



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 22-080**

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<b>To:</b>	<b>Mayor and Members of Council</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer</b>
<b>Resource Staff:</b>	<b>Justin Bromberg, Project Manager, CAO's Office</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>March 1, 2022</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Focus Group - Downtown Improvement Plan</b>

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: 5. Foster healthy citizens and vibrant spaces

Goal: See above

**Executive Summary:**

The City of Kingston and its partners have implemented several initiatives over the last two years to improve and make the downtown more vibrant. Although some of these initiatives, such as Love Kingston Marketplace, have been successful, staff and partners have raised concerns with homelessness, safety, and security, as well as cleanliness. Staff and partners recognize that these issues impact people's lives and could threaten business and downtown vitality.

Staff and partners recognize that a different approach and supports are required to improve both the lives of vulnerable people in the downtown and the livelihood of businesses. Having a downtown where residents, tourists, businesses and all others can feel safe and secure, while providing the compassionate care and supports to those less fortunate and in need, is vital to the overall health of our city and residents. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive but rather, they are very much linked.

Bringing many stakeholders together is a foundational means to start developing those solutions that focus on services to vulnerable populations as well as improving the cleanliness and use of spaces in the downtown. As proposed to Council in [Report Number 21-231](#), staff established a Community Focus Group in September 2021 in order to consult with partners and explore

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collaborative solutions that would provide better support to vulnerable people and the business community.

This Focus Group met five times between September 2021 and February 2022 and included representatives from more than a dozen agencies operating in Kingston and persons with lived experience. In addition, there were several meetings held for smaller sub-groups to discuss specific issues related to social services, downtown infrastructure, and street outreach solutions.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the Focus Group meetings, the working group composition and representation, the issues and gaps in services that have been identified, and recommendations for both short-term and long-term initiatives to be collectively implemented by the City and its partners.

**Recommendation:**

**That** Council endorse the short and medium-term Downtown Improvement Plan recommendations included in Exhibit A of Report Number 22-080; and

**That** Council approve up to \$150,000 from the Social Services Stabilization Fund to support the addition of two (2) one-year Outreach Workers within the existing Street Outreach Program operated by Home Base Housing, to be dedicated to the City's downtown area; and

**That** Council approve up to \$200,000 from the Social Services Stabilization Fund to extend the operations of the "Warming Centre" located at 218 Concession Street, in partnership with United Way, Lionhearts and Home Base Housing, for a period of three (3) months, until the end of June 2022 to allow time for homeless and housing services to stabilize; and

**That** Council approve up to \$100,000 from the Working Fund Reserve to cover the costs of equipment and beautification material to improve cleanliness downtown; and

**That** Council direct staff to report back to Council by March 2023 with information on progress and outcome of the Downtown Improvement Plan recommendations.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services

Craig Desjardins, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services

David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston

Not required

Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects

Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

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**Options/Discussion:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had impacts on residents and businesses over the last 24 months. Many businesses in the downtown core rely heavily on post-secondary students, visitors, tourists, and workers in the vicinity as a basis for their revenues. The lockdowns and other behavioural effects from the pandemic have significantly reduced those customer sources with the hardest hit being those in the hospitality, tourism, and service sectors.

It is well known that the pandemic has had a detrimental effect on those less fortunate in our society. Several social services agencies and City staff have observed a greater number of people experiencing homelessness as well as having addictions and mental health issues. The increase in individuals requiring supports for housing, mental health and addictions was raised by the Social Services Recovery Team, which has observed that the number of vulnerable people present in the downtown has risen over the last two (2) years.

Unfortunately, this has led to people (business staff, customers, visitors) feeling threatened and intimidated by some behaviours. Complaints of needles, human waste, litter, and garbage has also been common, as have issues of loitering, vandalism, and individuals sleeping and living in the public right of way (e.g., sidewalks).

