



## BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

Monday, February 06, 2017

Attention: Jessica Wesolowski  
Supervisor of Festivals & Events  
City of Burlington

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Burlington Downtown Business Association I would like to thank you for the proactive outreach regarding a proposed programming change by the event organizer VR Pro.

We have learned that your department is seeking feedback from the BDBA regarding the request for a date and time change for the proposed Santa 5K race 2016. Specifically, a request for comment on the proposal to host this race downtown on Saturday December 9th, 2017 with a start time of 10:00 a.m.

The BDBA Board met and discussed this issue on Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Our position is that we are not supportive of the requested change.

The Board's position on this issue was informed by data received from business members of our community. Feedback was received via a member-wide survey issued in December and a follow-up meeting, on Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, hosted by the BDBA which included several survey respondents. Kristina Paolucci was invited as an observer to this meeting.

The BDBA respects the fact that our position on this topic is but one factor that will be considered by your department in your deliberations.

The rationale for our position is multi-fold but has a direct relationship to the common themes we garnered from comments received by our membership.

The Association would like to share with you several reference documents in support of our position. They include: the Executive Director's staff report to the Board on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, a summary of the results and the full survey results. All are enclosed.

Common themes are summarized here:

- 1) The race puts a strain on customer parking in December.
- 2) The race (combined with parking) deters regular patrons from coming downtown on race day.
- 3) EVERY Saturday in December is critical to my business in terms of sales.
- 4) Belief that the participants do not generally shop or translate into new customers for my business.

The Board reviewed and discussed this feedback at length. Our principal concern with the event organizer's request is the selection of a **Saturday** in December. For the reasons listed above we strongly encourage the City's Special Events Team to not move forward with the present request.

Our business members, notably the retail community, are unified in their understanding that December is a *critical* month for Christmastime sales of goods and services. It is important for the BDBA that your department recognizes this reasoning in light of requests by future event organizers wishing to execute animation in December in the downtown core. Stated another way, *every* Saturday in December is viewed as by our downtown business community.

Evidence of this belief is found in the responses to the BDBA's survey to its membership (enclosed). Members were queried with the following question, "*If your business was open, how would you describe your sales during and after the 5K*

*Race?"* (This question is in reference to the Santa 5K Race held downtown on Saturday November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Twenty business members responded to this question (of 22 total responses). 75% of the respondents indicated that their sales were *"lower than average"*.

All 22 survey respondents provided feedback to the open-ended question *"The BDBA Board has been asked to take a position on a date and time change, proposed by the organizer for 2017. VRPro has requested a date and time change to host the event on Saturday December 9th, 2017. The start time for the race would be 10 a.m. and the event organizer indicates the end time to be 12 p.m. What are your business' comments regarding this request?"*

While the Association appreciates that it was not tasked with providing recommendations to the event organizer on a success formula for future races in the downtown, we would like to share our comments with you.

The general consensus amongst the downtown business membership and the Board of Directors is that we see value in the Santa 5K race continuing in the downtown core. It continues to be a popular event and is a traditional component of the post-summer animation campaign downtown.

Common recommendations from the membership survey are summarized here:

- 1) Race organizer should strongly consider moving the event to a Sunday in the future: NOT in December.
- 2) Race organizer should give thought to changing the race route off of Brant Street. Perhaps using Spencer Smith Park as a starting point and racing westward?
- 3) Race organizer could consider other areas in the City of Burlington for the Santa 5K race in the future.

The Board also reviewed and discussed these member-generated recommendations.

