



BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Attn: Kevin Arjoon, City Clerk

Re: Report Number: TS-08-21

Options to increase physical distancing on Brant Street in response to Covid-19

The following is a copy of the comments that were circulated to the members of Committee in advance of the June 8th, 2021 meeting of the Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee.

I have read the report "Options to increase physical distancing on Brant Street in response to Covid-19". Of particular note is the passage "*Support from the Burlington Downtown Business Association and Downtown businesses is key for any of the described options to be successful*". This is welcomed as it was general support for this concept that was given by the BDBA Board to Councillor Kearns at our regular meeting of May 5, 2021.

Since that time I have participated in two business roundtable meetings hosted by Councillors Kearns and Stolte with the Brant Street business community: May 25th and June 1st.

Both sessions were well attended with a mix of Brant street retailers, professionals and food service providers.

Over the course of the two meetings I made many notes and can summarize the conclusions for you:

- 1) There is acknowledgement that several areas on Brant Street are seasonal "hotspots" that require crowd management/physical distancing by the Brant Street operators. There was also discussion that several new businesses on Brant, in conjunction with the approved outdoor patios this summer, have the potential to generate even more "hotspot" areas.



BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

- 2) The Brant Street businesses are by and large very concerned about the potential of limited access to their businesses by customers and clients on weekends that could result from a closure. You will recall vividly the frictions we encountered during the execution of Downtown Streetfest during Sound of Music in past years. While it was well understood that the proposed options do not involve animation, sponsorship or advertising the business community was not favourable to mitigating measures that would see their patrons park off of Brant Street and walk over.
- 3) The same concern was voiced about the loss of the on-street parking assets. The businesses reasoned that the proposal, acknowledged to be a COVID 19 measure, would result in the loss of much needed proximity to the businesses should on-street parking be removed. Several mitigation measures were considered including clear on-site signage redirecting vehicles to off-street parking options, the establishment of a pick-up/drop off parking bay at the Councillor's parking lot, and, even the use of golf carts to shuttle patrons to the street. The collective feeling is that the current on-street parking is a vital asset for businesses this summer as they navigate how to service their customers through the next phases of the provincial re-opening plan

The short strokes are these:

- There is little appetite from the Brant Street business community to support measures that would strategically close Brant this summer
- There was a belief that closing the street could result in the unintended consequence of bringing more people up Brant and create additional issues of physical distancing
- Alternative measures such as weekly one-day closure on Sunday only and/or consideration of a "partial" closure of the street were discussed. The business community does not support these options

Councillors Stolte and Kearns did an admirable and sincere job of explaining the proposed options and seeking meaningful feedback from the business community at both sessions. And there is a commitment by all parties to continue this dialogue later in the month as we enter phase 1 of the re-opening.



BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

As a representative of the small business community downtown my conclusion is this option is recommended:

****Support the status quo and continue with enhanced pedestrian queuing delineation and signage at known and emerging “hotspots”****

Feel free to share these thoughts with the full Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Dean
Executive Director
Burlington Downtown Business Association