



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 18, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Alleyway Improvement Pilot Program (PW16030) – (Ward 2)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Ward 2
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Peter Wobschall 905-546-2424, Extension 4819
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Robert Norman, BLA, OALA, CSLA Director, Strategic Planning Public Works Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction

On November 7, 2012 GIC approved the following recommendation from Report PED12206, Reallocation of 2012 Downtown Block Funding (Wards 1, 2 & 3):

(g) That funding required for the development of a Downtown Alleyway Study and Implementation of Alleyway Improvements, in the amount of \$100,000, be funded from the Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program project ID 8201203515

## Information

This information report provides a summary of activities relating to the implementation of recommendation (g) as identified above and based on the direction provided in the following excerpt from Report PED12206:

### Downtown Alleyway Study and Implementation of Improvements

The purpose of a Downtown Alleyway Study would be to identify and prioritize improvements and enhancements to selected alleyways in the Downtown area as part of the Downtown Revitalization Strategy in conjunction with the Downtown BIA and the Ward Councillor. Improvements and enhancements for consideration would include safety, security and artwork taking the form of lighting, murals, surface upgrades, etc. The outcome of the Study would form the basis for future decisions related to alleyway maintenance and accompanying budget implications. The Study will also identify a priority alleyway(s) for implementation of the improvements that will act as a showcase for further Downtown alleyway improvements. The estimated cost for the study, and implementation of the improvements in the priority alleyway(s) identified in the study is \$100,000.

### Project Planning

The alleyway improvement pilot program was a successful example of collaboration between residents, business owners, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and City staff from Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE), Waste Operations, Business Programs, and Policy & Programs. It required an exceptional amount of communication and coordination between the various stakeholders in order to realize the improvements made to this downtown space.

Beginning in July 2013, staff from Policy & Programs conducted research on alleyway best management practices and coordinated a series of site visits to alleyways within the study area. Eleven alleyway locations were assessed and photographed with the support of staff from Operations (Roads & Maintenance), and Planning & Economic Development (Urban Renewal). Alleyways were selected based on their infamy, and/or challenges and issues as identified by Public Works and Urban Renewal. Various issues, challenges, and successes were identified during the site visits in an effort to identify potential improvements and best-suited alleyway locations to implement a pilot.

In September 2013 a meeting between Policy & Programs and Urban Renewal staff took place to review the results of the alleyway site visits. Suitable locations were narrowed to 'assumed'<sup>1</sup> alleys in close proximity to commercial areas. After careful consideration, the alleyway north of King St. East, from James St. North to Wellington St. North was selected as the pilot location based on the following criteria (see Appendix A – Downtown Alleyway Improvement Program Pilot Map for a map of the project area):

- Geographical location included multiple organized community groups that could be approached to participate in the project (International Village BIA, Downtown Hamilton BIA, and the Beasley Neighbourhood Association).
- Location suffered from a list of issues/challenges including: waste management and collection, illegal dumping, undesirable wildlife and transient human behaviour, and vegetation (weed) and alleyway surface maintenance.
- High profile area located in the heart of Downtown Hamilton with high exposure to residents and visitors.
- Provided a manageable geographic size for a pilot at approximately 600 metres in length.

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<sup>1</sup> Alleyway designations as presented at the *City of Hamilton – Alleyway Review Public Information Centre – June 25th, 2009*:

**City Assumed Alleyway** – The City has generally assumed these alleyways by by-law through improvements associated with the construction of a paved surface or in some cases through the construction of drainage improvements.

**City Unassumed Alleyway** – These alleyways were created by a plan of subdivision. The City has not assumed responsibility for maintenance of these alleyways and in the past has only performed limited maintenance.

**Closed** – A former City assumed or unassumed alleyway whose ownership has been transferred to the public. The City no longer has any responsibility for the alleyway. In some cases, the alleyway remains an alleyway, but can also be annexed into the back yards/properties of adjacent landowners.

**Private** – An alleyway that is built on private land by the public for their own use. The City does not take responsibility for these alleyways.