We would like to forward the following observations and recommendations for your consideration:

- Race time: overall the Board *prefers* a race time that starts earlier than 10:00 a.m. We have received positive comments about the race organizer's efficient set up and take down of the event. Yet, many retailers affected by the route's road closure on Brant Street open for business at 10:00 a.m. on weekends. Their preference is to support an event that re-opens the roads at 11:00 a.m. to free up the streets for patrons and access to customer parking.
- Race day: the Board would be supportive of a Santa 5K race in November that takes place on a Sunday morning. Having witnessed the success of events like *The Robbie Burns Race 2016* we posit the idea that the Santa 5K race would perform well on a Sunday morning where the impact on neighbouring business operations can be mitigated.
- Race route: we have observed that the current race route restricts vehicles from accessing downtown's largest long-term parking asset: the 414 multi-level parking garage. For the duration of the Santa 5K Race it is inaccessible for patrons and employers to park. This is a concern. The BDBA Board respectfully suggests that the event organizer consider a reorientation of the race route to permit unfettered public access to the 414 Locust Street garage during future races.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share feedback on the event organizer's request for a revised date and time for the Santa 5K race in 2017. We trust that our comments will be accepted in the positive spirit of partnership in which they are intended and that they will be helpful in your department's deliberations on this topic.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian Dean  
Executive Director  
Burlington Downtown Business Association

## Item #5: Santa 5K Race 2017

### SUMMARY

**ACTION:** The BDBA Board has been asked to take a position on a date and time change, proposed by the organizer for 2017. VRPro has requested a date and time change to host the event on Saturday December 9th, 2017. The start time for the race would be 10 a.m. and the event organizer indicates the end time to be 12 p.m.

**BACKGROUND:** The event organizer has hosted foot races in Burlington, ON, Burlington VT and Hamilton, ON for several years. The Burlington Santa 5K is billed as “Canada's largest all-Santa race “and engages approximately 4,000 runners.

The race in Burlington was held in 2016 on **Saturday November 26<sup>th</sup>**.  
The start time was **9:00 a.m.** and end time **11:00 a.m.**

In years 2015 and 2016 the BDBA cost-shared with the organizer the closure of the Elizabeth Street surface parking lot from 7:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. This was in response to comments from our business community that runners and participants using parking spaces intended for customers.

In 2015 and 2016 statistics indicate that the 414 Locust Street parking garage was not full during race times.

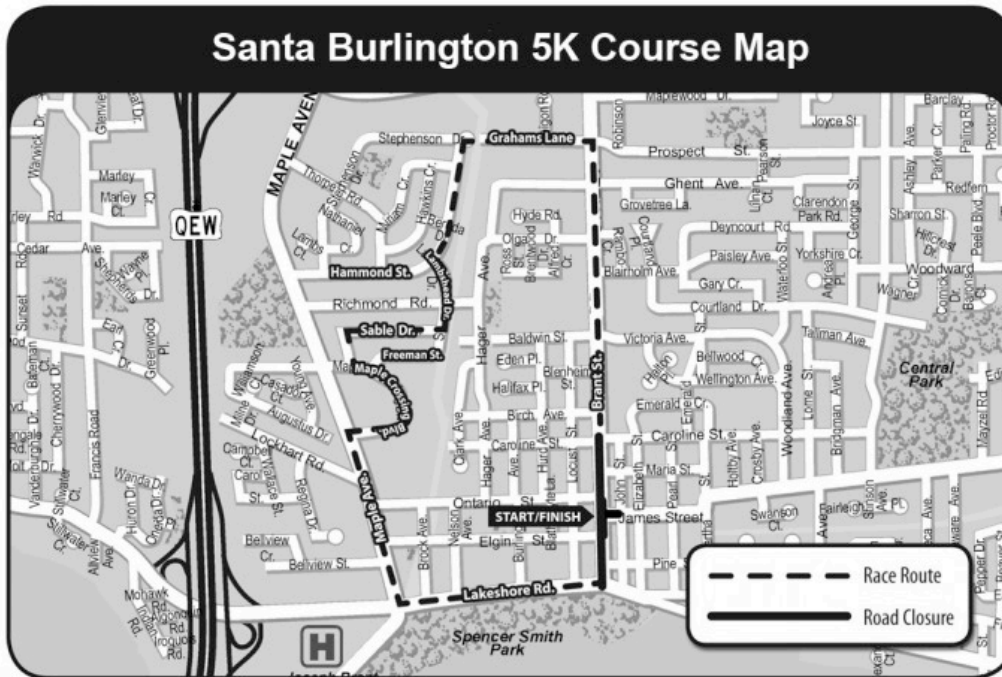
**OUTREACH:** To inform the Board's decision the BDBA office issued a three question survey of the membership. There were 22 respondents. The full results and a summary of conclusions are enclosed.

On Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup> the following members and staff met to discuss further the survey results with Kristina Paolucci (City's staff lead on the request from the organizer):

David Hayward/Brian Dean  
Lou Frasca (Scrivener's)  
Jeff Cooling (Jeff's Guy Shop)

Marianne Meed Ward  
Joelle Cooling (Joelle's)  
Jason Pepetone (CENTRO)

## RACE ROUTE:



### Road Closures: 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

- Brant Street from Elgin Street to Ontario Street.
- James Street from Brant Street to John Street.

### Traffic Lane Closures

All remaining streets on the event route will have one lane coned-off for runners.

- Emergency services access will be maintained at all times along the event route.

### Supervision

- Route management: Halton Regional Police Service will direct traffic at major intersections and event marshals will help runners and motorists at multi-residential driveways and on side streets.
- Event notices were delivered to all residences, religious centres and businesses affected by the event.

**Event information:** [www.santa5k.ca](http://www.santa5k.ca)  
or email [vrpro@sympatico.ca](mailto:vrpro@sympatico.ca)

**Event feedback:** [burlington.ca/eventfeedback](http://burlington.ca/eventfeedback)

**Road closures or traffic control:** Event liaison,  
City of Burlington, 905-335-7600, ext. 7704.



**Bus route detours in effect**  
on routes 3 and 5.

Call 905-639-0550

[www.burlingtontransit.ca](http://www.burlingtontransit.ca)

### Downtown Municipal Parking

Enjoy free parking during December in Burlington's downtown municipal lots:

- Waterfront Parking Garage, 414 Locust St.
- Various municipal surface parking lots.
- Limited meter parking will be available.
- Do not park at covered meters.

Find more parking information at [burlington.ca/parking](http://burlington.ca/parking)  
or call 905-335-7816.

For general events information contact Tourism Burlington at 905-634-5594, the City of Burlington Festivals and Events Hotline at 905-335-7766 or visit the events calendar at [burlington.ca/calendar](http://burlington.ca/calendar).

## **SUMMARY OF SURVEY:**

There were 22 respondents to the survey. 90% of the respondents had a Brant Street address. To the question "What are your business' comments regarding this request" by the organizer to a date/time change for the race in 2017.

2 –in favour

20 - not in favour

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### Common themes:

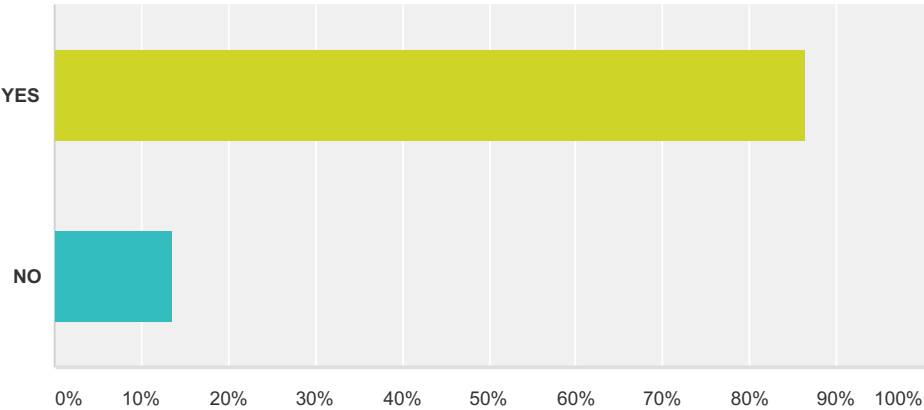
- 1) The race puts a strain on customer parking in December
- 2) The race (combined with parking) deters regular patrons from coming downtown on race day
- 3) EVERY Saturday in December is critical to my business
- 4) Belief that the participants do not generally shop or translate into new customers for my business

