

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 26 June 1997

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Councillor Madeleine Meilleur
Rideau-Vanier Ward - R12

SUBJECT/OBJET **OTTAWA-CARLETON STREET AMBASSADOR PROGRAM -
REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council approve a grant in the amount of \$5,000 to contribute to the Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program.

BACKGROUND

The Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program is a pilot project developed through the partnership of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Service, local Social Agencies and the Business Community in response to concerns from the public and businesses to the increasing number of aggressive panhandlers in the downtown core. The objective of the Program is to address this problem through an increased safety presence on the streets, public education and intervention. As part of their duties, the Street Ambassadors will act as “good will” ambassadors and provide visitors with a wealth of tourist information. They will be a visual presence on the street and help provide a sense of safety. They will educate the public and tourists on the existing social net of the Region and encourage the re-channelling of the money to social agencies to ensure “effective giving”. They will also become a direct link to the police by becoming the complainant and identifying aggressive panhandlers. Please refer to Annex A for more details on the Program.

An extensive training which includes a tourism component, a safety component, background on local social agencies and services available, first aid and public relations has been developed to prepare the Street Ambassadors for their duties. To date, ten people have taken part in the training and eight people have been hired and are actively fulfilling their role. To ensure the success of this program we are planning to hire more Ambassadors and in order to do so, additional funding is required. To date funding has been secured from various agencies such as the Police Services Board, the Byward Market BIA, the Rideau Street BIA, and requests for funding are in progress with other organization as per Annex B. The Program has been receiving very positive comments from the business community. OC Transpo is assisting in the Program by providing the Street Ambassadors with transportation within the downtown area (Annex C). The program is also being endorsed by the Commissioner of Social Services and the Medical Officer of Health (Annex D).

CONCLUSION

The Partners of this program are aware that this request for funding comes outside the regular budget process and grant programs. However, they feel that this issue is serious and must be addressed now as we are entering our busiest tourist season and the number of panhandlers is at its highest. Business owners in the downtown area and the community are asking for action on this issue. The Partners are confident that this program will have an impact in preserving the well-being of downtown core. An application for funding will be made through the 1998 Economic Development Grant Program for the continuation of this program.

*Approved by
Councillor M. Meilleur*

SR/

Attach. (4)

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

It is recommended that should Council wish to provide a \$5,000 grant in support of the Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program that the funding be provided from the Corporate Provision for Unforeseen account.

As of June 25, 1997, uncommitted funds in the amount of \$117,953 are available to fund this grant request. It should be noted that the Corporate Services & Economic Development Committee and Council will be considering a joint report from the President and General Manager of the Ottawa-Carleton Economic Development Corporation and the Regional Chair which requests funding support for the "Future Ottawa Initiative" in the amount of \$110,000. Should Committee and Council approve this report, the uncommitted balance in the Unforeseen account will decline to \$7,953.

*Approved by T. Fedec
on behalf of the Finance Commissioner*

DRAFT

Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program

A proposed pilot program

Submitted through the partnership of:

*Angelo Fiore, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police
Rick Malloch, Business Forum on Crime Prevention
Dawn Dannehl, ByWard Market Business Improvement Area
Madeleine Meilleur, Regional Council
André Vertes, Budapest Delicatessen
Philip Powell, Markets Manager
Judy Taylor, Ottawa-Carleton Health Department
Diane Morrison, Union Mission
Diann Consaul, Downtown Youth Drop In*

DRAFT

*For more information contact:
Rick Malloch: 762-7328
Sergeant Angelo Fiore: 236-1222 x 5881*

May 27, 1997

Situation Outline

FACT

- ◆ Ottawa-Carleton had 5.28 million tourists visit our Nations Capital in 1996.
- ◆ We will see another 5.40 million tourists in 1997.
- ◆ In comparison, the Province of Prince Edward Island sees 1 million tourists.
- ◆ Although tourism is increasing, retail sales area decreasing:
1993 - \$2, 708, 350, 000.00 1994 - \$2, 601, 768, 000.00
1995 - \$2, 502, 944, 000.00 1996 - \$2, 454, 503, 000.00
This represents a decrease of \$253,847,000.00

FACT

- ◆ Although the downtown core is only represented by two regional councillors, when you consider the fact that the business owners affected by the increased aggression live in wards outside the core, this is truly a regional issue.
- ◆ The region's own official plan clearly indicates that the core is the heart of the Region and must be successful in the long-term. The health of the entire region depends on the viability of the core.