Following discussions on potential solutions that could be implemented to better support the vulnerable populations in the downtown to improve their well-being, staff established a Community Focus Group in September 2021 to identify solutions that will ensure a better quality of life for people downtown and better supports for businesses. Representation included multiple agencies involved in Social Services, Health Services, and Housing Services, as well as the business, tourism, and municipal sectors, and one individual with lived experience.

City staff and partners understand and recognize that several challenges identified to improve the situation for people in the downtown area and beyond will also require support from upper levels of governments to make longer-term meaningful changes. The local Community Focus Group has focused its work and efforts on changes that can be made with all partners working collectively.

The themes covered during the Community Focus Group meetings included social services and outreach services provided to the vulnerable community; changes and improvements to downtown infrastructure and cleanliness; and improvements and requirements for the business community. In addition, several sub-group meetings were held to address specific goals around an improved street-outreach model for downtown Kingston as well as solutions for improved downtown cleanliness.

These solutions will continue to be examined and developed in concert with efforts to boost the local economy and improve the downtown core for all. Bringing stakeholders together is foundational to move forward on that and will maximize the efforts of all involved.

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**Community Focus Group: Composition and Representation**

The Community Focus Group included approximately 20 members with representation from the following agencies and organizations:

- City of Kingston (Administration, Housing & Social Services, Transportation & Public Works, Community Services)
- Street Outreach/Kingston Home Base Non-Profit Housing Inc.
- Addiction and Mental Health Services – KFLA
- Downtown Kingston Business Improvement Association
- Kingston Community Health Centres
- Martha's Table
- Street Health Centre
- Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce
- United Way KFL&A
- Tourism Kingston
- Kingston Health Sciences Centre
- Kingston Police
- HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS)

**Issues Identified and Discussed**

The issues discussed by the Community Focus Group were wide-ranging and identified through active participation and collaboration from all the group's members. It was agreed that the goals and outcomes of the discussions were to create an environment that better supports vulnerable individuals requiring and/or looking to access services, while also better supporting businesses and residents (e.g., creating more space outdoors, safer spaces, and more inviting spaces in the downtown area).

Specific points noted during the discussions were that safety has become a significant concern for businesses, residents, and tourists; more supports and improvements are needed for businesses and tourists downtown, including changes to infrastructure and improved cleanliness in the downtown area; and that any proposed solutions should seek to increase support for homeless individuals in the downtown core, improve relationships between the vulnerable community and the business community, reduce the number of calls to police, and provide training and support to businesses and their employees.

Sub-groups of the Community Focus Group also met on occasions to discuss specific items:

- Street outreach services in downtown Kingston and models/best practices employed by other municipalities
- Improvements to downtown infrastructure and downtown cleanliness
- Increased coordination among social services agencies in Kingston

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## Areas of Focus

As previously outlined in the report, the Community Focus Group's discussions were broken down in three (3) areas of focus:

- Social Services to support the vulnerable population
- Initiatives to support downtown businesses
- Physical improvements and safer downtown

### Social Services to support the vulnerable population

The Community Focus Group (CFG) identified a number of concerns related to lack of services and impacts on the vulnerable population. The following section provides an outline of some of the challenges and concerns.

**A) Panhandling:** Street Outreach has conducted assessments and built relationships with several individuals that panhandle in the downtown area of Kingston. A majority of panhandlers downtown are housed, but they panhandle to supplement their income from Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) which are typically not sufficient to cover basic cost of living. Some vulnerable individuals could become homeless in the absence of the income generated through panhandling which would worsen the situation for individuals and put additional pressure on the homeless system which typically operates at capacity. It was noted that panhandling is highest during the summer season.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** Since several vulnerable individuals panhandle to supplement their OW and ODSP income, the CFG believes that the best approach to support vulnerable individuals would be to provide part-time employment opportunities during the summer season that would enable individuals to generate additional income and reduce the need to panhandle. This would also enable vulnerable individuals to be more engaged in the community. It is recommended that the DBIA and the City of Kingston provide summer employment opportunities to vulnerable individuals that will be assigned to downtown cleanliness and programs. Both the City and the DBIA would work with Street Outreach to identify individuals that would be best suited for these employment opportunities. There is existing budget in both organizations to support this initiative.

