

Individual Responses From the Summer Access Review Survey (BIA Businesses ONLY):

"Extend it to Broadway please."

"I would like to see more of the downtown blocks & stores be included, and as well this will allow for more vendors on the street."

"I would like to see the whole downtown business core blocked off to vehicle traffic. That way we are all included as a downtown business community!"

"Continue with the weekends only but include all the way down to Broadway."

"I would like to see the vendors in the market expanded, as the little vendors huts created a lot of foot traffic. As long as those vendors are not in direct competition with the downtown businesses. I would like to see more live entertainment, buskers, and such things. Kids zone on Sundays. A lot of families with young children are in on Sundays for lunch. I do realize this year it could not be done because of the current situation..... i'm really hoping for a different situation next summer!"

"Consider if its worth including Friday nights and if something like a night food market under lights on Queen Street would attract a crowd. Shift the Monday market to Sunday and spread the vendors along the gaps on Queen Street (eg: bank, Enbridge etc). If COVID isnt an issue in 2021 then perhaps we could theme the nights to attract more people to Queen Street (eg: Friday night is Outdoor Food Market, Saturday is local fresh produce vendors & parade day, Sunday is Market Day)."

"Love the feel of our downtown because of this initiative. Very well received by anyone I have spoken to."

"Just a note. Saturday's and Sundays were mentioned but we are also open late on Fridays since the street is closed and often use up outdoor space for clothing racks. It's too bad more don't but it has done well for us. It would be nice to see the restaurants in the Durham block be able to use the street closure. Is Sunday needed? Seems most restaurants and stores are closed. Thank you!"

"Invite local vendors into the accessible area. Hopefully we will be fortunate enough to have the Monday market for our out of town vendors. However, competition brings more people downtown, therefore increasing sales. The Friday evening hasn't been strong for our retail, but I hope it's been helpful for our restaurants."

"-We think there should be a group discussion meeting for the business owners to be able to express their opinions and collectively come to an agreement to all work together in something that is great for all the businesses in the down town. -We would like to see the closure extended to Magnum fitness parking lot so all restaurants are included -Would be nice to have licensed path where people can walk the street within licensed area and see everything"

"I think it's fantastic!! This is just what our little town needs! Sets us apart from other towns! By 2021 I bet we will get a tone of new vendors, and it will blow up the shopping in downtown kincardine, even in winter!! Put a skating ring right down the main street!! This will lead to all kinds of fantastic things for Kincardine!"

"Continue the great work! This is something our neighboring communities would love to do but cant! Make us very unique!!"

“Access for all restaurants to expand their store front and dinning to the streets. At the moment, only one restaurant benefits from the street closure. Thank you.”

Positive Feedback from the Public:

July 27th, 2020

Dear BIA Members,

I would like to voice my support and enthusiasm for the current economic stimulus project underway, being the weekly closures of a portion of Queen Street to create extra capacity for restaurants and a pedestrian shopping area. This much needed effort can help create awareness and foot traffic for local stores and restaurants, as well as a safer pedestrian environment by making social distancing much easier and allowing diners and shopper to remain outdoors.

I would also like to say that despite being in the early stages of this endeavour, I believe it is well worth not rushing to judgement before summer is past. It will take some time for the public to grasp the idea and embrace it, and it will take the vendors some time to adjust their sales and marketing approach to properly make the most of this unique opportunity. Realistically, it could even take more than one season of this approach to truly begin to seize upon the potential it offers.

I applaud your leadership in implementing this progressive effort to help the businesses of downtown Kincardine face the unprecedented challenges Covid-19 has wrought upon the restaurant and retail sectors of the local economy. While there may remain some bugs to be worked out of this system, I think the BIA and Municipality's efforts to address the matter should be applauded and encouraged, rather than being criticized while offering no alternative solution to this serious issue. If the vendors and restaurants downtown will continue to try to evolve and adapt to the changes in consumer behaviour that this pandemic has forced, and try to create opportunities out of this challenge by working together and supporting each other, I believe we can not only allow the stakeholders in our downtown to survive, but in fact to flourish. There is no future to be had by complaining about the obstacles fate has thrown in our path. The only solution is to adapt, to be open to change, to create opportunity out of hardship, and to stick together and use the collective resources we have to create an environment that is conducive to the continued success of our lovely and historic downtown. I hope the community at large continues to support all the restaurants and vendors in Lakeside Downtown Kincardine and I believe the weekly Queen Street closures will allow that to happen in a safer and more vibrant and attractive manner throughout the summer months. Initiative like this is long overdue in Kincardine and I appreciate the foresight and planning it has taken to get this project underway. Keep up the good work.

Scott Duncan

Sugar Shack Tattoo & The Daily Grind

August 7th, 2020

Statement regarding Queen St Closure

Speaking on behalf of Locals, a north end business, the downtown road closure is beneficial to us. We do wish that the closure did extend down past Durham street so we were more included however the south end closure still affects us positively.

