

Appendix II Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

Background Information: Feasibility Study

The background information in this appendix provides further information about the components of the feasibility study undertaken by staff, which include:

- Legislative framework
 - The *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended
 - The *Planning Act, 1990*
- Roles and responsibilities
 - Local municipalities, City of Brampton
 - BIAs, Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Association
 - Regional municipalities, Region of Peel
- Survey
- Jurisdictional scan of programs in other Ontario municipalities

a) Legislative Framework

i) The *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended

The *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, is provincial legislation that governs all municipalities in Ontario (except for the City of Toronto, which is subject to the *City of Toronto Act*), as a responsible and accountable level of government.

The *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended permits local municipalities to establish business improvement areas and may establish a board of management (i.e., a BIA) with the following intent:

- (a) to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally; and
- (b) to promote the area as a business or shopping area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (1).

The *Municipal Act, 2001*, under certain conditions, also provides authority for a municipality to make a grant on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, to any person, group, or body within or outside of the boundaries of the municipality.

ii) The *Planning Act, 1990*, and Municipal Use of Community Improvement Plans (CIPs)

The *Planning Act, 1990*, is provincial legislation that lays out the rules for land use planning in terms of how land uses may be controlled and by whom. Section 28 of the *Planning Act, 1990* defines and authorizes community improvement plans (CIPs) as a planning tool that allows a municipality to develop a comprehensive plan for community improvement within a predefined community improvement project area. Within a CIP, the *Act* allows municipalities the ability to offer financial incentives such as loans or grants for private business owners that can be used to make improvements to the area.

Appendix II Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

b) Roles and Responsibilities

i) Local Municipality

As per the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, a local municipality initiates, supports, and funds their BIAs. The role of the local municipality with their BIAs usually focus on economic development matters. Ways in which municipalities can support their BIAs include:

- Encouraging local business leaders to get started and participating on an ongoing basis;
- Providing a supportive growth management and development strategy;
- Providing financial and technical resource assistance;
- Instituting public improvements;
- Providing encouragement and support to BIAs and their staff; and,
- Raising awareness of BIAs among municipal staff and the public at large.

City of Brampton

The City of Brampton supports the Downtown Brampton BIA (DBBIA) and its downtown area in numerous ways. One approach is through its Central Area Community Improvement Plan, which advances objectives related to the revitalization of downtown Brampton. The City also funds the DBBIA and provides community safety, litter control, and services that support local businesses.

Central Area Community Improvement Plan

The City of Brampton's Central Area Community Improvement Plan (CIP) has several programs designed to support specific planning objectives by aligning financial incentives with identified planning goals. Programs include:

- Façade Improvement Program
- Building Improvement Program
- Development Charge Incentive Program
- Sign Permit Fee Subsidy Program
- Display of Wares Application

BIA Funding

The BIA and the City of Brampton work collaboratively to promote the downtown core as a key attraction and destination. In addition to the CIP programs, the City assists the BIA through a marketing partnership, rent and other relief, the BIA tax levy, and other in-kind summer event support. The BIA tax levy for 2021 is \$392,943.

The City also provides tax levy relief to the BIA for buildings purchased by the City in the DBBIA area. As these properties no longer have commercial tenants and the buildings are tax exempt, the properties no longer have the BIA levy applied to them. Each year the City calculates what the total BIA levy impact is for all City purchased properties and how that results in a BIA budget deficit. The City then provides financial assistance to the BIA to cover that deficit. The amount for 2021 is \$60,484.

Appendix II Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

Community Safety

Another way in which the City supports the downtown area is through the lens of community safety. The Brampton Community Safety Advisory Committee aims to raise awareness, advise, and stimulate action to serve as a resource to Council on matters pertaining to community safety in the City of Brampton. There is also a Downtown Area Sub Committee that reports into the Brampton Community Safety Advisory Committee.

Litter

Litter enforcement and mitigation in Peel is the responsibility of the local municipalities and each local municipality has enacted by-laws to address litter. In the City of Brampton, litter is addressed under the *Prohibit or Regulate Public Nuisances By-law 136-2018*. Additionally, litter mitigation public awareness campaigns, installation of street litter receptacles, and managing outdoor public places such as parks, trails or paths and sports fields are the responsibility of the local municipalities. In partnership with Region of Peel Waste Management, services have been increased whereby the Region collects garbage twice a week and recycling once a week from downtown curbside locations. This is a unique service provided to businesses that are located within a BIA.