**B) Daytime Drop-in Service:** It has been identified that some vulnerable individuals have nowhere to go during the daytime to either socialize or access certain services. In the absence of a location where people can congregate to access services or socialize, a number of vulnerable people gather downtown where services and outdoor public spaces are available. The only adult daytime drop-in currently in place is located at the Integrated Care Hub which especially focuses services on a clientele with addictions and mental health challenges. One Roof, which is located on Princess Street, is a drop-in service hub for youth only. The CFG has identified a gap in daytime drop-in service for adults that require supports that are not focused on addictions and mental health. City staff had also identified this gap in service in the

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homelessness system and issued a request for proposal (RFP) in late 2021 seeking proposals for a daytime drop-in service as part of the homelessness system.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** Considering that there is a gap in service within the homelessness system which has been identified by the City and recently incorporated in a RFP that was issued in late 2021, it is recommended that the City completes its assessment of proposals and options for a daytime drop-in service and recommend the award of service to Council by May 2022. The daytime drop-in service should provide access to basic services such as showers and meals as well as support services with social services partners such as AMHS, etc. The City has funding included in its operating budget for this service.

**C) Dedicated Street Outreach:** There is currently a Street Outreach program with four (4) employees that reach out to street involved individuals and respond to calls/complaints throughout the City. The purpose of Street Outreach is to build relationships with street involved individuals and encourage them to access services that will enable to improve their life situations/conditions. Street Outreach are sometimes joined by staff from other agencies such as AMHS and Street Health (part of Kingston Community Health Centres). There is no doubt that the number of street-involved individuals has increased during the pandemic and that it has also made this community challenge more visible. It has also been observed that most street-involved people tend to congregate downtown and the Inner Harbour, where there is concentration of services available to the vulnerable population. With a total of four (4) employees to cover the entire City, it has been impossible for Street Outreach workers to provide a dedicated service and presence in the downtown area. It has also been impossible for those same Street Outreach workers to build direct relationships with downtown businesses due to the large territory and number of people that they must attend to. This lack of dedicated presence and support on the downtown has been identified as a gap in services.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** The City and the CFG did research on street outreach models in other municipalities within Ontario. Most models had dedicated downtown street outreach workers that were supported through partnerships that included the municipality, the downtown association, and some social services agencies. Some municipalities only provided street outreach service in their downtown core. The model of dedicated street outreach workers seemed to be beneficial for both street involved individuals and businesses to build relationships and provide better service supports.

The CFG supports the expansion of the current Street Outreach program to add two (2) dedicated street outreach workers fully dedicated to the downtown area seven (7) days per week from 8 am until 8 pm. These outreach workers would be based out of City Hall with access to an office and meeting space to meet with clients as required. They would actively patrol the downtown area, respond to calls/inquiries and attend to the needs of individuals congregating at City Hall. They would also build relationships with and provide training to downtown businesses in partnership with organizations like AMHS. The Street Outreach workers would also work with City By-Law and Police Services as required. The intent is to provide more presence and support to vulnerable population and help people access services to better meet their basic needs and support local businesses. This service will also help identify which individuals are

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currently linked to existing services. It is proposed that these two (2) additional Street Outreach workers be funded jointly by the City and the DBIA for a period of one (1) year and that the success of the program be evaluated prior to longer-term commitment. This service would be implemented in the Spring/Summer 2022.

**D) Shelters/Overnight Services:** The pandemic triggered a lot of changes within the shelter system, overnight services and other ongoing supports for vulnerable populations. A number of services had to reduce their capacity due to public health restrictions and some relocated their services in order to meet public health requirements. Ultimately, the impact was a reduced capacity in the overall system of overnight services and supports to the most vulnerable. Currently, with public health restrictions, there is a total of 115 sleeping/overnight spaces available per night. This number does not include motel rooms that are accessed as needed. With the lifting of public restrictions, it is anticipated that the shelter sleeping capacity will increase slightly, up to potentially 138 spaces per night.

