

# HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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## Item No. 6

Halifax Regional Council  
May 21, 2019

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original Signed by   
Brad Anguish, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

Original Signed by   
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 26, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Weekend Closures on Argyle Street

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### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

On June 19, 2018 Halifax Regional Council passed the following motion:

#### 14.1.3 Weekend Closures on Argyle Street

1. Direct staff to permit the routine non-special event weekend closure of Argyle Street to vehicular traffic between Prince Street and Blowers Street, during July and August 2018, during the approximate time period of noon on Friday to midnight Sunday as requested by the Downtown Business Commission;
2. **Direct staff to require the Downtown Business Commission, at their own expense, to collect data on the number of closures, degree of activity, opinions of visitors, business and property owners, any issues or concerns, and submit a report to Regional Council before May 2019;** and,
3. Direct staff to provide notice before the date of the first closure to all properties abutting the street closure.

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, R.S.N.S. 2008, c. 39 Subsection 332(b)

**"The Engineer may**

**(b) temporarily close a street, or part thereof, for the protection of the public, to allow work to be done on the street or on lands and buildings adjacent to the street or for any other purpose beneficial to the public interest."**

## **BACKGROUND**

On April 26, 2016, Halifax Regional Council directed staff to complete the detailed design and construction documents for a shared streetscaping project on Argyle and Grafton Streets and tender the project for construction. The objective of the project was to transform these streets into dramatic public spaces that encourage people on foot to linger and enjoy the space, while still allowing access and loading by vehicles.

On November 4, 2017, the completion of the project was signified with an official opening event.

Throughout the summer of 2018, staff worked with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) on a series of closures – not related to special events - on Argyle Street as a pilot program. During these non-event closures, Argyle Street was closed to vehicle traffic from Prince Street to Blowers Street over weekends from the end of June to the end of August. DHBC followed up with adjacent property owners to gauge the success of the closures from the businesses' perspective. DHBC's summary of the information is provided as Attachment A to this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

DHBC has requested the non-event, weekend closures be continued for 2019 (Attachment B); with the only notable change being the request to extend the closures into September 2019. Closing the street to vehicles in 2018 seemed to be well-received by the public. Data collected by DHBC from their members along the affected portion of Argyle Street show that the closures also had a reciprocal and positive effect on business. The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter does allow the Engineer to temporarily close a street for purposes beneficial to the public interest. Based on observations and data from 2018, it is beneficial to the public interest to temporarily close the street; therefore, the Engineer intends to authorize the routine non-event weekend closure of Argyle Street from June 28, 2019 through September 29, 2019, during the approximate time period of noon on Friday to 6 am on Monday each weekend.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No costs anticipated. The road closure can be implemented by regularly scheduled staff of Transportation and Public Works who provide non-business hour service in the urban core.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

DHBC consulted with adjacent property / business owners regarding their experiences from the non-event weekend closures in 2018. The results of the consultation are attached to this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Data collected by DHBC regarding 2018 closures of Argyle Street  
Attachment B – Request from DHBC to consider closures of Argyle Street for 2019

