

Pilon, Janet

Subject: King William St. Closure**From:** Matt Webber**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2022 8:46 AM**To:** clerk@hamilton.ca**Cc:** Kerry Jarvi <kerry@downtownhamilton.org>**Subject:** King William St. Closure

To City Council

My name is Matthew Webber and I am the owner of Berkeley North Restaurant on King William St. I am writing to ask for your support to allow King William St to close to traffic again for the Spring and Summer months. COVID-19 has created a massive interruption to all businesses and the hospitality industry took one of the biggest hits. The businesses on King William St. have created one of the most unique and special experiences in the City. We have restored a street that was practically abandoned and turned it into one of the most talked about areas with our hard work and for many, our life savings. The fact that we are all still here is a testament to the passion we have as a collective to help compliment all the other wonderful things being done across the City to put Hamilton on the national map. We are in need of your help!

The ability to use the King William St. Patio has honestly allowed my restaurant to survive and be here today. Without it over the last two years it would be very hard for me to imagine Berkeley North still operating today. Businesses, and restaurants in particular, have been set back years by this pandemic and it will take years of careful navigation to get our businesses back to where they were prior to the lockdown. I thank you all so much for expediting the process of closing down this street and making this possible for the last 2 years. Our BIA has been amazing in helping orchestrate this by providing equipment, support and promotion. I am forever grateful to both the City and BIA for this. And now I ask for your help again.

The experience that has been created on the King William St. Patio has brought life back to the downtown core. It has been a driving force for people to gather and celebrate with one another. Almost every table says the same thing, "This is such a great idea, this is healing as it gives me a feeling of normalcy and this has to be here every year." It offers a safe environment for those that feel uneasy about returning inside dining rooms. The outside seats are the very first seats that fill up everyday and the last to empty. There is a buzz of excitement, laughter and normalcy that is healing to everyone that joins us. We are on the verge of creating something that is truly special and unique in our City. Our suppliers, delivery services, staff and guests have all been able to easily adjust to the closure of the street and navigate around it.

I truly believe that some good has come from these extremely hard times and the push to close this street is one of those great accomplishments. This is something that not only needs to be here for this year but years to come. We have a chance to not only provide a spectacular experience for the residents of our City but also a tremendous tourist destination and unique feature that helps support one of the most special districts in the City. I hope that you all have had the chance to experience this street patio in action and if not I highly encourage you to do so. With some careful planning we can propel this district into a year long destination that will provide an extremely strong foundation to the downtown core that will service the growing population and reemergence of businesses.

Thank you for the chance to speak about the importance of this street closure. Thank you for your assistance and support up to this point. Please support this initiative for this year and years to come so that we can look at this 10 years down the road and all be proud of what we were able to create coming out of such a hard time.

Matthew Webber

Owner

Berkeley North

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