

# Council passes partial closure of Memorial Drive for party

*Last Updated: Monday, May 11, 2009 | 6:26 PM MT* [Comments 51](#) [Recommend 10](#)  
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Amid accusations of petty politics and an impromptu poem, Calgary city council is going ahead with a street party that would close Memorial Drive for half a day in August.

## Untitled by Ald. Bob Hawkesworth

There once was a leader named Druh

Who said "stroll, don't speed along through."

Though cars are territorial,

Let's celebrate a Memorial.

It'll be enjoyable and beneficial for you.

---

Spurred into reaction was Ric,

an "auto" cat with many a quip.

He said Druh's suggestion

would cause great congestion,

The kind that cannot be fixed with more Vicks.

---

The media seized on the melee,

With unabashed pleasure and glee.

They saw with some luck,

they could make a quick buck

By selling more papers you see.

---

The commandments we have are just 10.

One more is needed, others chimed in.

Thou shall not abide

To walk instead drive,

To do so, we declare it a sin.

---

Residents of Hillhurst hurt,

That the response to their idea was curt.

They said without contrition,

"The road to perdition

Is paved with four lanes and not dirt."

---

Declared Druh and her crew:

"We say nonsense to you.

It's not so dire as you claim

Your reasons are lame.

It's only two lanes and will only affect just a few."

---

The scenario generated conflict

Which city council was asked to direct.

Said they to the two,

"Settle the row between you

Or we shall determine our pick."

---

Council considered the cost

Of the Mother's Day run that was lost

Or supports for the cure.

Memorial's closure was sure,

And council said "Summer parties are boss."

Four aldermen, led by Joe Connelly, wanted to halt the proposal to temporarily shut down about seven blocks of the busy road, arguing the closure would seriously inconvenience motorists.

Memorial Drive is already going to be closed for several events in the summer. Connelly's motion focused specifically on blocking Ald. Druh Farrell's proposal to close it in August.

"Remain fully open to traffic every day in August 2009 to the exclusion of all previously approved events and programmed construction activities," Connelly moved.

"So we're saying that those are OK to go — but nothing new in four weeks of August?" Mayor Dave Bronconnier asked.

Connelly later further explained his intention: "What you're talking about here is a brand new festival, coming out from nowhere. Well, I doubt they're going to have the capacity, I doubt they're going to have the numbers that will support closing Memorial Drive."

Farrell is proposing closing two of the four lanes on Memorial Drive between 10th and Third Streets for one Sunday morning in August so people can use it as a promenade. She downgraded her original pitch from all Sundays in August.

Ald. Gord Lowe observed it was clear to him Monday's debate was not about Memorial Drive, but about partisan politics, and that it diminished all of council.

Farrell said: "What I'm for is a healthy community, a vibrant city and a healthy respect for our riverbank and getting people out of their cars for a few hours on Sunday without inconveniencing the whole city. So please, council, this is trivial, it's petty, I find it insulting to Calgarians."

### **Alderman waxes poetic**

Ald. Bob Hawkesworth called this type of debate dreary, then launched into a poem supporting the closure.

Ald. Ric McIver denied the charge of petty politics and said he was only expressing to council that many Calgarians have told him the closure was a bad idea.

McIver, Diane Colley-Urquhart and Jim Stevenson co-signed Connelly's motion, and picked up Andre Chabot's support during Monday's vote. But they were defeated by a vote of 9-5 in the end.

"The road can handle the traffic. The community wanted the festival. The business owners wanted the festival. The only reason we've had all this drama is purely personal," said Naheed Nenshi, a spokesman from the Better Calgary Campaign, a volunteer group that supports sustainable development in the city.

The next step in the process will be for the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association to apply for a permit for the event.

With files from Tom Spear

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**[Hondawithagunrack](#) wrote:**Posted 2009/05/12

at 10:52 PM ETHave a great festival - there is another BIG festival in july that only runs 10 days and shuts down every other street in the downtown. They've been doing it for years, its about time someone else is having their down festival. Good for them!

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**[Hondawithagunrack](#) wrote:**Posted 2009/05/12

at 10:46 PM ETWhat about new festivals? Sustainable Festivals? Festivals that are not partisan!

I'm all for this and I wish the organizers well - I for one will be there! Besides, why do we as Tax payers continue to \$upport the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede? The Stampede is a 10 day event that takes up more downtown space than they need. It is run by former developers that demolished Victoria Park and shut down a long term seniors center- if you think about how much real estate we provide for them it really is disturbing. Besides, The Stampede Started off as a business, not a community group.

I say, Challenge what has been and keep creating new festivals Calgary - maybe one day The City will be putting up your flags free of charge!

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**[JohnLuft](#) wrote:**Posted 2009/05/12

at 6:47 PM ETThe Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association had better pick up the tab for the extra cost to the City. As the City charged the organizers of the Lilac Festival \$50,000 last year for the closure of 4th St. SW., so too should the HSCA pay for this closure. They did, at least according to Farrell, request the closure.

I for one will be watching.

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**[frustrated albertan](#) wrote:**Posted 2009/05/12

at 6:43 PM ETThere was a politician named Druh

Who ONLY wanted her agenda pushed through

She wanted everyone walkin'

But had many a-talkin'

That an election is really past due!!

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- [3](#)

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[frege64](#) wrote: Posted 2009/05/12

at 6:36 PM ET McIver never met a car he didn't like. Cars before people, every day. And he seems to have the room-temperature IQs known as Chabot and Connelly competing for the redneck suburbanite vote. God help us if any of these clowns ever become mayor.

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