- In From the Cold – 35 spaces pre-pandemic and up to 18 spaces during pandemic
- Kingston Youth Shelter – 15 spaces pre-pandemic and 19 spaces during pandemic
- Lily's Place - 19 spaces pre-pandemic and 7-9 spaces during the pandemic depending on family composition
- Integrated Care Hub – 25 rest pods and 25 spaces in the drop-in area during the pandemic
- Concession street - services centre (evening and night warming centre) – 19 overnight spaces were added from January 2022 until March 31, 2022.

The lifting of public health restrictions will create more capacity in the shelter/overnight system but will also help to create more capacity in the detox beds and rehab beds that were reduced in capacity during the pandemic. Although this increase in capacity will help to support more people, staff have identified a number of additional changes or unknowns that could have an impact on the longer-term capacity requirements for shelter/overnight services:

- Unknown long-term funding for the Integrated Care Hub as staff are still awaiting confirmation from the Ministry of Health. Approved funding covers operations until the end of March 2022 and staff and Ontario Health Team representatives have been working with the Ministry of Health for almost a year to secure provincial multi-year funding for this critical health care service. Staff are expecting to bring an update at the March 22, 2022 Council meeting.
- Relocation of the Kingston Youth Shelter (KYS) to a new location from its previous temporary location at 805 Ridley Drive. KYS Kingston Youth Shelter will be temporarily returning to its original location on Brock Street and will utilize an additional site to complement the capacity needs. KYS vacates 805 Ridley Drive (which was always intended to be a temporary location) to allow for renovations to take place so that the building can be utilized for transitional supportive housing in late 2022. KYS is working on a permanent location that better suits their long-term needs and is anticipating moving in by Fall/Winter 2022/2023



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- New transitional and supportive housing initiatives that have been established at St. Andrews, 113 Lower Union as well as the sleeping cabin pilot initiative at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour. These services are still in the early days and their success and impact on the overall capacity need in the shelter and overnight services are still unknown. The next three to six months will be critical to assess the referrals of homeless individuals on the need for shelter and overnight spaces. The hope is that these transitional and supportive housing options, which have been severely lacking in the community, will help to relieve pressure on the shelter and overnight service system. It also provides vulnerable people with an appropriate path to get proper supports to move into more independent living situations.
- Potential additional detox beds and rehab beds through new provincial funding that has been recently announced. Details for this potential increase in service have not yet been announced but partners are monitoring, and it will be important for the entire community to advocate for this funding should it be made available to communities.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** Considering the significant changes and unknown in the shelter/overnight service system, the CFG is recommending that the Concession Street Warming Centre, which provides 19 spaces, be extended by three (3) months, until the end of June to allow for more stability within the system. The Concession Street Centre has been typically at capacity every night since its opening in January 2022. It has been a critical alternative service to shelters, which have often been at capacity. The Concession Street Centre also provides meals through Lionhearts which have been well attended on a daily basis. The initial City contribution to establish the Warming Centre (up to \$300,000) will be mostly spent by April as funding was required for the actual set up of the Warming Centre. It is estimated that another \$200,000 would be required to support this service for an additional three (3) months.

The CFG is also recommending that all partners, including the City of Kingston, advocate for provincial funding to increase the number of detox beds and rehab within the community. City staff are recommending that Council pass a resolution and correspondence to the province once new funding for detox beds and rehab beds is announced.

