



Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Council Approves Temporary Weekend Closure of Queen Street and Parking Rate Increase

For Immediate Release

June 26, 2020

-Niagara-on-the-Lake- At the June 26, 2020, Special Council Meeting, Town Council voted in favour of Staff initiating a 4-month Pilot Program that will temporarily close Queen Street, from King Street to Victoria Street, on weekends, starting on Saturdays at 10:00 AM through Sundays at midnight, and between the same hours on statutory holidays, as well.

This program is to be established in partnership with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and the Town's Tourism Recovery Team and is set to begin on July 1, Canada Day. A detailed operational plan for this temporary closure is forthcoming, and Town Staff will ensure ample messaging, communication, and signage is provided in order to advise residents and visitors of this closure and to reroute traffic accordingly.

Separate from [temporary approval of patio expansions](#), this temporary closure is not intended to allow businesses to encroach out onto the Municipal right of way, rather, to promote and support physical distancing measures among those wishing to visit the Heritage District and to support local business during the busiest times of the season (i.e., weekends and statutory holidays). Town Council is hopeful that this temporary closure will aid in protecting the health and safety of community members and visitors while assisting businesses during this recovery phase.

"There is no doubt that closing Queen Street has long been a contentious topic among businesses, property owners, and tenants in the Heritage District," stated Interim CAO Sheldon Randall. "At the direction of Council, we will do our best to execute this pilot program in a safe and efficient manner, knowing that it may not be the perfect solution for everybody. Right now, Town Staff is dedicated to doing all we can to protect the health and safety of our residents while supporting our local businesses."

Acknowledging the loss of parking revenue as a result of this temporary closure, Council approved a \$1.50/hr increase to the Town parking rates for the duration of the program. This increase is intended to help offset the lost revenue.

"The Chamber would like to help facilitate a safe experience on Queen Street, helping at the same time downtown merchants and restaurants to provide additional physical distancing," stated Eduardo R. Lafforgue, President & CEO of Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce & Tourism NOTL. "We have suggested a series of test weekend street closures for Queen Street in July, with an option to extend once it is reevaluated if it's working. These measures are temporary, we need them now because safety and health are paramount for our residents and visitors."

"What is most important right now is that we promote safe physical distancing and that we support our local business community," stated Lord Mayor Betty Disero. "Only time will tell if this solution helps us achieve both of those."

For the most accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 related measures being taken by Niagara-on-the-Lake, please visit [notl.com/COVID-19](#), or call 905-468-3266. Town Staff continue to assist and serve citizens online and over the phone between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM Monday to Friday.

For immediate alerts, follow the Town on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For more information, please contact:

Lauren Kruitbosch, Community Engagement Coordinator
905-468-3266 | lauren.kruitbosch@notl.com