

To: Council in Committee of the Whole

From: Paul Ralph, Chief Administrative Officer
Office of the C.A.O.

Report Number: CNCL-21-72

Date of Report: September 22, 2021

Date of Meeting: September 27, 2021

Subject: Proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in
Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan as well as provide City Council with information on some of the work being undertaken related to this matter.

Attachment 1 is the Community Safety in Oshawa's downtown area community engagement results.

Attachment 2 is the proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan resulting from the Community Safety in Oshawa's downtown area community engagement initiative as well as input from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being.

Attachment 3 is a copy of the joint statement from the Regional Chair John Henry and Mayor Dan Carter.

Attachment 4 is a copy of the letter sent to Chief Paul Martin, Durham Regional Police Service from Mayor Dan Carter.

Attachment 5 is a copy of the Regional Council Direction as introduced by Mayor Dan Carter and seconded by Regional and City Councillor Bob Chapman.

Attachment 6 is a copy of the letter sent to Dr. Robert Kyle, Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health at The Regional Municipality of Durham from Mayor Dan Carter.

Attachment 7 is a copy of the letter sent by Regional Chair John Henry to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, and Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party.

Attachment 8 is a copy of the letter sent by Regional Chair John Henry and Mayor Dan Carter to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General.

Attachment 9 is a copy of the letter sent to all Mayors in the Durham Region from Mayor Dan Carter.

Attachment 10 is a copy of the Action items for downtown Oshawa email sent by the Chief Administrative Officer of Durham Region to Durham Region members of Council.

2.0 Recommendation

It is recommended to City Council:

1. That the proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan, as outlined in Attachment 2 to Report CNCL-21-72, dated September 22, 2021, be endorsed; and,
2. That a copy of this report and Council resolution be provided to the Region of Durham Council, Region of Durham Social Services Department, Region of Durham Health Department, Region of Durham Planning & Economic Development Department, Lakeridge Health and Durham Regional Police Service Board and Chief of Police;
3. That the Regional Chief Administrative Officer and Commissioner, Social Services be invited to a future Council meeting to overview the Regional initiatives to address the issues in downtown Oshawa; and,
4. That the Chief of Durham Regional Police Service be invited to a future Council meeting to overview Durham Regional Police Service initiatives to address the issues in downtown Oshawa.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

- Corporate Leadership Team
- Economic Development Services
- Durham Regional Police Service (D.R.P.S.)
- Facilities Management Services
- Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services
- Region of Durham
- Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for our residents and businesses. These challenges include among other matters, the impact on our individual health, the impact on our healthcare system, the closure and lockdown of and restrictions on our businesses and services as well as the closure of our schools. The unsheltered population has been impacted as well due to the number of services they rely on have been either closed or restricted.

Many community stakeholders work together to address the complex issues for those who are unsheltered, many of which have mental health and addiction challenges. In addition, community stakeholders are trying to address issues that members of the public including seniors, families and businesses are experiencing as a result of unlawful behaviour by others (e.g. vandalism, open illegal drug use in public and loitering). These issues and challenges being experienced in Oshawa are prevalent across Canada.

The following outlines at a high-level various stakeholders and their respective responsibilities as it relates to the issues occurring in downtown Oshawa:

- Region of Durham:
 - Health Department includes paramedics, PCOP (Primary Care Outreach Program), harm reduction, opioids and overdose prevention, Project X-Change and healthy living
 - Social Services Department includes Community Hubs and support, Outreach Housing, Income and Employment
 - Planning and Economic Development includes: economic development and tourism
- Durham Regional Police Service:
 - Law enforcement for criminal activity, Durham Connect, Mental Health Support Unit
- Lakeridge Health – Oshawa/ Pinewood Addiction Services:
 - Acute care for high needs, assessments, addictions, mental health
- Social Services Organizations/ Community Providers:
 - Food, clothing, medical care (physical, mental), housing connections, counselling, addictions support, needles pick up, etc.
- City of Oshawa:
 - Enforcement of by-laws, waste collection, economic development, parks and trail maintenance

5.2 Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being

In January 2021, the **Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being** was formed to bring together community stakeholders to identify and propose opportunities to address community safety, security and well-being issues facing the City of Oshawa. Chaired by Deputy Mayor and Regional and City Councillor Bob Chapman, the Task Force works collaboratively and provides suggestions to assist Oshawa City Council and staff in developing solutions. Since community safety, security and well-being is a large and complex issue that requires significant effort, the Task Force is addressing priorities in multiple phases.

Phase 1 is focusing on the downtown and surrounding area bounded by Ritson Road on the east, Park Road on the west, Olive Avenue / Gibb Street on the south and Adelaide Avenue on the north. Additional phases will be identified as necessary and may focus on other areas of the city.

Some of the initiatives that the Task Force have been involved with include:

- Provided input and supported the 'If you see it report it' communications;
- Provided input on **CS-21-61** Portable Stage and Picnic Tables in the Victoria Street Plaza to support the Troubadour Series that took place in August;
- Supported **DS-21-90 Signs of Life Mural Project** that provided four murals painted directly on the shipping containers located at 99 Simcoe Street South and one mural painted on the south façade of the building at 155 Simcoe Street South;
- Provided input on the Parks By-law and Highway Vending By-law amendments;
- Recommended **DS-21-52 Amendment to Downtown Urban Growth Centre Community Improvement Plan** to allow Security and Safety Features to Promote Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Principles;
- Provided input on the **RMG capital greenspace items** to address security concerns;
- Provided input on the downtown business information packages that were hand delivered in May/June;
- Supported three downtown Oshawa community clean-up events (August 14 and September 18 with a future event scheduled on October 16);
- Provided input and supported the community engagement on community safety in Oshawa's downtown and surrounding area.

5.3 Community Engagement Results

During a six-week period (from May to June 28, 2021), the City called on community members to share their feedback on community safety in Oshawa's downtown and surrounding area.

The feedback form was available on the City's online engagement platform, Connect Oshawa and available on paper by contacting Service Oshawa.

The public consultation was promoted to the community and stakeholders through various mediums, including media materials, social media, as well as print and digital promotional material. In addition, the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being assisted in the dissemination and promotion of the community engagement initiative.

5.3.1 Response

In total: 959 completed the feedback form (955 online; 4 submitted paper forms):

- Responses were received from all age groups ranging from 18 – 75+ with the majority of responses coming from those aged 25-34 (25%), 35-44 (25%) and 45-64 (20%).
- Responses were received from all wards, with the majority of respondents indicating their household/business/property was located in Ward 4 (44%).
- The majority of respondents learned about the opportunity via social media with a significant portion indicating they were notified by e-mail/e-newsletter.

Attachment 1 is a copy of the community engagement results and Attachment 2 is the proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan, which outlines 37 items and has been recommended by the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being for endorsement by Council.

5.3.2 Findings

Key findings from the feedback form are noted below.

- 90% of respondents indicated they were either Oshawa residents and/or business/property owners.
- Respondents reported that they have visited the downtown Oshawa area in the past 12 months for leisure, work or business at the following levels of frequency (note: that a number of businesses in the downtown were closed to due to COVID-19 restrictions):
 - 26% - a few times
 - 26% - daily
 - 24% - weekly
 - 13% - monthly
 - 11% - have not visited
- The majority of respondents indicated that they feel the downtown Oshawa area is either unsafe (40%) or very unsafe (18%). This is compared to 24% who indicated safe or very safe. Additionally, 18% of respondents indicated they were undecided.
- When asked to specify why respondents chose either unsafe or very unsafe, the most common response was personal experience.

- The majority of respondents (53%) indicated that they feel crime in the downtown area of Oshawa has increased over the last three years.
- The top three areas of concern selected by respondents were: illegal drugs, disorderly conduct and loitering.

5.4 Proposed Action Plan

The proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan (Attachment 2) recommends 37 action items. The proposed action items have been sorted under five categories: Social Services, Property Owner Support, Health and Safety, Enforcement, and Revitalization / Image. The proposed Action Plan also provides an estimated timeframe in which the work on the action item will begin, identifies who is leading the action item and who is providing support.

It should be noted that the proposed Action Plan is not static and will need to be continually updated as new information is obtained, as circumstances change and as best practices are learned.

5.5 Downtown Initiatives

Mayor Dan Carter, members of City Council and City staff have been speaking and meeting with businesses, residents, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations regarding health and safety concerns in the downtown, as well as the opioid and housing crisis.

As a result of ongoing concerns from Oshawa downtown property owners regarding unlawful activities in the downtown, homelessness, mental health and addictions, as well as the economic development impact directly related to these complex issues, a joint statement from the Regional Chair John Henry and Mayor Dan Carter was made regarding downtown Oshawa. Refer to Attachment 3 for a copy of the statement.

In addition, Mayor Dan Carter, members of City Council and City staff have met and continues to meet individually with property owners to provide support and advocate on their behalf to D.R.P.S. and the Region of Durham.

5.5.1 Property Owners

Some of the actions undertaken by property owners include:

- Proactively reporting criminal activity to D.R.P.S.;
- Installing and registering security cameras with D.R.P.S.;
- Registering for the Downtown Clean Up Program; and,
- Providing authorization under the Trespass to Property Act to D.R.P.S.

In addition, over 50 downtown businesses have joined together and created the Downtown Oshawa Business Alliance to advocate and find solutions by government to address the community health, safety and well-being issues in downtown Oshawa.

5.5.2 Region of Durham

The initiatives that are being advanced by the Region are outlined in the Action items for downtown Oshawa email sent by the Chief Administrative Officer of Durham Region to Durham Region members of Council as per Attachment 10. For more information on the Region of Durham's support, visit the Region of Durham's website at [Downtown Oshawa Support - Region of Durham](#).

5.5.2.1 Senior Staff Task Force

The Regional Municipality of Durham, which is responsible for social services, community housing, public health and police services, established a senior staff Task Force comprising of representatives from Durham Region Social Services, Durham Region Health Department, Durham Regional Police Service, Lakeridge Health, and the City of Oshawa. The Region is chairing/ leading the senior staff Task Force given their areas of jurisdiction.

The senior staff Task Force was established to address concerns from downtown property owners and recognizing that more action is needed to address a growing unsheltered population, increased opioid misuse resulting in death and increased unlawful behaviour. The senior staff Task Force met throughout the summer and continues to meet regularly to address the issues in downtown Oshawa so that everyone feels safe and supported.

Specifically, the senior staff Task Force is reviewing the concentrated support services offered by the Region and community partners, identifying gaps and duplication of services and taking steps to help all involved.

5.5.3 City Initiatives

The City has undertaken numerous actions, some of which include but are not limited to the following.

5.5.3.1 Health and Safety

- In October 2019, Mayor Dan Carter introduced a motion at the Durham Region Health & Social Services Committee, seconded by Regional and City Councillor Bob Chapman advocating for the Provincial and Federal governments to address the opioid crisis in Canada. Refer to Attachment 5 for a copy of the Regional Council direction.
- In June 2021, Mayor Dan Carter, Regional and City Councillor Bob Chapman and City staff met with the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society as they have achieved zero homelessness since work started in 2011. Key points that were discussed are that it is important to understand: a) relationships between service providers and the people receiving services; b) collaboration between service providers is key; and, c) the importance of having a policy for service providers to implement with individuals receiving services as they need to understand that there are expectations that need to be followed.

- On July 30, 2021, Mayor Dan Carter wrote to Dr. Robert Kyle, Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health at the Region of Durham, advocating that the Health Department and the Province of Ontario modify the harm reduction program due to the health and safety concerns experienced by our community (e.g. used discarded needles found in parks and trails and on downtown private properties). The letter also requested that it be an exchange program as well as investigate changing the types of syringes distributed (e.g. retractable needles) and changing the colour so if discarded, they would be easily identified. Refer to Attachment 6 for a copy of the letter.
- On August 16, 2021, Regional Chair John Henry issued letters to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, and Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party requesting that they visit our downtown as well as recommended three immediate actions: 1) toughen penalties and sentencing for gun and drug-related offences; 2) declare the opioid crisis a national health crisis and significantly increase funding and supports to effectively manage the crisis; and, 3) support municipalities with a post-pandemic community building fund. Refer to Attachment 7 for a copy of the letter.
- On August 20, 2021, Regional Chair John Henry and Mayor Dan Carter issued letters to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General requesting that they visit our downtown as well as recommended two immediate actions: 1) consider alternatives for repeat offenders; and, 2) allocate funding and support to Durham to address root causes of homelessness and address the opioid crisis. Refer to Attachment 8 for a copy of the letter.

