



October 27, 2022

The Honorable Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor
121 N LaSalle Street, Room 500
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Opposition to Clark Street Permanent Closure

Dear Mayor Lightfoot,

It has been brought to the attention of SOAR (Streeterville Organization of Active Residents) that there is a proposal to make the Clark Street Closure between Grand and Kinzie permanent. SOAR is strongly opposed to the proposed permanent closure of Clark Street.

This area is in close proximity to the proposed interim casino at Medinah Temple and it will cause even more major traffic gridlock if the Clark Street closure continues. Consequences of this closure include delayed response times for emergency vehicles, public transportation and delivery vehicles. Clark Street is a major north/south arterial street that carried roughly 21,000 cars per day before the street closure and these cars did not go away, they were rerouted into Streeterville and River North. This rerouting makes it very difficult for east/west traffic to head in and out of the neighborhoods and is particularly bothersome for residents.

Closing Clark Street between Grand and Kinzie impedes resident and worker ability to travel out of Streeterville into River North and beyond. Zoning and permitting flexibility for restaurants were good ideas during the pandemic to help them stay in business, but it did cause traffic to be rerouted, generating more congestion on east/west streets in River North and Streeterville. However, now that traffic is back to a more normal level, it is time to re-open Clark Street. SOAR strongly opposes the proposed ordinance under consideration to expand the Outdoor Dining Program which would allow the Clark Street closure to continue into the future.

We request that you reconsider the proposed ordinance for closure and to not include Clark Street in that ordinance. It should be kept open in order for residents and visitors to Chicago to enjoy a better quality of life and not waste valuable time and energy.

On Behalf of the SOAR Board of Directors and Residents of Streeterville,

Deborah Gershbein
President

Cc:

Alderman Brendan Reilly 42nd Ward
Alderman Brian Hopkins, 2nd Ward
Alderman Howard Brookins, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Public Way Deputy
Mayor Samir Mayekar
Commissioner Gia Biagi, Chicago Department of Transportation