FACT

- ◆ The perception of crime increases as the number of street people and vagrants increases.
- ◆ This perception dramatically increases as these same street people show aggressiveness in their attempt to panhandle.
- ◆ Although the police address these calls when they can, a constant effort is needed. This problem is compounded by the fact that other more serious offenses take precedence and prevent the police from dealing with this issue on a continual basis.

FACT

- ◆ Regional Police have seen a tremendous increase in the number of street people and panhandlers.
- ◆ Every information source indicates that more and more are getting aggressive in their quest for money and some are now becoming violent.
- ◆ The Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Officers on the streets, have in their experience, seen an increase in aggression.

FACT

- ◆ Our social agencies are seeing a dramatic increase in the service demand.
- ◆ Our outlets have seen an increase in demand, seeing over 3000 individual men using services in the last year.
- ◆ What is out there now does not meet the needs of the Communities.
Cuts to our social net result in cuts to programs and less workers on the street. The workers that are there do not always have the profile needed to address the safety perception.

Hear what our customers are saying.....

As I was getting out of my car to go to dinner, I was approached by 3 "street" people who asked if I would be interested in paying them to watch my car for me.. "to ensure nothing happened to it"!

My wife and I always shopped at that grocery store on Bank Street. The last time a panhandler followed us for a block and a half "hounding" us for money. We won't go back to that area. We found a new store on Elgin Street to go to.

I needed a police escort to get my customers out of my store. Four panhandlers were blocking the store entrance. One had his pants down and was urinating on the window and the others were so aggressive you could not get near them. I had calls from customers that day stating that they were going to shop at my store that day but would not come near the place when they saw what was happening. They won't be back.

I was with my husband admiring a building facade when a female panhandler approached us for a cigarette. We don't smoke and could not provide her with one. She immediately started cursing and yelling at me and called me a "bitch". She followed us for a couple of blocks.

We have received a dozen calls. Every caller mentioned that the panhandlers were aggressive, if not hostile. An Orleans woman was physically assaulted even though she did not provoke him in any manner. The police were called and suggested that she press charges.... she has not yet decided.

The complainants were either residents of the ward, ByWard Market merchants or residents of the Region who no longer felt safe in the ByWard Market even in broad daylight. One man mentioned that his wife would not go into the Market without being accompanied

Every caller was asked whether he/she could provide the Councillor with any suggestions as to how to deal with this problem. Most felt that the police should remove the panhandlers or at least increase police visibility.

The nature of the calls has changed. There is more concern, and rather than simply lodging a complaint, people want to know what can be done.

These facts are not imagined, they are real and reflect a serious problem. A dramatic change in the environment has occurred in the Region's core over the last year.

This is not a police problem, not a business problem, or a social problem - its a community problem. For this reason a community task force was put together and has spent many hours researching possible solutions.

Solution Background

As a result of the increase in aggressive panhandlers a community task force was formed. Driven by the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police, it met extensively. This partnership includes:

- ◆ The Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police
- ◆ Regional and City Council Representation
- ◆ Social Service Agencies
- ◆ Ottawa-Carleton Regional Health Department
- ◆ Representation from the Business Community

Task Force Mission Statement/Objectives

While it is acknowledged that street people will always be part of our community, it is also recognized that tourists and residents should be able to walk through our community streets without being harassed.

It was therefore agreed that the task force would only address the ***increased aggression*** by:

- ◆ Public Education
- ◆ Increased Safety Presence
- ◆ Intervention

A Comprehensive Solution - The Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program

Addresses all three components.