5.5.3.2 Enforcement

- On August 23, 2019, a letter was sent to Chief Paul Martin, Durham Regional Police Service from Mayor Dan Carter advising that the safety and health of our community is priority and that unlawful behaviour will not be tolerated and to advocate for their continued commitment to enforcement to eliminate unlawful behaviour. Refer to Attachment 4 for a copy of the letter.
- In September 2020, Mayor Dan Carter met with the Durham Region Police Service Board to advocate for sufficient police funding, increased foot patrols, police presence 24/7 year-round, and continued investment in CCTV cameras.
- In December 2020, a staff Downtown Steering Team comprised of Corporate Security, Municipal Law Enforcement and D.R.P.S. was established and meets bi-weekly to collaboratively address some of the issues occurring in the downtown.
- The Parks By-law was amended to require a permit by individuals/ organizations who are handing out food within the City's parks, greenspaces, boulevards, sidewalks.
- The Highway Vending By-law was amended to prohibit the distribution of items from a vehicle within the road allowance, unless authorized by a permit.

- The City has increased patrol and reallocated staffing of Municipal Law Enforcement to identify and address Property Standards issues and enforce Trespass By-law, Nuisance By-law, Waste By-law, Parks By-law, Highway Vending By-law as well as Traffic and Parking By-law.
- The City's new Corporate Security provider has been assisting in addressing behaviour that is contrary to the City's by-laws. The City's Corporate Security Manager has provided C.P.T.E.D. (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) information to downtown property owners as well as installed 12 security cameras in the downtown to assist D.R.P.S. and Municipal Law Enforcement in addressing unlawful behaviour.
- On September 21, 2021, Mayor Dan Carter met with the Durham Region Police Service Board to advocate:
 - for sufficient police funding for increased foot patrols and police presence 24/7 year-round in the downtown;
 - for the return of the DRAVIS funding and unit to the downtown;
 - that proactive action on open illegal drug sale, use and distribution in the downtown occur;
 - that the mental health unit work with the downtown social service agencies to assist individuals experiencing mental health issues in order for them to be connected to appropriate services; and,
 - that there be increased overnight patrols in the downtown core where the city is experiencing increased criminal activity.

5.5.3.3 Property Owner Support

- The City has increased patrol and reallocation of Parks staff to proactively patrol and clean up the trails and parks including landscape maintenance, removal of garbage and drug paraphernalia as well as address graffiti.
- In April 2021, Mayor Carter and Regional and City Councillor Bob Chapman and City staff hosted a virtual meeting with members of the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce to provide information on the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being, community safety and security, when and how to report incidents to either D.R.P.S. or to the City as well as have the opportunity to ask questions.
- In May 2021, over 150 individual face-to-face meetings were completed with downtown business owners that included representation from D.R.P.S., Municipal Law Enforcement and Corporate Security. Information packages were provided that included an introductory letter that gave an update:
 - on the "If you see it, report it!" campaign that encourages the reporting of safety and nuisance concerns in the community to Service Oshawa and D.R.P.S.
 - and a window decal, posters and bookmark was also included to help communicate the campaign

- The letter also advised:
 - that there has been an increase of D.R.P.S. foot patrols dedicated to the downtown
 - how to register their property's CCTV cameras with D.R.P.S. to aid in the event of criminal activity
 - that there has been an increase of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers patrolling parks and trails in the downtown
 - to report used, discarded needles to Service Oshawa
 - to contact John Howard Society for training on how to handle used needles
 - about the formation the Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force and the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being.
- There has been an increased level of service for sidewalk and road cleaning, it is now taking place every other day Monday to Friday instead of once a week.
- There has been an increased level of service for garbage clean up and reallocation of Operations staff in the downtown to clean up every day on both private and public property the discarded garbage and drug paraphernalia prior to the opening of businesses and organizations. This clean up includes the front of properties and some alleyways. Property owners have been requested to contact Service Oshawa to register for the Downtown Clean Up Program which is expected to continue until winter control operations require staff to redirect their resources elsewhere. To date, over 25 property owners have signed up for the program.
- On August 24, 2021, Mayor Dan Carter issued letters to all the Durham Region mayors for assistance in addressing the health and safety challenges that are being faced in downtown Oshawa. Refer to Attachment 9 for a copy of the letter.
- In September 2021, Mayor Carter and representation from Economic Development Services, Corporate Security, Facilities Management Services, Municipal Law Enforcement and Durham Region Social Services visited the downtown properties located within the new "Plan20Thirty Downtown Action Plan" geographic boundaries. Information letters were hand delivered that provided an update on initiatives and programs to support Oshawa's downtown property owners including the ability to register for the Downtown Clean Up Program as well as advising them on the virtual Downtown Oshawa Stakeholder Virtual Town Hall which will be taking place on Thursday, September 23, 2021.
- There have been two downtown Oshawa community clean-up events (August 14 and September 18) with a future event scheduled on October 16. To date, 50 volunteers participated in these clean-up events.

5.5.3.4 Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force

- In April 2020, Mayor Dan Carter announced the formation of the Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force to make recommendations to help businesses, during and after the pandemic, including ways to advocate for support from other levels of government.
- Chaired by Regional and City Councillor Tito-Dante Marimpietri, Chair of Oshawa's Development Services Committee, members of the Task Force includes Mayor Dan Carter and representation from many sectors including the development industry, financial sector, employment support sector, post-secondary institutions, business support organizations and real estate, among others.
- The Task Force has worked throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to identify short and long-term priorities to support businesses and advance ongoing recovery efforts through programming and initiatives. Items that support the downtown include:
 - the expedited outdoor patio program and temporary on street pick up zones for takeout and delivery services for businesses;
 - work with various stakeholders to establish creative solutions and ideas for businesses;
 - the Oshawa Loves Local and Buy Local campaign; and,
 - waiving of parking fees.

5.6. Council Direction to Hold a Meeting

At its meeting of June 21, 2021, City Council directed the following regarding issues surrounding properties on Simcoe Street South as outlined in Correspondence CNCL-21-58:

"That Oshawa Enforcement Division organize a meeting of Durham Region Social Services, Durham Regional Police, to hear delegations from affected businesses, residents and concerned citizens for the purpose of solving issues faced by business, residents and concerned citizens."

On September 23, 2021, a Downtown Oshawa Stakeholder Virtual Town Hall will be held online (through Microsoft Teams Live Event) starting at 6:30 p.m. The virtual Town Hall is to be hosted by the Region with presentations made by Durham Region Social Services, Lakeridge Health, D.R.P.S. and the City of Oshawa and is to be moderated by Oshawa's Director, Economic Development.

A number of downtown Oshawa stakeholders were notified through various communication methods including targeted emails from Durham Region and the City of Oshawa, posting on the City's calendar listing and door-to-door distribution of letters within the geographic area approved by Council for the new "Plan20Thirty Downtown Action Plan". In addition, both Regional and City Councils were advised.

Downtown Oshawa Stakeholders were advised that they could participate in the meeting and ask questions, submit questions in advance to be addressed during the meeting or

simply listen to the meeting. The meeting will be recorded for posting on the Region and City websites along with the PowerPoint presentations.

6.0 Financial Implications

The initiatives that have already been advanced are being addressed through existing approved budgets and some are eligible costs for the COVID funding provided by the Province. In addition, the Region agreed to cost share on certain items. The other financial implications of the various items that need to be investigated further in the proposed Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa's Downtown Area Action Plan will be addressed through future budget submissions as part of the City's regular budget planning process or separate reports as appropriate.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

The recommendations in this report respond to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Goals of Accountable Leadership, Economic Prosperity & Financial Stewardship, Social Equity and Cultural Vitality.

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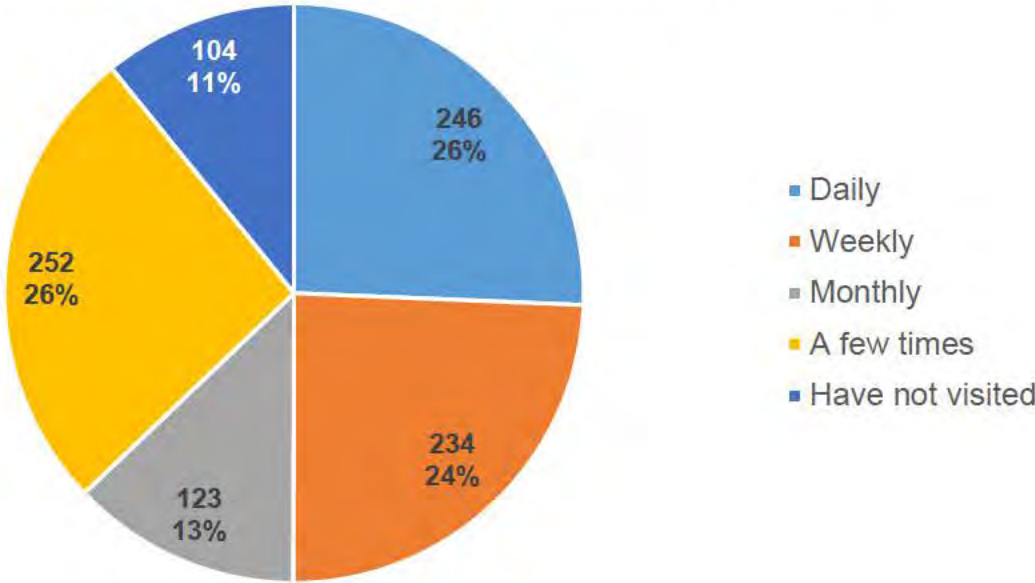
Paul Ralph, Chief Administrative Officer,
Office of the C.A.O.

Attachments

Feedback Form Results

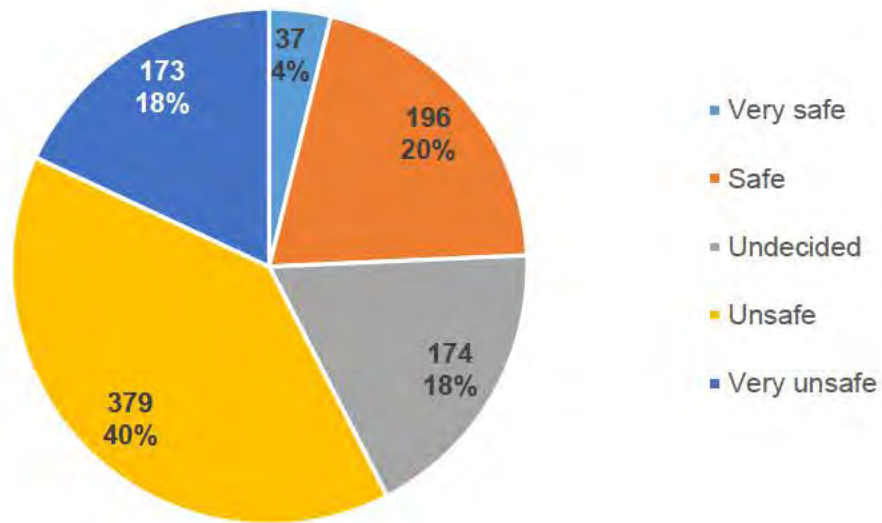
Community Safety in Oshawa's downtown area

In the past 12 months, on average how often did you visit the downtown area of Oshawa for leisure, work or business?



