



June 22, 2026

Toronto City Council
c/o Sylwia Przewdziecki
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of Toronto City Council,

Re: MM42.39 (Creating a Pedestrian Streets Program for Toronto)

We express our full support for this motion from Councillors Josh Matlow and Chris Moise regarding the creation of a pedestrian streets program for Toronto. This motion acts to build on the momentum from the Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot which was approved by City Council in May 2026 via Motion TE32.46 and officially started on June 19, 2026. While the Church Street pilot would help inform this process and there are other streets that could use pedestrianization such as Downtown Yonge and Kensington Market, we strongly believe the reinstatement of open streets needs to be part of this discussion as well.

Open Streets Toronto was started in April 2025 to call on Toronto City Council to bring back open streets programs such as OpenStreetsTO and ActiveTO through the demonstration of community support. These programs close streets to cars to allow for walking, cycling, and physical activity. OpenStreetsTO was held two Sundays per year from 2014 to 2019 – plus one Sunday in 2022 – along parts of Bloor and Yonge Streets, which was supplemented with ActiveTO major road closures during the COVID-19 pandemic including along Lake Shore West, Lake Shore East, and Bayview. Our campaign launched a petition which has almost 1,000 signatures while 44 organizations have expressed their support.

There are two main reasons why OpenStreetsTO and ActiveTO were never able to reach their full potential. These include the lack of political support – especially from the mayor's office – and the lack of dedicated and permanent funding from the city in the case of OpenStreetsTO. These two elements were key for the success of open streets programs in cities such as Bogota, New York City, Ottawa (via the National Capital Region), and Hamilton. Instead, OpenStreetsTO had to rely on funding from external partners which was not sustainable over the long run.

In the event open streets can be brought back to Toronto, not only is permanent city funding needed for the program's long-term viability, but the frequency and route length need to be scaled up as well. These three elements will help achieve an ambitious and bold open streets program for Toronto.

Both pedestrian streets and open streets share a diverse range of benefits. These include increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic, improved business activity and public health outcomes, and the ability for people across all ages, backgrounds, and neighbourhoods to come together. These would also be in line with Toronto's own road safety and climate action goals, as well as with their plan to develop a pedestrian streets policy and guidelines. Given these benefits – and the outcome of the Pedestrianizing Church Street

Pilot which we anticipate will be successful – we urge that Mayor Olivia Chow and members of City Council approve this motion and amend it to include the reinstatement of open streets.

I thank you for taking this matter into consideration and feel free to reach out to me should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Zaichkowski
Campaign Lead, Open Streets Toronto

CC: Mayor Olivia Chow
Councillor Josh Matlow
Councillor Chris Moise
Councillor Dianne Saxe
8 80 Cities
Walk Toronto
Cycle Toronto
Toronto Community Bikeways Coalition