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Following the site selection in September 2013, Policy & Programs staff conducted an alleyway site visit to the King St. alley with representatives from Engineering Services (lighting) and Hamilton Police Services to discuss lighting retrofits and safety concerns (i.e. using CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). A complete inventory of graffiti within the target alleyway was documented with photographs during the site visit.

Early in October 2013, Policy & Programs staff met with representatives from the Downtown Hamilton and International Village BIAs to determine their challenges and needs within the pilot alley.

On October 28, 2013, Policy & Programs hosted a meeting of internal stakeholders that included representatives from Public Works (Road Operations, Waste Operations, Business Programs, and Geomatics/Corridor Management), Planning & Economic Development (Municipal Law Enforcement and Urban Renewal), and the Ward 2 Councillor. A number of operational and enforcement-related issues specific to the proposed pilot alleyway were identified and discussed from a city staff perspective. In addition, a presentation on alleyway management best practices from across North America and around the globe was delivered to the internal working group. The group subsequently developed a short-list of improvements and an associated budget including an estimated cost for each improvement.

Policy & Programs staff met again with stakeholder BIAs in November 2013 to review the short-list of city staff recommended improvements and the BIA's preferred improvements and discuss opportunities for BIA participation. The BIAs were invited to submit independent proposals detailing their proposed involvement in the project and provide associated costs for implementation. Proposals were received from the BIAs early in 2014 and were subsequently reviewed and refined by Policy & Programs staff before BIA participation was confirmed in the pilot.

#### Project Goals & Objectives

The following pilot program vision and goals were developed based on discussions with internal and external stakeholders as identified above.

Vision: The alleyway space north of King St East from James St. to Wellington St. is an attractive and safe place for residents and businesses, and serves as a welcoming and functional component of the downtown neighbourhood.

#### Goals

1. Provide alleyway improvements for the enjoyment of existing commercial and residential users.
2. Enhance safety within the alleyway for residents and City staff.
3. Empower community members to create positive change within their neighbourhood.
4. Minimize alleyway-related municipal operating costs.
5. Engage community and build civic pride within the alleyway.
6. Establish expectations of property standards and other pertinent bylaws.

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7. Provide tools and knowledge to area residents and businesses to facilitate long-term change.
8. Improve the ability of residents and business owners to report crime and bylaw infractions.
9. Reduce exposure of biohazards to alleyway users.

Project Implementation

The International Village BIA and the Downtown Hamilton BIA were each provided with funding to hire a part-time, seasonal Alleyway Coordinator. Engaging the BIAs also offered their established communications networks and active participation within the pilot; including the coordination and hosting of the pilot kick-off and end-of-program celebration events. The BIAs chose to brand the pilot as the “Up Your Alley!” program. Based on discussions with internal stakeholders and the BIAs, the program elements detailed below were implemented within the pilot alleyway.

Lighting Retrofits

Alleyway lighting within the pilot area was retrofitted to Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting technology replacing the previously existing lights which were High Pressure Sodium (HPS) or Metal Halide (MH). The intention of the retrofits was to provide increased light within the alleyway and reduce associated maintenance and energy costs.

LED lighting technology uses approximately fifty to sixty percent less energy than HPS or MH lighting. In addition, the LED lights have a longer maintenance cycle, lasting up to twenty years as compared to average four to five year lifespan of an HPS lamp. LED lighting is a whiter light and has excellent optical efficiency which means there is less spill light/up light (wasted light) and the light being generated is cast where it's desired to be. The lit environment of the alleyways has been dramatically improved as a result of the LED retrofit.

Thirty five lights were converted from HPS to LED within the pilot alleyway and are estimated to provide a combined total of \$1,800 in annual operating savings from reduced electricity use. LED luminaires have a life expectancy of up to twenty years, which would bring the total potential operating savings over a twenty year period to \$36,000. In addition, due to the twenty year life expectancy of LED luminaires, compared to the maximum expected five year life of an HPS lamp, up to 140 lamp replacements will be avoided at a cost of \$125 per replacement, resulting in a twenty year potential estimated maintenance (lamp replacement) savings of \$17,500. This brings the total estimated savings over the twenty year lifetime to \$53,500. When the capital costs of the initial LED retrofit of \$25,000 is considered, the total potential twenty year operating and maintenance-related savings from the alleyway LED retrofits is \$28,500; therefore, the payback period of LED lights is approximately nine years.