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

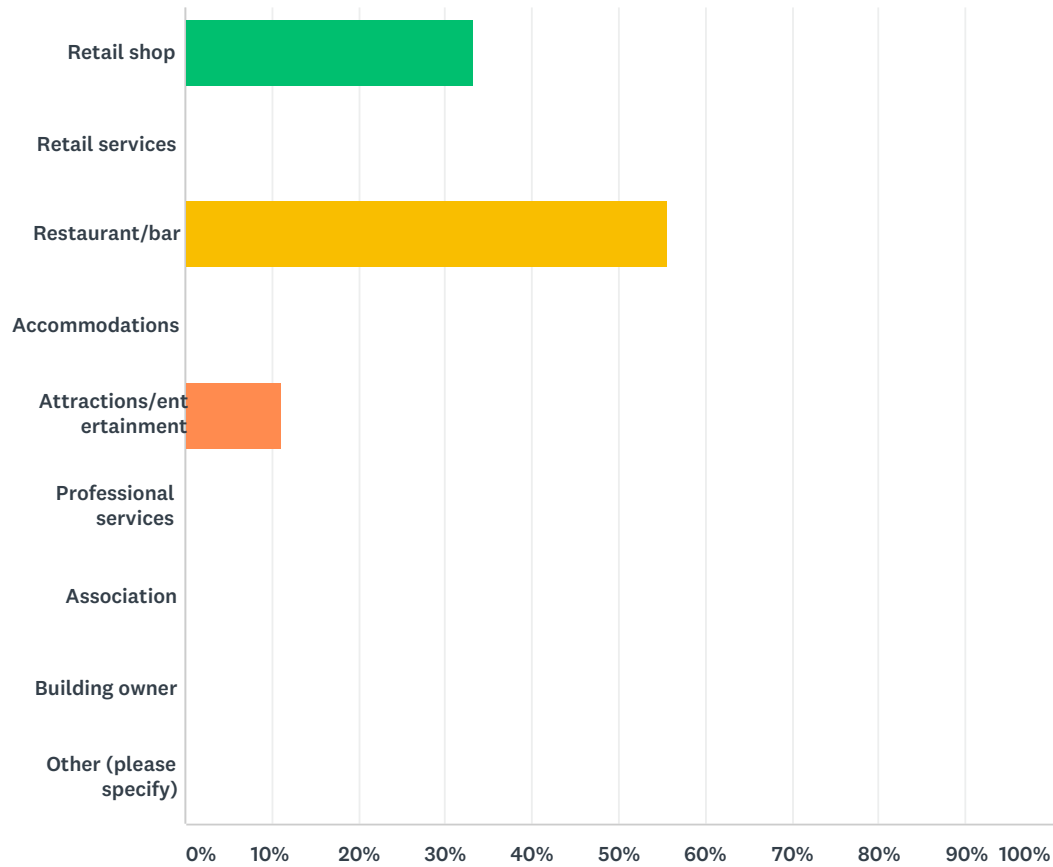
Report Prepared by: Christopher Davis, P.Eng., Supervisor, Right of Way Services, 902.490.7462

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Argyle Street Weekend Closures 2018

# Q1 What type of business do you own or manage?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

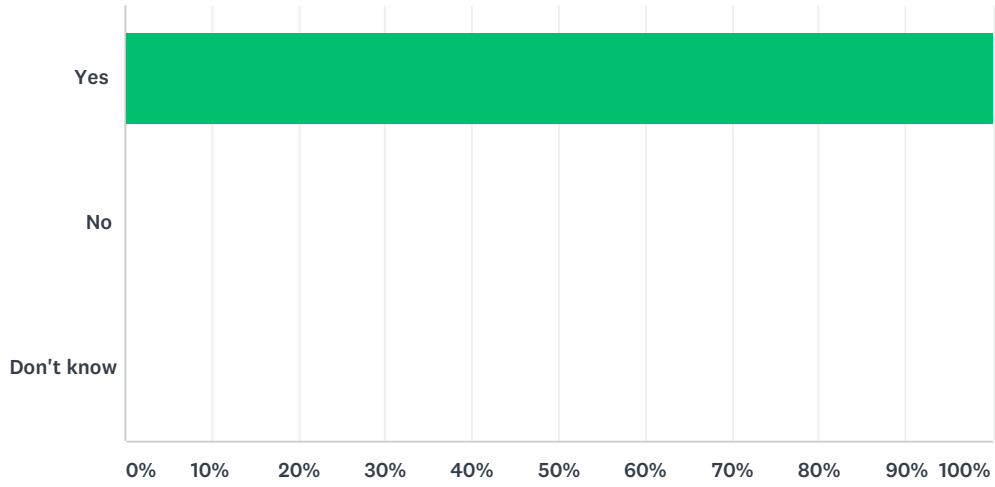


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Retail shop	33.33%	3
Retail services	0.00%	0
Restaurant/bar	55.56%	5
Accommodations	0.00%	0
Attractions/entertainment	11.11%	1
Professional services	0.00%	0
Association	0.00%	0
Building owner	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

