

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to correspondence on temporary closure of James St N that will be submitted for the City Council meeting on April 15th.

From: Ro Tru

Sent: Monday, April 13, 2020 6:47 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Opposition to correspondence on temporary closure of James St N that will be submitted for the City Council meeting on April 15th.

Dear Mayor Fred Eisenberger and City Council,

I understand that you will be receiving a proposal to temporarily close a section of James Street North to allow pedestrians more space to walk/cycle and practice safe social distancing during this pandemic.

I, along with many people that I have spoken to (in my personal life and as an admin of a North End Facebook group with over 1,000+ members) do not believe this is a good idea.

I will add some points, some questions and some concerns that I personally have about this which I hope you will consider before making a final decision on this proposal.

First I'd like to express my concern that the original proposal is open for anyone to sign. Non-residents of the North End should not have a say in a decision that will likely not impact their lives personally.

It is my hope that if this is seriously considered, that the constituents of Ward 2 will be allowed to vote or at least attend a virtual town hall where they can have their say on the matter.

The original author of this proposal posits that shutting down James North would be an "easy task", just like "Supercrawl". Premier Ford is expected to announce tomorrow (Tuesday April 14) that he will be extending the Ontario State of Emergency to 28 more days.

28 days minimum is not comparable to a 4 day event road closure.

The original author of this proposal posits that Emergency vehicles be allowed to use the closed roads. If barricades are put in place, does that mean emergency workers would have to stop, open the barricade, move their vehicle and then close the barricade behind them? We all know when there's an emergency time is of the essence. This would waste time that emergency workers frankly don't have.

Speaking of barricades, what kind of barricades would they be? Plastic? Cement?

Would regular drivers be physically able to move them? Will there be people monitoring these barricades to make sure citizens are not moving them? Would fines be given out if people moved the barricades?

The original author of this proposal posits that city council can look to other cities around North/South America that are conducting similar street closures for ideas. If city council were to do this would they be paying out consultancy fees?

The original author of this proposal posits that people who need to get to work will be able to use James Street North more effectively with the road being closed & will be better able to practice safe social distancing. At the risk of sounding insensitive (which is not my intention) we could suggest that they use a side street? After all, side streets (let's say like Hughson or Macnab) tend to have less foot traffic anyway.

They most likely can walk the side streets without really coming into contact with anyone. Why is the solution they are putting forward to close down a major street in order for them to walk to work etc?

One of the other points that was brought up was that it would be good for people to get out, get some fresh air & stretch their legs. And I wholeheartedly agree. Being stuck in your home for days on end is not good for body mind or soul. With a street closure though, I wonder if people will look at this as an open invitation to "hang out", "play in the street" etc.

Street parking can be an issue in the North End if you don't have your own driveway. I don't know how large of a section of James North they want to temporarily close as it wasn't in any of the material that I read, but because they used Supercrawl as their model, I will use that as well.

You're looking at an area that roughly spans Barton to King or 4 to 5 blocks. Any cars that normally park will have to compete with people already short on parking spaces on side streets.

Not to mention a road closure of that size will impact the following bus routes:

- 2-Barton
- 3-Cannon
- 4-Bayfront
- 6-Aberdeen
- 7-Locke
- 8-York
- 20-A Line

Again, a few days versus 28 days or longer is a big difference.

Finally, I would like to talk about something that is personal to my situation. 2020 has unfortunately not been a good year (though I'm hopeful for the latter half).

I was in physio for a back injury (obviously that's on hiatus for now) and the transmission on our car broke down. Therefore, I rely on services like Instacart or Skip The Dishes to get food/groceries.

Sure, there are a few variety stores in my area but we all know how much they mark prices up and they're not offering the healthiest food options. The bottom line is carrying heavy groceries is not an option for me right now.

I can think of many people who are in the same boat. People who have a physical disability, people who are ill and the elderly just to name a few.

There are many people who rely on grocery delivery services and that includes having the delivery person come right to our doors. Proposing a street closure of this size for this long, could be problematic if people use any of these services to get food. When this was my response in a group discussing this, I was told that the most people would have to walk is a few minutes to meet your delivery on a side street.

Not everyone has the privilege of good health or even good physical strength to carry those groceries back home.

So I would ask to keep compromised people in mind who may need these services and how a road closure may negatively impact people trying to get food.

I hope I have presented a thorough counter argument to closing down a major street in Hamilton. I understand that some creative problem-solving has to happen here in order to make this pandemic as comfortable as possible for as many people as possible. I think the original authors heart is in the right place. I think it goes without saying that we all want safer streets and a healthier environment. Maybe this starts a conversation about how City planning should go in the future. Maybe sidewalks need to be wider and road sizes need to be reduced etc.

I just don't believe the decisions that could be quite impactful should be made during a pandemic unless it's an absolute necessity. We have already been impacted enough, our lives have already changed so much in such a short amount of time. And I have heard so much opposition to this idea and was asked by several people to write in that I felt it was my duty to at least be a voice for the people opposed.

Thank you for your time.

Yours,

Roberta Trunfio

Resident of Ward 2