

As a resident of Verdun since 2011, **I fully support the initiative** for the City of Verdun to turn Wellington into a year-round pedestrian thoroughfare.

When the City first introduced this during the pandemic, it instantly (re)vitalized this main street, breaking the isolation that people had been enduring in this scary time of uncertainty.

Since then, that feeling of freedom to move about (via walking, cycling, or rolling) in more uninhibited ways – in particular in an urban context – has most definitely brought about a greater quality of everyday life: both for doing the normal errands (grocery shopping; filling prescriptions at the pharmacy) and for the planned (and unexpected) social encounters of after-work or weekend hangouts. It's a pleasure to step out of the house and meander with (or without) purpose in "downtown" Verdun!

To directly quote the literature in the consultation process:

"This proposal would make Verdun a more pleasant, healthy, ecological, equitable, accessible, child-friendly, and socially integrated neighbourhood aligned with our community's ambitions and values."

And to add to this: much has been documented about the importance of these spaces to create greater a sense of community, neighbourhood, and belonging; i.e.: quality of life. American urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, for example, discussed at the length the importance of sites of encounter that exist outside of work and home, what he calls "third places."

A third place is a space like a bookstore, a tavern, a café, or a public square where people don't necessarily plan to meet but run into each other, and have relaxed social time together. This spontaneous way of being together, or simply being in the world (with ease of movement) contributes to our general wellbeing, and the idea for a year-long pedestrian street in Verdun would achieve just such a possibility: the pedestrian thoroughfare as "third place."

<https://courier.unesco.org/en/articles/third-places-true-citizen-spaces>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Good_Place_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Good_Place_(book))

I hope this can be something that becomes a reality for our community, not just in the summer months but all year long!

In solidarity,
Victoria Stanton