### Common recommendations:

- 1) Race organizer should strongly consider moving the event to a Sunday in the future: NOT in December
- 2) Race organizer should give thought to changing the race route off of Brant Street. Perhaps using Spencer Smith Park as a starting point and racing westward
- 3) Race organizer should consider other areas in the City of Burlington for the Santa 5K race in the future

Q1 Was your place of business open during the Santa 5K Race, 2016 (7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.)?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

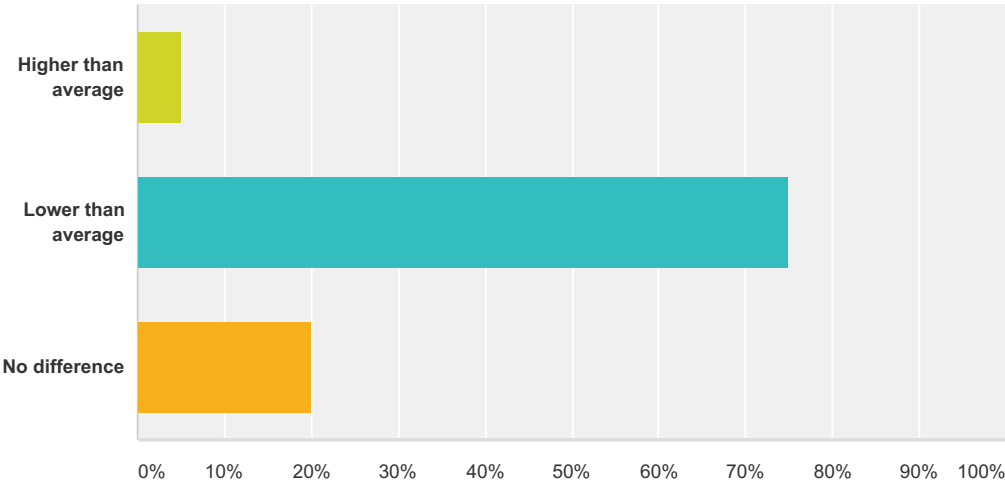


Answer Choices	Responses	
YES	86.36%	19
NO	13.64%	3
Total		22



Q2 If your business was open, how would you describe your sales during and after the 5K Race?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Higher than average	5.00%	1
Lower than average	75.00%	15
No difference	20.00%	4
Total		20

**Q3 The BDBA Board has been asked to take a position on a date and time change, proposed by the organizer for 2017. VRPro has requested a date and time change to host the event on Saturday December 9th, 2017. The start time for the race would be 10 a.m. and the event organizer indicates the end time to be 12 p.m. What are your business' comments regarding this request?**

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

No. Please No. They take up all the parking spots downtown which leave no parking spots for our customers. Take these races out to Bronte Park Please!

12/20/2016 10:40 AM

Maybe moved to the afternoon or not using our main roads

12/19/2016 11:15 AM

Do it on a Sunday. irritated by the number of Saturday interruptions

12/17/2016 8:30 PM

There should be no road closures or events that shutter the downtown in December other than the Santa Claus Parade. The 5 K Santa Run benefits no one other than the participants of the race. Losing business because of all of these road races and road closures is getting old. Why can't the event be held somewhere else or the last Saturday of November.

12/17/2016 5:55 PM

I hate that the race goes down Brant st right through the core. Starting somewhere where there is enough parking for all the participants as well as our regular clientele would be nice. Our customers avoid us because of this influx of cars/bodies/traffic and our business suffers as a result :(

12/17/2016 12:41 PM

I am not in favour of the date or time or the event for that matter. December is our most important month of the year for sales and this run hinders this for us retailers who pay taxes and rent/mortgages to be downtown. The whole event discourages our customers from shopping that day. There is no parking available and street closures make it difficult for customers to want to come downtown. We did not notice any additional sales from the people that attended the run. We were lucky that it happened to be a nice afternoon weather wise and our regular customers came out to shop late afternoon that day. I heard lots of comments like, we weren't going to come down until the race was over, or on Sunday saying, I didn't come yesterday because of the race. Quite frankly it is very frustrating as a business owner to have this event in December. If this run has to take place downtown (I'm not sure why it can't be somewhere else) would there be a possibility to change the route and date to be end of November instead. What about having it start at Central Park or Spencer Smith park. I love the downtown community feel and I never complain but this is one event that I would love to do without on Brant street. December is our month!