Brampton Entrepreneur Centre

Through the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre, City staff provide support to small businesses with a focus on contributing to the stability and growth of the Brampton economy and promoting long-term sustainability. The centre also provides current, accurate and thorough information through online documents, seminars and workshops, consultations, and business plan reviews with a strong customer service approach.

ii) **Business Improvement Associations (BIAs)**

First created in Toronto in 1970, a Business Improvement Association (BIA) is a non-profit association that enables local commercial property owners and their commercial tenants within a defined area to work in partnership with the local municipality to organize, finance, and carry out physical improvements and promote economic development. The BIA works to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses.

Impact of BIAs

BIAs improve the local economy through activities such as:

- Maintaining streets and sidewalks and making capital improvements;
- Promoting the BIA as a business, employment, tourist or shopping area (e.g., business directories, festivals, advertising);
- Hosting neighbourhood festivals and events;
- Initiating safety, security and crime prevention programs;
- Providing graffiti and poster removal services on building façades that are visible from the street;
- Developing strategic plans for business recruitment, market studies and capital improvements; and,
- Advocating on behalf of their membership as a unified voice.

Appendix II

Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

There are seven designated BIAs in Peel Region. They are located in Bolton, Clarkson, Cooksville, Downtown Brampton, Malton, Port Credit, and Streetsville.

Downtown Brampton BIA

The vision of the Downtown Brampton BIA (DBBIA) is that downtown Brampton is a respected and welcoming destination dedicated to bringing people together for quality shopping, services and entertainment. Its mission is that the DBBIA promotes and enhances downtown Brampton through marketing, events and beautification to build confidence and engagement with its members and the community.

Its corporate goals are to:

- Create a cool and trendy vibe;
- Promote the value and raise awareness of Downtown Brampton; and,
- Create synergy with the City of Brampton for the betterment of the downtown.

Most of the DBBIA's funding is sourced from the City of Brampton. Other sources of revenue include sponsorships and provincial grants. The DBBIA is very active and supports its members with a variety of programs, which include:

- Floral and Decorative Rebate Application;
- Clean and Safe Rebate Program Application;
- Music in the City Application;
- Marketing Recovery Rebate Application;
- Special Events Grant Application;
- Digital Main Street Grants; and,
- Digital Main Street – ShopHERE Grant/Program.

iii) Region of Peel

The Region of Peel provides a range of programs and services to residents. Programs funded and supported by the Region that are particularly relevant for downtown Brampton are street outreach and drop-in centre programs, curbside waste pick-up and needle drop boxes.

Through funding that the Region provides to the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Outreach Program provides a 24/7 street helpline as well as mobile vans that provide mental health, addictions, medical, and housing supports. This program was recently expanded with temporary COVID-19 funding. This funding also supported the opening of the drop-in centre located in downtown Brampton, which provides individuals experiencing homelessness with a safe indoor space to congregate, meals, hygiene kits, winter accessories and sleeping quarters for up to 16 overnight guests at a time. The Region does not administer or fund other social or community services provided in the downtown area.

In response to concerns about the improper disposal or litter of needles in Brampton, in 2020 the Region allocated \$26,240 of Reaching Home funding from the federal government to implement a needle drop box pilot program on a temporary basis. Reaching Home provides funding to municipalities for preventing and reducing homelessness. Working in partnership with the City of Brampton, 11 receptacles were

Appendix II

Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

installed by the Region in July 2020. The drop boxes allow for the safe disposal of needles, syringes, and lancets. The pilot program runs until August 2021.

The Region of Peel collects curbside garbage and recycling in downtown Brampton. This is a unique service that the Region provides to the privately-owned businesses located there. Through an agreement between the Region and the City of Brampton, the Region collects garbage twice a week and recycling once a week in the downtown. As part of that agreement, the Region also investigates all reported complaints of loose or overflowing roadside litter, recycling, and dual-stream containers and provides the required clean-up of the container and the affected area around the container. Within 24 hours, the Region cleans up any street litter or recycling that are a result of the program. As well, in partnership with the City of Brampton, the Region coordinates clean-up of street litter that is found in city parks, public properties, boulevards in non-residential locations, and new housing developments.

c) Survey

Staff conducted a survey targeted to businesses located in downtown Brampton with the assistance of the City of Brampton and the Downtown Brampton BIA. The survey asked for input from respondents on what they felt were the important issues in downtown Brampton.