## Q2 Did you have a sidewalk patio?

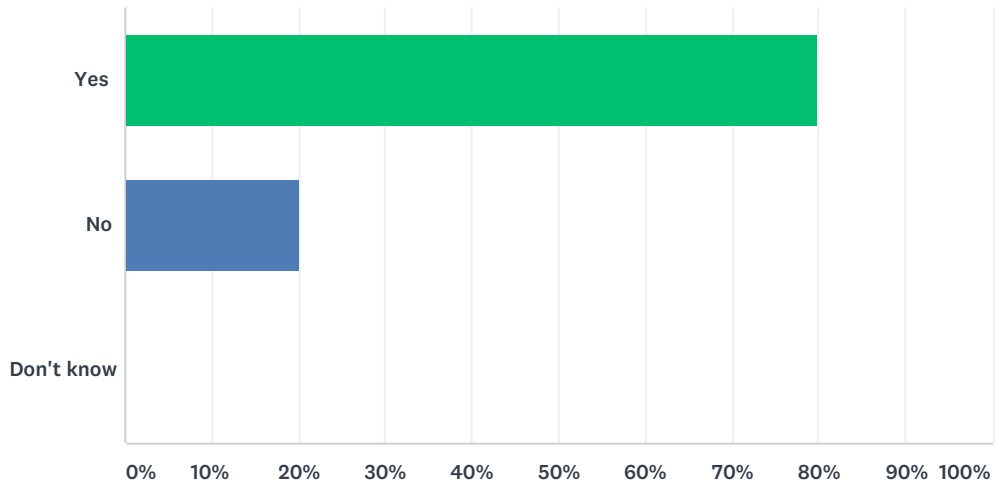
Answered: 5 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
Don't know	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

### Q3 Did you extend your patio's footprint during the closures?

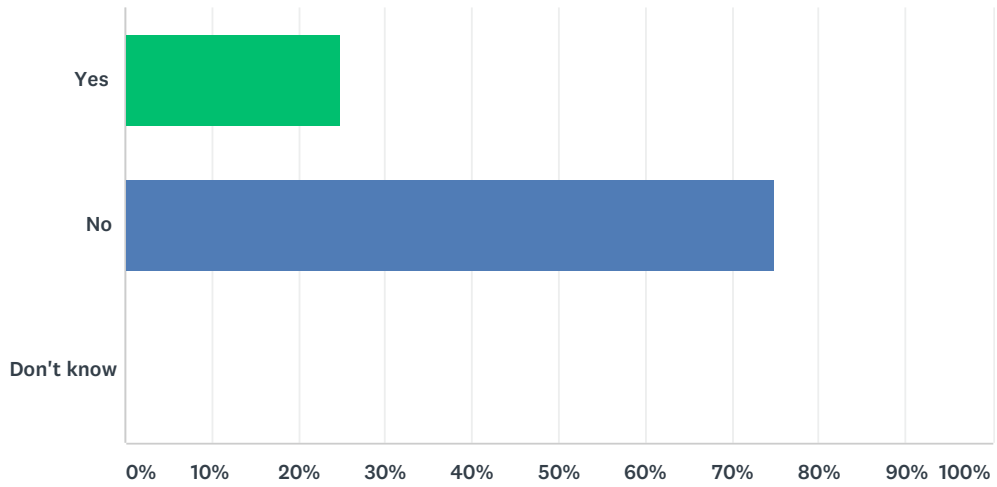
Answered: 5 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80.00%	4
No	20.00%	1
Don't know	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

