

Staff Memorandum



To	Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council
Subject	This Week in Barrie Pilot Extension
Date	June 18, 2025
Ward	All
From	C. Harris, Associate Director Communications and Customer Service
Executive Member Approval	R. James-Reid, General Manager, Access Barrie
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the pilot for This Week in Barrie in the Barrie Compass (Motion 23-G-277). Notwithstanding the procurement by-law, staff were directed to pursue a pilot with iPolitics until June 2025, which included a This Week in Barrie advertisement in the Barrie Compass to promote City programs, services, and initiatives, and report back with details on the pilot project.

The closure of Barrie's local printed newspaper created a gap in access to community news—particularly for residents who relied on print. The pilot in the Barrie Compass offered a way to maintain a printed communication presence through a monthly publication. The Barrie Compass is distributed free of charge at several City facilities, including:

- City Hall (Service Barrie and the Mayor's Office)
- Peggy Hill Team Community Centre
- East Bayfield Community Centre
- Allandale Recreation Centre
- Parkview Seniors Centre
- Barrie Public Library branches (Downtown, Holly, and Painswick)

Feedback from the Seniors Advisory Committee has emphasized the need for broader access to City news in print format. The committee expressed concern that many residents, particularly seniors, may not have easy access to online platforms or other digital channels to get City updates and information. Committee Members have asked about expanding both the content and distribution of This Week in Barrie.

In response, the Barrie Compass has offered to expand the City's space to a dedicated two-page spread at no additional cost. This allows for more in-depth content and directly responds to the Seniors Advisory Committee's feedback.

Additionally, the Barrie Compass is actively expanding its distribution network. Beyond City facilities, it is increasing availability throughout the community in places such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and apartment buildings with high concentrations of senior residents. These efforts are helping to broaden the publication's reach.

Given the added value of the expanded layout, growing distribution efforts, and the important role of print in reaching Barrie residents with City news, staff recommend continuing the pilot through the end of 2026. There is no budget implications associated with extending the pilot, and unless otherwise directed by Council, staff recommend continuing This Week in Barrie in the monthly Barrie Compass.

Memo Author:

Cheri Harris, Associate Director, Communications and Customer Service,
Access Barrie