



**Building a Louder Voice
For Small Business in
Boundary Country**

May 20, 2020

Dear whom it may concern,

On behalf of our members, our committees, and stakeholder organizations that the BCRCC works with on a regular basis – including Discover Grand Forks and the Downtown Business Community – We are putting forward a formal request to create a pedestrian only order for Market Ave, within the Grand Forks Market District.

Our current vision is pedestrian only access from 2nd to 4th on Market Ave, From June 1 through September 30. The reasoning for this is two-fold. First, it will allow for a safe approach to increasing general foot traffic to our downtown core. Taking notice from larger cities, there has been a difficulty in maintaining proper social distancing on core commercial sidewalk spaces. While Grand Forks has not had to deal with this issue yet, we feel it is crucial to proactively address before foot traffic increases. With the summer season approaching, and with the Province announcing its staged “re-opening” plans – we expect more people to be out and about in the very near future.

The second aspect of this is around improving safety in the shopping experience, and utilizing outdoor space for commerce. Ideally, we would like to utilize the parking space areas for seating and sales as much as possible. While some of the population will find comfort in the fact that our businesses are following all orders and guidelines around operating safely, consumer confidence in their own safety will be of the utmost importance to a successful “re-opening” of Market. We believe that providing an outdoor shopping experience is one of the best ways to show a noticeable effort in keeping customers safe. We have heard some criticism about the provincial guidelines and orders only protecting shops and staff – not customers.

In the name of flexibility, we are making this request now. We understand the need to plan and prepare for this in order for it to work to its fullest potential. However, we feel that an approval and support from council is the best way to get these plans developed. In our opinion, developing full scale plans before approving the concept will result in delays and likely a missed opportunity.

Our business community understands that approval is not an immediate “go ahead”. Instead, it is the approval to develop a plan, working through the Chamber, business owners, and the City. We all understand the City will be the one

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liable for many potential issues, and we will look for leadership in guidance from your planners on how to best make this work. We look forward to your support on the matter, and to our further discussion on how this can work.

From every crisis stems opportunity – and we would really like to capture any element of opportunity we can for this resilient section of our local economy.

Sincerely,

Boundary Country Regional Chamber of Commerce & Market Street Business Owners

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