

PO Box 6840
Ketchum, Idaho 83340

Mayor Neil Bradshaw
City Hall
PO Box 2315
Ketchum, Idaho 83340

6/11/2020

Dear Mayor Bradshaw

I preface the below by noting that as I have testified in front of Congress on multiple occasions (admittedly, not on the topic of street closures), I usually express my disapproval of government actions (which are *so often* uninformed and harmful, in my opinion) with standard, bureaucrat-friendly terminology such as, "Here are some unfortunate, unintended consequences of your legislation/decision of which you may not be aware." This sounds better than "How can you be so stupid?" However, I have seen so much gross stupidity as regards the below topic that I am not going to bother being polite.

In short: open up 4th Street. Now. The fact that you closed it at all is disrespectful of the people who live here and for whom YOU WORK (a reminder that you work for us taxpayers, not the other way around). Moreover, it is hypocritical in the Nth degree given the history of the Farmer's Market. City Hall's position seems to be: "We can no longer have a Farmer's Market on 4th Street one day a week in summer, but it's OK to close 4th Street every day now." Really? Under what twisted system of logic?

The best possible locale for the Farmer's Market was the same 4th Street that you are now closing. I understand moving it to Town Square a few summers ago when there was a lot of construction on 4th Street. But the Farmer's Market should have moved BACK to 4th Street when the construction finished. Hardly anybody can or will walk to River Run, and it is farcical to have cheery signs about how we should *bike* there (really, how many bikes have baskets in which you can put what you purchase at the Farmer's Market?) River Run is – hopeless. Almost everyone has to drive there.

When the Farmer's Market was in town, a lot of people could actually walk there and on 4th Street you could move around, unlike Town Square, which was too congested. River Run is not only a horrible locale, it's even worse with the Covid-steria-induced rule set: "You can't walk around as a pedestrian here until after 4PM!!!!" Really, Mr. Mayor? I can and I will. And let's not push any ideas about how we need more social distancing than 4th Street would allow. Nobody cared a rat's ass about social distancing when (so-called) peaceful protesters for Black Lives Matter were way closer than 10 feet AND blocked traffic on Main Street last week. Wow, could you be any more hypocritical?

The idea that somehow closing 4th Street will allow for more "social distancing pedestrians" assumes pedestrians are all *obligingly* going to walk down 4th Street. Really? There are more stores and restaurants on Sun Valley Road (which means more people will be walking there), and the sidewalk there is narrower. Why not close that? Oh, and Main Street (there are a lot of restaurants and businesses there) – close that, too. Your logic is flawed – no, it's completely bonkers.

So now you close 4th Street and for what possible purpose? The idea that somehow restaurants will benefit from 4th Street closure is delusional. Are there *any* restaurants on the closed sections of 4th Street? Why no, there aren't! Is anybody going to get takeout and sit outside on a public street to eat their takeout? Why, no. Did you even bother asking restaurant owners whether they thought there was a better-than-even chance that their business would increase if people could eat outside, on the tarmac, on 4th Street? <Crickets chirping.> Mayor Bradshaw, you should not be using the residents of Ketchum as lab rats for your "brilliant ideas."

As far as "promoting foot traffic." To where and for what? Does anybody who needs more than 4 items from the grocery *walk* there, and how is street closure going to increase people's willingness to walk when the damn sidewalk is already pretty wide? Do we need more bike traffic? Cyclists are the biggest traffic problem! I have lost track of the number of times I've almost been hit by spandex-clad bike snobs on 4th Street blitzing through stop signs (*pedestrians* have the right of way, not cyclists) and almost hitting me and or running over my dog. We need traffic enforcement **against cyclists**, not "encouraging them to just keep on gliding through stop signs because They Are Special." (Cars can get through intersections faster than bikes can, so why can bike riders ignore stop signs but cars can't? Explain that to me!)

Last but perhaps first, here are some data points from Day 1 of your Brilliant Street Closure. I saw nobody at those tables for most of the day. At most, two tables were occupied for mere minutes. Almost no pedestrians. I did see a lot of pissed off drivers. So what have you accomplished, besides a completely unacceptable level of utter disrespect for people who live here?

Not a G-d-damned thing.

In short, Mayor Bradshaw, you have blown it big time. Stop making stupid and overbearing government decisions without talking to the people To Whom You Report – us taxpayers. We aren't guinea pigs and you should not treat us as such.

"Free 4th Street."



Mary Ann Davidson