



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

## FOOD WALKING TOUR CONSULTANT

AUGUST 14, 2025

Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) represents some \$7.2 billion of commercial property and close to 2,000 businesses in the Yonge-Dundas neighborhood of Toronto. Bounded by Alexander/Grosvenor streets to the north and Richmond Street to the south; Bay Street to the west and Church/Victoria/Shuter Streets to the east, Downtown Yonge is home to top tourist destinations, landmark public and private spaces and a range of retail options, along with a vibrant residential population, many social agencies and Toronto Metropolitan University.

Please consider the following four (4) questions before submitting a proposal:

1. Are you a food walking tour provider or developer with a focus on community engagement?

2. Are you committed to showcasing neighbourhoods through year-round programs, including in the colder months?

3. Do you recognize the value businesses and commercial property owners contribute to a successful and vibrant downtown neighbourhood?

4. Do you have a history of completing projects on time and on budget?

**If your response to these four questions is “yes”, please continue reading and consider submitting.**

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Ontario, M5G 2C2

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@downtownyonge



## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Established in 2001 along Toronto's iconic Yonge St., the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (DYBIA) is a non-profit organization committed to strengthening the culture and economy of our world-leading downtown neighbourhood through programs, partnerships, advocacy and outreach.

A champion for the mixed-use community of 2,000+ businesses and property owners in the heart of downtown Toronto, DYBIA is responsive, inclusive and collaborative, reaching beyond its boundaries to create innovative programs that help drive consistent growth in the community. The BIA is engaged in all aspects of the neighbourhood, with a full-time clean streets team and outreach team working in the area, as well as a full suite of events and activations and an extensive data & research portfolio.

Representing more than \$7 billion in commercial real estate, this vibrant downtown district is home to exceptional retail such as CF Toronto Eaton Centre, entertainment mainstays including Sankofa Square (formerly Yonge-Dundas Square), the Ed Mirvish Theatre, the Elgin and Wintergarden Theatres and Massey Hall, and a bustling post-secondary community at Toronto Metropolitan University and Toronto Film School, as well as over 100,000 residents within a 10-minute walk. All of which contribute to some of the highest pedestrian flows in Canada with over 60 million pedestrians annually.

With nearly 250 restaurants and food service providers calling Downtown Yonge home, this neighbourhood has also seen a shift in the business makeup; in the last 2 years, over half of the new businesses that have opened in our neighbourhood have been restaurants, with 30% of those being independently operated. The makeup of our restaurants is very diverse, including food courts, food halls, quick-service, fine dining and more. Many cultures are also represented, with restaurants serving Thai, Cantonese, Iraqi, Italian, Korean, Portuguese and many more cuisines all located within our 1.4 km district.

In Fall 2024, the DYBIA piloted hosting food walking tours to highlight the extensive food offerings in the area. These tours were hugely successful, selling out in a few hours at a cost of \$10/participant. Since then, the BIA has been testing different themed food programming to highlight the various types of food service providers in the area, including lunchtime tours and budget eats. The DYBIA prides itself on offering only free and low-cost programs to ensure the neighbourhood is accessible for all. Our programs also usually include a community engagement component, such as working with a charity or partnering with a university or high school to provide students with educational opportunities.

The main objective of this RFP is to invite proposals from experienced and qualified food tour developers or providers to design and execute year-round food walking tours in 2026 for the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood. Given the different types of users in the community including residents, office workers, students and tourists, tours should be designed with this variety in mind. These tours should aim to showcase the variety of offerings in the neighbourhood, foster community pride and engagement as well as encourage participants to return with others on their own.



## CORE SCOPE OF WORK

The core scope of work in this RFP includes:

- Developing and executing year-round food walking tours in 2026 that highlight the various offerings within the Downtown Yonge neighbourhood.
- Designing all marketing materials for the tours, along with hosting the registration platform.
- Developing an accompanying resource that extends the life of the tours and allows people to continue exploring the BIA offerings beyond tour dates. Examples could be a booklet, webpage or map.
- Providing the BIA with detailed post-tour metrics on attendance and registrations, including developing a post-tour survey for participants as well as a post-tour survey for participating businesses.

The successful applicant will be responsible for all aspects of the planning and execution of the food tours, with final approval of all routes, stops and content by the DYBIA. Tour providers will be responsible for restaurant selection, testing, and liaising with businesses for day-of execution.

All logistical considerations are also the responsibility of the provider; this includes applying for and purchasing any necessary City permits, parking costs, microphones/speakers, tour supplies, etc. Tour provider must also have general liability insurance and must name the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area as additionally insured.