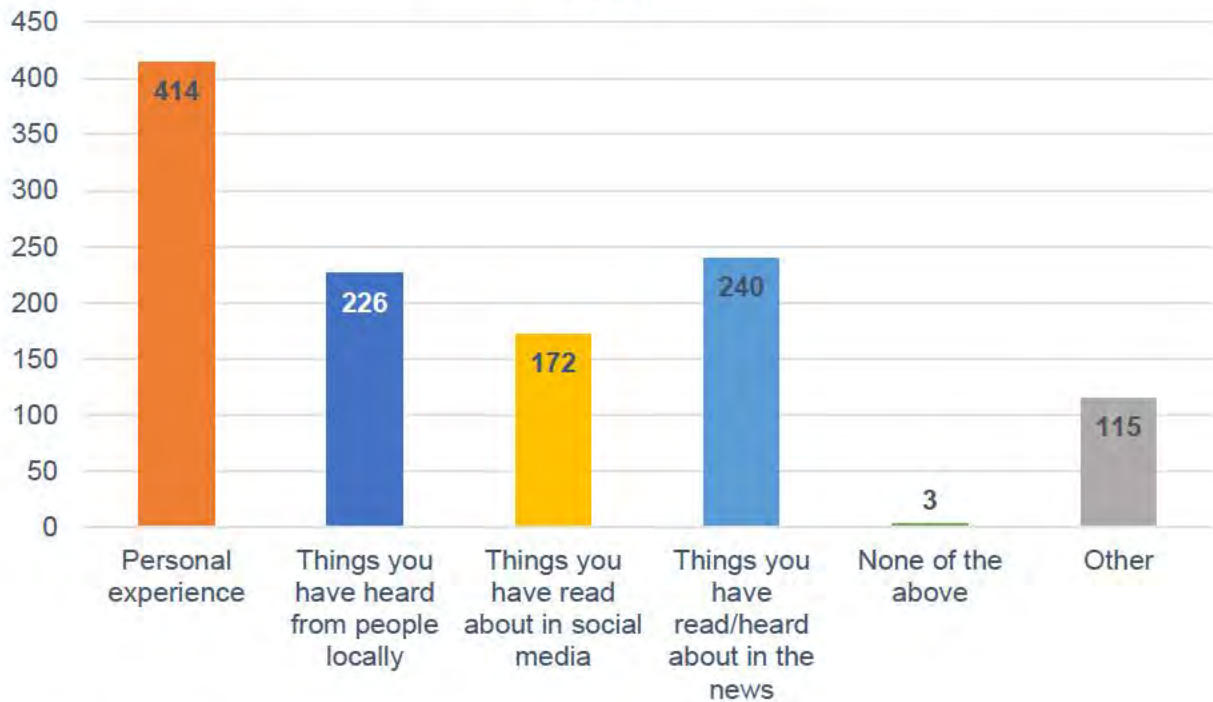
Mandatory question: 959 responses

Overall, how safe or unsafe do you feel the downtown area of Oshawa is?



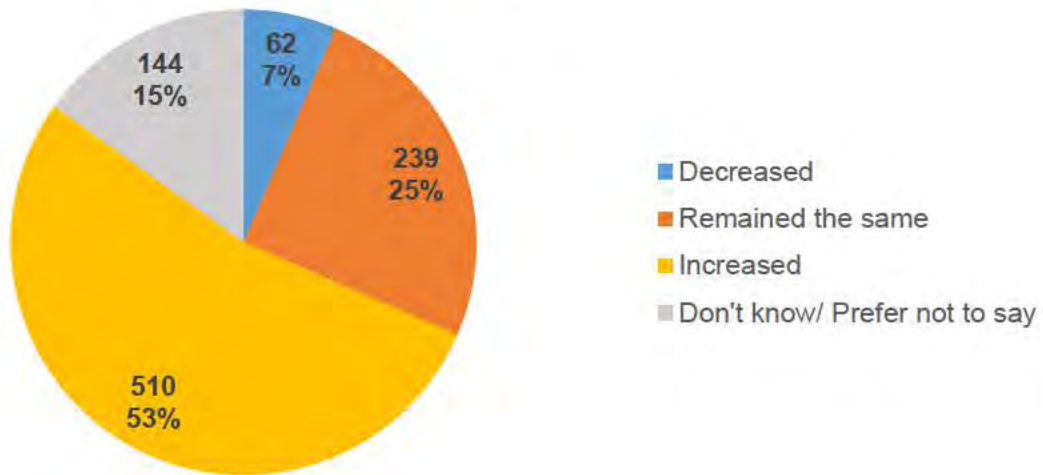
Mandatory question: 959 responses

If you answered "Very unsafe" or "Unsafe", please specify why you feel that the downtown area is not safe. Check all that apply.



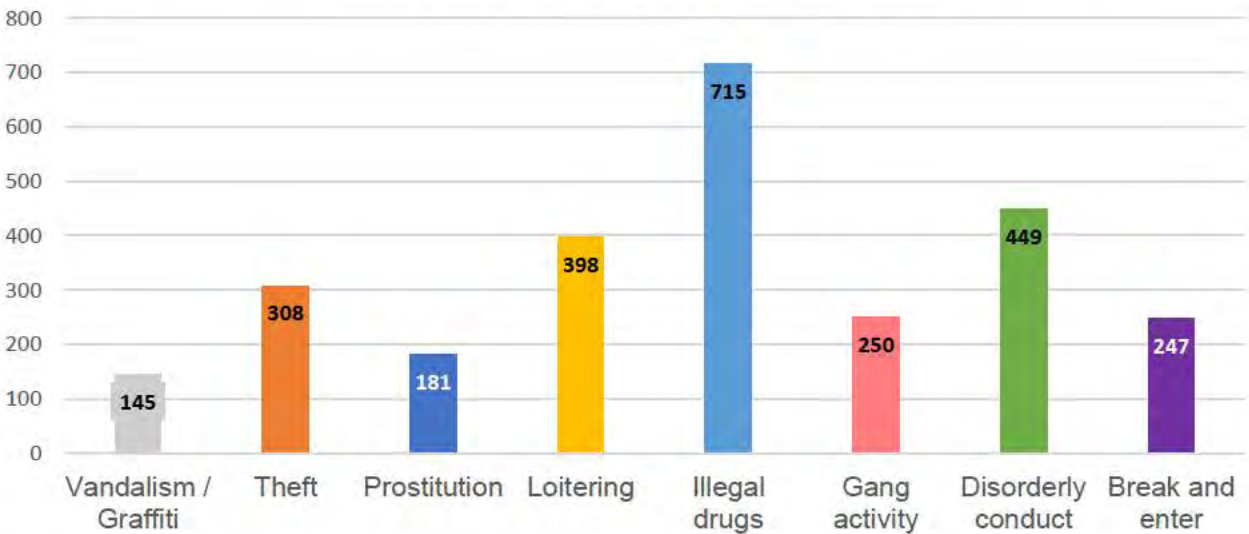
Optional question: 552 responses, 407 skipped

Over the last three years, do you think crime in the downtown area of Oshawa has...



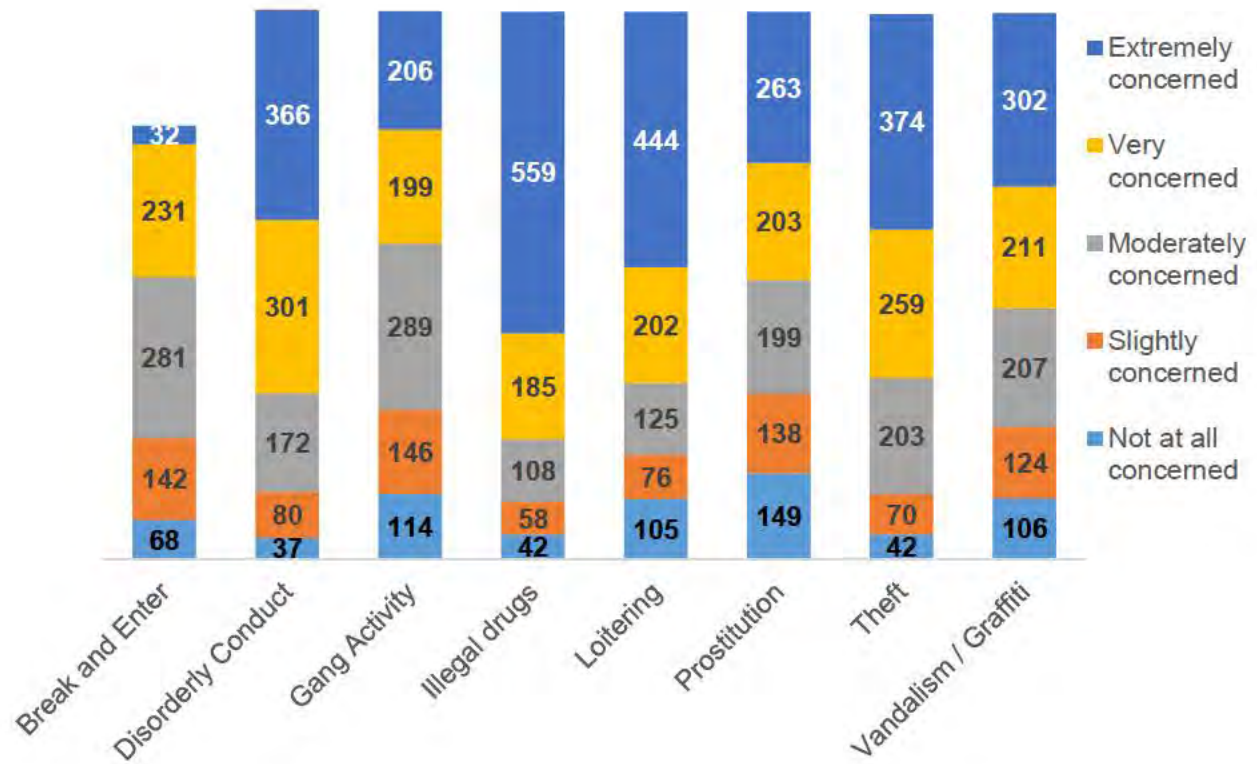
Optional question: 955 responses, 4 skipped

Please select from the following and choose your three main issues of concern in the downtown area.



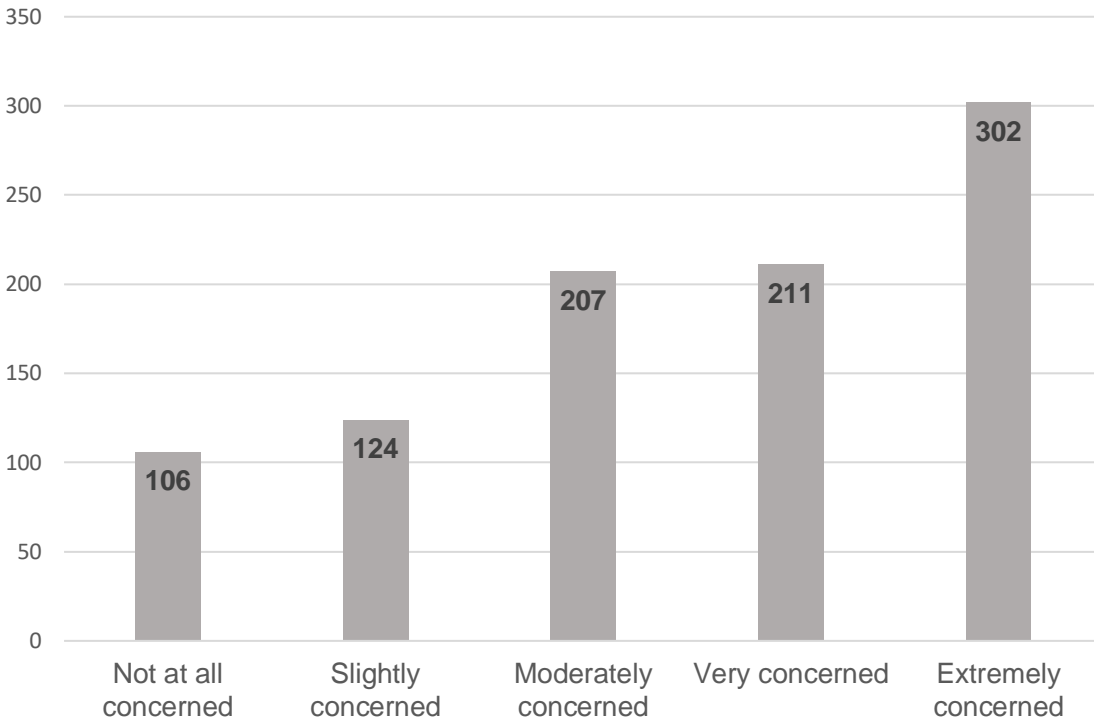
Optional question: 930 responses, 29 skipped

How concerned are you about the following in the downtown area of Oshawa?

