

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Streets and Services to hold hearings to investigate the benefits and feasibility of either temporarily or permanently closing certain City streets to vehicular traffic in cooperation with local business in order to help boost retail and restaurant sales in Philadelphia, as well as create a more positive pedestrian experience.

WHEREAS, Many cities worldwide have already closed down streets to vehicular traffic and created car free zones, including: Copenhagen, Lyon, Munich, Prague, Vienna, Ontario, Toronto, Boston, and Santa Monica; and

WHEREAS, New York City will experiment with closing traffic on seven blocks of Broadway this year. While the primary intention is to reduce traffic congestion, retailers have endorsed the plan. The Senior Vice President of Macy's has predicted that the increase in foot traffic that will result from the closure will help boost commerce for small and large stores up and down Broadway; and

WHEREAS, The Center City District has noted that "There is no better measure of the revival of downtown than the flourishing of sidewalk cafes in the last decade," and that "cafes expand the seating area of restaurants and coffee shops and augment the volume of business downtown;" and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's small sidewalks place tight limitations on how many outdoor seats a restaurant may have. Closing streets to vehicular traffic would provide more room for outdoor seating; and

WHEREAS, Many of Philadelphia's smaller streets and alleys should be reclaimed as active spaces for public uses. Many alleys and small streets that are currently neglected can serve as venues for pedestrian-oriented economic activity; and

WHEREAS, The economy is in recession and the boosted foot traffic that results from street closures could help maintain consumer spending in Philadelphia's commercial corridors; and

WHEREAS, Increased pedestrian traffic improves safety and creates a more vibrant atmosphere, encouraging residents, tourists, and visitors to explore Philadelphia's commercial corridors; now, therefore,

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Streets and Services is authorized to hold hearings to investigate the benefits and feasibility of either temporarily or permanently closing City streets to vehicular traffic in cooperation with local business in order to help boost retail and restaurant sales in Philadelphia, as well as create a more positive pedestrian experience.