**E) Belongings and Large Items:** The CFG recognizes that most street-involved individuals tend to accumulate belongings including larger items such as tents and shopping carts. Typically, street involved individuals will carry their belongings as they may not have access to storage or because they do not feel comfortable being separated from their belongings. There is currently a storage service that is provided by Home Base Housing where individuals can leave their belongings for 30 days which can be extended if required. Home Base Housing staff have indicated that unfortunately several individuals utilizing the storage space choose not to recuperate their belongings which are eventually discarded to make room for other individuals in need of temporary storage. The current storage is being utilized by 20-25 people on a regular basis. This storage service does not have the capacity to accept larger items such as shopping

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carts. There is no doubt that shopping carts are taken from some businesses located downtown to transport individuals' belongings. Not all downtown businesses have locking or securing mechanisms for their shopping carts which makes it easy for individuals to leave the commercial properties with shopping carts.

All partners of the CFG noted that the storage issue is broader than just providing space and that it is often connected to deeper mental health issues that must be addressed concurrently.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** The CFG supports maintaining the current storage being provided by Home Base Housing and look at options to establish storage for shopping carts and larger items such as tents. Shopping carts could also be addressed through an exchange program with businesses. The partnerships are still to be determined. The CFG also recommend that individuals with lots of belongings or seeking large amount of storage be supported with counselling and support services from organizations such as AMHS to help change some of the behaviours, especially in preparation to finding stable housing options.

It is also recommended that the City works with downtown businesses to identify better securing options for shopping carts on commercial properties as well as regular monitoring and collection of shopping carts that are left unoccupied in the downtown area.

**F) Information Sharing and Better Coordination:** The CFG recognizes that all agencies and partners are dedicated to addressing the needs of the vulnerable population downtown but that often agencies and partners will work with the same individuals without knowing what other services have been offered or provided. It is clear that there is a gap in information sharing and coordination of services to ensure that services being provided are effective to support the most vulnerable population. Currently, each agency and partner collect its own information and data. Some information, but limited, is shared through the encampment working group that meets on a regular basis. This group usually focuses areas of encampments identifying most appropriate supports and approaches.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** The CFG supports the establishment of a working group composed of all agencies and partners that serve and that are impacted by vulnerable individuals in the downtown area. This working group would also have compensated representation from individuals with lived experience of being street involved. The intent would be to share data and use a common database to help better coordinate efforts to support vulnerable individuals. This working group would meet on a regular basis to share info and discuss approach to best support the downtown population. The City currently uses the By Name List which could be considered for a common database to provide integrated support services. Individuals' privacy and informed consent will be respected in accordance with policies and legislation. A smaller sub-group could be established to act as a liaison between the downtown outreach team and the DBIA, while respecting individuals' privacy and informed consent.

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**Initiatives to support downtown businesses**

The Community Focus Group (CFG) also identified several concerns impacting businesses operating in the downtown area as well as their employees. The following section provides an outline of some of the challenges and concerns.

**A) Safety and Security:** The CFG recognizes that businesses and their employees, as well as their customers (including residents and visitors), do not always feel safe and secure operating, working and shopping in the downtown area. This can be related to the presence of individuals occupying space on sidewalks, in business storefronts, or inside businesses, although it is more specifically related to concerns around individuals exhibiting aggressive or intimidating behaviour resulting from mental health and/or drug addiction issues. Businesses have indicated that these situations do not often require calls to police; however, businesses and employees are not aware of the appropriate agency to contact for assistance. Beyond that, employees lack the appropriate awareness and de-escalation training that may be required for such situations.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** As mentioned earlier in this report, the CFG supports the increased Street Outreach presence in the downtown area, to build relationships with and provide training to downtown businesses, respond to calls/complaints throughout the City, and build relationships with street involved individuals to encourage them to access services that would enable them to improve their life situations/conditions. These street outreach workers would have specific knowledge and relationships with both the businesses and the vulnerable individuals and would have the de-escalation training required for such situations. They would also be able to provide training to business owners and employees, as part of the relationship building. Furthermore, the CFG also supports the increased presence of uniformed Kingston Police officers walking in the downtown core as part of a group of downtown “ambassadors” with the appropriate de-escalation training. This group of ambassadors may also be assisted by the continued support from Murney, the Kingston Police mounted unit.