Thanks, Naomi

August 9th, 2020

Hi Rick,

I just wanted to give an update on my experience with the downtown road closure.

We have been open on Friday nights until 8, and Saturdays 10-5:30, unfortunately still closed Sundays.

Although our Friday nights are just steady as expected, our Saturdays have surpassed our expectations.

There is a great increase of traffic, with both local customers and visitors, which is what we want to see.

I also find people are commenting they are more comfortable walking our downtown when they have more space to walk freely around the traffic on the sidewalk. I know myself, my mom has yet to visit in stores, but I can get her out shopping at the street vendors and going for a walk to get a coffee on the weekend when the roads are closed. I can't imagine she's alone in feeling this way.

I feel like this has given our downtown more flexibility for us to meet all of our customers needs.

Thank you, Justine.

Positive Feedback Received by Drifter Lots directly related to the Promenade News Article:

We are looking for a little get-away, as we have not been able to travel this summer. Today I saw an article about Kincardine in the Ottawa Citizen and it looks like a lovely place to visit.

We are a couple in our 50s and 60s.

As we are driving from Ottawa along the scenic route, we would probably not arrive until the evening.

Thanks,

Ingrid

Hi Ash - we're Peter and Mihaela from Ottawa - looking forward to visiting Kincardine and surroundings after reading about it up there.

Thanks for hosting us!

Peter



Intended to facilitate social distancing, the closure of Kincardine's downtown core to motor vehicles is being hailed as a success.

KINCARDINE RECOVERING WITHOUT CARS

Beach town discovers that closing streets to motor vehicles can be good for business

MARK WESSEL

During a recent visit to the charming beach community of Kincardine, on the shores of Lake Huron, I was struck by the sight of a young child running down the middle of the road. She was followed by her mother pushing a stroller.

In their midst, moving in both directions on the road, were people of all ages from preschoolers to seniors. People walking, on road bikes, mountain bikes, standup scooters for the young and sit-down electric scooters for those with mobility issues.

On this particular road trip, the road itself was the star attraction because, unlike Saturday mornings in previous years when cars ruled the road, vehicles were now prohibited from the downtown core. Word got out not only among locals but tourists, that you could visit Kincardine over the course of the summer and walk down the street to your heart's content without a worry about cars. Hence the steady stream of people showing up.

To understand how this urban

transformation came about, rewind to the spring of this year, when a large percentage of businesses were forced to shut down for several weeks due to COVID-19. "Devastating" was probably the most appropriate word to describe the effect the virus was having on the local economy, with 58 per cent of businesses surveyed in April indicating they ran the risk of closure by the end of the year if circumstances didn't change.

If COVID-19 was the proverbial rock, then the hard place for the municipality was the reality that for several weeks this summer, the main road running into Kincardine from the south end would be closed for repairs to the bridge the road traverses. Further adding to their woes was the lineup of festivals and events that drew the crowds and helped drive sales for the downtown merchants had to be cancelled as well over COVID-19 related safety concerns.

Kincardine's response to these seemingly insurmountable challenges was to have the courage to try something that had been

done previously for a day or two during festivals, but never for the entire summer: close the community's core to vehicular traffic as a way to draw more residents and visitors, concurrently providing extra space for safe distancing.

In hindsight, "we knew that the concept of closing the streets to traffic to allow greater pedestrian movement wasn't new," recalls downtown development manager Rick Clarke. "But it was new for most parts of Ontario and it was certainly new for Kincardine."

Clarke says the initial knee-jerk reaction from some was "I'm going to lose my parking spots and people won't be able to park in front of my business," while others bought into the vision right away of creating a unique pedestrian environment, "not unlike what cities in Europe have done."

In a spring survey to determine whether to proceed with the street closure, the overwhelming majority in the south end of the downtown where most of the shops and restaurants reside voted in favour of the closure, although the idea of closing the core for four days was reduced to Friday through to Sunday evening. The north end, which has more office space and fewer shops, failed to get the requisite majority — and yet surprisingly, some of the more vociferous business owners later complained they were being left out.

Despite these mixed results, recognizing they had to do something to offset the carnage caused by COVID-19 in a community where the vast majority of businesses are locally-owned and family-run, Kincardine opted to move ahead with closing the southern block and adjacent side street. The municipality's gutsy mindset is best summed up by



A closed side street in Kincardine provides a safe walk to the beach.

Kincardine Mayor Anne Eadie, which is "you've got to make decisions ... you can modify them ... but if you wait for everything to be perfect, then you'd be waiting until next summer."

So what is the outcome of the downtown closure now, two months on? Responding to a midsummer survey of shopkeepers, one owner (Jaye Bayer of Harbour Rose Boutique) reported sales comparable to the town's peak times when festivals were taking place. Scott Duncan, owner of The Daily Grind coffee shop, reported record daily sales on a recent Sunday. And to date,

over 90 per cent of owners in the area closed to traffic are either in favour or neutral to the idea of continuing the program in 2021 — virus or not.

