

councilmeeting

From: Kelly Jackson <kjackson@destinationtoronto.com>
Sent: May 19, 2026 8:00 PM
To: councilmeeting
Cc: Sarah Jarvis
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2026.TE32.46 on May 20, 2026 City Council

Categories: Communication (New)

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the May 20, 2026 City Council meeting on item 2026.TE32.46, Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

May 19, 2026

RE: Item 2026.TE32.46 – Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot

Dear Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council,

On behalf of Destination Toronto, I am writing to express our full support for the proposed **Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot** (Item 2026.TE32.46). This initiative, which proposes the closure of Church Street to vehicular traffic between Wellesley Street East and Alexander Street from June 19 to August 21, 2026, is a direct and timely application of the strategic priorities outlined in the newly released **Toronto Destination Master Plan (DMP)**.

The DMP provides a decade-long roadmap to fuel Toronto's momentum as a top global urban destination and generate greater economic benefits. The plan was developed with input from 400+ businesses, organizations and community stakeholders to reflect a broad consensus on the steps we need to enhance Toronto's competitiveness.

A central pillar of this plan is **Track 1: Ensure the City is Welcoming, Safe, and Inspiring**. The Church Street pilot aligns directly with key strategies within this track including:

- **Enhancing Street-Level Vibrancy (Strategy 1.4):** The DMP explicitly identifies that Toronto lags peer cities in walkability and street-level vibrancy. Track 1 calls for the evaluation of candidate streets for seasonal or year-round pedestrianization to invite exploration and connection. This pilot builds on the DMP's recommendation to scale the success of previous initiatives, such as the Market Street seasonal closure, to other neighbourhoods.
- **Solidifying Inclusivity and Accessibility (Strategy 1.7):** Toronto's identity as one of the world's most inclusive cities is a key global differentiator. Strategy 1.7 specifically calls for partnering with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and the **Church-Wellesley Village BIA** to ensure queer-inclusive

businesses and experiences are prioritized in our visitor resources. Supporting this pilot is a tangible way to advance the DMP's goal of making every visitor feel "seen, valued, and welcome".

Last year, visitors to our city generated \$9.1B in direct spending and \$13.5 B in overall economic impact. With competition intensifying among major cities and visitor expectations evolving, this is a critical moment to strengthen Toronto's tourism advantage as an exciting, safe and inclusive city. Many global cities have iconic people-first corridors that are important social and commercial spaces, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike and seen as destinations themselves. To solidify our position as a top global urban destination, Toronto needs more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly public spaces and strategies to ensure safety, cleanliness, and state of good repair, particularly in the downtown core. This pilot is an important step forward, and we encourage Council to both support the pilot and continue to consider other pedestrianization opportunities.

Sincerely,

Kelly Jackson

Vice-President, Destination Development
Destination Toronto