



Media Release

The Corporation of the City of Oshawa

For Immediate Release

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City of Oshawa, BIA and Carea introduce Welcoming Streets to downtown Oshawa

OSHAWA – The City of Oshawa, Downtown Oshawa B.I.A. and Carea Community Health Centre have introduced a Welcoming Streets pilot project in downtown Oshawa.

Based on a successful model used in Guelph, the pilot project brings targeted outreach services to vulnerable community members in the downtown core as well as education and training to area businesses.

Through the Welcoming Streets Initiative, the partners are helping to bridge the gap between business owners and community members who are vulnerable in our downtown. The aim of the project is to foster a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all by supporting downtown business owners and assisting community members in need of assistance.

Through this initiative, a community-based outreach worker serves as a point of first contact for individuals who are unsheltered and vulnerable and helps provide connections to outreach services. The outreach worker also provides support, education and training to businesses in the area. The new outreach worker was formally introduced to downtown businesses at the B.I.A.'s annual general meeting in November.

This pilot project runs until March 2020, with the City contributing financial support from its approved allocation to the Oshawa Unsheltered Residents (O.U.R.) Program Initiative. The funding is helping to cover costs associated with the pilot project.

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Quotes:

"I believe that by working together we can make a difference. Welcoming Streets is doing just that – providing support to downtown business owners while at the same time offering outreach and social supports to vulnerable individuals in our community," said Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter. "I look forward to seeing the many positive outcomes of Oshawa Welcoming Streets."

“Welcoming Streets is a great example of how partnerships among business, government and community organizations can bring innovative programs to communities,” said Councillor Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Chair, Development Services Committee. “Welcoming Streets is creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all in our downtown core by supporting our businesses and helping those in need.”

“The Welcoming Streets initiative is about more than connecting individuals living rough in Oshawa’s downtown with community support contacts. It is also about bringing balanced insight to both sides of a neighbourhood problem and believing everyone deserves to know someone cares about them,” said Councillor Rosemary McConkey, Vice-Chair, Development Services Committee.

“To successfully handle the various aspects of homelessness, drug abuse, perilously-housed people, and the opioid crisis we need a variety of solutions coordinated for maximum effect. The Welcoming Streets initiative should prove to be an excellent coordinating effort. The City of Oshawa, the BIA, and the other related agencies involved in this initiative are fully committed to making this a success,” said Councillor Rick Kerr, Council-appointee, B.I.A. and Regional and City Councillor, Ward 4.

“Complex socio-economic problems that are systemic in nature won’t be solved overnight or with any one simple solution, but an initiative like Welcoming Streets, which moves away from a traditional more adversarial response to one that is humane and mutually supportive, will bring us closer to solutions by working directly with the diverse people who make up our downtown community,” said Councillor Derek Giberson, City Councillor, Ward 4.

“The Welcoming Streets initiative will strengthen our sense of community by enhancing the safety and inclusivity of everyone in the downtown core. This project will also help to improve the image of Downtown Oshawa, and will be an integral part of our successful growth and development, said Cindy Malachowski, Chair, B.I.A. Internal Welcoming Streets Committee.

“We are very pleased to partner with the City and the BIA in their efforts to assist the unsheltered individuals in the downtown core and to support the many businesses and residents that are being impacted. Carea’s experienced team of professionals understands the complex issues being faced. Welcoming Streets aligns with our mission and mandate to provide holistic care, support and wraparound services to those in need,” said Francis Garwe, CEO, Carea Community Health Centre.

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