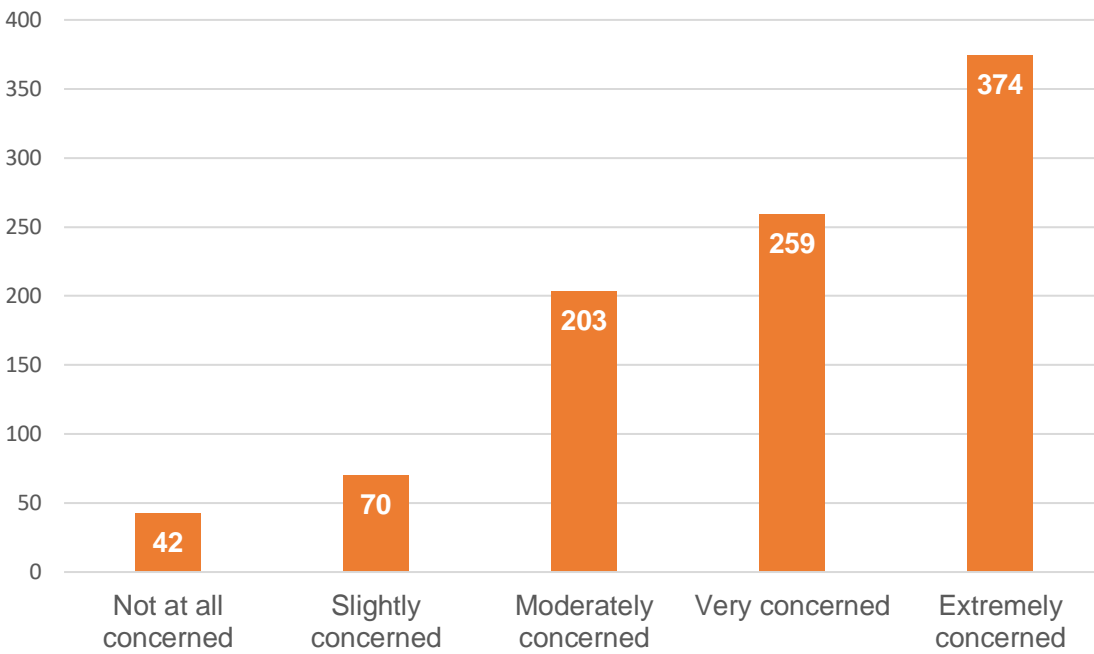


Optional question: 957 responses, 2 skipped

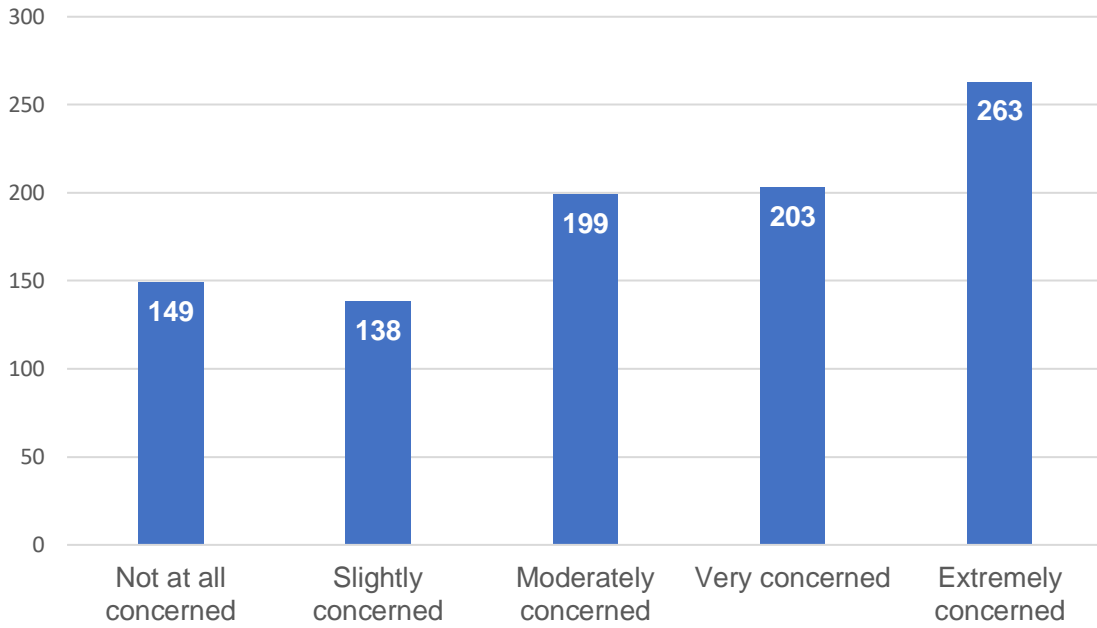
Vandalism / Graffiti



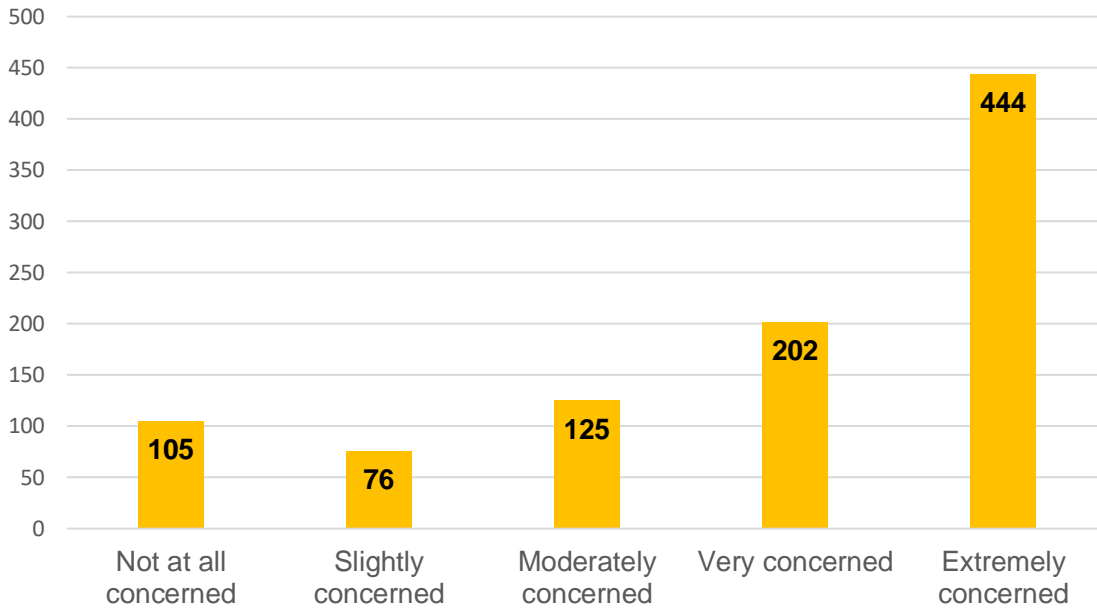
Theft



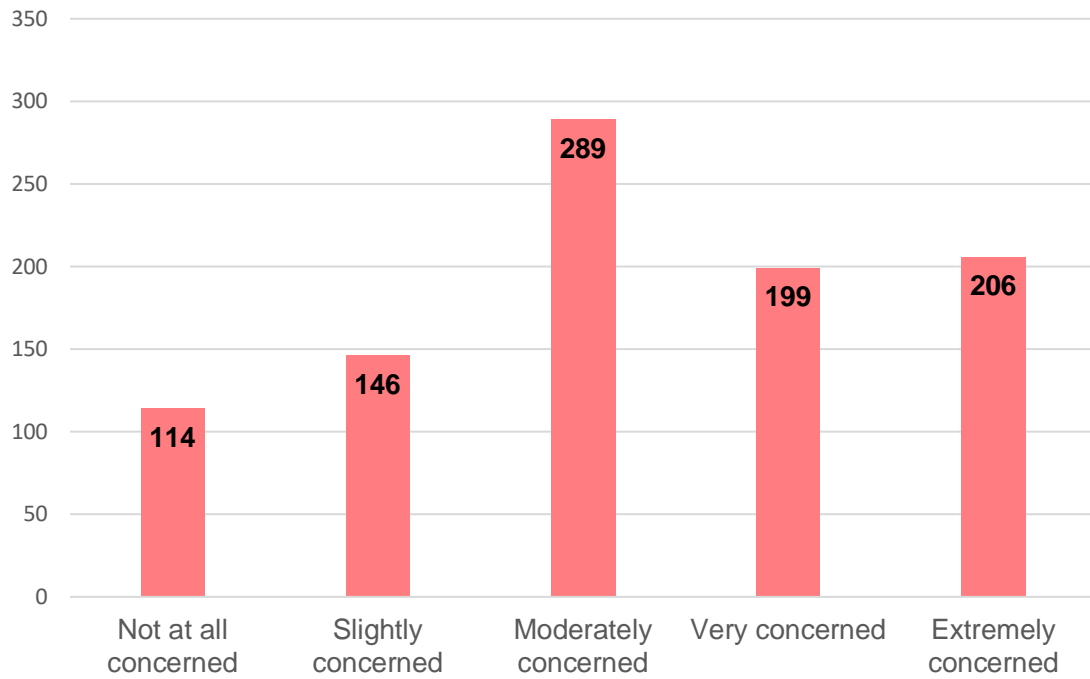
Prostitution



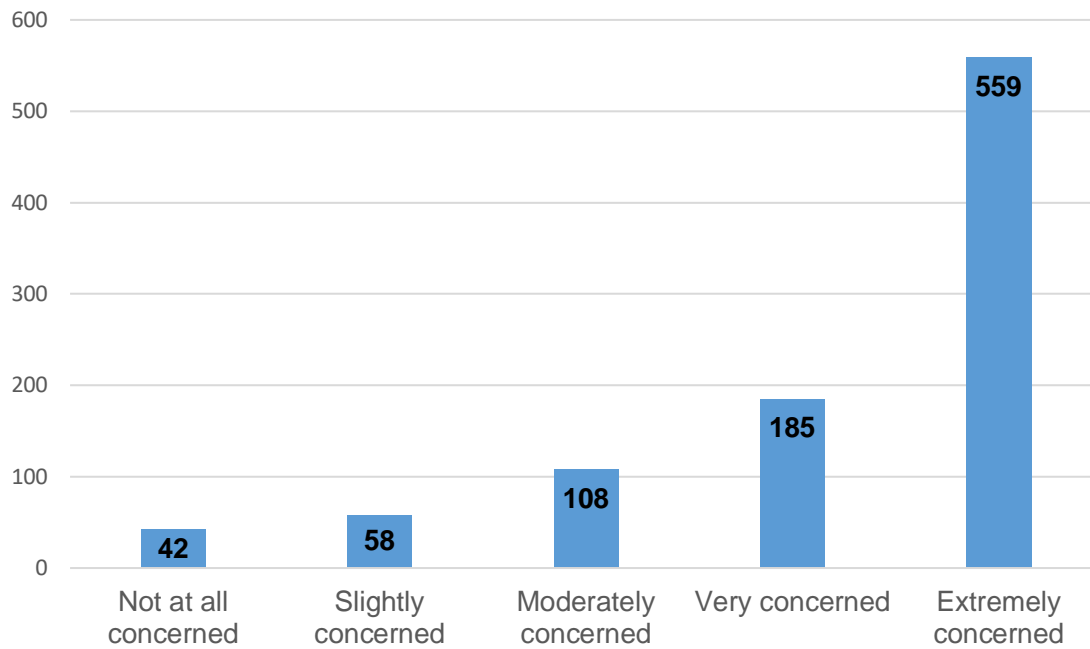
Loitering



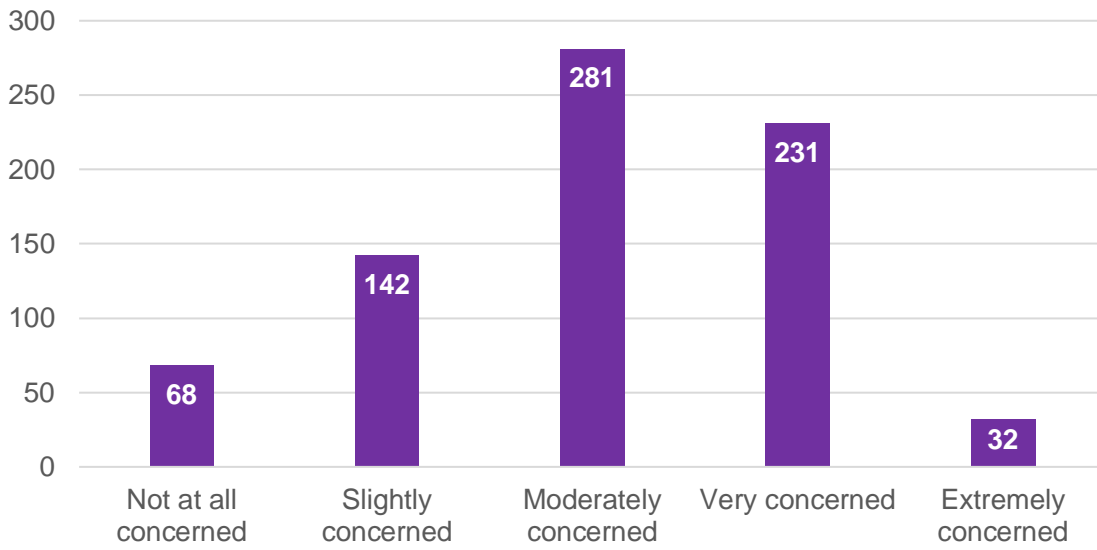
Gang Activity



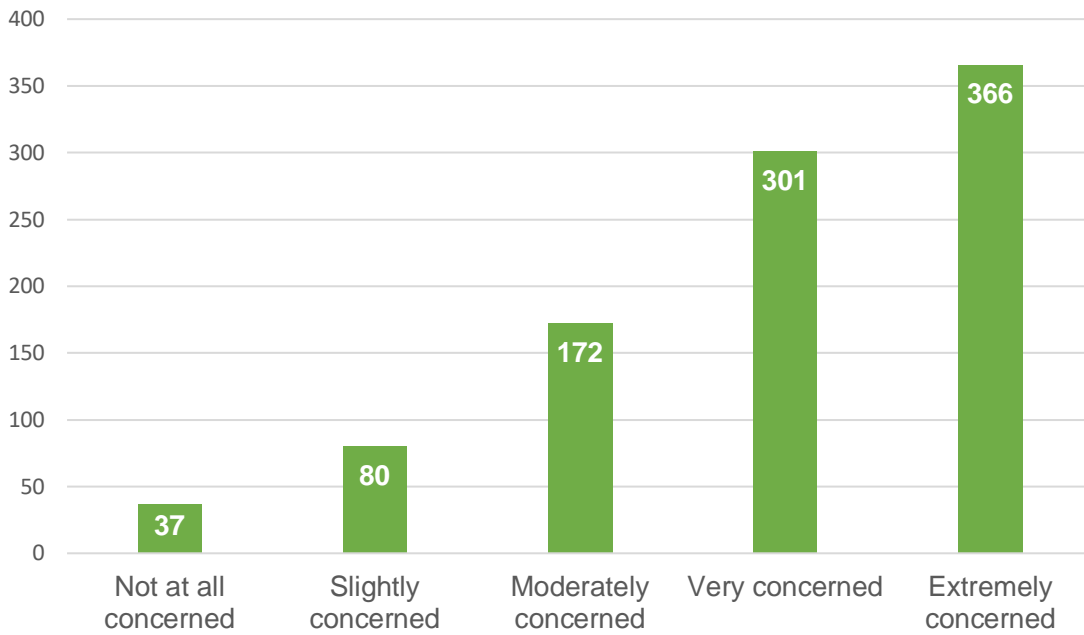
Illegal drugs



Break and Enter

