

Communication Update

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

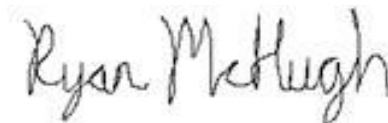
Committee Date: June 30, 2026

Subject/Report No.: King William Summer Pedestrianization 2026

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 2

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Signature:



The purpose of this Communication Update is to advise Council.

Summary

This Communication Update provides Council with an update on the King William Summer Pedestrianization Program.

Background

In 2020, the Downtown Hamilton BIA launched a pilot for an on-street dining initiative in cooperation with local restaurants, closing the road to vehicular traffic and encouraging residents to patronize local restaurants via these outdoor patio spaces. In 2024, the City of Hamilton offered a renewed version of the program, closing the road for a total of 6 days scheduled intermittently throughout the summer, installing lightweight temporary seating and shade infrastructure, and offering programming that was free to the general public. In 2025, the program was extended into an 8-week closure with more robust furniture installed for the season, a renewed partnership with the Downtown Hamilton BIA to support staffing, and a series of programming partnerships that increased the volume of public programming available. An informal committee of local stakeholders was formed, and modifications to the program stem from consultation with the businesses, local not-for-profit and arts organizations, and nearby resident groups. In 2026, the stakeholder planning meetings were positive, and this momentum has increased collaboration between the businesses and cultural groups activating the street.

Accompanying the pedestrianization program has been an ongoing lighting project that was requested by neighborhood partners: the first stage of the lighting project installed lighting garlands running parallel to the street, the second stage will involve cross-street lighting installed in either late 2026 or early 2027 pending approval from the Fire Department. The lighting project and part of the pedestrianization program of 2025 were provided for by discretionary ward funding from the Ward 2 Councillor.

In 2025, Tourism and Culture staff tracked media coverage and online feedback, conducted on-street interception interviews, online surveys of local partners to gather resident and business feedback on the closure and perceptions of the area before, during, and after the pedestrianization. The findings indicated a 672% increase in people choosing to stay on the street when compared to pre-event data, an 81% increase in reported low dollar spends, positive online engagement, and an enthusiastic response from members of the stakeholder group who requested more frequent planning meetings and an interest in building on the current efforts in support of future growth.

One of the key event partners, The Hamilton Fringe Festival, anchored their annual event on "Fringe Boulevard" – a high-visibility outdoor live arts hub on King William Street - supporting a 66% year-over-year increase in attendance at outdoor events and a correlative 30% increase in ticket sales to their indoor shows. A total of 29,392 locals and visitors attended indoor and outdoor Hamilton Fringe programming in 2025, with an induced tourism spend of \$3.5M over 12 days.

Though City staff had budgeted for repair in relation to the on-street amenities installed for seating and shade, there was only a single incident of graffiti tagging with no other vandalism or damage reported throughout the summer event.

The annual King William program is an example of placemaking in the service of downtown revitalization; producing incremental change over time and encouraging positive experiences in Hamilton's outdoor public spaces in support of an active and welcoming public realm.

The 10-Year Downtown Hamilton Revitalization Strategy (PED 24163 (e)) allotted \$50,000 annually to engage the Downtown BIA as the on-going operator of the King William pedestrianization program for the next 10 years.

Details

Building on the success of the 2025 summer event, the iconic Restaurant Row in downtown Hamilton will once again transform into a vibrant pedestrian-only hub featuring live music, performances and events from 7:00 am on Monday July 13, 2026, until 6:00 pm on Monday September 14, 2026. King William Street will be closed to vehicles between James St. North to Hughson St. North

The pedestrianization program is presented by the City of Hamilton in collaboration with the Downtown Hamilton BIA and community partners such as the Hamilton Festival Theatre Co. (Hamilton Fringe Festival), Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, and Supercrawl Productions.

The road will remain open to pedestrians. No vehicles will be permitted to access King William St from James St N. Authorized garbage/service vehicles can access the City-owned alleyway adjacent to the Impark lot via Hughson St N to King William St, Monday to Friday from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm only. Neighbourhood residents and business have been notified in writing as of June 23rd, 2026.

2026 Schedule of Activities:

1) July 13-14, 2026 Road closure begins

- Event set up

2) July 15, 2026

- First day of free public programming

3) Weekly Events

- Wednesdays (starting July 22) – Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra concert from 12-1pm
- Thursdays (starting July 30) – Live acoustic music by local musicians from 12-1pm
- Fridays (starting July 31) - Dance series and other evening events from 7-8pm
- Saturdays (starting August 1) – Pop-Up Markets 11am-5pm

4) Special Events

- July 15-26 - Fringe Boulevard - Fringe Boulevard transforms the street into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly hub filled with music, dance, vendors, drag, film, painting, and performance as part of the annual Hamilton Fringe Festival. The programming is free, occurring daily from 10am – 11pm. Full schedule available at [HFTco.ca](https://hftco.ca).
- September 11, 12, 13 – Supercrawl is Hamilton's premier multi-arts festival, fusing new and independent music with art installations, fashion, performance, literature, theatre, and artisanal craft. Supercrawl is staged along a pedestrian-only creative corridor in the heart of downtown. New this year: Supercrawl presents an art installation designed to complement the King William Street pedestrianization.

5) September 14, 2026

- Event equipment removed from King William.
- Road re-opens to vehicles by 6:00pm.

Next Steps

N/A

Appendices and Schedules Attached

N/A

Additional information for events occurring on King William will be made available at the following websites:

- [Webpage: City of Hamilton King William Summer Street](#)
- [Website: Downtown Hamilton BIA](#)
- [Webpage: 10-Year Downtown Hamilton Revitalization Strategy](#)