



**SUBJECT: Shared Streets during COVID 19**

**TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.**

**FROM: Transportation Services Department**

Report Number: TS-18-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 750-01

Date to Committee: June 9, 2020

Date to Council: June 22, 2020

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**Recommendation:**

Approve a responsive approach related to road closures to aid social distancing during the COVID-19 emergency as indicated in transportation services report TS-18-20.

**PURPOSE:**

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Improve integrated city mobility

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**Background and Discussion:**

A proposed motion was presented to Burlington Council on April 20, 2020 by Councillor Shawna Stolte which sought to direct staff to prepare a list of potential streets under the City's jurisdiction that could be closed for the purpose of allowing space for walking and cycling within the roadway/road allowance in a manner that does not conflict with provincially mandated social distancing regulations. This motion failed, however in its place, the following staff direction was approved:

Defer item 14.1 "Shared Streets Burlington" (ADM-02-20) regarding road closures to aid social distancing during the COVID-19 emergency to staff to determine criteria and return back to Committee or Council in May.

In preparing this report, staff kept the following significant principles in mind:

- There must be demonstrated and measurable need for increased space for pedestrians and/or cyclists.
- That any road space re-assignment does not encourage large gatherings.
- That any road space reassignment be sensitive to the impacts to neighbourhoods and businesses and will be effectively communicated.
- A “one size does not fit all” approach to developing solutions to identified problem areas.

After careful consideration and taking into account the above principles, staff recommend a “responsive” approach as the best way forward when considering whether to implement road or sidewalk closures. This approach involves the identification of an issue requiring consideration of closures and developing a plan that addresses those site-specific conditions.

Once a particular roadway section, intersection or sidewalk has been verified as a problem, staff can take a phased approach commencing with education, signage, coning off areas of conflict and/or proceed with the closure option from the very beginning.

With several variables to consider when closing roadways and/or sidewalks, it was determined that setting pre-determined criteria for closures would not give staff the flexibility needed to address a wide range of issues and changing conditions at locations across the city. For example, finding solutions for the downtown or the Aldershot business areas require distinctively different approaches given the needs of merchants versus other areas of the city who may have the luxury of underutilized private parking lots.

Given the State of Emergency it is further recommended that the Emergency Control Group (ECG) and Task forces be advised of any need to close roads and sidewalks to ensure consistency and alignment with provincial orders

Through the City’s Delegated Authority By-law (099-2012), authority is given to the Director of Transportation Services, Director of Engineering, Director of Roads and Parks Maintenance, and Fire Chief, or their designate(s) to approve short-term emergency and temporary road closures. Any closures which could involve a longer time period will require consultation with Legal Staff and Council approval.

### **Strategy/process**

In response to the varying needs already identified, the following initiatives have been undertaken by Transportation Services staff:

### Traffic Signal Timing Changes

As a measure to address issues of social distancing for pedestrians waiting to cross at signalized intersections, traffic signal timing changes have been implemented at intersections with high pedestrian volumes. Specifically, wait times for pedestrians were reduced through eliminating advanced left turn phases where possible and activating the pedestrian walk symbol automatically during every cycle to reduce the need to use the push button.

### Paid On-street Parking Conversion to 20 min. Drop Off Zones

As Burlington retailers begin to re-open and offer curbside pickup, the City of Burlington has made changes to all on-street parking within the downtown. Changes include converting all on-street paid parking areas to 20-minute parking only. This initiative, developed in conjunction with the Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDBA), is intended to aid businesses in providing curbside pickup and was implemented on May 22, 2020.

The downtown is an obvious source of high numbers of pedestrians, so it is not surprising that it has emerged as an area that requires attention. A number of intersections on Lakeshore Road through the downtown are continually being monitored by staff in order to quickly respond to changing conditions. City By-law staff who are continually circulating around the city are reporting hot spots so that staff can focus their attention on developing solutions.

Staff recognize and appreciate the importance of Burlington residents communicating with their ward Councillors. Staff plan on using this intelligence by holding an open weekly invitation to Council members to convey what they hear from their constituents as it relates to pinch points around the city.

### **Options Considered**

A pre-determined list of criteria to support road and sidewalk closures was considered, however, the varying nature of roadways across the city and the limited number of issues identified to date has resulted in staff preferring to take a responsive approach that examines the merits of each request and considers context-sensitivity when developing a solution.

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### **Financial Matters:**

Not applicable

**Total Financial Impact**

Not applicable

**Source of Funding**

Not applicable

**Other Resource Impacts**

Not applicable

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**Climate Implications**

Not applicable

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**Engagement Matters:**

The need to close roads and sidewalks will be identified through receiving feedback from the public and businesses. If and when a roadway is recommended for closure, appropriate public notice will be provided following consideration by Council.

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**Conclusion:**

Staff support a responsive approach when considering road closures *to aid social distancing during the COVID-19 emergency*. It is recommended that the current practice of evaluating each request on its own merit be continued as this provides staff with the flexibility to address the unique and varying issues that may arise.

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Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Black

Manager of Traffic Operations and Signals

(905) 335-7600 x7779

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council. Final approval is by the City Manager.