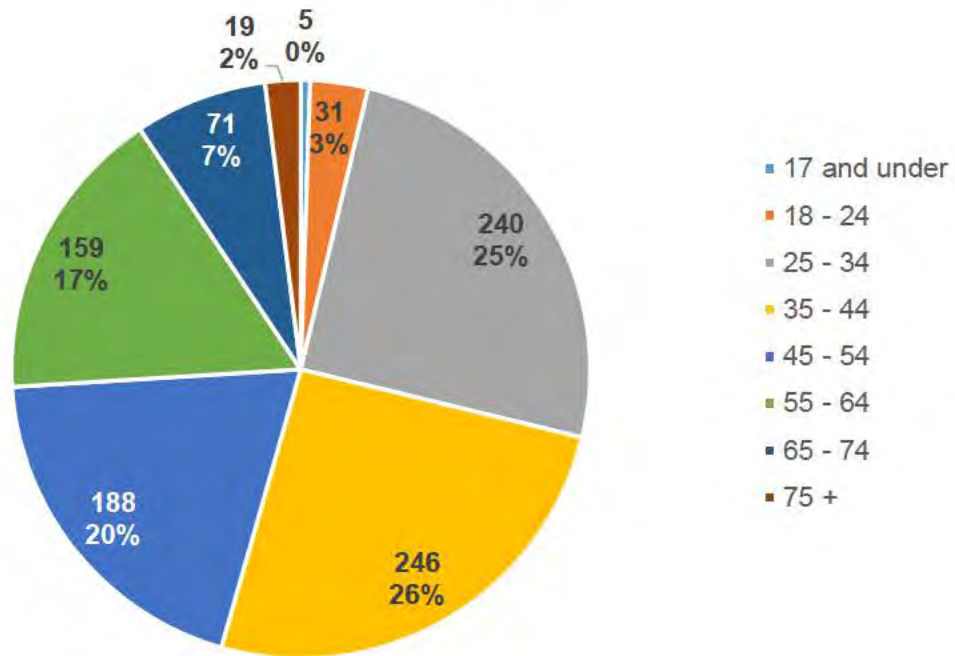


Disorderly Conduct



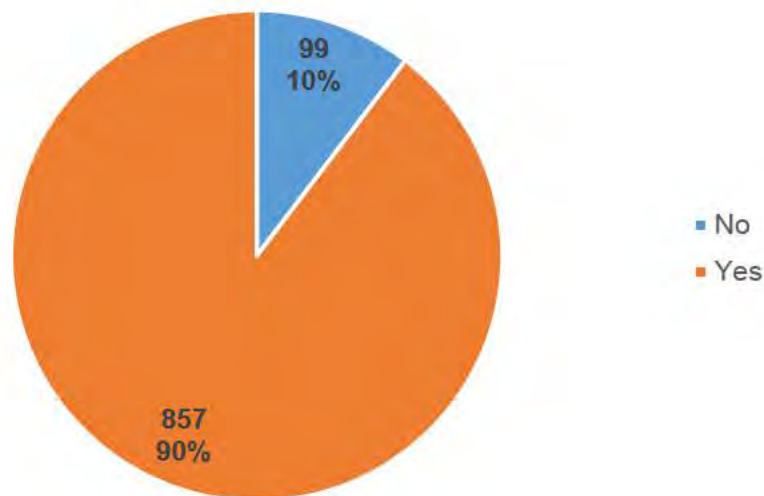
Demographics

How old are you?



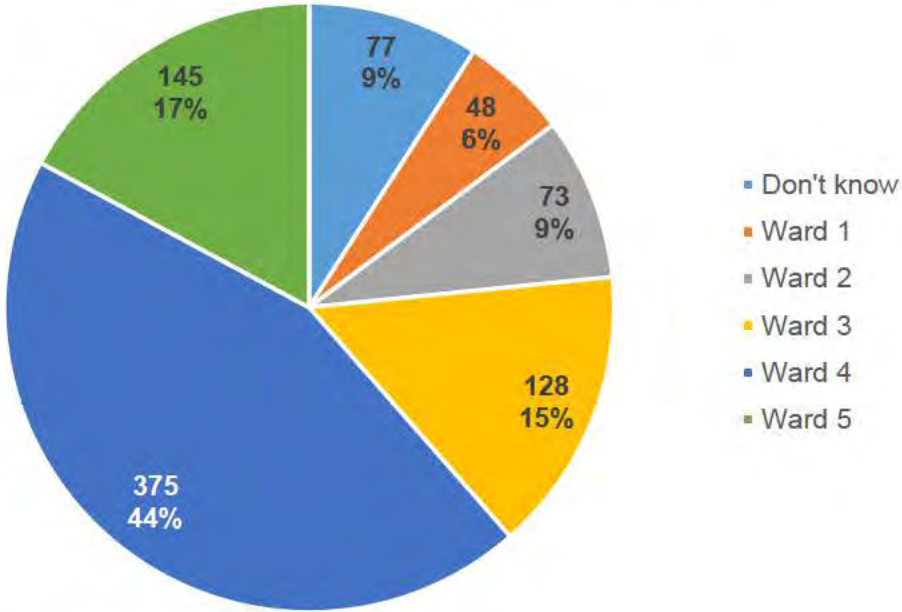
Mandatory question: 959 responses

Are you an Oshawa resident, and / or Oshawa business/property owner?



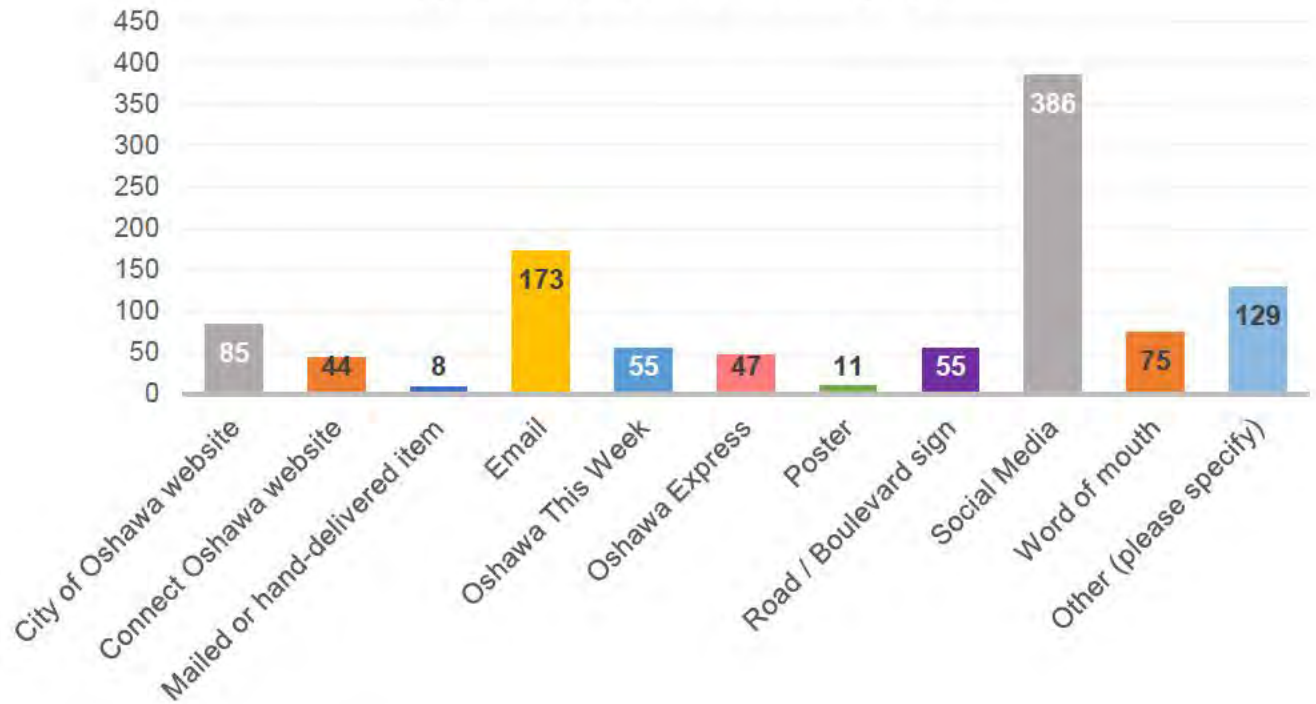
Optional question: 956 responses, 3 skipped

If you answered "Yes" , what ward do you live in/is your business/property located in? Select all that apply.