It must be understood that any materials and designs which are created for DYBIA by your firm, at our cost, become the property of the BIA and no additional fees will be paid to the design firm or illustrators for their use, with the exception of changes quoted and approved in advance for each project

### *Supplementary conditions*

- Tours will be run year-round, rain or shine or snow unless safety is a concern for staff and participants.
- Tours should be accessible, with alternative routes designed to provide barrier-free access to all stops
- Tour guides and support staff are required to wear Downtown Yonge BIA branded uniforms while conducting the tours, designed and purchased by the tour operator, with final design approval by the DYBIA.
- Given the busyness of the area, applicants should include a plan to navigate the neighbourhood with a large group of people.
- Tour provider should include a matrix for restaurant selection, though the DYBIA has final approval of the routes, menu, stops and script
- A Downtown Yonge BIA representative will attend the beginning of all tours, however they will not necessarily be available for the entire duration of every tour.
- All communications relating to the logistics of the tours, including confirmation emails for participants and follow-up emails, will be done through a Downtown Yonge email, which the tour provider will be given access to by the DYBIA (for eg. [foodtours@downtownyonge.com](mailto:foodtours@downtownyonge.com)).



## DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM

The below conditions should be considered in all submissions:

Required	Considered an asset
A minimum of 40 walking tours offered throughout the year beginning in Q1 2026, with a minimum of 15 attendees per tour. Timings and theme recommendations should be included.	Program connects with existing DYBIA programming.
A minimum of one accompanying resource that can be updated seasonally to be used during and after the tours. E.g booklet, map, or webpage	Program includes a community engagement component.
Depending on length of the tours, 3-5 businesses featured on each tour.	A track record of working closely with a business association, BIA, or similar community and its sponsors.
Tour providers should include variations to ensure continued interest and highlight a range of businesses. This could be done through a variety of means, including changing the restaurants featured, different seasonal themes, or changing the menu offerings.	Reflects an understanding of DYBIA's strategic priorities.
To ensure fairness and to highlight the variety of offerings in the neighbourhood, every season the tour provider will connect with and assess at least 2 new businesses that haven't been featured before and integrate them into the tours as needed.	
Fees for tour participants should not exceed more than CAD \$20+HST/person.	
A mechanism should be in place so tour participants are limited to a maximum of two registrations per email per year to give opportunities for others to attend.	



## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In considering the proposals, DYBIA will be looking for evidence and examples that consultants are able to demonstrate:

- A **dedication to community development** in previous work experience;
- An interest in **highlighting the businesses** that make Toronto a successful city; and
- A proven record of **execution and delivery**.

## TIMELINE & BUDGET

Any questions or clarifications should be directed to the email listed in “submission details”. Answers to all queries will be posted on the DYBIA website within seven business days of the “deadline for questions”. Interested bidders must provide a firm, all-inclusive price for all services proposed. Additional costs and fees may be presented as menu pricing. All times listed in EST.

<b>RFP distributed</b>	August 14, 2025
<b>Deadline for questions</b>	September 02, 2025, 4:00pm
<b>Responses to questions posted on DYBIA website (if applicable)</b>	September 09, 2025
<b>Submission deadline</b>	September 23, 2025, 4:00pm
<b>Final decision reached</b>	October 21, 2025
<b>Start date for contract</b>	January 01, 2026
<b>Length of contract</b>	12 months
<b>Budget for entire program</b>	CAD \$110,000

## BACKGROUND READING

A consideration in the selection of a proposal will be the understanding of the DYBIA. To this end, respondents can review the following documents and resources for more information:

- [Downtown Yonge BIA boundary map](#)
- [Downtown Yonge BIA Annual Report 2024](#)
- [DYBIA Events](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2023-2028](#)
- [End of Year AGM video 2024](#)

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Respondents are requested to include the following components in their submissions.

1. A clear **outline** of the approach to the project.
2. Any **conditions** from the provider's end to the DYBIA to deliver the program.
3. Detailed **timelines and budget** for the project.



4. Any response to the “**Additional Considerations**” (p.5).
5. Outline of the firm’s **experience on similar projects** and **dealing with BIAs** or other associations.
6. A company **prospectus**.
7. **Identification of team leader(s)** who will oversee this project – including their *Curriculum Vitae*.
8. Fill out **Schedule B** (p.7) and attach to the proposal.

## SUBMISSION DETAILS

**Please submit one (1) electronic copy of your proposal by 4:00pm on September 23, 2025.**

Attention: Susie Barbosa-Pizzirusso, Manager, Economic & Community Development:  
[sbarbosa@downtownyonge.com](mailto:sbarbosa@downtownyonge.com)

\*Please note\* that proposals will not be considered unless:

- Received by the date and time specified; and
- Received at the address specified.



## SCHEDULE B: DISCLOSURE OF SUBCONTRACTORS

Please check and fill out appropriate statement below.

- ☐ No subcontractors or suppliers will be used in connection to delivering this service
- ☐ Subcontractors or suppliers will be used to deliver the service

### **Subcontractor or Suppliers list**

Name of Organization:  
Contact Name & Designation:  
Email & Telephone Number:

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