12/16/2016 10:14 PM

Morw apt to benefit the association businesses road ckosures impede traffic to and from the core.

12/16/2016 9:35 PM

We think moving it further into the holiday season would really deter customers coming into the downtown and shopping over the weekend.

12/16/2016 6:15 PM

Negative - parking again was overtaken by race patrons, staff, customers can't nevigste to get down town to work or shop, December is a very busy month and and we count on Saturday for all day traffic, we pay high rent and high taxes to have an opportunity to do business, this race is for profit, would love to know the amount given to charity each year? We did not have one Santa in our store before during or after ..... perhaps moving the venue to a Sunday or even out of downtown can be concidered, I THOUGHT A DESCESSION WAS MADE LAST YEAR TO MOVE THIS RACE FROM DECEMBEE YO NOVEMBER GOUNG FORWARD,

12/16/2016 5:50 PM

honestly, this event is annoying on every level. We would love to see it disappear. Sorry to be Grinch!

12/16/2016 5:42 PM

I'd rather see the race moved to Sunday mornig!

12/16/2016 2:57 PM

A Saturday in general is not good for us. If the run could be a Sunday it would be better. My business is open Saturday mornings from 9-12, if the run could happen after noon it would be better.

12/16/2016 12:32 PM

Saturdays are very disruptive to our business. We have a significant number of clients who can only get downtown on Saturdays and they choose to stay away on these event days. Sundays make much more sense since businesses / offices are closed before noon.

12/16/2016 11:37 AM

WAY TOO CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS!!! NO to Saturday! Get it off Brant St. That solves the issue by removing it from Brant St. This is very unfair to our customers. Saturday is our busiest day of the week. No one can pick up orders nor find parking. This is IMPOSSIBLE! Why do the businesses of Downtown Burlington bear the brunt of these 'events'. There is NO PARKING to host this event. Maybe it could start over at Spencers or Emmas Back Porch and end there too?

12/16/2016 11:33 AM

no problem. it is fun to see all the red suits

12/16/2016 10:57 AM

We are strongly opposed to any event like this. The participants take up all available parking and do not support local businesses except the sponsor and some coffee shops. It is HIGHLY disruptive and serves no purpose except to enrich the sponsor. We do not support approval for this event or anything else like it throughout the year. If it must be accommodated then it should take place on a Sunday morning and be completed by 10 a.m.

12/16/2016 10:53 AM

Can they do it on a different street? Being on the Main Street my Customers can't find parking, and people attending the race do not shop at my store during the event. I don't feel like it's good exposure either because the runners and people attending are not paying attention to the businesses, They aren't paying attention to the race.

12/16/2016 10:52 AM

I would agree with request. People still have time to shop. And still have 2 Saturdays before Christmas. They were torn down and off the streets by 1130 am this year! It's too bad that this race isn't embraced by the downtown! It gives people the opportunity to explore the downtown especially at Christmas time. We had the Christmas walk which I participated in and most of the stores were closed. I can live with this event for a half a day. It's fun to see everyone dressed in Santa suits. We should try as a community to build upon it. As a biz owner I find that most of my business is in the afternoon anyway!

12/16/2016 10:48 AM

As a business owner, I would prefer the race to take place outside of retail hours eg. Sunday morning 10-12 or any evening. Not only is it difficult for clients to get downtown to our business but staff too cannot get parking to arrive at work on time.

12/16/2016 10:35 AM

I would like to see it start at 8 am. I closed my business to accommodate this event. 10&12 is my peak time,

12/16/2016 10:34 AM

I am against this date. December is our biggest month of the year and Saturday is our busiest day of the week. We have 4 Saturdays in 2017 and the first 2 are the best. The race will take one of them away.

12/16/2016 10:34 AM

Fine

12/16/2016 10:31 AM