**B) Improved Communication and Resources:** The CFG recognizes that businesses and their employees require a dedicated resource (e.g., a single point of contact) in order to establish consistent, reliable resources and to build a collaborative working relationship with businesses. Currently, businesses are not aware of the appropriate resource(s) to contact in the event of a non-emergency situation, and in some cases, the resources contacted are not available to assist. There is a need to establish an improved and clear communication procedure for businesses, and to provide tools, education and information that each business can make available to its employees. These tools and information would be coordinated through the DBIA and include training and awareness resources regarding homelessness, drug addiction and mental health; information and 24/7 contact details for the services available in the event of a situation that does not require a call to police; and clear expectations for response times and communication.

**Community Focus Group Recommendation:** The CFG supports the creation of a single point of contact responsible for coordinating outreach services to businesses, available 24/7 via phone or text, that would act as a triage for challenging situations in the downtown area. The

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CFG also supports the notion that the DBIA and the Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the City, Street Outreach and AMHS, would also provide the appropriate tools, training, resources, information, list of services available, etc. to downtown businesses. The DBIA and the Chamber would serve as the key point of contact for businesses and would coordinate with other service providers, including 211, as required.

**C) Permanence of Expanded Patio Program:** The CFG recognizes the importance of the additional patio space that has been offered to businesses as a means of expanding operations with outdoor seating and providing space for additional physical distancing, as a result of occupancy restrictions during the pandemic. This has included the creation of new patio areas, as well as the temporary expansion of existing permanent patios. These patios were temporary in nature and were primarily installed in on-street parking spaces in front of or adjacent to a participating business. In limited areas, existing permanent patios were also able to expand further onto the sidewalk provided an accessible pedestrian path of travel could be maintained. The DBIA has confirmed the business community's desire to continue the temporary patio program that was permitted in the City's right-of-way and on other publicly owned lands to support local business and restaurants, and the temporary sidewalk patio program will continue in 2022 with updated processes, guidelines, and fees based on feedback from stakeholders.

**Community Focus Group Recommendation:** The CFG supports the City making the expanded patio program permanent, beginning in 2023, to provide an expansion of patio footprint as well as an extended season.

**D) Additional Downtown Housing Development:** The CFG recognizes the importance of a permanent population living and residing in the downtown area as a means of making a more vibrant, active, permanent and safe community. Discussion occurred on the need to review the existing land use and planning policies in an effort to encourage more housing developments – including affordable and attainable housing – and consequently the responsible growth of a permanent population that would live and shop in the downtown area throughout the year. The CFG also noted the importance of social services agencies and other partner organizations participating in this review, by attending Council meetings as well as providing feedback and comments to the City in support of such developments.

**Community Focus Group Recommendation:** The CFG supports the City's review of land use policies to encourage more housing developments downtown that ensure permanent population live and shop downtown throughout the year. Social services agencies, the DBIA, and the Chamber of Commerce will also take a more active role in the development of downtown land use policies to ensure that their needs are reflected in critical policies.

### **Physical Improvements and Safer Downtown**

**A) Downtown Cleanliness:** A number of concerns were raised by downtown businesses, tourists, residents, and other partners related to the amount of garbage, littering, drug paraphernalia and overall lack of cleanliness in the downtown area. These concerns increased

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during pandemic during which more people were using outdoor amenities due to public health restrictions.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** It is recommended that the City works more collaboratively with the DBIA and Street Health to implement the following actions over the next Spring/Summer season:

- Establish coordinated cleaning crews that would be readily identifiable and would act as ambassadors for the City (providing assistance and wayfinding). These cleaning crews could include vulnerable individuals being hired by the DBIA and the City.
- Increase frequency of cleaning including power washing in key areas such as sidewalks and Springer Market Square and implement a quick-call system between the City and the DBIA clean-up crews and Public Works for rapid response.
- The City and the DBIA replace existing and add new garbage and recycling containers to reduce leakage and effects of wind and rain on contents, and to improve proper usage. City to provide cigarette butt disposal bins and safe sharps disposal containers in some key downtown locations.
- The City and the DBIA work together to address businesses garbage bags being ripped open overnight before pickup occurs in morning and issues with businesses garbage bag weight limits being regularly exceeded.
- The City, the DBIA and Tourism Kingston work collaboratively in providing additional features to the area to improve attractiveness and appeal including beautification such as planters and trees.