Twenty-seven out of 224 businesses (12%) surveyed provided a response. A key finding was that respondents felt the most important issue in the downtown was people under the influence of drugs and/or displaying aggressive behaviour, followed by individuals loitering, and community safety. Respondents felt outdoor cleanliness on private property was a less important issue. Other concerns noted ranged from vacant properties in the core, a request for a post office to be located downtown, snow clearing, additional lighting, cleaning up garbage on private property, vandalism, and a lack of free parking. Respondents liked the curbside waste pick-up service and were generally supportive of the needle drop box program.

d) Jurisdictional Scan

To understand how other local municipalities have addressed similar challenges in their downtown/Business Improvement Areas, Region of Peel staff conducted a jurisdictional scan of various programs in Ontario. Staff also met with the various stakeholders who implemented these programs, which are led by local municipalities and the local Business Improvement Association.

The Town of Guelph Welcoming Streets Initiative

The Welcoming Streets Initiative supports business owners by providing Peer Outreach Workers who respond to situations that do not require police assistance. The worker interacts with individuals who are loitering to ensure they are connected to appropriate supports and services. The program aims to ensure that both business owners and individuals feel supported and have access to the information and training that they require, as well as helping to ensure that downtown Guelph is safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all community members.

The City of Oshawa Welcoming Streets Program

The City of Oshawa's Welcoming Streets Program was inspired by Guelph's success. It aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all by providing targeted

Appendix II Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton

street outreach services to vulnerable individuals in addition to educating and training businesses in the downtown area. The program was introduced in September 2019 by the City of Oshawa, who continues to lead the program. The program is conducted in partnership with the Carea Community Health Centre and the Downtown Oshawa BIA. Since January 2021, program staff have interacted with 1,592 clients, resulting in more than 185 referrals to support agencies, and visited more than 184 businesses.

The City of Cambridge Ambassador Program

The City of Cambridge's Ambassador Program was established in 2018. It is an initiative of the City of Cambridge's Infrastructure and Parks and Recreation Departments. The program aims to enrich the downtown experience in three core areas for residents, pedestrians, businesses, and visitors. Ambassadors provide a variety of services, including:

- street and sidewalk cleaning
- litter and debris removal (including needle debris)
- graffiti removal
- weed removal
- maintenance of planters and flower beds
- greeting visitors and providing tourism information and directions
- requesting voluntary compliance with City ordinances
- reporting public disturbances to Regional Police
- connecting vulnerable people with social services when needed
- acting as a resource for general information on City operations

Each year the program supports 448 businesses, receives 1,200-1,600 calls, and removes 10-15 tonnes of trash, with an average response time of 25-30 minutes. City of Cambridge staff advised that litter and debris removal is done on public property only, except for needle debris; any litter or debris on private property is the responsibility of the property owner. Needle debris is removed by Ambassador Program staff on both public and private property.

Table I: Summary of Programs in Other Jurisdictions

Region/City	Program	Partners and Funders	Outcomes	Annual Costs & Staffing Resources
City of Guelph	Welcoming Streets Initiative	Guelph Community Health Centre, Guelph Police Services, Downtown Guelph Business Association	Five-month pilot interacted with 670 individuals , received 145 calls for support , and provided 24 presentations to local businesses and agencies.	\$156,000 2 FTEs
City of Oshawa	Welcoming Streets Program	City of Oshawa, C.A.R.E.A. Community Health, Downtown Oshawa BIA	Since 2019, program staff have interacted with 550 individuals , resulting in more than 200 referrals to support agencies , and visited more than 400 businesses and seen 250 participants in workshops . Since January 2021, program staff have interacted with 1,592 clients , resulting in more than 185 referrals to support agencies , and visited more than 184 businesses .	\$240,000 2 FTEs & 1 PT student

**Appendix II
Creating a Welcoming Streets Pilot Program for Brampton**

City of Cambridge	Ambassador Program	City of Cambridge (Infrastructure and Parks and Recreation Departments)	Each year on average supports 448 businesses , receives 1,200-1,600 calls , and removes 10-15 tonnes of trash , with an average response time of 25-30 minutes .	\$913,000 9 FTEs (3 downtown areas)
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Table II: Staffing and Funding Resources by Program

Program and Municipality	No. of staff	Annual budget
Welcoming Streets, Guelph	2 FTEs	\$156,000
Welcoming Streets, Oshawa	2 FTEs and 1 PT student	\$240,000
Ambassador Program, Cambridge	9 FTEs	\$913,000