



Report
Staff Report
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton
 3/20/2024

Date: 2024-03-20

Subject: Results of 2023 Auto Theft Reduction Pilot Project (RM 2/2023)

Contact: Razmin Said, Manager, Community Safety & Well-Being Office

Report number: Community Services-2024-254

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the information report from Razmin Said, Manager, Community Safety & Well-Being Office to the Committee of Council Meeting of March 20, 2024, re: Results of 2023 Auto Theft Reduction Pilot Project, be received.

OVERVIEW:

- Prior to the launch of the Auto Theft Reduction Pilot Program, Peel Regional Police (PRP) statistical data for the year ending December 31, 2022, showed an eighty-six percent rise in auto thefts since 2020 in Brampton and Mississauga with 5,806 auto thefts in 2022 alone.
- Since the February 1, 2023 Brampton City Council motion, the city has taken numerous steps to address resident concerns for their safety and well-being due to the rise of auto theft in the community.
- In June 2023, the Auto Theft Reduction Pilot Program included the distribution of approximately 5,000 signal blocking pouches (SBP) to Brampton residents within five (5) pilot areas, which consisted of one in each ward pairing.
- PRP statistical data showed a decrease by thirty-seven percent (37%) in auto thefts in the five pilot areas, in the six months after the SBPs were mailed out, compared to 6 months before the distribution of the SBPs.
- PRP statistical data showed a decrease by forty-five percent (45%) in auto thefts in the streets surrounding the pilot areas since the SBPs were mailed out.
- There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND:

As auto thefts continue to rise across Canada, the City of Brampton has been drastically affected by this crime. There are several factors contributing to the sudden and dramatic rise in thefts, which include, but are not exclusive to, the vulnerability of keyless lock and keyless ignition fob technology present in most late model vehicles.

On February 1, 2023, Brampton Council passed a motion to help prevent auto thefts in Brampton following residents' significant concern for their safety and well-being due to the rise of auto theft in the community. The auto theft reduction pilot program, in collaboration with PRP, Peel Crime Stoppers, and generously sponsored by Performance Auto Group, included the distribution of SBP to Brampton residents, in five pilot areas, as a tool to help prevent a relay attack by blocking the radio signal given off by a key fob.

In addition to the distribution of SBPs and recognizing that municipalities across Ontario are facing similar challenges, Brampton City Council led advocacy efforts to raise awareness of the issue and encourage collaboration. The chart below highlights 2023 auto theft rates in surrounding municipalities.

Municipalities	2023 Auto Theft Statistics	2021 Census Population	% of Auto Theft to Population
Brampton	3,178	656,480	0.48%
Mississauga	4,482	717,961	0.62%
Toronto	12,088	2,794,356	0.43%
Vaughan	2,142	323,103	0.66%
Richmond Hill	702	202,022	0.35%
Markham	1,212	338,503	0.36%
Oakville	716	213,759	0.34%
Milton	235	132,979	0.18%
Burlington	382	186,948	0.20%

Recent advocacy efforts to curb auto theft rates in Brampton and promote greater collaboration on the matter included:

- *February 1, 2023:* Letter of advocacy to Federal MP Hon. Marco Mendicino, on tackling auto theft.
- *March 10, 2023:* Participated in Auto Theft Summit, hosted by PRP.
- *May 2, 2023:* Letter of advocacy to auto manufacturers requesting action to address the rising rates of auto theft.
- *October 20, 2023:* Anti-auto theft motion at the Ontario Big City Mayors (OBCM) conference.
- *November 3, 2023:* OBCM sent a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery on the resolution passed on auto theft and calling on the provincial government to take further action.
- *January 25, 2024:* Resolution approved by Regional Council for tackling the auto theft crisis.

- *February 2, 2024:* Resolution passed on January 25, 2024, Regional Council was forward to Minister Dominic LeBlanc to take further action on combatting auto theft.
- *February 8, 2024:* Attended and advocated for further action at the National Summit on Combatting Auto Theft, hosted by the Federal Public Safety Minister.
- Continuous advocacy to the federal government for additional screening at Ports, Intermodal Hubs, and stricter sentencing for auto theft crimes.
- Continuous advocacy to the provincial government to petition for auto insurance reform to make auto insurance rates more affordable for Brampton residents.
- Addition of 135 new PRP officers in 2024.
- Continuous resident interactions during Town Halls to raise awareness and share information regarding auto theft mitigation efforts.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The week of June 12, 2023, approximately 5,000 SBPs were distributed to Brampton residents within five pilot areas. One pilot area was identified in each ward pairing. Households making up 101 streets received the SBP in the mail along with a letter giving information on the situation and initiative. The SBPs prevent a relay attack by blocking the radio signal given off by a key fob, thereby foiling attempts to steal your vehicle while parked.

Prior to the launch of the Auto Theft Reduction Pilot Program, PRP statistical data for the year ending December 31, 2022, showed an eighty-six percent rise in auto thefts since 2020 in Brampton and Mississauga with 5,806 auto thefts in 2022.

To determine the success of the campaign's impact, PRP statistical data from the six-month period following the pilot (July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023) was assessed by the City of Brampton Community Safety & Well-Being Office (CSWO).

The chart below displays PRP statistical data six months after the distribution of SBPs in the five pilot areas:

	Wards 1 & 5	Wards 2 & 6	Wards 3 & 4	Wards 7 & 8	Wards 9 & 10	Total Auto Thefts
6-months pre-Pilot (January 1 to June 18, 2023)	12	6	7	20	15	60
6-months post-Pilot (June 19 to December 31, 2023)	7	8	4	9	10	38

Overall trend	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Overall Decrease 37%
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As stated in the chart above, there was a 37% decrease in auto theft rates in the five pilot areas six months after the pilot was launched. The SBPs provided an additional tool to reduce the likelihood of an auto theft with a key fob. Crime prevention focuses on layering multiple interventions to reduce the likelihood of a theft. It is important to note that the additional measures implemented and listed above contributed to the overall decrease in the rates of auto thefts in the pilot areas.

The effects of the pilot can also be seen in the surrounding areas of the selected streets. The chart below shows a decrease in the number of auto thefts within the streets near the pilot streets. The data shows that across all ward pairings, there is an overall decrease of 45% in auto thefts in surrounding streets, in the six months after the SBPs were mailed out.

	Wards 1 & 5	Wards 2 & 6	Wards 3 & 4	Wards 7 & 8	Wards 9 & 10
Surrounding Streets	33% Decrease	37.5% Decrease	40% Decrease	17% Decrease	71% Decrease

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This initiative supports the Strategic Focus Area of Health & Well-being, focused on resident's belonging, health, wellness, and safety. It provides crime prevention tools and information for people to utilize and apply to their daily routines. This initiative also aligns with the focus areas of the Council approved Community Safety Action Plan, safety, awareness, and empowerment.

CONCLUSION:

With the increasing concern of auto thefts in Brampton and across municipalities, Brampton City Council led the charge in raising awareness of the matter and ensuring the appropriate levels of government worked on finding solutions. In addition to advocating for system changes, the city also provided direct support to residents as they were the most affected. The distribution of free SBPs to Brampton neighbourhoods provided individuals with an additional prevention tool and information to support their decision making. This work advances Brampton's vision of an empowered and

connected Brampton where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging, and has their needs met.

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