

**May 15, 2026**

**Re: Church Street Pedestrianization**

**Dear Members of the Toronto Community Council,**

On behalf of Climate Action Partnership, I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the proposed Church Street Pedestrianization Pilot. Church Street is the heart of the Church-Wellesley Village — a neighbourhood with deep roots in Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ history and a community that has long shaped the cultural life of our city. This summer, a stretch of Church Street is planned to transform into a pedestrian-friendly space where residents, families, and visitors can gather, connect, and celebrate together.

The proposed Church Street Pedestrianization Pilot has the following goals:

- Designate Church Street (Wellesley Street East to Alexander Street) as a seasonal pedestrian zone this summer
- Develop and implement a local access model with the help of relevant City divisions for business deliveries, waste collection, and emergency services, following the successful frameworks used in Montreal and Calgary
- Establish a new pedestrianization policy using Church Street as a model and pilot project



The proposed pedestrianization of Church Street strongly aligns with Climate Action Partnership’s commitment to promoting active transportation as a key pathway to decarbonizing our communities. Creating safe, accessible space for walking not only encourages healthier, low-carbon mobility but also contributes to more vibrant and inclusive public realms. Pilot projects like this are especially valuable, as they allow cities to test, learn, and refine approaches in real time—building the evidence needed to design better streets and more effective programs. Drawing on CAP’s experience in research, community engagement, and active transportation initiatives through the Centre for Active Transportation, we see this as an important step toward creating people-focused streets and advancing sustainable urban mobility. While other Canadian cities, such as Montreal, have embraced people-first infrastructure, Toronto lacks a formal, permanent policy for street pedestrianization. A pedestrianized Church Street would not only advance broader city building objectives around local economic development, sustainability and improved population health, it would also provide an important precedent for the city, demonstrating leadership in prioritizing human connection and investment in local businesses in high-density, mixed-use neighborhoods, while setting the foundation for future projects.

The proposed program takes an innovative approach for Toronto: seizing two landmark moments in a community’s history for a celebration of people and place to inform the creation of a pedestrianization policy for seasonal and permanent major road closures. With the 50th anniversary of The 519, a cornerstone community centre for the Village, and the long-awaited Cultural District designation coming to City Council in June 2026, it is the right moment to invest in this street and the people who call it home. In addition to programming and associated celebrations, this project will also take steps to identify coordinated service pathways for running pedestrianization events, helping to reduce navigation barriers, establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms, enhance capacity for public space activations, and build community resilience. All of this is necessary for long-term sustainability of pedestrianization projects.

We are confident in the Office of Councillor Chris Moise and the Church Wellesley BIA’s ability to deliver on the commitments outlined in the project and look forward to supporting this important work as both local champions of inclusive city building and as a multidisciplinary team of professionals with experience delivering transformative placemaking projects and programs around the world.



Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gaby Kalapos".

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