



TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: STREET PERFORMER PROGRAM

WARD: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: A. DYKE, CULTURE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT, EXT 4593

SUBMITTED BY: K. DUBEAU, DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE ECONOMY

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: Z. LIFSHIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INVEST BARRIE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That staff in Creative Economy in consultation with the Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) review the Street Performer Program on an annual basis.
2. That staff in Creative Economy report back to General Committee through a memorandum regarding the Street Performer Program's effect on downtown visitors and revitalization, while exploring opportunities for increased partnership and program enhancements to ensure sustainability by February of each year.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

Report Overview

3. On April 20, 2009, City Council adopted motion 09-G-147 regarding the investigation of live and/or recorded music in the downtown core:

"That staff in the Department of Culture and Municipal Enforcement Office develop a permit process to designate specific locations for busking, provide criteria with respect to the selection of busker, e.g. Length of performances, volume restrictions, costuming guidelines, content appropriateness, and the solicitation and/or the acceptance of payment".
4. A permit process for the street performers was consequently developed and approved by City Council, and the Department of Culture implemented the new program in the summer of 2009.
5. The purpose of this Staff Report is to update City Council on the evolution and impacts of the Street Performer Program since its inception.
6. Staff Report DOC007-10 indicated the initial annual cost of the Street Performer Program was \$11,673.
7. In an attempt to respond to comments from the Street Performers, some changes to the program have occurred over the years. In 2010 the permit fee was initially \$100, and was subsequently lowered to \$50 after the performers noted the fee was too high. Many of the street performers are

youth who attend secondary or post-secondary school or are full-time artists living on limited incomes. Making revenue on their performances was identified as essential.

8. The street performers selected in 2009 indicated that they were not able to recover the \$100 permit fee or the other associated costs such as parking fees, from their audience. One of the main goals of the program is for emerging artists to learn to engage their audiences while honing their craft and earning income through their art. It is important that they make a return on their performances as this keeps them committed to the program and engaged in the process of animating the downtown core.
9. When the program began City and BIA staff selected 15 locations and over the years these were refined and reduced in an effort to increase exposure and tips to performers. The current program identifies the downtown business improvement area borders and allows scheduled performers to entertain audiences anywhere within the designated area during their shift provided they are on City property and are not interfering with other business or programming.
10. In 2014 after continuing to hear that the permit fees were cost-prohibitive, and finding that the voluntary scheduling system did not guarantee animation in key locations in the downtown during key times, the Department of Culture opted to move away from a permit system. It was decided that the Department of Culture would hire a small number of performers, through the traditional audition process, to be paid as non-union, part-time employees of the City of Barrie.
11. Department of Culture staff worked with Human Resources to set an appropriate starting wage at Level Four, Step Four of the Non-union Part-time wage schedule. In 2014 six artists were hired as City of Barrie employees and given regularly scheduled shifts to fill. Feedback from the hired street performers was generally positive and staff in the Department of Culture as well as at the Downtown Barrie Business Association noticed an increase in animation during key times.
12. In 2015, four of the six performers from the previous year auditioned for the program again, along with 21 other acts. Increased marketing, integration into existing events and having performers commit to shifts as staff members resulted in an improved program known for giving local artists exposure and the opportunity to be paid for their work.
13. In 2016 and 2017 staff noted a further increase in the number of auditions, with many program participants re-auditioning year after year. Feedback from the Street Performers, BIA and others from outside of Barrie have indicated to Creative Economy Department (formerly Department of Culture) staff that this model accomplishes the original goals of the program: to support downtown revitalization efforts by creating a lively and dynamic atmosphere in the City's core while ensuring artists get paid for their work.
14. The total budget for the Street Performer Program in 2017 was \$9,072.26, which included salaries, benefits and related expenses. The BIA sponsors the program annually by providing \$1,800 towards salary costs, as well as in-kind support through marketing efforts.

ANALYSIS

15. Several Street Performers have "grown up" through this program, honing their skills in anticipation of professional careers in the performing arts with each of them going on to study music or music business while returning to Barrie to participate in the program. Three of the four annually-returning performers have gone on to sign record deals, travelled to LA or Nashville to record and perform for key industry insiders, and have been acknowledged at a local or regional level for their talent and dedication.

16. A survey to the BIA members received only positive feedback despite a low response rate, with members stating that the program supports young and emerging artists, adds a relaxing, comfortable feeling to the downtown, encourages diversity and supports tourism efforts.
17. Positive feedback from all participants led staff in the Creative Economy Department to propose a Peer to Peer Presentation on Street Performer Programs to the Creative City Network of Canada as part of their 2017 summit in Halifax, NS. Staff were invited to present their unique program as a model that other communities are investigating as a best practice, contributing to building Barrie's brand as a creative hub and leader in supporting a creative economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

18. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

19. As this Staff Report is being presented for information purposes only, no alternatives are presented.

FINANCIAL

20. There are no financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation as the costs associated with the Street Performer Program have been included in annual business plans, including the 2018 Business Plan. Operating expenditures related to the recommendation are included in account 01-36-3256. No additional staff resources will be required to implement the recommendation.

