



Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Ward 13, Toronto Centre
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
2nd Floor, Suite A5
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Tel: 416-392-7903
Fax: 416-696-4300
councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca
www.kristynwongtam.ca



June 15, 2021

My Statement About the Wellington Street East Construction

Last week my office was informed that Transportation Services and Engineering and Construction Services jointly decided to halt ongoing streetscape construction on Wellington Street East between Yonge Street and Church Street until the Spring of 2022. In the interim, I have asked City staff to work with the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area (BIA) to make this summer's streetscape condition as welcoming as possible and to permit CafeTO patios for those restaurants that can now also take advantage of the construction delays.

While Wellington construction was originally scheduled to be completed this September, I'm advised that unanticipated and ongoing challenges have resulted in City staff's decision to delay construction one more year. Sidewalks and roadways in Toronto have significant underground infrastructure buried from a long time ago, especially prevalent in some of the oldest segments of the city. Unexpected underground infrastructure has forced the City to take pause and find a resolution. Left unresolved and without a clear timeline for resolution, the contractor on-site essentially ran out of work they could complete. In addition, City staff heard a number of concerns from businesses along Wellington Street East and Front Street East that were unhappy about the ongoing construction on Wellington this summer. Operating a successful patio this season is critical and it could mean the difference between staying in business or shutting their doors forever. City staff will use this delay to resolve the infrastructure challenge while permitting eligible local businesses to proceed with CafeTO installations this year.

The contractor for the Wellington Street East work will be demobilizing, removing on-site equipment and construction materials by June 19, 2021. The plan is for the contractor to return in April 2022, and spend approximately three months to finish this work by July and well before the end of next summer. City staff will be working to see if construction can resume earlier than April, weather permitting, to avoid heavy construction work next summer.

If there is a sliver of positive outcome to the regrettable delays on Wellington, it is to the restaurant owners who reached out to my office and City staff concerned that ongoing construction would delay any implementation of CafeTO and cause disruptions for patio patrons. City staff will use this deferred construction to implement



Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Ward 13, Toronto Centre
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
2nd Floor, Suite A5
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Tel: 416-392-7903
Fax: 416-696-4300
councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca
www.kristynwongtam.ca



CafeTO patios immediately where requested, and will work with restaurants who were not anticipating the ability to operate a patio to see if one can be accommodated. City staff are now hopeful these CafeTO patios can be in place on or shortly after June 20, 2021 once the streetscaping contractor has vacated the area.

Staff have also indicated that deferring construction until 2022 is the least intrusive and most cost-effective measure to complete this streetscaping project. Pausing work indefinitely to keep the contractor on-site would incur significant additional costs, and would ensure Wellington Street East would remain a construction zone for the duration of the summer with no guarantee the work could be completed this year.

While construction is delayed, I have asked staff to work closely with the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA to assist businesses through this interim period. I have spoken to many of you and share your frustrations. My office will continue to advocate with City staff for as much business assistance as reasonable through this period.

Shortly after I took office in the new Ward 13 at the end of 2018, the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA reached out about the pre-existing challenges on Wellington Street East, which at the time was subject to utility work in advance of approved streetscape work. Through my [Motion to City Council](#), I directed the creation of a working group with the expressed purpose of coordinating technical infrastructure work in a timely fashion. My motion was both a recognition of the complexity of coordinating multiple utilities, telecommunications, TTC infrastructure, and subsequent upgraded streetscape work while acknowledging this work had not proceeded in a timely manner.

Construction on Wellington Street East, as originally envisioned, was to be a model of proper coordination of utilities and streetscape work that could save both time and money while leaving an attractive, safer streetscape for everyone. Instead, the work has dragged on for approximately seven years and forced residents and businesses to deal with many years of construction impacts. There is no shortage of streets that could be transformed like Wellington Street East, but if this is the construction coordination model, such streetscape improvements will be much harder to promote to residents and businesses alike. I will be asking City staff to perform a post mortem of this project to understand everything that went wrong, and to try ensure the painful experience of Wellington is not repeated.