### Q4 Were there any challenges with extending your patio?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 5

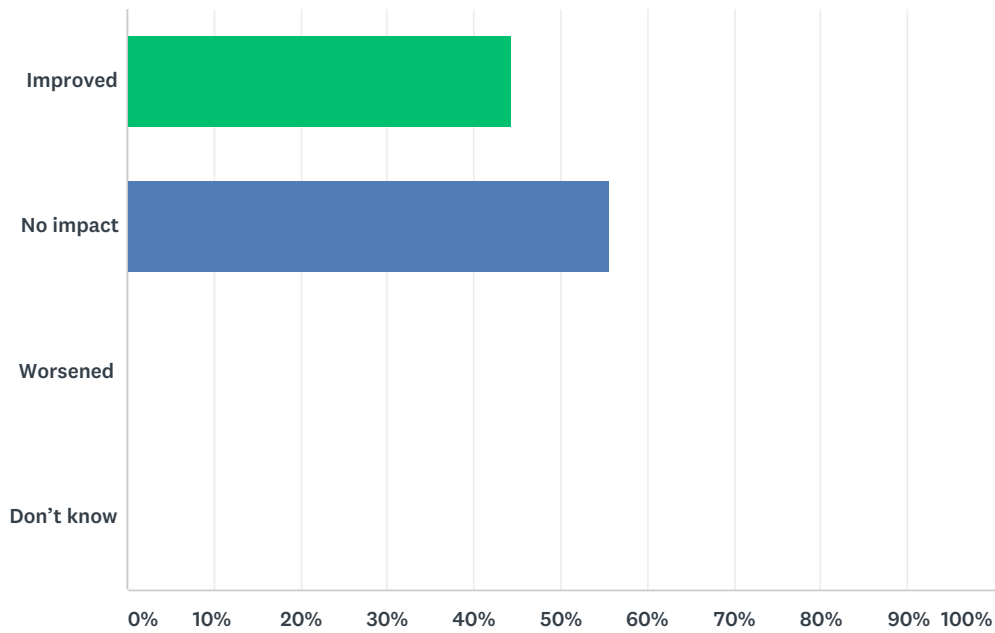


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	25.00% 1
No	75.00% 3
Don't know	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	Not being able to extend up till second drain because of infrastructure.	2/26/2019 2:43 PM
2	on a few occasions HRM was slow to close the road which caused minor confusion	9/24/2018 12:51 PM

### Q5 What impact did the scheduled street closures have on your sales/business?

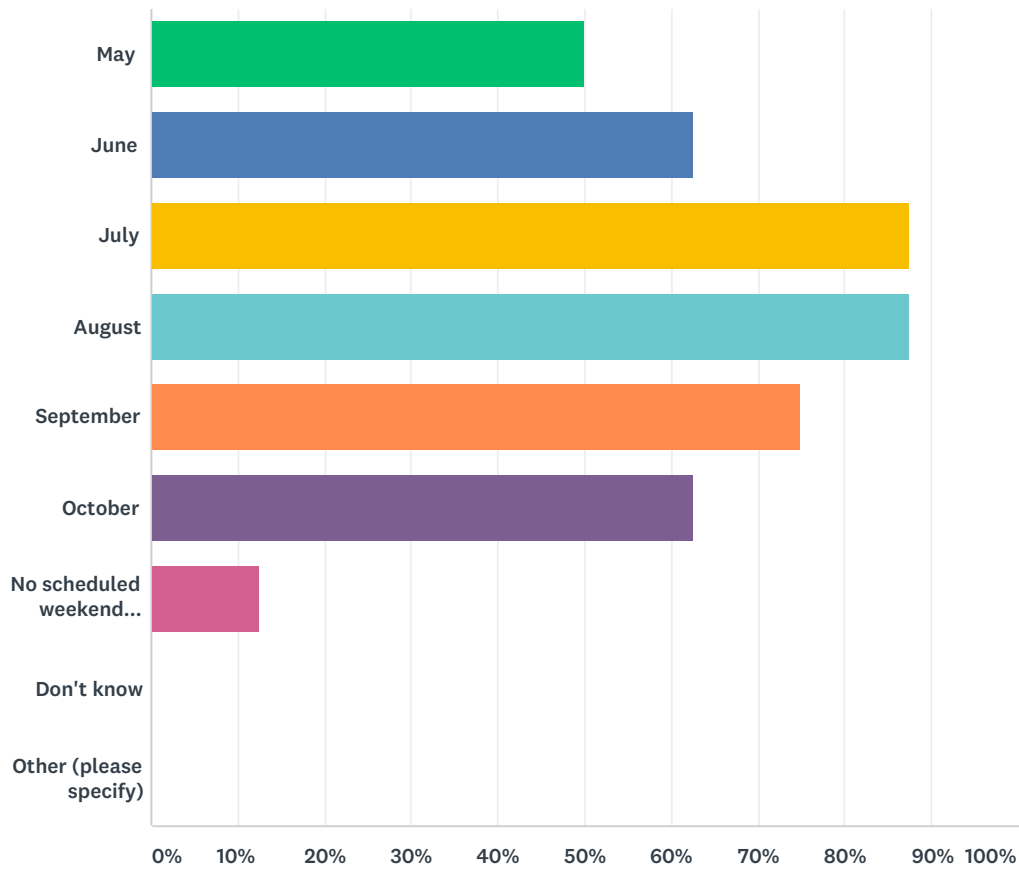
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Improved	44.44% 4
No impact	55.56% 5
Worsened	0.00% 0
Don't know	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>

### Q6 When would you like to see scheduled weekend closures for Argyle Street in 2019? Check all that apply.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 1



