

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Closure of James St North

From: Debbie Field

Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 8:23 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Mayor Eisenberger and City Council:

The following letter pertains to the idea of temporarily restricting non-emergency motorized vehicles to some of the city's streets - similar to events such as Supercrawl, Locke Street Festival, and Concession Street Fair.

We, the undersigned, are asking City Council to temporarily close James Street North, in Ward 2, for the duration of the pandemic to allow more space for residents who are using sidewalks for walking and roadways for biking. We think that this closure could act as a "pilot" to spur the closure of other streets in Hamilton.

We chose James Street North because it has been habitually closed for events like Supercrawl and, therefore, its closure would put less of a burden on City staff to come up with workarounds for public transit and other regular services and allow them the lead time needed to anticipate and plan for other road closures.

Dozens of other cities around the world including Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary have already deployed these types of actions in order to help walking, biking, and outdoor respite-taking in accordance with physical distancing guidelines. Bogotá, Brampton, Mexico City, and Berlin have all expanded cycling networks to make way for bikes.

The City of Oakland has a program titled "Oakland Slow Streets", which was implemented by their City Council. The program began by closing four street segments to through traffic (local traffic and emergency vehicles were still permitted).

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation closed three segments of parkways in the greater Boston area to vehicles, leaving them open to pedestrians and cyclists only.

We believe that this will benefit the community's mental health in regards to balancing the stresses associated with maintaining physical distance while trying to avoid vehicle traffic. A reduction in noise pollution and air quality will also be a positive benefit of this temporary restriction.

These measures could be implemented by placing barriers such as the ones currently used to block other vehicle access in the city during road closures. This way, emergency vehicles would still be able to access these areas free of restriction if necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration, it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Deborah Field
Hamilton, ON