

Date: April 29, 2026

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Nazzareno A. Capano, (A) Director, Street Permits

Re: **Temporary Closure of Church Street (Ward 13, Toronto Centre)**

Transportation Services has been requested by the local councillor to provide recommended wording for a recommendation they plan to present in a motion to the Toronto and East York Community Council. Staff request that this memorandum accompany the member's submission.

As the proposed street event exceeds four consecutive days, City Council approval of the recommendation in this memorandum is required.

Summary

- Staff **support** the draft recommendations provided below
- Staff **do not support** the draft recommendations provided below
- X Staff do not have sufficient data and/or time to determine if the draft recommendations provided below can be supported by staff, at this time.

Draft Recommendation

1. *City Council authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services to approve a Street Event, despite any section of Chapter 743 to the contrary, to facilitate Church Street Pedestrianization Plan / Village Fest requiring the closure of Church Street to vehicular traffic, between Wellesley Street and Alexander Street, but not including east-west intersections, from June 19, 2026 to August 21, 2026, inclusive, with such conditions deemed appropriate in the opinion of the General Manager, Transportation Services and the City Solicitor.*

The Church-Wellesley Village BIA is proposing a temporary full closure of Church Street to vehicular traffic between Wellesley Street and Alexander Street for approximately 9 weeks, from June 19 to August 21, 2026. Church Street is a minor arterial roadway,

carrying an average daily two-way traffic volume ranging from 12,000 to 15,000 vehicles (2025).

In the absence of a pedestrianization policy or program in place, staff are processing this request through the street event application framework, which requires the applicant to complete all applicable submission requirements. The proposed closure period coincides with major events including FIFA and significant construction activities in the immediate area (map included below).

Transportation Services is currently working with the BIA, local Councillor and relevant City divisions and agencies to undertake a comprehensive technical review of the proposal. At this time no approvals have been granted, and no permits have been issued.

Based on the applicant's materials submitted to date, there are a number of unresolved issues that staff are continuing to discuss with the BIA and the Councillor's office. A prolonged closure of Church Street raises operational concerns and risks, which includes but not limited to the following:

Traffic Congestion and Network Impacts

- Traffic congestion and broader network disruptions impacting the general public, including residents, business deliveries, taxis, and ride-share services
- Overlap with major events including the FIFA World Cup, as well as peak summer demand, placing additional strain on already busy road networks. Specifically, impacts to adjacent routes, including north-south routes such as Yonge Street and Jarvis Avenue, and east-west routes such as Bloor Street, Wellesley Avenue and Carlton Street. Staff would need to see a completed traffic modeling study related to the proposed closure of Church Street which is typically carried out by the applicant.
- Concurrent construction activity in the area, including the TTC track and watermain work on College Street from Bay Street to Carlton Street and Church Street which will result in a full closure of the intersection of Yonge Street and College Street/Carlton Street and a full westbound closure on Carlton Street/College Street between Yonge Street and Bay Street
- Near Church Street, additional watermain construction is taking place on Wellesley Street East, resulting in lane reductions and directional closures. As a general best practice, activities or events, such as this proposed closure, should avoid proximity to ongoing construction due to the potential for operational challenges and conflicts.
- Potential impacts to TTC operations, including the night network along Yonge Street and bus shuttle services that rely on Yonge Street during subway closures on TTC Line 1, due to increased diverted traffic onto the corridor.

Policing and security considerations

- Adequate policing resources, including pay duty officers will be difficult to accommodate given the competing needs during the closure period
- The lack of comprehensive safety and traffic management plans that need to be developed and submitted by the BIA to the City

- The lack of an approved Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) infrastructure plan from the BIA to ensure public safety is addressed
- The lack of a plan for dealing with crowd management and risks associated with high attendance or overcrowding

Emergency response

- Emergency response constraints, including diversions of existing reliable and unobstructed routes for fire, paramedic and police services

Staff resources

- Transportation Services currently lacks the dedicated staffing and resources required to effectively manage a long-term pedestrianization initiative of this scale. The Church Street closure is proposed to happen simultaneous with FIFA, and staff are focussed on delivery of these games.
- Based on recent experience with the Distillery Winter Village, a prolonged closure of 9-weeks may generate a high-volume of public complaints related to traffic congestion, traffic infiltration, restricted access for residents, loss of parking, business deliveries and noise complaints
- A complaint management strategy/triaging process would need to be developed that can be integrated with 311

Liability risk

- As the applicant is a BIA, insurance coverage is shared with the City, resulting in joint liability and limiting the City's ability to fully transfer risk.

Financial Impact

- The Councillor is also seeking approval to waive all applicable street event permit fees associated with the proposed temporary closure of Church Street.
- The fees proposed for waiver include an application fee of \$266.41 +HST and an estimated permit fee of approximately \$832.56 + HST per 4-day closure period. This results in an estimated total revenue loss of \$15,353.73 + HST.
- At this time, any additional implementation costs such as traffic management, security, street cleaning, waste removal, accessibility measures, and Hostile Vehicle Mitigation have not been identified. The associated financial impacts will need to be reviewed and will be reported at the earliest opportunity through the 2026 quarterly operating variance reporting process. These additional costs are not included in the 2026 Operating Budget for Transportation Services.

Contact

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Church St Pedestrianization and Construction – Overview Map