Optional question: 846 responses, 113 skipped

How did you learn about this community engagement opportunity? Select all that apply.



Optional question: 959 responses

Community Safety, Security and Well-Being in Oshawa’s Downtown Area Action Plan

Social Services

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
1	Investigate the support service model to ensure the model is coordinated and effective – and that services are available equitably across the Region of Durham.	Q4 2021	Region	City/ Community Partners/ GAP Committee
2	Review support services offered by the Region and community partners to identify service gaps and duplication of services and ensure activities support the Region’s goal of ending homelessness by 2024.	Q4 2021	Region	Community Partners
3	Investigate a registration and/or regulation of community partners to ensure that they are providing services that supports the Region’s goal of ending homelessness.	Q4 2021	Region	Community Partners
4	Develop a Community Code of Conduct for recipients of support services.	Q3 2021	Region	GAP Committee/ Community Partners
5	Expand the street outreach team, in addition to the PCOP team, to connect with unsheltered individuals struggling with mental health and addictions with the goal of placing them in supportive housing.	Q3 2021	Region/ Lakeridge Health	Community Partners
6	Create a day program with supports due to the increased number of unsheltered individuals struggling with mental health and addictions living on the streets, with a goal of placing them in supportive housing.	Q1 2022	Region/ Lakeridge Health	Community Partners
7	Advocate for support from upper levels of government to address the needs (addiction, opioids, mental health, poverty and housing) with continued and increased investment in Direct Service Provision.	On-going	Region	Mayor’s Office
8	Advance a zoning review of social services establishments along the gateways to the downtown.	Q1 2022	Planning Services	

Property Owner Support

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
9	Investigate the establishment of Property Value Protection to address increased operating costs (e.g. CPTED items), decreased revenue and loss of rental income resulting from the increased number of social service organizations and individuals with addiction and mental health issues and associated negative impact to the community (e.g. unlawful and criminal behaviour).	Q4 2021	Finance Services	Region
10	Investigate the establishment of a Vandalism Cleanup Support Grant Program for businesses within the downtown boundaries that have been directly affected by such matters as vandalism and graffiti.	Q4 2021	Finance Services	Oshawa Chamber of Commerce/ Downtown Businesses
11	Attract new and support existing businesses through financial incentives and business outreach (e.g. CIP incentives).	On-going	Development Services	Planning Services/ Region/ Downtown Businesses
12	Develop Downtown Action Plan “Plan 20Thirty” for Council’s endorsement.	Q4 2021	Economic Development Services	All

Health and Safety

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
13	Advocate to the Region and Province the modification of the Project X-Change needle exchange program due to the thousands of discarded used needles found in Oshawa parks, trails and on downtown businesses and residential properties which is a public health and safety issue for all. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify the colour so that discarded needles are more easily found • Distribute retractable needles 	Q3 2021	Mayor’s Office	Region
14	Investigate the creation of a Downtown Staff Response Team to provide support to the residents and businesses to address issues as such as discarded waste, used needles, by-law issues after regular business hours.	Q4 2021	Operation Services	Corporate Services

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
15	Increase waste collection service levels to patrol/ pick up garbage, human waste and used needles daily from August until November 30 on public and private properties.	Q3 2021	Operation Services	Region to cost share
16	Request that the Region investigate the provision, maintenance and staffing of a portable sanitation services/washrooms and hand washing stations located in the downtown to address the urination and defecation on public and private property (e.g. trailer versus porta-potty).	Q3 2021	Region	
17	Advance the discussions regarding relocation of the downtown methadone clinic with the owner.	Q4 2021	Development Services	
18	Increase the daily maintenance in the downtown by providing increased sidewalk and road cleaning and trail patrol to address used needles, garbage, and graffiti.	Q3 2021	Operation Services	
19	Investigate the possibility of increasing the illumination of lights in downtown and on trails to enhance public safety.	Q4 2021	Corporate Services	Community Services/ OPUC

Enforcement

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
20	Meet with D.R.P.S. Police Board, as a follow up to the Mayor's September 2020 meeting, requesting that they request that the Province return the DRAVIS funding to address drug related crimes in the downtown and support their vision of the safest community for people to live, work and play.	Q3 2021	Mayor's Office/ D.R.P.S. Police Board	
21	Request that the D.R.P.S. 2022 budget includes a dedicated, consistent presence in the downtown as public safety is of the utmost importance and to support their vision of the safest community for people to live, work and play.	Q3 2021	Mayor's Office/ D.R.P.S. Police Board	Region
22	Request that D.R.P.S. has an increased response for all criminal behaviour.	Q3 2021	Mayor's Office/ D.R.P.S. Police Board	Downtown Stakeholders
23	Investigate a higher-level response from D.R.P.S. for those experiencing mental health and addiction issues (e.g. D.R.P.S. Mental Health Unit).	Q3 2021	D.R.P.S. Police Board	Lakeridge Health
24	Request proactive patrolling by D.R.P.S. Mental Health Unit in downtown to assist individuals experiencing mental health and addiction issues will be connected to appropriate services.	Q3 2021	Mayor's Office/ D.R.P.S. Police Board	Lakeridge Health

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
25	Investigate the development of a property beautification by-law that would address property standards and lot maintenance, and have a shorter service level timeline.	2022	Municipal Law Enforcement	Legal Services
26	Report on the inclusion of tiered and escalating Administrative Monetary Penalties in the Lot Maintenance By-law 127-2007, Boulevard By-law 136-2006, and Waste Collection By-law 113-2008 to address repeat offences.	Q4 2021	Municipal Law Enforcement	Legal Services/ I.T. Services
27	Investigate the establishment of a vacant buildings registry to track vacant buildings as they can affect the character of a neighbourhood and can have a negative effect on property values, and detract from future investments.	2022	Municipal Law Enforcement	Legal Services
28	Increase Municipal Law Enforcement staffing on weekends dedicated to the downtown to provide a consistent presence in the downtown to enforce municipal by-laws including properties with property standards and lot maintenance infractions.	Q2 2021	Municipal Law Enforcement	
29	Increase Corporate Security foot patrol to ensure a consistent presence in the downtown.	Q2 2021	Facilities Management Services	
30	Conduct proactive enforcement of lodging homes to ensure compliance with by-law.	Q4 2021	Municipal Law Enforcement/ Fire Services	Region
31	Investigate establishing a new by-law that retail stores must submit a management plan for retrieval and return of abandoned shopping carts found outside their property boundaries to address the number of discarded shopping carts found throughout the city.	Q4 2021	Municipal Law Enforcement	Legal Services

Revitalization/Image

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
32	Investigate the distribution of bags (including a tag that provides information on social services supports) to reduce the use of shopping carts beyond retail establishments.	2022	Oshawa C.A.O.'s Office	Region/ Community Partners
33	Investigate the establishment of additional lockers.	2022	Oshawa C.A.O.'s Office	Region/ Community Partners/ Downtown Stakeholders

#	Item	Timeframe	Lead	Support
34	Investigate the use of the Municipal Accommodation Tax to provide funding to enhance the downtown streetscape and maintenance to support tourism.	Q4 2021	Finance Services	
35	Investigate increasing the revitalization of the downtown landscape, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place flower planters along the southern gateway • More murals • Widening of sidewalks • Replacement of furniture 	2022	Community Services/ Engineering Services	Downtown Stakeholders
36	Investigate the number of public special events and activities to be held in the downtown to support the revitalization of the downtown.	Q3 2021	Community Services	Economic Development Services
37	Revitalize downtown Oshawa image through a Downtown Oshawa web section, Instagram account and Twitter profile. Promote downtown public events and enhancements, including other business events on these channels.	Q1 2022	Economic Development Services	Region/ Downtown Stakeholders



The Regional Municipality of Durham

News Release

August 23, 2021

Joint statement from Regional Chair John Henry and Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter on downtown Oshawa

Whitby, Ontario – The following statement is being issued on behalf of John Henry, Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer, and Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter:

“Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, many cities and towns have witnessed an increase of mental health challenges, addictions and housing needs among residents, while local businesses also face additional unprecedented challenges. In Durham Region, these issues are particularly prevalent in the City of Oshawa.

We have acknowledged concerns from residents, Oshawa downtown businesses, organizations and visitors regarding concerning activities in the downtown, homelessness, mental health and addictions, as well as economic development concerns directly related to these complex issues, and that more action is needed. The Regional Municipality of Durham—which is responsible for social services, community housing, public health and police services—is partnering with the City of Oshawa to address these complex social issues.

We are working diligently to ensure all residents feel safe and supported and have convened a senior staff Task Force to address the immediate issues happening in downtown Oshawa. This Task Force consists of representatives from Durham Region Social Services, Durham Region Health Department, Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS), Lakeridge Health and the City of Oshawa.

The Task Force is currently reviewing the concentrated support services offered by the Region and community partners; identifying gaps and duplication of services and taking steps to help all involved. As a first step, we are creating a Community Code of Conduct for recipients of support services and developing a Street Outreach and Encampment Strategy for Durham Region.

Other immediate actions include:

- Prioritizing street, park and private property clean up.
- Working closely with Lakeridge Health on addiction and treatment services through a street outreach team.
- Developing an updated local opioid response plan, including reviewing needle distribution.

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If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 905-441-2644.

- Continuing DRPS proactive presence.
- Proactive enforcement of property standards by-laws.
- Working with community agencies to reinforce our commitment to being a housing-focused community by expanding housing first initiatives.
- Supporting the City of Oshawa's work with businesses and residents.
- Regular updates on our collective actions taken to end chronic homelessness in Durham by 2024.
- Reviewing support services offered by the Region and community partners to identify service gaps.

The City and the Region have been addressing these unique challenges, including allocating funding, resources and staffing. The City and the Region have met and continue to meet individually with residents and businesses to provide support and advocate on their behalf regarding their health and safety concerns.

Planning is underway at the City to develop a [revitalization strategy for downtown Oshawa](#) and to continue expanding public art and civic pride initiatives. The Region plans to open the [Oshawa Micro-Homes Pilot Project](#) and complete its [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) to address priority risk factors with strategies and measurable outcomes.

In addition, the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security and Well-Being was formed to identify and propose opportunities to address community safety, security and well-being issues facing the City of Oshawa.

These initiatives will build on the work that the Region is already doing to support people experiencing homelessness. This year, we have helped create more than 100 new housing opportunities for our By-Name List and are on track to exceed that amount in the coming year. In addition, the Primary Care Outreach Program (PCOP) provides ongoing medical help and mental health counselling to more than 440 clients across the region annually.

The Region works alongside municipalities, the province and the federal government to ensure that Durham Region continues to grow, and our residents and businesses continue to thrive. As such, the Region and the City are engaging provincial and federal representatives to help advocate for additional support because these complex issues cannot be addressed by municipalities alone—we need strong partners.

The Region and the City have called on all federal party leaders and Durham Region candidates this federal election; the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Bill Blair; the Premier; and provincial representatives to tour downtown Oshawa. The purpose of the tour is to gain a better understanding of the complexity of homelessness, mental health and addiction and the impact on our community. The Region and the City of Oshawa have offered to co-ordinate the tours in September and work together on constructive solutions, as this cannot be solved without support and direction from our federal and provincial partners.

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If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 905-441-2644.

We are a Region that stands with all of our communities when faced with challenges. We will ensure our communities are healthy, safe and happy for all.”