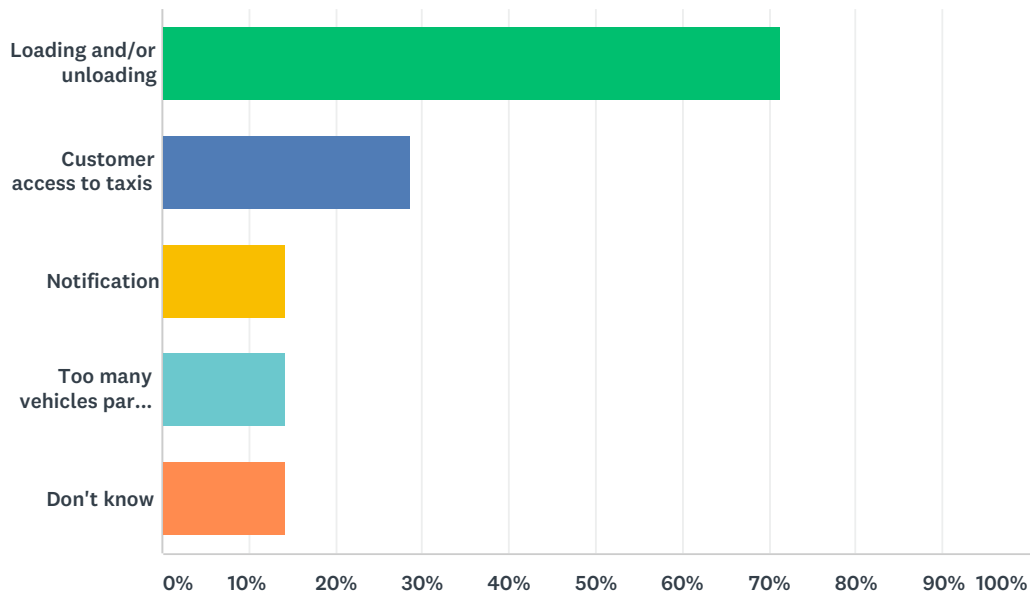
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
May	50.00%	4
June	62.50%	5
July	87.50%	7
August	87.50%	7
September	75.00%	6
October	62.50%	5
No scheduled weekend closures	12.50%	1
Don't know	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 8		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	



### Q7 Did you have any challenges with the street closures? Check all that apply.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 2

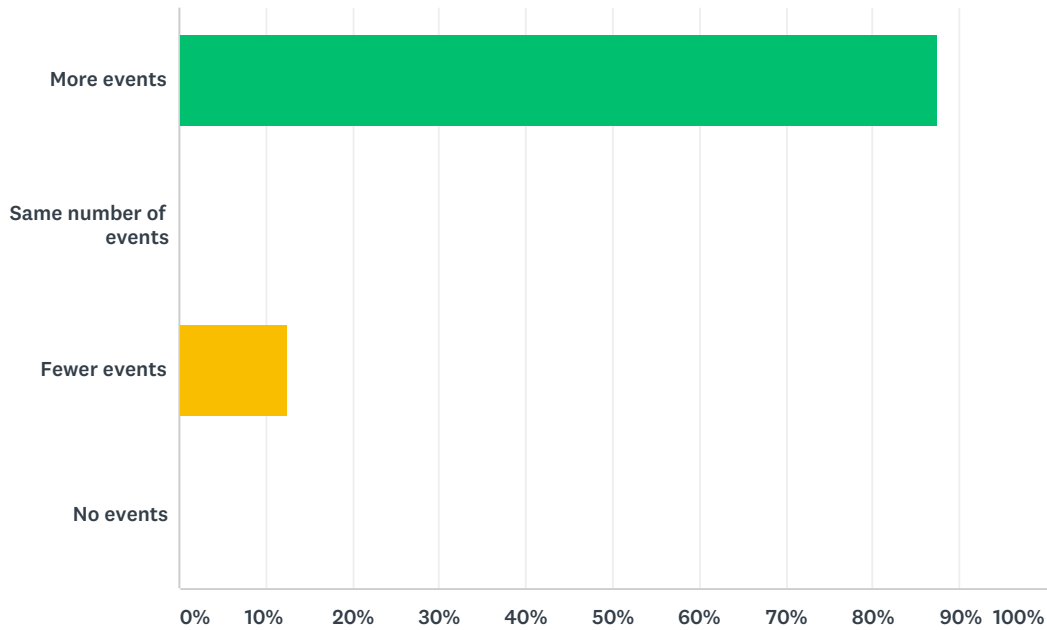


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Loading and/or unloading	71.43%	5
Customer access to taxis	28.57%	2
Notification	14.29%	1
Too many vehicles parked illegally on the street during the closures	14.29%	1
Don't know	14.29%	1
Total Respondents: 7		

