

Date: 2022-06-06

Subject: Welcoming Streets Pilot Program

Contact: Ryan Lynn, Downtown Coordinator, Economic Development
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Report Number: Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2022-694

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** the report from Ryan Lynn, Downtown Coordinator, Economic Development, dated June 6, 2022 to Committee of Council Meeting of June 22, 2022, re: Welcoming Streets Pilot Program (2022-694) be received.

Overview:

- The purpose of this report is to update Council on Welcoming Streets Pilot Program activities since program launch.
- This program supports downtown business owners and, vulnerable individuals in the area of the Downtown Business Improvement Area. These individuals are often struggling with complex issues, such as poverty, mental health and addiction, and homelessness.
- This initiative is the result of an innovative partnership between the Region of Peel and the City of Brampton, with support from community partners such as Peel Regional Police, CMHA, Regeneration and the Downtown Brampton BIA.
- Region of Peel staff will be reporting back to Regional Council in September 2022 with a more fulsome report on the preliminary results of the pilot program.
- This report aligns with the Term of Council priorities, which include making Brampton a Safe & Healthy City focusing on community safety.

Background:

In June 2021, Regional Council directed the Region to provide the City of Brampton with up to \$250,000 for a 12-month Welcoming Streets pilot in downtown Brampton. The pilot program was co-designed by the Region of Peel and the City of Brampton to provide for program staff that would support vulnerable populations in accessing programs and services designed to improve their outcomes and act as a liaison between these individuals and downtown stakeholders, building trusting and effective relationships over time. Throughout the pilot period, Regional staff, together with City of Brampton staff, will monitor program outcomes.

Purpose:

Welcoming Streets Leaders work to support business owners by responding to situations that do not require the help of the police. In addition, Leaders engage with vulnerable individuals to ensure they are connected with the services they need.

Expected Outcomes:

- Business owners feel supported and have access to the information they need
- Vulnerable individuals feel supported, and are linked with the services they need
- The downtown core is safe and inclusive for all community members

Anticipated outcomes of the program include more timely responses to businesses' requests for assistance with loitering individuals, enhanced communication and collaboration among stakeholders, improvements in cleanliness as well as in perceptions of community safety and well-being, more options to resolve issues outside of police involvement and security responses and improved support to vulnerable populations in accessing programs and services to improve their outcomes. Throughout the pilot period, Regional staff, together with City of Brampton staff, will monitor program outcomes and determine where program funding, administration and oversight are ideally suited.

Current Situation:

As of the end of May 2022, the pilot has been in the field for approximately four months. There are four Leaders in the field on weekdays between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm from Monday to Wednesday, and between 11:30 am and 8:30 pm from Wednesday to Friday. Collectively, this group is referred to as the "Welcoming Streets Team". A typical day is a combination of directly assisting the vulnerable, liaising with the downtown business community related to assisting the vulnerable population. The initial phase includes building relationships with the downtown businesses and the vulnerable population in Downtown Brampton. It will also support educational initiatives that focus on heightening awareness among business owners on the existing capacity to assist and resources available to the vulnerable population through workshops to the BIA and their membership.

The intention is that when a business does call for support, the business owner has already been previously engaged and has awareness of the Welcoming Streets pilot

through contact with our Leaders. Building relationships with the vulnerable and the business community takes time and effort.

Through the Team’s interactions with the vulnerable population they are able to provide individuals with resources and referrals such as North Peel and Dufferin Legal community services, ROP housing services including the Out of the Cold Program, central intake (emergency shelter support), and the Peel Outreach Team, laundry and washroom services, nurse practitioners, health care services, Employment Ontario, Roots Community Services, and many other services housed within Regeneration as well as direction on where to obtain these services. Bus tickets are made available through Brampton Transit as required. These items allow them to start the engagement process with individuals, which in turn creates an avenue to further engage and provide support.

The Team is working in collaboration with community stakeholders and agencies. The Team has met with Peel Regional Police to discuss the Pilot Program and the support needed from Peel Police. The Team has also built relationships with Regeneration, CMHA, the Region of Peel’s Housing Services division, and the Region of Peel’s Harm Reduction team. It’s important for the Welcoming Streets pilot to not overlap the efforts of our partner but instead to augment the programs and activities of the downtown.

In the first few months of the Pilot, the Team has been working closely with the stakeholders involved with the above noted stakeholders to ensure that Brampton and the Region of Peel has a cooperative and collaborative approach toward dealing with complex issues facing the City and the downtown. These issues include the impact of COVID-19 which has led to many business closures, mental health, poverty, food insecurity, and addiction. As we enter the summer months and the weather is warmer, staff is anticipating more interactions with the community and calls from stakeholders in the downtown.

Welcoming Streets Activity Summary

The results below represent the interactions the Welcoming Street team has had since this pilot program started.

	Business owner interactions	Vulnerable individual interactions	Referrals
Month 1	63	3	1
Month 2	27	19	4
Month 3	13	21	13
TOTALS TO DATE	109	60	29

City staff continue to meet monthly with the Welcoming Streets Program Design Table to give updates on the progress of the pilot. Participation on the working table includes representatives from the BIA, Peel Regional Police, ROP Housing Services, ROP Waste Management, ROP Health Services, ROP Strategic Initiatives, CMHA, Regeneration, COB Security, COB EDO, COB Community Services, COB Planning, and Community Safety.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications. The Pilot program is funded by the Region of Peel.

Term of Council Priorities:

The Welcoming Streets Pilot Program aligns with Term of Council priorities, which include making Brampton a Safe & Healthy City focusing on community safety and well-being, and having a Well Run City by effectively managing existing City assets and programs.

Conclusion:

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