– 30 –

Media inquiries:

The Regional Municipality of Durham:

Corporate Communications

905-441-2644 or CorporateCommunications@durham.ca

City of Oshawa:

Corporate Communications

905-436-5686 or communications@oshawa.ca

Quick Facts

- [The Regional Municipality of Durham's Social Services Department](#) has six divisions committed to delivering professional and high-quality services. Many residents will need one or more of these services at some point in their life. Our department's principles of care, excellence, learning and leadership are the foundation of our programs and services.
- Durham's [Homelessness Support & Coordinated Access System](#) is a collective of organizations and support services that work together to help address and eliminate barriers to access safe and affordable housing. The Coordinated Access System helps people experiencing homelessness to access services based on their individualized needs; the alternative is helping on a first-come, first-served basis, which means those able to better navigate the support system get help first, not necessarily those who need it most.
- The Region's By-Name List is a list of people, by name, who are experiencing homelessness in Durham. This list provides access to real-time data to help better address peoples' needs and track milestones on the journey to ending homelessness. The By-Name List was created as part of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness's Built for Zero Canada campaign, which is a nation-wide effort to end chronic homelessness.
- Shelters in Durham region are housing-focused, which means they are focused on helping people move from homelessness to housing as quickly as possibly by supporting people with their housing plans.
- Durham Region's [Master Housing Strategy](#) aims to improve affordability and access to housing, while highlighting priorities in [At Home in Durham, the Durham Housing Plan 2014-2024](#). Priorities include affordable rent, greater housing choice, strong and vibrant neighbourhoods and ending chronic homelessness.

durham.ca

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- Durham Region helped create more than 100 new housing opportunities in 2021 for our By-Name List by expanding successful models and adding new Housing-First Teams across Durham, developing new spaces from capital projects targeted to support Durham's Coordinated Access System, and launching the Landlord Engagement pilot to increase partnerships and support for landlords renting to clients from Durham's By-Name List.
- From January to May 2021, the Region's services and supports helped 577 people with eviction prevention and helped 556 people find housing.
- Durham Region received \$10.3 million in funding through the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) – Cities Stream to create an estimated 41 new affordable homes for individuals and families. These housing units will support Canadians who are in uncertain housing situations, experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, or living in temporary shelters because of the pandemic.



OSHAWA
ONTARIO, CANADA

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MAYOR DAN CARTER

Friday, August 23, 2019

Chief Paul Martin
Durham Regional Police Service
P.O. Box 911
605 Rossland Rd. E
Whitby, ON L1N 0B8

Dear Chief Martin:

I would like to thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss very important issues concerning our community. This letter confirms the key items that we discussed as well as clarifies my expectations with respect to addressing unlawful behaviour in our great city.

As you know, Oshawa like many other cities across Canada is facing a health crisis being caused by issues related to poverty, mental health, addictions and unsheltered individuals in our community. This has resulted in an increase in unsheltered people in our community, many of who are living in rough conditions and are struggling with complex addiction and mental health issues.

The City of Oshawa has been impacted by this national crisis more than any other community across the Region. The latest Point-in-Time Count estimates that there are approximately 291 unsheltered individuals in Durham Region, with Oshawa being home to 77% of those individuals. They are living in our city parks, trails and green spaces, as well as on private property without consent.

While the City is taking steps to help connect individuals in need in our community with services and shelter, we must also address the growing number of negative impacts of individuals on City land and private property without consent, including the negative impacts of theft and other resultant impacts on neighbouring residents and their properties.

Chief Martin, it is important that I confirm my position on this subject matter, as the Head of Council and the Mayor of the City of Oshawa. The safety and health of our community is one of our top priorities and we cannot tolerate any unlawful behaviour. The City and DRPS continue to receive complaints about property thefts and vandalism, discarded used needles, littering, public urination and defecation and belligerent behaviour throughout our community. These calls are not only growing in frequency and number, but these behaviours are also becoming more aggressive, to the point that our City staff are being threatened and in many cases need to work “shoulder-to-shoulder” with your officers in the field.

This is a serious community safety issue that requires diligence. We ask for the continued commitment to enforcement and addressing this unlawful behaviour and we welcome any ideas or concepts that may be able to help us address this issue.

As we continue to advocate at all levels of government for a solution to this national health crisis, I would like to make it clear that at no time do we support or accept individuals breaking the laws or by-laws in our community. The safety of all our community members is of the utmost importance. I ask that you share this communication with all 850 members of Durham Regional Police Services to ensure that they know my position and they have my support.

We thank you and your team for the work that you do in our city, specifically recognize the outstanding professionalism, skill and leadership displayed by John Parkinson, Tom Melnick and Dave Saliba at 17 division. The working relationship we have shared with the three leaders has been very positive and collaborative. We look forward to a continued, collaborative working relationship as we move forward.

Sincerely,



Dan Carter
Mayor of the City of Oshawa

Copy:

Kevin Ashe, Durham Regional Police Services Board
Colin Goodwin, Durham Regional Police Association President
Oshawa City Council
Paul Ralph, City Manager
Regional Chairman and Chief Executive Officer John Henry
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Mr. Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby

Ms. Lindsey Park, MPP for Durham
Ms. Jennifer French, MPP for Oshawa
Mr. Mark Holland, MP for Ajax
Mr. Erin O'Toole, MP for Durham
Dr. Colin Carrie, MP for Oshawa
Ms. Jennifer O'Connell, MP for Pickering, Uxbridge
Ms. Celina Caesar-Chavannes, MP for Whitby
Media

Regional Council Direction

WHEREAS the opioid overdose emergency is affecting communities across Ontario, including Durham Region; and

WHEREAS the prevalence of addiction and the incidence of emergency department visits and deaths associated with opioid use disorder have increased in recent years; and

WHEREAS addiction to prescription and illegal opioids is negatively affecting individuals, families and entire communities; and

WHEREAS on September 12, 2019, the Government of Ontario announced its plan to establish the Mental Health and Addictions Division (MHAD) under the leadership of Karen Glass, Assistant Deputy Ministry; and

WHEREAS the MHAD will lead the development and implementation of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy; and

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario will be consulting key stakeholders and the public on modernizing public health and land ambulance services; and

WHEREAS public health programs and services demonstrate superior value for money and return on investment; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has identified a need for federal and provincial strategies that are comprehensive, coordinated and address the root causes of the opioid crisis; and

WHEREAS FCM has recommended an intergovernmental action plan that aligns federal, provincial/territorial and local strategies, responds to specific needs of indigenous communities and rapidly expand all aspects of the collective response; and

WHEREAS FCM has echoed the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on the Opioid Crisis; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) has identified the following recommendations for a provincial response to addressing the opioid overdose emergency in Ontario:

- i. That the Province publicly affirms the seriousness of the opioid overdose emergency and commit to take all necessary measures to save lives and prevent harm, including the provision of long-term funding for existing programs as well as new funding streams, where necessary.
- ii. That the Province undertakes an 'all of government' effort to develop a comprehensive provincial drug strategy that addresses the opioid overdose emergency, based on a public health approach that addresses the social determinants of health, and that takes a non-discriminatory approach to overdose prevention and harm reduction. This strategy should cascade down to guide local

- drug strategy development and implementation with accompanying resources so that municipalities in Ontario have comprehensive, multi-faceted, funded drug strategies in place led by dedicated local coordinators. Further, progress toward implementation should be measured with performance indicators and be evaluated for outcomes achieved.
- iii. That the Province examines, and its ministries provide, a coordinated 'all of government' response with adequate funding to address the root causes of addiction, including housing related factors, poverty, unemployment, mental illness, and trauma.
 - iv. That the Ministry of Health provides more funding to support, enhance and expand evidence-based consumption, treatment and rehabilitation services, addiction prevention and education, and harm reduction measures in all areas of Ontario.
 - v. That the Ministry of Health targets funding for addiction and mental health services that would assist in treating people with mental illness to reduce and/or eliminate self-medication and would provide services to help people overcome their addiction.
 - vi. That the Ministry of the Solicitor General provides enhanced funding to enforce laws surrounding illicit drug supply, production, and distribution.
 - vii. That the Province enhances funding for diversion programs, mobile crisis intervention teams, and further promote harm reduction approaches among police services.
 - viii. That the Ministry of Health examines community paramedicine as a viable option to provide treatment and referral services.
 - ix. That the Ministry of Health funds a public education campaign, including on social media, to complement the efforts of individual communities.
 - x. That the provincial coordinator work with the Ministry of Education to add a health promoting youth-resiliency program to the school curriculum that includes coping skills to get through obstacles in life, e.g. social competence, conflict resolution, healthy relationships, and informed decision-making.
 - xi. That the Ministry of Health fully funds (100%) Naloxone for all municipal first responders (paramedics, police, and fire services) and provide training in its use.
 - xii. That the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services work together with municipal human service system managers to better link social service and health supports including to help people overcome addiction and address mental health.
 - xiii. That the Ministry of Health works toward a goal of establishing and maintaining 30,000 supportive housing units in the province.
 - xiv. That the Province advocates to the federal government for appropriate and supportive measures that will support effective provincial and local responses.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Health & Social Services Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That the Government of Canada and Ontario recognize, acknowledge and declare a national health epidemic in respect to the opioid overdose emergency across Canada;
- B) That AMO's recommendations with respect to Ontario's opioid overdose emergency be endorsed;
- C) That the Government of Ontario be urged to continue funding the important work of public health units to help address the current opioid crisis;

- D) That the Government of Canada and Ontario be advised that the opioid emergency is not limited to major urban centres and that federal and provincial representatives work directly with the Region of Durham, to develop and fund a full-suite of prevention and addiction services, affordable social and supportive housing to address the crisis in our communities; and,
- E) That the Prime Minister of Canada; Ministers of Health and Children, Families and Social Development, and Minister Responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Durham's MPs, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, Premier of Ontario, Deputy Premier & Minister of Health, Ministers of Children, Community and Social Services, Finance, and Municipal Affairs and Housing, Durham's MPPs, Chief Medical Officer of Health, AMO, alPHa, FCM, all local municipalities, and all Ontario boards of health be so advised.



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MAYOR DAN CARTER

July 30, 2021

Dr. Robert Kyle
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health at The Regional Municipality of
Durham
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3

Dr. Robert Kyle,

I am writing to address a health concern that continues to grow within the city of Oshawa as we deal with the complexities of our homeless population. We are seeing an increase in those who are suffering, both with addiction and mental health.

Working with our Regional social services department and the city, we have tried to find ways of addressing the complexities of today's unsheltered population, including housing, Ontario Works, ODSP, transit, healthcare and addiction and mental health supports.

I understand that the harm reduction program implemented by the Province of Ontario provides funding and resources through our regional health department to agencies within Oshawa and Durham Region. My understanding was the harm reduction program was to be an exchange program. Unfortunately, Oshawa has estimated through its service agencies that there could be as many as 600,000 harm reduction kits distributed in the city.

We also understand, based on data, that approximately 20% of the needles are not returned either to the yellow kiosks the city has in the community or the drop boxes provided by our agency partners, creating a health hazard for our community. City staff, and residents, continually find discarded syringes on the streets, in the parks, on our trails and on private property.

I ask at this time that our health department works with the Province of Ontario on the harm reduction strategy to find better ways of managing this program through an exchange program. As well investigate changing the type of syringes distributed, including retractable needles and changing the colour so if discarded can be identified.

We understand the complexities of today's mental health and addiction issues that we are facing not only here in Oshawa but across the region of Durham, Ontario and throughout Canada. The latest statistics indicate that we will have the highest rate of deaths related to opiate overdoses in Canada in 2021.

I am asking the province to take appropriate steps to address the distribution of harm reduction kits and allocate the required resources to address the complexities associated with the opiate crisis.

As I indicated earlier, I believe that the harm reduction kits play a role in cutting down the spread of disease. But we must find a way of protecting all individuals.

I look forward to continuing the dialogue, and I thank you for your attention. On behalf of the city of Oshawa, we look forward to finding a solution together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a final flourish.