#	OTHER/COMMENTS:	DATE
1	minor challenges , the delivery trucks often cannot park on the street anyway as the loading zone is often full with contractor vehicles working in the area	9/24/2018 12:53 PM

### Q8 In addition to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment, the scheduled weekend closures helped facilitate events on the street. What would you like to see on Argyle Street?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More events	87.50%	7
Same number of events	0.00%	0
Fewer events	12.50%	1
No events	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8</b>

## Q9 What kind of events would you like to see on Argyle Street?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	family friendly events, culinary events, any events that will avail of the amazing destination that has been created.	3/8/2019 2:57 PM
2	music, lifestyle, camp out on Argyle, family friendly events w entertainment, dog friendly events, social activism events,	2/27/2019 4:36 AM
3	Concerts, DJ, Dance, Game telecast, Buskers, Family friendly, amusement rides, Street party with restaurants on the street involved, yoga, Skate	2/26/2019 2:51 PM
4	weekend farmers market / frequent bouncy castles for the families, retail vendors ,	9/24/2018 12:54 PM
5	holiday events with carollers & free hot chocolate & santa & taking gift donations & ornament vendors & ornament contest & christmas carolling group competitions, events for families with entertainers, sidewalk days when restaurants do outdoor cooking and we could do sidewalk sale, pet friendly events/ dog contests, group sing events, public awareness events where different non profits and orgs could set up info tents, participatory events like dance contests, cooking contests, flower contests or shows, etc...	9/20/2018 5:09 PM
6	Street events to draw foot traffic. Years ago we had "Taste of Argyle" that was amazing. Live music is great. Major request is that organizers put out washroom facilities so our restaurants/stores are not bombarded with non paying facility users.	9/20/2018 3:52 PM

## Q10 Any additional comments?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	would also like to see Argyle beautification with additional charming elements such as string lighting, plants,	2/27/2019 4:37 AM
2	It would be nice to be able to extend the patios further and leave 6 feet space for pedestrian. Restaurants and bars have a lot to offer and can really make that street happening with our food and drinks culture.	2/26/2019 2:54 PM
3	excellent addition to our patio to be able to extend it. We had ZERO issues with alcohol compliance / customers seemed to love the Euro style of street side dining	9/24/2018 12:56 PM
4	Washrooms outside for events. MORE outside events!!!	9/20/2018 3:53 PM



Brad Anguish  
Director of Transportation and Public Works  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
March 9, 2019

Dear Brad,

I am writing to you to request that HRM approve and operationalize non-event weekend closures (Friday 5pm to Monday 6am) on Argyle Street, for the months of July, August and September. This year's closures would commence on June 28 (and ideally include Canada Day, on the Monday) and end September 29. We would further request that licensed establishments with patios again be able to extend their patios during these closures. Any closure requests related to specific events would still go through the process of HRM Civic Events. Patio extensions during events would continue to be at the discretion of the event organizer.

The Argyle shared street re-design has been a great success for both the citizens of Halifax, as well as the businesses along the street. It has cemented Argyle Street's reputation as the heart of Halifax's entertainment district and won several national and international awards.

During the pilot project, DHBC was asked by Council to collect data on the closures, including degree of activity, opinions of visitors and businesses, issues and concerns. Attached is a survey that was conducted with area businesses. Highlights include that 44% of respondents reported that the closures had a positive impact on sales (with none reporting it negatively impacted business). Only 1 respondent indicated they did not want to see closures in 2019. Public support, measured via social media, was overwhelmingly positive. The biggest challenges identified were lack of accessibility for loading and taxis (which do service Argyle from the cross streets during the closures), and enforcement of illegally parked vehicles. We are confident these issues can be addressed with DHBC working directly with HRM operations.

While the majority of ground-floor businesses along the two blocks of Argyle are restaurant-related, the Carleton apartments, Neptune Theatre and the Halifax Convention Centre, represent specific entities that sometimes require unique consideration. The owners of each have expressed support, and DHBC and HRM can work with them individually to accommodate special needs as they arrive. The Residence Inn by Marriott has a parking garage on Argyle, but the closures maintain access to it.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to another great summer on Argyle Street.

Sincerely,

Paul MacKinnon

Executive Director  
Downtown Halifax Business Commission