



Item 2026.TE32.46 (Pedestrianizing Church Street Pilot)
Toronto and East York Community Council

Dear TEY Community Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of Strong Towns Toronto, a local chapter of Strong Towns, a worldwide movement that advocates for a bottom-up approach to making our towns and cities stronger, more resilient places.

We would like to share our group's support for the proposed Church Street Pedestrianization Pilot which is being considered by the Toronto and East York Community Council.

Our group has a regular presence on Church Street, hosting monthly meet-ups at the 519 and social gatherings at Church Street Espresso. We have benefited greatly from Church Street's wonderful mix of homes, local businesses, and community spaces. These foster the happiness, health, and wealth of residents and visitors. The neighbourhood would greatly benefit from the pilot moving forward, which would then set the stage for further improvements to Church Street and a city-wide pedestrianization policy.

Personally, as a student who lives near Church Street, I really enjoy studying at cafes there, and I think its proximity to multiple university campuses attracts a lot of students. That could be capitalized on if it were pedestrianized, making it a student hangout more like St George Street, where semi-pedestrianization efforts have been socially and economically successful. As a member of the 2SLGBT+ community, Church Street holds a special place in my heart, and seeing businesses close there in recent years has been tough. Part of the vibrancy of pride comes from the fact that the street is pedestrianised, and this pilot could be a great way to bring a bit of that vibrancy to the street year round and support the local businesses there.

This pilot represents an incremental step towards a more walkable, active downtown. By temporarily closing Church Street to through traffic, Toronto can create safer conditions for pedestrians and people of all abilities, support local businesses, open up public space for people, and honour the Village's place in Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ history. It is a low-cost, reversible way for the City to observe how Church Street functions when designed for people rather than pass-through traffic, allowing staff and Council to gather real-world data before making permanent decisions.

With support from Councillor Chris Moise of Toronto Center, the Church-Wellesley Village BIA advocating for local businesses, and more than 2000 supportive petition signers, the community clearly desires this proposal to move forward.

We urge the City of Toronto to pedestrianize Church Street this summer and treat it as a pilot to inform the creation of a pedestrianization policy for seasonal and permanent major road closures.

Sincerely,

Katrina Eilender on behalf of Strong Towns Toronto