LINKAGE TO 2014-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN

21. The recommendation included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan:
 - Vibrant Business Environment
 - Inclusive Community
22. The Street Performers Program supports the goal of developing a vibrant business environment by creating an atmosphere of positivity and creativity in downtown Barrie, thereby encouraging shoppers to linger in the city centre and explore local businesses.
23. This program supports the goal of creating an inclusive community by enhancing public spaces and supporting diverse and safe neighbourhoods.

Appendices: Appendix "A" – Testimonials
Appendix "B" – Artists/Acts Who Have Participated in the Street Performer Program

APPENDIX "A"

Testimonials

"The Downtown Barrie Street Performer program in partnership with the City of Barrie Creative Economy Department has been **an integral layer of programming that has contributed to creating a safe, fun, interactive environment** that has helped to establish and maintain a dynamic downtown atmosphere. By supporting local artists through this program it has allow the artists the opportunity to perfect their performance as well as gain public exposure. We are proud of this partnership!"

– Craig Stevens, Managing Director Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA)

"I have been a busker known as "FireGuy" for over twenty years. My show has brought me to Busker Festivals all over Canada and the world. I work as a busker consultant with both Harbourfront Center and Dundas Square in Toronto. I love street performing so much that I created a busker based talent agency called Dispatch Talent. We help festivals, events, BIA's and municipalities find quality performers at a fair price. I also mentor up and coming buskers and help them to launch their careers.

The purpose of this letter is to talk about the City of Barrie's unique approach at fostering a culture of street entertainment. I have worked with Amanda Dyke and her team on a number of events for the City including a Busker based event. In that time I was even invited to give a Busker 101 class for some of the performers. It was there that I learned about the busker program the City of Barrie offers to local entertainers. **Because Barrie is a growing city, but not as densely populated as Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, they decided to audition buskers and pay them an hourly wage. I've busked in many different cities and countries and have never heard of a city paying people to busk. Their support is a huge help in confidence and appreciation to developing acts.** In time this should empower more performers to join the program while activating the downtown with music and art. I'm excited to see how the program grows in the coming years. Hopefully more cities and towns will follow their lead."

– Brant Matthews, Dispatch Talent

"I would just like to say thank you for allowing me to be part of this program. It has been a great experience. The impact this program has had for me: I have gained a ton more experience performing in all kinds of conditions. When to use a PA system and when not to, and how that effected my performance, my voice and developing interaction with people. Learning the ideal locations to busk. Also the weather and how that effected everything that was planned.

There has been a lot of learning this past summer. I have dealt with many kinds of people on the street. Overall everybody was so kind and generous. **I have even developed a few followers that I did not know before. They would applause from their 2nd and 3rd floor balconies across the street, was pretty cool. I even got a few gigs from busking.** I noticed I could fill an empty patio with people just walking by to hear me sing earlier in the summer when the bars did not pump out music from inside the bar. Once the bars provided their own music I was drowned out and their patios were not as full as compared to when I performed earlier in the year. I gained so much more confidence. The organization on your part and the staff of the City of Barrie has been tremendous. This is a program that needs to stay".

– John Anderson, first-time Street Performer in 2017



“It has been an amazing last four years as a Street Performer and the program gets better each year. The program has really helped me further my career by making connections with people who see me performing during my shift and then contact me for further performance opportunities. Last summer I was able to perform at Blue Mountain Resort and this summer I met the head of Siva Creative who just had me perform at their opening event. It is a great program and I hope to be part of it again in the future!”

- Melina Hanke (Melle), Street Performer since 2014 and winner of the Most Promising Youth Award at the 2017 Barrie Arts Awards

Appendix "B"

Artists and Acts Who Have Participated in the Street Performer Program

John Anderson	Danny Leck
Maria Asunmaa	Jenna Lee
Megan Baillie	Shay Lee
Connory Ballantyne and Rebekah Hawker	Brynn Leger and Kaitlyn Sutton
Mary-Florence Bartley	Jacqueline Lovely and Vin Black
Mike Bennett	Molly McNulty
Scott Bingham	Sarah Morano
Ian Chaplin	Jon Palmer
Cathy Charlebois-Nahanee	Bryan Patton
Neil Crowe	Shamus Petrie
Joshua Doerksen	PJ and Oli
Rayne Donkers	Marcus Rodgers
Lyric Dubee	Alyssa Polan
Brittney Fulton	Gerry Shaput
Manny Gratz	Mose Stephenson
Melina Hanke	Thundercelt
James Harrison	Ashley Valiant-Blackwood
Tori Hathaway	Cara Wardell
Gillian Hay	Troy Wellington
Emily Hoppe	Ty and Xander Lloyd
Charlie Istok	Mitchell Wilson
Daniel Jacklin and Stephen Keohan	Kasey Kohring and Brandon Pellatt
Linda Laforge	