



April 29, 2026

Toronto & East York Community Council
c/o Cathrine Regan
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Toronto & East York Community Council

Re: TE32.46 (Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot)

We express our full support for the Church Street Pedestrianization pilot; as well as thank Councillor Chris Moise's office, the Church-Wellesley BIA, and University of Waterloo student Rodney Chan for championing this initiative. As we have seen with street festivals and past open streets events in Toronto, car-free spaces are very popular and can contribute to this city's civic well-being and economic vitality. However, these events often only last a day or a weekend, and we lack permanent pedestrian streets and extended pedestrian streets events which other cities such as Montréal have enjoyed.

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.

Montréal residents have enjoyed pedestrian streets during the summer months for several years with one of these streets – Sainte-Catherine – expected to undergo permanent year-round pedestrianization¹ along certain stretches. Some counts done by Eco-Counter² showed foot traffic increased from 17% to 86% when seasonal pedestrianization occurred, while bicycle traffic also increased. With Toronto in the process of developing their own pedestrian streets policy and guidelines, we feel the Church Street initiative can help inform this work and determine the feasibility of expanding the practice to other streets. Especially within Kensington Market and along Yonge Street which have been popular pedestrianization targets over the years.

While Toronto has pedestrianized parts of Gould and Willcocks streets to serve the respective Toronto Metropolitan University and University of Toronto, these initiatives are small in scale compared to what Montréal and other cities have done. If Toronto is to truly become a world class city, it needs to radically expand pedestrian streets across the city and Church Street is the first step in making this a reality. Therefore, we encourage Mayor Olivia Chow and City Council to support the Church Street

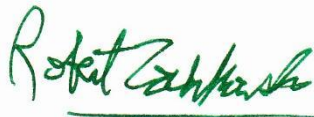
¹ <https://montreal.ca/en/articles/rue-sainte-catherine-ouest-renewed-pedestrian-experience-80618>

² <https://www.eco-counter.com/blog/pedestrianization-montreal-qc>

Pedestrianization pilot from June 19 to August 21, as well as explore opportunities to expand this treatment into Scarborough, Etobicoke, and North York in future years.

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

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Robert Zaichkowski". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Robert Zaichkowski
Campaign Lead, Open Streets Toronto

CC: Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillor Chris Moise