15 Street Ambassador "teams" will be assigned the responsibility to patrol key areas such as:

- ◆ Bank Street
- ◆ Rideau Street
- ◆ Elgin Street
- ◆ ByWard Market
- ◆ Sparks Street
- ◆ The Glebe

Once the teams are developed, other areas can be added to the patrol schedule as necessary.

Duties will include.....

◆ **Tourist "good will" Street Ambassadors**

As an identifiable person on the street, they will provide visitors with a wealth of tourist information. Essentially they will be a travelling concierge service.

Note: This will always be the significant responsibility of the Street Ambassadors

◆ **Visual Presence**

Being clearly identifiable, (bright coloured wind breakers) they will provide a sense of safety on the streets. They will help to ***address the perception of crime***.

◆ **Education and Awareness**

To the public and tourists regarding the "social net" that is established in the Region (i.e. we are currently meeting the increased demand for food and shelter). They will hand out brochures to tourists/residents outlining the services available and ***educate the public that giving money is often only harming the street person*** by providing them with money for drugs & alcohol. They will also target employees of large office towers and our business community at large.

We do not want to discourage giving, we simply want to "re-channel" where the money is going ***to ensure "effective giving"***.

◆ **Action - Becoming the Complainant**

Working with the Regional Police and the court process to ensure that the aggressive or intoxicated street people are identified and dealt with. They will serve as a ***direct, quick link to police***.

◆ **Supporting Objective of Getting Street People into the System**

In some cases the only way a street person will receive help is if they are charged with an offence and are held by police under the Mental Health Act for assessment.

Finally, they will gather data to evaluate the success of the program.

Training Program

An 80 hour training program will be developed to include:

◆ **Regional Health and Social Service Agencies - to know all services available such as:**

Centre 507

Shepherds

Salvation Army

Union Mission

Canadian Mental Health Association

Detox

Crisis Intervention - how to deal with the street people

◆ **OTCA/OHI - for tourism component**

◆ **Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police - for safety component**

◆ **Public Relations: how to address the public**

Benefits of Program.....

◆ Trained Tourist Ambassadors

On the streets to welcome our 5.40 million tourists.

◆ Address the panhandling /street people issues

Head on - instant impact - here and now.

◆ Streamline efforts and resources of Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police

They will assist the police to better focus their priorities, and improve service.

◆ Proactive in nature

We will deal with the issues before they reach a critical level.

◆ Comprehensive solution

Addresses all aspects of the problem. We have already seen business communities attempt to address this problem through private policing. This we believe, is not an approach which addresses the Region's needs.

◆ Control the problem

The street ambassadors will provide a "control" mechanism when situations involving aggression arise. Due to other priorities, the police aren't always able to respond as quickly as they would like. The ambassadors will be on the streets as concerned citizens, willing to respond to situations.

◆ Will assist street people

Cut off \$ supply to their addictions which will hopefully direct them to the services.

◆ Proven results

This program is not only based on research, it is benchmarked against initiatives that report successful results. We have taken elements of other programs and localized them to suit this region's needs.

This program is a community solution - in response to a community problem - developed by the formation of a much needed partnership between the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police, the Social Service sector and the business community.

These partners support this program and believe it will address the increase in aggressive panhandlers. Moreover, the public education/intervention supports the goals of the social service agencies by encouraging street people seek assistance. If funding is redirected as intended, the incentive to panhandle is eliminated, leaving one alternative - that of turning to an agency for assistance.

It is also believed that the social service component of the training program is of significance. It ensures the ambassador training program is "well rounded" and enables the ambassadors to address the situations they may face on a daily basis.

Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Program

ANNEX B

Sources of Funding

Organization	Confirmed	In Process
ByWard Market BIA	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Rideau BIA	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Sparks Street BIA	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Bank Street BIA	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Glebe Business Community	\$0.00	\$0.00
Province of Ontario	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Police Services Board	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
City of Ottawa	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
OHOI	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Bell Mobility	\$0.00	\$0.00
Capital Publishers	\$0.00	\$0.00
O.C. Transpo	\$0.00	\$0.00
Business Forum on Crime Pre.	\$0.00	\$0.00
McDonald's	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Corporate Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$45,000.00
Total	\$34,000.00	\$56,000.00

Expenses

Promotional Design	\$0.00	Sponsorship
Printing	\$5,500.00	
Salary	\$75,000.00	15 @ 10\$ x 8 hr / day 5 day / week, 13 weeks June - Sept
Benefits	\$15,000.00	
Jackets/Golf Shirts	\$2,000.00	
Hats/Fanny Packs	\$500.00	
Cellular Phones	\$2,000.00	
Insurance	\$0.00	ByWard Market BIA
TOTAL	\$100,000.00	



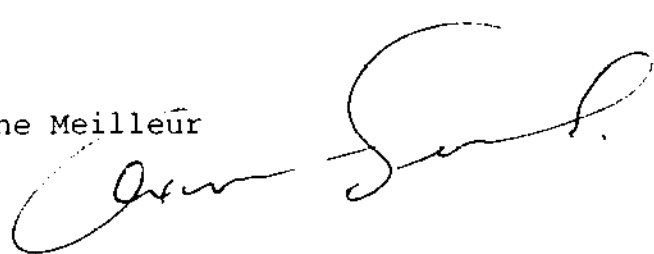
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18 June 1997

MEMORANDUM

To: Councillor Madeleine Meilleur

From: *for* General Manager 

RE: Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador Pilot Program

Thank you for inviting OC Transpo to participate in this pilot program to improve the downtown streets for tourists, workers and shoppers.

We will be happy to assist in this program which, I understand has significant involvement and support from the Regional Police Services.

To assist the ambassadors in travelling throughout the downtown, we will let them ride free as long as they are wearing their specially-designed ambassador uniform. Would you be kind enough to send a description and design of this clothing so that we can advise our bus operators and front-line employees.

I understand that these ambassadors are receiving training from the tourism association as well as other groups. Since they will be using our service and they will be assisting tourists, I would like to ensure that have a good understanding of our downtown transit services and I would be happy to have my staff coordinate this immediately.

IGS:eh

21 May 1997

Region of Metropolitan Ottawa-Carleton
 P.O. Box 5000, Ottawa
 Ontario, Canada K1V 6Y4

Social Services



Municipalité régionale d'Ottawa-Carleton
 P.O. Boite 5000
 Ottawa, Ontario K1V 6Y4

Services sociaux

ANNEX D

Rick Mallock
 Ottawa Congress Centre
 55 Colonel By Drive
 OTTAWA, Ontario
 K1N 9G2

Dear Mr. Mallock:

Re: Ottawa-Carleton Street Ambassador's Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity that you afforded us on May 20, 1997 to learn more about the Street Ambassador's Proposal.

This proposal recognizes the important reality that street people and panhandling are a reality in an urban landscape. The proposal appropriately targets for intervention the aggressive panhandling behaviour of some street people and not the passive activities of most street people. Most importantly this proposal is based on the important understanding that the aggressive nature of some pan handlers is not solely a business problem, a social service or public security problem but rather a community issue that requires a collaborative community response.

During our meeting, we discussed several important issues from our perspective that will need some attention during the development and implementation of this program. These include expanding the level of understanding of this initiative and co-operation with a range of community based social services, particularly as a significant number of the aggressive pan handlers in our community have addiction problems with either drugs and/or alcohol. If this program is successful and their source of funds through panhandling begins to diminish, this will have an impact on a variety of community agencies.

We also discussed the importance of including the Aboriginal community in the further development of this proposal since it is important that the collaborative response identified above includes appropriate responses for these individuals.

Fundamentally on behalf of the Social Services Department and the Public Health Department of the Region, we believe that this proposal has merit and we support its further development and piloting in the months to come.

Yours truly,

DICK STEWART
 Social Services Commissioner

Dr. Robert Cushman
 Medical Officer of Health