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**TO:** GENERAL COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** REPORT BACK ON 2022 BUSKING PROGRAM PILOT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023 PILOT

**WARD:** ALL

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL:** B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.ENG, PMP, GENERAL MANAGER, INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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

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### **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department build upon the 2022 summer Busking Program Pilot and extend the Program for 2023, whereby artists that are ineligible for the Emerging Artist Program can apply for a Busking Permit to perform at designated “busk stops” in Downtown Barrie in a form to the satisfaction of the Director of Economic and Creative Development and the Director of Legislative and Court Services.

### **PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

#### Report Overview

2. The purpose of this Staff Report is to obtain Council approval for Economic and Creative Development to continue the pilot busking program into 2023, building on the 2022 program, to provide opportunities for street performances and activations in the downtown for musicians and artists that are ineligible for the Emerging Artist Program.
3. On March 26th, 2018, City Council adopted motion 18-G-046 regarding the renaming of the Street Performer Program to the Emerging Artist Program, with the following direction:  
  
“That the Street Performer Program be renamed to the Emerging Musicians Program to capitalize on the successful track record of the program in launching musical careers”.  
  
Later that year, the Canadian Musicians Co-operative Inc. was approved to utilize the City of Barrie’s Emerging Artist Program to deliver their initiative to develop young musicians, as a one-time pilot project in 2018. Through Council direction, the City has continued to support the Emerging Artist Program in which youth, aged 16 to 30 receive professional development and business skills coaching for the duration of the summer in the music industry incubator.
4. On April 11th, 2022, City Council adopted Motion 22-G-065 regarding the Emerging Artist Program and a pilot busking program, with the direction:

“1. That the Director of Economic and Creative Development be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Understanding with Canadian Musicians Cooperative, Inc. (CMCI) for delivery of the Emerging Artist Program as a music industry incubator for 2022 and for subsequent years under the same general terms and conditions and in a form that is approved by the Director of Legal Services.

2. That staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department pursue a one-year pilot busking program whereby artists that are ineligible for the Emerging Artist Program can apply for a Busking Permit to perform at a designated “busk stop” in downtown Barrie in a form to the satisfaction of the Director of Economic and Creative Development and the Director of Legislative and Court Services”. (ECD004-22)

### 2022 Pilot Busking Program

5. To provide additional opportunities to activate the downtown core with artists, and to address interest from artists not eligible for the Emerging Artists Program, staff in the Economic and Creative Development Department undertook benchmarking of similar communities’ busking programs to develop a pilot program in 2022 that served to animate downtown Barrie with performance art while providing artists an opportunity to share their craft and collect voluntary tips from passers-by.
6. The pilot program operated in conjunction with the Emerging Artists Program so that Emerging Artists could continue to perform in designated spaces in downtown Barrie and on the waterfront according to a pre-approved schedule. Two separate, pre-approved “busk stop” locations in downtown Barrie provided a venue for buskers interested in ad-hoc, casual performance opportunities.
7. Staff in Economic and Creative Development consulted with Parks, Roads, Recreation and Culture and Waterfront Facilities staff to determine appropriate locations for the busk stop and selected two locations. One was located on the east side of the Five Points Theatre, and the second, on the back side of the Marina Office building at the foot of Bayfield Street (see Appendix ‘A’ of Staff Report ECD003-23 for images of the busk stops).
8. The permitting process was developed utilizing the City’s online permitting system, APLI, and required that applicants provide proof of insurance and agree to adhere to the City’s code of conduct for performances on municipal property, in addition to general terms and conditions related to applicable municipal By-Laws, process for collecting tips, volume of performance, and type of performance. There was no audition process for this pilot program in an attempt to provide a more flexible and open approach to casual performance.
9. The Culture Development Officer worked with the Legal Services team to find appropriate third-party insurance for buskers to purchase in the event they were not already insured. It was determined that the best option was to utilize the City’s existing user group insurance provider and application process for buskers to purchase insurance for as little as one day at a time.
10. The program launched in June, 2022 with a full marketing campaign and interest from potential buskers, with the following results:
  - Permits issued in 2022: 7
  - Number of permit applications in 2022: 22
  - Number of different applicants in 2022: 13
  - Shortest permit length: one day
  - Longest permit length: 5.5 months
  - Most permits were for one to four days

11. In engaging with applicants as part of the process, most identified they did not already have insurance. The daily insurance purchase rate ranged from \$20 to as high as \$100 for various applicants going through the process, and based on the format of the insurance, coverage was only allowed for one of the two busk stops. Several buskers opted not to complete their application as they felt the insurance expense was a barrier for one or two days.

