

BRENDAN REILLY
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
ALDERMAN, 42ND WARD

121 North LaSalle Street, Room 200
Chicago, IL 60602
312 744-3062
alderman@ward42chicago.com



EX-OFFICIO MEMBER
ALL COMMITTEES

CITY OF CHICAGO
CITY COUNCIL

June 14, 2023

Eileen Murray & Debra Schalk
Co-Presidents
River North Residents Association
PO Box 10924
Chicago IL 60610

Dear Ms. Murray & Ms. Schalk

Thank you for copying my office on your letter to Mayor Johnson regarding the Extended Outdoor Dining (EOD) program on Clark Street.

I am writing to provide you with an update on the EOD Program and upcoming plans for Clark Street, specifically.

As you correctly noted, the restrictions placed on the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic were, thank goodness, temporary. However, guests' dining habits have shifted with a preference for open air dining in a more permanent fashion.

Due to this shift and the resounding success of the 2022 EOD program, Mayor Johnson introduced an ordinance to establish a seasonal version of the program that allows restaurants to apply, on an annual basis, to expand their outdoor dining footprint during the summer, with appropriate review and approval from various city departments and the local alderperson. The City Council unanimously approved the revised EOD Ordinance on May 31, 2023.

The new EOD program has been dramatically pared-back in comparison to previous years: it has a defined season of May 1 – October 31, and it requires annual review and approval from all necessary City Departments.

Reviewing Departments include the Department of Transportation (CDOT), Department of Business Affairs (DBACP), Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), Chicago Fire Department (CFD), and Chicago Police Department (CPD). These departments will provide input and recommend changes with specific focus on safety and traffic.

As promised in my previous correspondence, my office conducted a community survey to gain feedback about the closure of Clark Street for extended outdoor dining. The April 2023 survey received more than 3,000 thoughtful responses. Results were tabulated and each address was verified to determine the level of stakeholder feedback.

Overall, 87% of all respondents supported future closures of Clark Street for outdoor dining. Furthermore, 76% of respondents indicated that the closure should be in place for "as long as possible". This included 84% support among confirmed 42nd Ward residents (as opposed to commuters or business owners, who also have an interest in this matter).

Nearly all of the restaurants on Clark Street, between Grand Avenue and Kinzie Street have submitted the required documents for an EOD street closure permit.

Neighborhood feedback is incredibly important to me. I have listened carefully to the overwhelming number of supporters of the Clark Street closure, as well as the handful of critics.

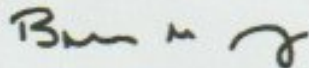
Ultimately, due to the overwhelming neighborhood support for the initiative, and the newly required annual review of security and traffic plans by city departments and the local alderperson, I support the closure of Clark Street for the 2023 season.

As a condition of my support, the applicant for the street closure has agreed to forgo expanded outdoor dining on all East / West streets in River North to ensure more efficient circulation of vehicular traffic in the neighborhood.

After this 2023 season, my office will review any future proposals with a narrow focus on traffic, given the anticipated opening of the temporary casino at Medinah Temple. It is very likely that any future requests to close Clark Street will be denied due to changing neighborhood factors, like the casino.

As program updates become available, my office will share that information in our e-newsletter: Reilly Reports. If you do not already subscribe to Reilly Reports, please email my office at office@ward42chicago.com to stay up to date.

Thank you again for sharing your feedback.



Brendan Reilly
Alderman, 42nd Ward