added Ross Meredith, sub-committee chair of the task force’s ByWard Market priority. “That includes going to the shops, going for a walk along the streets, going to work, looking for work, or simply socialising. Accessibility and safety standards need to be addressed at this early stage of planning and design.”

The Capital 2020 Task Force, which was struck in February 2019, hopes to function as the (1) leader and catalyst for plans, strategies, programs and services that promote a favorable business climate, (2) and improve the quality of life, and support the orderly growth, development and revitalization of the Nation’s Capital – on both sides of the Ottawa River.

The five priorities for the Task Force are to expedite the efficient and effective:

- 1) Redevelopment of the Byward Market;
- 2) Redevelopment of LeBreton Flats;
- 3) Establishment of a train between Ottawa and Gatineau;
- 4) Establishment of a federal employment node in Orleans; and
- 5) Redevelopment of the Ottawa Civic Hospital.