But arguably the most telling response to the survey, according to Ashley Richards, the executive director of Kincardine's chamber of commerce, has been that "retail and restaurants outside of the summer access area (that's currently closed to vehicular traffic) are indicating clearly that they would like to be included ... should this happen again in 2021."

Learn more: visitkincardine.ca

Bachelorette takes design sense to Etsy

TV personality teams up with 15 makers on summer decor collection

ALEESHA HARRIS

Joelle (JoJo) Fletcher is no stranger to the realm of home design and decor.

Before she became a part of "Bachelor Nation" as, first, a contestant on the 20th season of The Bachelor, followed by a starring role in the 12th season of The Bachelorette, Fletcher worked in real estate development and flipping homes.

"After I got out of (the show) it kind of went back to normal life. And I sort of just allowed people to follow along with that."

As her following grew, so too did the interest in her activities in real estate and design. Noting

there was "huge interest" from her followers on the subject, she and her fiancé, Jordan Rodgers (who was briefly a B.C. Lions player), ramped up documenting their work experience online. It was a move that ultimately landed the duo a TV show called Cash Pad, turning properties into short-term rentals with a big return.

"People have loved learning about it and seeing it," Fletcher says of the behind-the-scenes access. "And a lot of that goes into design and home decor."

Describing her style as "timeless and modern," Fletcher says the design sense she employs differs depending on the space.

"When we're working on Cash



TV personality Joelle Fletcher has partnered with Etsy on a collection of decor items. Seven of the 15 artisans she worked with are in Canada. *ETSY*

Pad and we're working on different Airbnbs in different locations, it's obviously really catered to who we think the guests are going to be and what the guests are going to like," Fletcher says. "For my personal style, I'm more minimal and laid back, with playful touches. I'm really drawn to organic textures and textiles. But, I do like to add a little pop of colour here and there."

This summer, Fletcher has put her experience and design esthetic to work with a limited-edition collection with Etsy called the JoJo Fletcher x Etsy summer collection. When the chance to curate the

lineup of products for the online marketplace came about, Fletcher says that she was "so, so thrilled."

"I have been a huge fan of Etsy over the years ...," Fletcher says. "For me, it's the place that I go when I want to find that one-of-a-kind, completely unique piece that completes my spaces."

Beginning with an idea of the kinds of pieces she wanted to see in the collection, she worked with the Etsy team to find 15 makers to collaborate with from among the "millions of incredible artists" available on the virtual marketplace.

"I think what it just came down

to was figuring out what I wanted the collection to represent and what pieces I wanted to fill it with — and then going and finding different Etsy-makers that have the same kind of esthetic and design vision as I did," Fletcher says. "The whole point of this collaboration is to take what these artists already do, because it's so beautiful, and put my little touch on it. So that we can create something new that represents both of us."

Among those 15 artisans, seven are from Canada — Townsend-RoweHome, Lanterncozies, NightshiftCeramics, Cattails-Woodwork, BrookDrabotGlass, MLKANHNY and SOOWORKS. The prominent presence, Fletcher admits, wasn't planned. Though, she's confident the Canadian contingent among her two-million-plus followers will be pleased with the outcome. "It was just for you Canadians," Fletcher says with a laugh. "You know what's really funny, is that any time I post things that don't ship to Canada, all of my Canadian followers get really upset."

The Texas native says one of the proudest parts about doing this Etsy collection, now, is how it provides a chance to spotlight the work of a "diverse range" of artists during times that have proven to be tough for small business.

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Kincardine's closed downtown is attracting every age group.

KINCARDINE'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

MARK WESSEL
GREEN
LIVING

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On this particular road trip, the road itself was the star attraction because unlike Saturday mornings in previous years when cars ruled the road, vehicles were now prohibited from the downtown core.

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To understand how this urban transformation came about, rewind to the spring of this year, when a large percentage of businesses were forced to shut down for several weeks in the wake of COVID-19.

'Devastating' was probably the most appropriate word to describe the impact the virus was having on the local economy, with 58% of businesses surveyed in April indicating they ran the risk of closure by the end of the year, if circumstances didn't change.

If COVID-19 was the proverbial 'rock,' then the 'hard place' for the municipality was the reality that for several weeks this summer, the main road running into Kincardine from the south end would be closed for repairs to the bridge the road traverses.

Further adding to their woes, was the fact the line-up of festivals and events that drew the crowds and helped drive sales for the downtown merchants, had to be cancelled as well over COVID-19 related safety concerns.

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Learn more at visitkincardine.ca.

Mark Wessel lives in Collingwood, Ont. and is a passionate advocate for living more sustainable at home and in the greater community. Visit his blog at sustainablecommunitybuilder.com



During the closure a pedestrian street cleaner helps keep things tidy.



It's not every day you witness a toddler running safely down the middle of the street.



Closed side street provides a safe walk to the beach.