Cc: Minister of Health Christine Elliott
Associate Minister of Health and Addictions Michael Tibollo
MPP Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy
MPP Lorne Coe
MPP Jennifer French
MPP Lindsey Park
MPP Hon. Rod Phillips
MPP Hon. David Piccini
MPP Laurie Scott
MP Colin Carrie
MP Hon. Mark Holland
MP Jennifer O'Connell
MP Hon. Erin O'Toole
MP Ryan Turnbull

Sent Via Email



**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Office of the Regional
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John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO

August 16, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Erin O'Toole
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
Leader of Official Opposition
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Erin.OToole@parl.gc.ca

Jagmeet Singh
Leader of the New Democratic Party
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Jagmeet.Singh@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister and Party Leaders:

RE: Support for communities to address homelessness and illegal activity

On behalf of the Region of Durham and in partnership with the City of Oshawa, I am writing to request your immediate support for challenges facing our communities.

Since the start of the pandemic, across the region we have struggled to address a growing unsheltered population, increased opioid misuse resulting in death, and increased criminal behaviour.

Specifically, in the downtown Oshawa core, businesses are relocating because employees and customers are afraid to visit their locations. Municipal funds are being diverted to pay to clean up excrement and garbage, discarded needles and drug paraphernalia on a daily basis. Police presence has been increased to respond to property damage, drug distribution and gun crime. In short, it's devastating.

In Durham, we've convened a task force to build and deliver on an action plan to address the immediate issues. We are coordinating social services, investing in supportive housing with wrap around services, running a regionally-funded primary care outreach program for the unsheltered and working with the healthcare sector to provide addictions treatment. But the problems continue to grow.

Municipalities are not equipped to deal with these issues on our own.

We know these problems are not specific to Durham Region and that national coordination and increased support is needed for housing, mental health and addictions, as well as tougher sentences for repeat criminals.

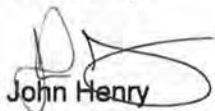
We ask you to visit our communities to see first-hand the destructive effects that drugs, crime and homelessness are having on our residents and downtown business owners.

To support Durham communities, where these challenges are escalating, we recommend the following immediate actions:

- 1) **Toughen penalties and sentencing for gun and drug-related offences.** Over 30% of arrests made by Durham Regional Police Service are repeat offenders who need to be incarcerated longer to keep our streets safe.
- 2) **Declare the opioid crisis a national health crisis and significantly increase funding and supports to effectively manage the crisis.** In 2019, the number of opioid related deaths was four times the number in 2013. In 2020, it was even higher and we're on track for a new record again in 2021.
- 3) **Support municipalities with a post-pandemic community building fund** that would allow communities to invest in projects to help address their specific housing, mental health and addictions or law enforcement needs.

Our community resources are being overwhelmed by hundreds of unsheltered residents experiencing long-term, chronic issues. We need you to see the severity of these issues for yourself so we can work with the federal government on constructive solutions. We look forward to co-ordinating a meeting with you in September.

Yours truly,



John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO

c: Durham Regional Council
Durham Region MPs

Sent Via Email



**The Regional
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Durham**

Office of the Regional
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John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO

August 20, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
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Premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
College Park, 5th floor
777 Bay St. Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Christine.Elliott@ontario.ca

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
College Park, 17th floor
777 Bay St. Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Minister.mah@ontario.ca

The Honourable Doug Downey
Attorney General
McMurtry-Scott Building, 11th floor
720 Bay St, Toronto, ON M7A 2S9
Attorneygeneral@ontario.ca

Dear Premier and Ministers

**RE: Support for communities to address homelessness and
illegal activity**

On behalf of the Region of Durham and in partnership with the City of Oshawa, I am writing to request your immediate support for challenges facing our communities.

Since the start of the pandemic, across the region we have struggled to address a growing unsheltered population, increased opioid misuse resulting in death, and increased criminal behaviour.

Specifically, in the downtown Oshawa core, businesses are advocating for change because employees and customers are

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 extension 2001.

afraid to visit their locations. Municipal funds are being diverted to pay to clean up excrement and garbage, discarded needles and drug paraphernalia on a daily basis. Police presence has been increased to respond to property damage, drug distribution and gun crime. In short, it's devastating.

In Durham, we've convened a task force to build and deliver on an action plan to address the immediate issues. We are coordinating social services, investing in supportive housing with wrap around services, running a regionally-funded primary care outreach program for the unsheltered and working with the healthcare sector to provide addictions treatment. But the problems continue to grow.

Municipalities are not equipped to deal with these issues on our own.

We ask you to visit our communities to see first-hand the damaging effects that drugs, crime, and homelessness are having on our residents and downtown business owners.

We know these problems are not specific to Durham, but they are escalating here. To support our communities, we recommend the following immediate actions:

1. **Consider alternatives for repeat offenders** who are not deterred by fines and cause property damage, use illegal drugs, trespass, and are aggressive towards residents and business owners.
2. **Allocate funding and supports to Durham to address root causes of homelessness and address the opioid crisis** including supportive housing with wraparound services, mental health, and addictions services, and community paramedicine programs.

Our community resources are being overwhelmed by hundreds of unsheltered residents experiencing long-term, chronic issues. We need you to see the severity of these issues for yourself so we can work with the Province on constructive solutions. We look forward to co-ordinating a meeting with you in September.

Yours truly,



John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO



Dan Carter
Mayor, City of Oshawa

c: Durham Regional Council
Durham Region MPPs

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2009.



OSHAWA
ONTARIO, CANADA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF OSHAWA
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MAYOR DAN CARTER

August 24, 2021

Dear Mayor,

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, your staff and your communities for coming together to deal with the challenges of COVID-19 with incredible commitment and innovation.

Throughout this period, we have seen a renewed sense of community. We have come together to help friends and neighbours weather the crisis and have learned that we are stronger working together when tragedy occurs in our communities.

In the City of Oshawa, we find ourselves in an emergency situation that has to do with the complex issues of individuals who are suffering from addiction, mental health, and being unsheltered. During the early part of the pandemic, the City of Oshawa worked with the Region of Durham and our social agencies to provide services for those individuals seeking assistance as many of the community supports were temporarily closed.

However, we are at a point where we no longer have the capacity to care for the complex issues of the unsheltered population, which numbers over 200. I'm writing today to ask for your assistance in addressing the health and safety challenges that we are facing in downtown Oshawa.

We have seen increased criminality on our streets and the downtown core that we have never seen before. We are asking for your support and help to advocate for additional police resources to address the criminality including the establishment of a special task force unit with specialized personnel.

I need you to help us ensure that we have the extra resources necessary from our social services and health departments to provide both on and off hour street presence to meet the needs of the unsheltered individuals and to actively work on reducing the concentration of services in Oshawa.

I need you to help advocate for Lakeridge Health to expand their inpatient program for people seeking addiction help and to be able to have the pathways available to support individuals with complex mental health issues.

I need you to advocate to our housing divisions to continue to look at innovative ways of creating housing so that all of our communities can meet the needs of those that are unsheltered, living, rough, or cannot find affordable housing.

I am asking each of you for your support and ideas to address these unprecedented challenges. I look forward to those conversations on how we can work together to find solutions for Durham Region and its municipalities.



Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 15:52

The following is sent on behalf of Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer:

Members of Council,

Downtown Oshawa businesses are advocating for additional Regional support to ensure our streets are safe and welcoming, and that our vulnerable residents have the care they need.

The Region is taking a holistic approach to addressing these complex challenges and has convened a task force that includes the City of Oshawa, Lakeridge Health and Durham Regional Police Service. Staff are liaising and coordinating with community agencies that provide support services to identify and reduce duplication.

Collectively, the task force has created a list of immediate action items that has been appended to this email for your information. It also includes the list of ongoing regional supports and programs already in place. This information will be provided to Durham Region MPPs as a follow-up to their visit to the downtown Oshawa area early in September.

This week, the task force is hosting a virtual town hall to hear directly from businesses and to share information about the initiatives in place to address the complex health and safety issues in downtown Oshawa. If you would like to listen to the presentations and hear from businesses, the link to join is here: www.durham.ca/OshawaTownHall.

The invitations to the downtown Oshawa business community have been managed by the City of Oshawa Economic Development team. For more information, you can visit the [City of Oshawa Calendar](#). Should you have any questions, please contact Elaine Baxter-Trahair at elaine.baxter-trahair@durham.ca.



Clerks | Corporate Services – Legislative Services
The Regional Municipality of Durham

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Appendix: Downtown Oshawa Task Force New and Ongoing Action Items

New Action Items led by the Task Force

Convened a Task Force to address a growing unsheltered population, increased opioid misuse resulting in death, and increased criminal behaviour	Led by Region CAO (Social Services, Health, DRPS Lakeridge, Oshawa)
Convened community agencies and directing move from low-barrier service to housing first or members only model. Providing training through OrgCode**	Durham Region Social Services
Engaged OrgCode to ensure coordinated system planning is grounded in data and set us up for success	Durham Region Social Services
Created Durham Outreach Strategy and shared with community partners	Durham Region Social Services
Utilizing community code of conduct that the GAP and DACH committees are creating	Durham Region Social Services
Hosting business forum to address business concerns about unsheltered population	Task Force
Resuming Public Health services in downtown	Durham Region Health
Increased police presence (8 officers) to deter behaviour in 2 phases: education and enforcement	DRPS
Increased municipal funding for street clean-up	Region and City
Event planning and increased economic development activities to increase visitors to downtown	Region and City
Providing additional mental health staff for street outreach	Lakeridge
Strengthening by-law enforcement	City of Oshawa

**OrgCode: a leader in homelessness research and advocacy in North America.

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Primary Care Outreach Program (PCOP)** – Region-funded. Paramedic and Social Worker provide acute medical care, crisis counselling and service navigation
 - One team of two met with clients 3,284 times in 2020
 - 200 new clients to the program
- **Project X-Change** - Delivered by John Howard Society, funded by the Region. Offers sterile needles, alcohol swabs, sterile water, and items for safer drug use
- **Community Support Program** – Innovative, client-focused case management to provide support for people on the By-Name list to ensure housing is obtained
- **On Point Needle Program** – Under supervision, paid participants receive safety kits and training to assist with needle and drug paraphernalia clean up. Funded by the Region’s Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding
- **Housing First programming** - Operate Durham Access to Social Housing (DASH) program and act as the Service System Manager for Housing
 - Fund housing projects with community agencies (e.g., Muslim Welfare Association and Cornerstone)
- **Oshawa Microhome Pilot** – 10 microhomes will provide temporary transitional housing with supports. Will be available in fall 2021
- **Ontario Works** – Provides support for clients to access social assistance (participate at Back Door Mission and located at 200 John St)
- **DRPS** – Deployed 8 additional officers to downtown area who have become familiar with clients. Moving from education to enforcement. Last year, over 9000 hours in downtown Oshawa
- **Mental Health Support Unit** – Council approved the hiring of 3 additional mental health nurses to accompany DRPS and support mental health crisis calls
- **Poverty Reduction Programs** – Administration of various programs including Canada Learning Bond, Tax Filing, Eviction Prevention, etc
- **Naloxone Kit Distribution** – Support the distribution of kits – our partners provide education and training to businesses owners/organizations to use them
- **Community Safety and Well-being Plan** – Significant community engagement – identification of 7 priority risk factors, with strategies and measurable outcomes

Coordinated Committees and Working Groups

- **Funder’s Table** – Community of Practice ensures funding allocations to not-for-profits is coordinated and informed by local data.

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 extension 2001.

- **Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH)**– includes community agencies and provides advice to Regional Council on homelessness issues
- **Health, Homelessness and Housing Committee** - established because of the pandemic to bring together health, homelessness and housing sectors to support homeless residents
- **GAP Committee** – community partners who work together to fill the gaps in services to prevent and end homelessness in Durham Region
- **Community Leaders Group *new** – formed by the SS Commissioner, with DRPS, City of Oshawa and Lakeridge. Focused on engaging local community agencies on current issues and prioritize housing first initiatives
- **Street Outreach Team Network *new** – includes SS, Carea, Back Door Mission, Durham Mental Health, Cornerstone, DRPS and other outreach service agencies. Focused on newly developed Street Outreach Strategy, Encampment Strategy & Case Conferencing efforts for Housing First priority clients

Community-led Initiatives

- Lakeridge Health leads the ongoing renewal of the Opioid Response Strategy and Action Plan in Durham. The strategy is supported by Public Health
- Back Door Mission – central hub location to provide wraparound services; additional hub services in Durham Region are established in Ajax, Brock and local libraries.