

Pilon, Janet

Subject: City's plan for pedestrian-only downtown mall

From: Anita
 Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 10:36 AM
 To: clerk@hamilton.ca
 Subject: City's plan for pedestrian-only downtown mall

Mayor and Members of Council,

City's plan for pedestrian-only downtown mall will exclude those less mobile from downtown streets and businesses.

It has only just come to my attention that the city is planning to create weekend-long pedestrian-only malls out of streets in downtown Hamilton. If even just on weekends, this is a huge limitation as it will dictate when those with mobility problems have to shop or do business.

My concern is that once you remove parking for cars on those streets and access for cars, you are excluding anyone who has physical mobility issues.

The people who come to an area by car for other reasons (distances, cargo, kids/passengers, limited time available...) will ALSO be having to find parking spots nearby as they will no longer be able to park on the closed pedestrian-only streets. Add to that residential side-street parking restrictions (ie. permit only parking for residents) we make it even more difficult to find somewhere to park - NOW, with all that, where do those with accessible parking permits park?! Often for many of us, if we can't get a spot near the store we're going to, we can't go to the store.

I look at what they've done with King William - completely blocked off - and drive right by it seeing it as an impossible barrier for me. I can no longer patronize any of the shops or restaurants along there because it has no access.

Is there not legislation protecting the rights of those who need accessibility? How can the city implement something like this where it is removing accessibility for entire groups of people when they are supposed to be IMPROVING accessibility? If I'm not mistaken, on one hand the city required shops to make their entrances accessible, and now those people who need those ramps and such won't even be able to come!

How can our mayor even suggest a plan like this and he sits on the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities? Is it not his job to look out for those living with disabilities if he's on that committee - instead he's throwing up barriers.

This is a very bad idea that is excluding anyone with mobility difficulties, those with permits and those without.

In a perfect world where everyone was healthy and mobile, it's great, but this is not the case. Don't look to countries that are NOT as progressive as we are in North America when it comes to accessibility.

The mayor of Paris, France has her sights set on doing the same to much of the core in Paris. With their abysmal track record for accessibility, THEY are not the ones to look to for innovative ways to "improve" city cores. I speak from almost 40 years of very frequent visits to Paris visiting family and know very well the accessibility limitations they have at every turn.

Thank you,
 Anita Thomas
 Ward 7