



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 CREATIVE ECONOMY

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

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

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the Street Performer Program be renamed to the Emerging Musician Program to capitalize on the successful track record of the program in launching musical careers.
2. That musicians be issued annual permits and perform during scheduled shifts in return for gratuities from the public and increased marketing support as compensation.
3. That Council approve the following objectives of the program:
 - a) Animation of downtown Barrie, outside of high traffic time such as festivals and events; and
 - b) Harnessing the downtown community as a platform to showcase emerging Barrie musicians.
4. That staff in Creative Economy report back to General Committee through a memorandum regarding the Emerging Musician Program's effect on downtown visitors and revitalization by March 31st of each year.
5. That staff in Creative Economy continue to explore opportunities for increased partnership and program enhancements to ensure sustainability.
- 6.

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

Report Overview

7. The purpose of this Staff Report is to propose an updated framework for the Street Performer Program, renaming it to the Emerging Musician Program and moving to a permit based system for program performers that addresses operational issues such as insurance, scheduling and compensation.
8. 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 buskers, e.g. Length of performances, volume restrictions, costuming guidelines, content appropriateness, and the solicitation and/or the acceptance of payment”.

9. A permit process for the street performers was consequently developed and approved by City Council, and the Department of Culture implemented the program in the summer of 2009. Staff Report DOC007-10 indicated the initial annual cost of the Street Performer Program was \$11,673.
10. Changes to the program were made throughout its implementation, including lowering the initial permit fee of \$100 to \$50 after the performers noted the fee was too high. Many of the street performers were youth who attended school or were full-time artists living on limited incomes and the permit fee posed a barrier to participation.
11. Scheduling and maintaining animation of downtown with live performance throughout non-peak times continued to be an issue. While some locations and times were easily covered (during festivals and times where there was high foot traffic volume), other times did not generate sufficient income from gratuities to maintain the musician's commitment.
12. In 2014, Staff made the decision to hire performers as part-time municipal staff, which resulted in a stronger commitment by performers to fulfil their scheduled shifts. It also addressed the issue of street performers having to pay for required insurance coverage to perform on municipal property.
13. 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 costs, as well as in-kind support through marketing efforts.
14. At Council direction, as an outcome of Staff Report CE012-17, Creative Economy staff conducted a thorough review of the program and benchmarking of other communities to determine the best program model for achieving the objectives set by Council.
15. Benchmarking of comparable communities revealed that those with a busking or street performer program in place do not pay their performers and a variety of permitting and insurance formats exist. Permit and insurance costs for performers' participation range from free for small to midsize cities to \$45 for very large cities with high foot traffic. See Appendix "A" to Staff Report CE003-18 for a chart of comparable communities.
16. Creative Economy Staff met with staff from Human Resources, Risk Management and Internal Audit to discuss options regarding compensation of performers, policies with respect to gratuities, and insurance options. Staff noted that as paid staff, performers could not accept tips per the City's Staff Code of Conduct. Should the program return to a permitted one where performers are not insured as staff, there would be a minimum \$2,000 cost associated with insuring up to 10 performers under the City's insurance policy.
17. Street Performers were brought together in the fall of 2017 to discuss possible changes to the program and gather their thoughts on what works and what might be improved upon. Results from that meeting and associated survey indicate that performers would rather collect tips than receive an hourly wage under the City's non-union, part-time pay scale for employees. Performers indicated that increased branding and marketing of the program would improve their chances of earning increased tips and significantly contribute towards building an audience and profile for their music.

ANALYSIS

18. The primary intent of this program is to animate the downtown core on a regular basis. Providing incentives for inconsistent foot traffic and removing barriers to performers' participation and success are necessary to achieve the stated objective of increasing animation in the downtown. A schedule and thorough marketing plan ensures performances during key times and increases exposure to the community for selected musicians. Marketing, including traditional advertising and public relations tools, identification and portable signage for artists, kiosk signage and schedules in high traffic areas, and presentations by artists at City of Barrie and BIA-hosted events serve to legitimize the program to the public and position it as professional and valued.

19. The Street Performer program has acted as a launch pad for Barrie musicians. Emerging artists learn to engage their audiences while honing their craft and earning income through their art. Several Street Performers have “grown up” through this program, developing professional careers or studying music or music business while returning to Barrie to participate in the program each summer. Three of the four annually-returning performers have gone on to sign record deals, have travelled outside of Canada to record and perform for key industry insiders, and have been acknowledged at a regional level for their talent. This has helped to build Barrie’s cultural brand nationally and internationally. These findings are supported through testimonials from the artists, included in Appendix “B”.
20. Given that the majority of performers in the program have been musicians, the track record of success that the performers have achieved using the program as a launch pad and the emerging focus of original live music in the City of Barrie, staff recommend that the program be re-positioned as the Emerging Musician Program. This would align with the preliminary findings from the music strategy study being conducted by the City of Barrie in partnership with the County of Simcoe and RTO7.
21. The program has proven itself to be complimentary to other arts and career development programs offered by the City, with music artists aiming for professional careers making up the majority of the City’s Street Performers. Four performers have participated in the City’s Artrepreneur program, learning from business experts and creating business plans for their musical careers. Ten of the artists have been nominated in the Most Promising Youth or Emerging Artist category at the Barrie Arts Awards, with three winning awards. One performer recently completed a workshop by Canada’s Music Incubator hosted by the Creative Economy Department, a music entrepreneur intensive focused on the business skills required for professional musicians to succeed. The involvement of street performers in other programs offered by the Creative Economy Department indicates that this program should be positioned as part of the City’s start-up economy.
22. There have been several positive changes to programming and animation in downtown Barrie since the inception of the Street Performer program. These include the development of a growing sidewalk patio program, weekly car shows supplemented by outdoor films twice a month, promotions with radio stations and charities to increase business on week nights, and the development of Memorial Square and Meridian Place. According to the BIA, these programs have increased interest and foot traffic in downtown Barrie, suggesting that the capacity for tip-taking by artists has increased since the inception of the program, and a permitting process for Street Performers may now be feasible.
23. Based on analysis and feedback, a no-fee permit process where musicians may perform in downtown Barrie in exchange for insurance coverage, promotion and professional development is the optimal arrangement to achieve the City and BIA’s goal of animation while allowing musicians to collect tips and be acknowledged as valued members of the downtown ecosystem.
24. Place-making, community-building and career-building are key themes of the program. These can be realized through a program where selected performers are supported by the City and BIA through coordinated efforts in professional development, promotion, insurance coverage, and the shift to new technology such as cryptocurrency to enable gratuities in a culture where fewer people carry cash for leaving tips.

