

NOTICE OF MOTION

Creating a Pedestrian Streets Program for Toronto

Moved by: Councillor Matlow _____

Seconded by: Councillor Moise _____

SUMMARY:

The enormous popularity of street festivals in Toronto demonstrates that Torontonians are eager to enjoy pedestrian streets and the food, entertainment, and social opportunities they provide. These events are drawing increasingly large crowds, signalling strong public demand for pedestrian-oriented experiences.

Pedestrian streets deliver significant economic benefits and have been successfully implemented in cities around the world, including places like Paris and Copenhagen, and as close to home as Montreal. A recent Toronto Destination Master Plan report from April 2026 finds that Toronto lags peer cities in walkability and street-level vibrancy, with many areas lacking pedestrian-friendly design. This report recommends creating more pedestrian-friendly public spaces and evaluating candidate streets for year-round pedestrianization.

Transportation Services has been researching and developing a Pedestrian Streets Policy since at least early 2025, with a final report originally targeted for December 2025 that did not go forward. At its May 2026 meeting, City Council approved the Church Street pedestrianization pilot and directed that those outcomes and findings be used to inform the creation of the pedestrianization policy.

This motion seeks to build on and accelerate that work by directing staff to broaden the scope and create a citywide Pedestrian Streets Program, identifying candidate streets for seasonal and year-round pedestrianization next year, and requesting staff to report back on the required resources for implementation through the 2027 budget process.

Torontonians and tourism experts are calling on the city to expand pedestrianization options, and we should listen by taking concrete steps to make this happen. While there are important considerations around impacts to congestion, public safety, and responsible management, these can be effectively addressed – like many cities around the world already do. It's time to move forward on a Pedestrian Streets Program for Toronto.

RECCOMENDATIONS

1. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services, the General Manager, Economic Development and

Culture, the Toronto Police Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, and Toronto Fire, to create a Pedestrian Streets Program and implementation plan that identifies the process for identifying candidate streets, the criteria for selecting them, and the approach for planning and implementing pedestrian street projects, and to:

- i. Incorporate findings and lessons from the Church Street pedestrianization pilot and the Toronto Destination Master Plan recommendations.
 - ii. Assess the implementation experience of Pedestrianization Programs in comparable jurisdictions including Montreal and New York.
 - iii. Include meaningful consultation with BIAs, local businesses, residents, and other interest groups to define potential roles for external groups in implementing pedestrian street projects.
 - iv. Identify and assess potential impacts on traffic congestion, public transit, site servicing, maintenance and operations, parking, and the needs of first responders, and include how these issues and needs can be addressed.
 - v. Identify necessary resources, materials, and infrastructure to support the permanent or temporary pedestrianization of a street, including vibrant lighting, public art, seating, and event-ready infrastructure.
 - vi. Ensure that the program considers financial sustainability with regards to safety and security requirements for policing, hostile vehicle mitigation, security, and city servicing.
 - vii. Propose an implementation plan that addresses the public desire for pedestrianized space while implementing in a manner that enables learning and modification of the program as it evolves.
2. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services, and the General Manager, Economic Development, to report through the 2027 budget process on the resources required to implement future seasonal or year-round pedestrianization projects, and to report back in Q1 2027 with an implementation plan for Summer 2027.