

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE
CITY OF STRATFORD APPROVES
ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASK FORCE
AL FRESCO PROJECT TO STIMULATE COVID-19 ECONOMY
New COVID-19 Recovery Project to Support Business

Stratford, ON – May 29, 2020... **Today Stratford's City Council approved a proposal from the Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force to implement al fresco (outdoor) dining experiences in collaboration with and in support of Stratford's restaurants and culinary providers.** The request was received by the COVID-19 City Initiatives Team and brought to Council for approval. The Stratford City Centre BIA is leading operations in collaboration with City staff, Stratford Tourism Alliance, and the HRT Destination Development Group.

The project aims to place outdoor picnic tables and patio umbrellas in public spaces to provide physically distanced seating options for more than 200 people. Hand sanitizer stations, additional waste and recycle receptacles, and signage will spread throughout Market Square and Upper Queen's Park. Other locations may be added in future phases.

Sourced locally by companies such as CR Plastics & Junction56 (sanitizer), materials will be managed by the Stratford City Centre BIA and remain available for use by the City for day to day use, and future events & functions for many years to come. Funding for these materials will be covered by the Stratford Economic Response & Recovery Task Force and other local and regional tourism partners.

Phase One of the project will allow curbside and take-away patrons access to nearby outdoor dining facilities that are properly setup within COVID-19 health and safety guidelines and best practices such as physical distancing. It also provides additional seating areas for those shopping in the downtown in stores that have re-opened.

The Al Fresco dining experience is part of a phased implementation plan and additional information and ideas for future phases will be presented to Council, dependent on the progression of the COVID-19 Pandemic as directed under Provincial regulations. More information will be made available on both the BIA and Economic Recovery Task Force websites.

Mayor Dan Mathieson stated *"These types of projects are key to the recovery of our City and our businesses. Thank you to the teams, businesses and individuals who are working towards finding creative, appropriate solutions during these challenging times. This is one step of many for our City, supported by local manufacturers, and with long-term impact."*

Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford stated *"I'm very excited to see the Al Fresco Project take its first step. This is a marathon, not a sprint, and the emphasis on high impact with long-term benefits speaks to the quality of the projects being considered and put forward by the Task Force team."*

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About investStratford:

investStratford is committed to advancing the economic future of Stratford, Ontario, Canada through investment in arts, education and industry. Globally Connected | Community Driven For more info visit: investStratford.com

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