



Mayor Jim Watson  
And Ottawa City Councillors  
City of Ottawa  
116 Laurier Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario

April 21, 2020

Dear Mayor Watson,

On behalf of our OCOBIA members we would like to raise a point of concern impacting our members. There has been a recent movement to have specific roadways and lanes closed to facilitate the movement of pedestrian and cyclists more freely through the City during this time of physical distancing. We find this is laudable and it may assist those who are seeking a little more flexibility in their day to offset the impacts of the “stay at home” orders from Public Health officials across Canada, albeit at the same time in contradiction to their recommendations.

The concern lies with those seeking to find this relief on the retail mainstreets of the City. Our members have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 virus forcing closures and pushing businesses to operate via on-line and/or pick up services. Survival will be touch-and-go for these businesses based on the amount of business they can generate through these other measures with hundreds already losing their jobs. Closing down a lane of traffic, which serves as the only alternate distribution channel for these affected businesses (where people can drive to pick up and/or deliver orders), will critically hurt our members’ ability to weather the storm. There can be no further impediments thrown in their path for survival if we are to avoid a total collapse of our bricks and mortar businesses. The lifeblood of our main streets should not be compromised to benefit a few extra feet of street space for pedestrian and cyclists, in a city with a multitude of roadways.

There are many alternative or parallel roads that can be considered for such measures and we would recommend that these are the paths to be considered. The main retail roadway must be preserved for businesses to make every effort to survive during this pandemic. There must be balance and fairness for everyone in such times as tipping the scales in favour of one would be catastrophic for the other.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Kaluski", is written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Mark Kaluski, Chair  
Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA)  
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