**B) Create Additional and More Welcoming and Safer Public Spaces:** During the pandemic, the City, supported by its partners, created temporary additional public spaces by using public right of ways and temporary closing certain streets. Considering indoor public health restrictions, many residents and tourists were looking for more outdoor spaces and activities. The City provided expansion for restaurant patios in public right of ways, closed Market Street to traffic for entire summers to expand Love Kingston Marketplace area, closed Ontario Street to traffic in front of City Hall for periods of time during the summer to allow for more public space, closed Sydenham Street every Saturday as well as Ontario and Princess Street for specific days as requested by the DBIA.

Feedback received from residents and businesses over the last two (2) years clearly indicates that people enjoy these expanded safe public spaces. Many communities in Ontario and Canada have also implemented more temporary street closures to provide expanded safe public and pedestrian access. Sidewalks are of course an important part of public spaces and some concerns have been raised about sidewalks not always being clear and safe for pedestrian use.

Even prior to the pandemic, it was not unusual to see large pedestrian flow around City Hall in the summertime, especially during special events, and people at time walking on the side of the streets as sidewalks were too busy. This is something that could be observed on Ontario Street in front of City Hall and Market Street next to City Hall. During the pandemic, Market Street has

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been closed for a significant part of the summer months and Ontario Street in front of City Hall closed on a number of occasions over the summer months.

**Proposed Community Focus Group Solution:** The CFG is fully supportive of creating more welcoming and safer public spaces for all in the downtown area. These spaces could be temporary or permanent depending on location and need. The following are the recommended approaches to help advance the creation of more public spaces:

- Review the Streets By-law to include stronger provisions to promote public safety.
- Use more temporary closures such as Princess Street and Sydenham Street to create more accessible pedestrian and public spaces as well as additional temporary spaces for commercial activities.
- Incorporate more family and interactive features in the Confederation Basin Park and the First Capital Place area starting this summer.
- Initiate the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process to consider the permanent closure of Ontario Street (in front of City Hall only) and Market Street (beside City Hall) to vehicular traffic to create additional public space.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

None

**Notice Provisions:**

None

**Accessibility Considerations:**

None

**Financial Considerations:**

There are a number of initiatives in this plan that will require future funding which will need to be incorporated into future capital and operating budgets. As far as short-term and more immediate initiatives, most such as changes in cleaning schedules, etc. can be accommodated within existing budgets.

Two (2) recommendations have an immediate financial impact related to the increase of two (2) Street Outreach workers with a cost of up to \$150,000 and the three (3) month extension for the Warming Centre with a cost of up to \$200,000. It is proposed that both temporary initiatives be funded from the Social Services Stabilization Fund which has a balance of \$2,150,122. This Fund was established when the municipality was responsible for the actual Ontario Works payments which have since been uploaded by the province. Currently, the only service committed from this Fund is an annual contribution of \$110K for health care support program for low-income workers.

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The other recommendation for up to \$100,000 from the Working Fund Reserve will be used to cover the costs of new and additional garbage containers, equipment such as pressure washer for staff and other beautification items such as planters and trees.