25. The following chart is an analysis of the alternative options for the program:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
	Paid Staff (no tips)	Recommended Program (No fee permit; insurance included)	\$25 Permit Fee in place; insurance included	No fee; performers pay for their own insurance
Program Expenses	\$9072.26	\$5100 -insurance = \$2000 -marketing = \$2500 -auditions = \$600	\$5,100 -insurance -marketing -auditions	\$3100 -marketing -auditions
Program Revenue	\$1800 -BIA contribution	\$1800	\$2050 -BIA & permit fees	\$1800
Barriers to Program Success Removed	X	√	√	X
Insurance for musicians provided	√	√	√	X
Reduced City Staff Resources	X	√	X	√
Potential for High-quality, Committed Artists	√	√	X	X
Program Objectives Achieved	X	√	X	X

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

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

ALTERNATIVES

27. The following alternatives are available for consideration by General Committee:

Alternative #1

General Committee could decide to continue paying the performers as employees and request that they no longer accept tips.

This alternative is not recommended as survey results show performers are only willing to consider forgoing tips if their hourly wage is increased from the existing level. This will result in fewer or lesser-quality artists auditioning and being selected for the program, which would diminish the professionalism of the program and therefore decrease animation in downtown Barrie. Further, the recent increases to minimum wage may impact the overall program budget under this model of compensation

Alternative #2

General Committee could decide to implement a no-fee permit-based program and require artists to provide their own insurance.

This alternative is not recommended as most of the City's Street Performers do not carry their own liability insurance and the cost to purchase it as an individual is upwards of \$500. This will make participation in the program cost-prohibitive for many young and emerging artists and will result in less animation in the downtown.

Alternative #3

General Committee could decide to have the program return to the original model where the City charges a permit fee and does not implement a performer schedule.

This alternative is not recommended as the level of foot traffic, though increased since the program's inception, is not high enough to support a program with little structure, and performers will be less inclined to participate out of concern that they will not make enough to cover their permit fee and daily parking costs. This will result in decreased animation in downtown Barrie.

Alternative #4

General Committee could decide to cancel the Street Performer program.

This alternative is not recommended as it does not align with Council's Strategic Plan, the City's Plan for Culture or the Waterfront and Marina Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL

28. In 2017, the total budget for the program was \$9,072.26 with \$1,800 coming from the BIA. The 2018 budget has \$9,112.99 allocated to the program with the BIA committing \$1,800 once again.
29. The recommended motion will maintain the current budget and reallocate the salary component of the budget to support the increased marketing costs related to signage, paid advertising and digital exposure of the program. Marketing and auditions expenses and insurance costs will still apply. By carrying over the existing budget and leveraging in-kind media partnerships, the program achieves the same objective while investing in development and place-making.
30. Operating expenditures related to the recommendation are included in account 01-36-3256. No additional staff resources will be required to implement the recommendation.

The municipality has a vested interest in ensuring that performers who are operating on municipal property have appropriate insurance coverage. As this can be a barrier for some performers, particularly young and emerging artists, and due to recent changes in the City's insurance program, there is an ability to provide comprehensive coverage for up to ten non-staff individuals under the current City policy, and within the annual budget already approved by Council. **[LINKAGE TO 2014-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)**

31. The recommendation included in this Staff Report support the following goals identified in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan:
 - Vibrant Business Environment
 - Inclusive Community

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32. The Emerging Musician 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.
 33. This program supports the goal of creating an inclusive community by enhancing public spaces and supporting diverse and safe neighbourhoods.

Appendices: Appendix A - Benchmarking of Comparable Communities
Appendix B - Testimonials

APPENDIX "A"

Benchmarking of Comparable Communities

Community	Population	Regulation	Insurance provided?	Cost to performer
Brampton	593,638	Code of Conduct	Yes	\$35/season
Guelph - Old Quebec Street	39 business tenants	Permit	Yes	None
Kingston	161,175	Permit	Yes	None
Mississauga	721,599	Permit	Yes	\$35/season
Niagara Falls	88,071	License	Yes	Pilot: \$25/season
Stratford	31,465	None	No	None
Toronto	2.809 million	Permit	No	\$45/season
Vancouver	631,486	Permit	No	\$40/season

No Busker program in place

Markham
Richmond Hill
St. Catharines
City of Guelph
Burlington
Hamilton

APPENDIX "B"

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. 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 have worked with Amanda Dyke and her team on a number of events for the City including a Busker based event. It was there that I learned about the busker program the City of Barrie offers to local entertainers. **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."

– 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. **I have even developed a few followers that I did not know before. They would applaud from their 2nd and 3rd floor balconies across the street. I even got a few gigs from busking.** 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. 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 Award



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