

29 APRIL, 2025

To: Toronto East York Community Council
From: The ArQuives Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives

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Subject: Letter of Support for the Church Street Pedestrianization Project

As one of the world's largest repositories of queer and trans history and a cornerstone of the Church-Wellesley Village, The ArQuives supports the proposed pedestrianization of Church Street. We believe this initiative is a vital step in preserving the living history and ensuring the future vitality of Toronto's queer and trans community.

Historically, the Church Street corridor has served as a sanctuary, and our records document how this street evolved from a site of protest and surveillance into a haven for self-expression. Pedestrianization honours this legacy by returning the street to the people, effectively creating a safe space for the community that allows for the spontaneous social interactions that have always been the heartbeat of the Village.

The ArQuives operates as a site of active memory, and a pedestrianized environment would allow us to significantly expand our public-facing mission. By removing the noise, pollution, and safety risks associated with vehicle traffic, we can better facilitate historical walking tours and workshops that bring our collections directly to the public.

Finally, we believe this project is essential for the economic and social resilience of the Village. As our neighbourhood faces increasing complex pressures, creating a thriving, walkable district will naturally increase foot traffic for local businesses and community organizations like ours. The ArQuives has spent decades documenting the struggle for queer and trans people to take up space in this city (and around Canada), and this project represents a landmark opportunity to make that space enjoyable and protected. We strongly urge the City to move forward with pedestrianizing Church Street.

Sincerely,



Raegan Swanson
Executive Director