**Contacts:**

Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer, 613-546-4291 extension 1231

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Housing & Social Services

Bruce Davis, Project Manager, Housing & Social Services

Joanne Borris, Housing Program Administrator, Housing & Social Services

Mitchell Grange, Manager of Housing and Homelessness, Housing & Social Services

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A – Recommendations Table with Lead Organization, Supporting Organizations, Timeframes and City Financial Implications

Downtown Improvement Plan Recommendations

Short Term - 3 to 6 months  
Medium Term - 6 months to 1 year  
Long Term - over 1 year

Social Services Recommendations	Lead	Support	Time Frame	City Financial Implications
Expansion of Street Outreach Program with two dedicated downtown presence	Home Base Housing (HBH)	City of Kingston; AMHS; DBIA	Short Term	Up to \$150,000 to be funded from Social Services Stabilization Fund
Creation of daytime drop-in centre	City of Kingston	Home Base Housing, AMHS	Short Term	To be funded as part of current homelessness funding in operating budget
Extend operations of Warming Centre	City of Kingston	HBH, AMHS, United Way	Short Term	Up to \$200,000 to be funded from the Social Services Stabilization Fund
Advocate and apply for funding to increase number of detox beds and rehab beds	AMHS	City of Kingston	Short to Medium Term	None
Provide summer employment for vulnerable individuals	DBIA	City of Kingston, United Way	Short Term	To be funded as part of current operating budget
Improve storage options at In From the Cold and support individuals' behaviour	Home Base Housing	AMHS	Short to Medium Term	None
Consider storage and/or an exchange program for shopping carts and support individuals' behaviour	City of Kingston	Home Base Housing, AMHS	Short to Medium Term	To be funded as part of current operating budget



<b>Social Services Recommendations</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>City Financial Implications</b>
Creation of working group with lived experience of being street involved	City of Kingston	Home Base Housing, AMHS	Short Term	None

<b>Initiatives to Support Businesses</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>City Financial Implications</b>
Permanence of expanded patio program	City of Kingston	DBIA	Long term	None
Provide tools, training, resources to businesses	DBIA; Chamber of Commerce	City of Kingston; HBH; AMHS; 211	Short term	None
Increase police foot patrol downtown (ambassadors) / possibly with continued support from Murney	Kingston Police	City of Kingston; DBIA	Medium to Long Term	To be considered in a future operating budget
Review land use policies to encourage more housing development downtown	City of Kingston	DBIA; Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	None
Approach downtown businesses to secure shopping carts on premises	City of Kingston	DBIA; Chamber of Commerce	Medium to Long Term	None

<b>Physical and Safety Improvements</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>City Financial Implications</b>
Establish cleaning crews to act as downtown ambassadors	DBIA	City of Kingston	Short Term	To be funded as part of current operating budget
Replace/add garbage/recycling containers and cigarette/sharps disposal	City of Kingston	DBIA	Short to Medium Term	Additional up to \$100,000 from the Working Fund Reserve

Physical and Safety Improvements	Lead	Support	Time Frame	City Financial Implications
Increase frequency of power washing on sidewalks and other areas	City of Kingston	DBIA	Short Term	Additional up to \$100,000 from the Working Fund Reserve
Implement quick-call system between City/DBIA clean-up crews	City of Kingston	DBIA	Short Term	To be funded as part of current operating budget
Address business garbage bags being ripped overnight	DBIA	City of Kingston	Short Term	None
Address issues with business garbage bags exceeding limits	City of Kingston	DBIA	Short Term	None
Provide additional beautification features (planters and trees)	City of Kingston	DBIA; Tourism Kingston	Short Term	Additional up to \$100,000 from the Working Fund Reserve
Incorporate more family and interactive features in Confed Park and First Capital Place	City of Kingston	Tourism Kingston	Short Term	To be funded from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund as part of waterfront improvements
Review Streets By-law to include stronger provisions for public safety	City of Kingston	DBIA	Medium to Long Term	None
Create more active public spaces with more temporary street closures	DBIA	City of Kingston; Tourism Kingston	Short to Medium Term	To be funded as part of current operating budget
Initiate Environmental Assessment process to consider permanent closure of Ontario St. & Market St. to create more public space	City of Kingston	DBIA; Tourism Kingston	Medium to Long Term	To be included in a future capital budget
Redesign Confederation Park & First Capital Place for improved public experience	City of Kingston	DBIA; Chamber of Commerce	Long Term	To be included in a future capital budget