#### Pilot Busking Program Continuation for 2023

12. In response to applicant feedback, and to provide more insurance options to continue the program in 2023, the Culture Development Officer worked with staff in Legal Services to source an alternative third-party insurance option where buskers can purchase event liability insurance to protect themselves and the City from any potential risks that could arise because of their performing on Municipal property. This alternative option allows buskers to access insurance for a day or for a complete busking season at a flat rate of \$164.50, which includes the insurance premium, administration fee and tax.
13. This insurance option will exist in addition to the daily option offered in 2022 to retain a more affordable option for buskers who are only looking to busk in downtown Barrie for a short period of time. There remains no fee to obtain a Busking Permit, in an effort to minimize fiscal impacts to accessing the program.
14. Feedback from buskers showed that of the two Busk Stops, the Marina stop was much preferred. While the Emerging Musicians Program and BIA programming of Meridian Place provide opportunities for live performance, an additional Busk Stop will be considered for Meridian Place for the 2023 pilot, in consultation with the BIA, Special Events staff, and Parks Operations staff to promote more casual performance when Meridian Place is not already programmed.

#### ANALYSIS

15. The busking program is an additional program to the Emerging Artists Program to promote increased animation of the downtown. Creating a secondary program stream for more casual buskers or those that are ineligible for the Emerging Musicians Program, provides a community platform for live performance in the downtown, both musical and otherwise.
16. The development of a secondary stream for buskers supports the arts sector and continuing recovery by animating downtown Barrie with additional types of performance art beyond music, and by artists of all ages. Interest in the program by buskers from Barrie and further away and the continued outreach from artists inquiring about opportunities to perform casually in public indicate this program is needed.
17. The inclusion of an insurance requirement for buskers ensures that the City and performers are protected. In review of other municipalities, there is not a consistent approach to permitting/licensing, fees and insurance requirements. Requiring insurance is a prudent risk management practice at the City and is a requirement for all other permitted activities on City property.
18. Staff have developed a Busking Guide to assist applicants with the application for a busking permit and purchasing of third-party insurance to lessen barriers to program participation and assist in developing the local music sector through this program.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT MATTERS

19. There are no environmental and/or climate change impact matters related to the recommendation.

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## **ALTERNATIVES**

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

**Alternative #1**

General Committee could decide not to approve the continuation of the pilot busking program and only permit street performance on municipal property through the Emerging Artist Program.

This alternative is not recommended as the City of Barrie has seen some success of the Emerging Artist Program and is positioned to continue to develop a secondary permit stream for performing artists to animate downtown Barrie and earn income.

By offering flexibility, the City of Barrie can support a broad range of artists and increase positive programming to enhance downtown Barrie beyond the summer-long Emerging Artist Program.

## **FINANCIAL**

21. There are no financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation.

## **LINKAGE TO 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**

22. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report support the following priorities and goals identified in the 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan:

- i. Affordable Place to Live
  - a. Develop and attract talent to support our employers
- ii. Thriving Community
  - a. Champion equity, diversity, and inclusion
  - b. Foster growth in arts and culture
  - c. Continue to support a vibrant downtown
- iii. Infrastructure Investments
  - a. Support active transportation and pedestrian connections

23. The busking pilot program supports the goal of developing and attracting talent by making it easier for local and visiting artists to do business and develop their skill sets through public performance. The long-term impact of the program supports the retention of artists by offering another revenue stream and ensures performing artists of all ages and stages have a path for busking in downtown. With no permit fee, and offering options to access insurance under daily and seasonal time-frames, the City is working to offer cost-effective solutions to the busking community.

24. The pilot fosters growth in arts and culture by providing a platform for artists to share performance with the public while earning income, and contributes to the City's culture, identity, and spirit. Busking brings energy and excitement to sidewalks and provides welcoming entertainment for residents and visitors, supporting Barrie's reputation as a creative city. Busking provides an element of safety to communities, helping people feel more comfortable and safer by animating spaces and encouraging positive behaviours.

APPENDIX "A"

2022 Busk Stop Locations