Wayfinding

Reflective, easy-to-read address plates were installed near the rear entrances of the businesses to add a sense of “ownership” to the alleyway space, and to assist alleyway

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users in identifying properties in relation to property standards infractions and crime reporting. Address plates for all properties on the north side of King St. were produced and provided to the BIAs to distribute to their members as contact and installation approvals are secured. As of January 2016 approximately thirty percent of the address plates were installed by property owners/managers.

In addition, addresses for all properties abutting the alley were painted on the public-owned portion of the alley. These were used throughout the program by city staff from Public Works and MLE to more easily determine locations and addresses where issues and property standards violations were occurring. Feedback from staff was very favourable regarding the usefulness of the painted addresses in investigations.

#### Community Art

As a component of the agreements with the participating BIAs, each was responsible for coordinating a community art call. This process included establishing a selection committee of community members, and selecting winning submissions to display within their respective alley space. The BIAs were also responsible for selecting locations and securing the required installation permissions from the business owners as all art within this pilot was installed on private property. Appendix B – Alleyway Pilot Winning Art Submissions includes photographs of the art selected by the BIAs for installation within their respective BIAs.

#### Transportation Counts

Transportation Planning conducted pedestrian counts during the project in three locations between: Catharine St. and John St., Walnut St. and Mary St., and Jarvis St. and Ferguson St. Remotely deployed, automated pedestrian counters tracked pedestrians in each location over the period of one week at various times throughout the pilot. Pedestrian counters provided data on the number of pedestrians using the alley and their direction of travel. The pedestrian counters were unable to determine if the 'pedestrian' was a true pedestrian, a cyclist, a vehicle, or other. Due to limitations in resources, counter data was not verified to determine what percentage of users (or 'trips') were actually pedestrians. Staff however considered the unverified data to be adequate for the purposes of the pilot. Approximately 230 daily trips were recorded, with slightly lower usage during the winter months. The majority of daily trips were recorded during working hours (7am to 5pm Monday to Friday), with very few trips recorded during the early morning and night time hours. This indicated that the alleyway was being used and any improvements made through this pilot program would benefit, at minimum, these existing users.

#### Graffiti

With the assistance of the Downtown Hamilton BIA's summer coop students, the BIAs' Alleyway Coordinators conducted a series of graffiti-related tests on private property within the alleyway using a number of graffiti-block and graffiti-removal products. The BIAs rated each product based on criteria such as: ease of use and clean up, initial cost, health and safety data, and product effectiveness. Results were shared with the

city in a comprehensive report that can be used as a reference document as appropriate/required.

### Cleaning & Litter

An external contractor was selected through an RFQ process to conduct ten litter pick-ups and powerwashing services within the pilot alleyway. Clean-ups occurred every two to three weeks from July to November 2014. A specialized vehicle fitted with a wide-mouthed, fifty foot long vacuum hose was used for litter clean-up, and a powerwashing tank (with the capacity to deliver heated water) was used to pressure-wash the public-owned space within the alleyway throughout the pilot.

### Waste Strategy

Waste management within the alleyway was the most challenging aspect of this pilot and required continual coordination between staff from various city departments/divisions and the BIAs in order to realize success. Issues included higher-than-average incidents of illegal dumping, waste being set out in the evenings and being rummaged through and strewn about by animals and humans, and a higher-than-average number of waste collection times throughout the week.

To address these challenges, a revised alleyway waste collection schedule was implemented on August 11, 2014 which included defined times for setting waste into the alley and to collect it. Collection times within the alley were limited from daily collection (often multiple times per day, including weekends), to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 12 noon and 3 pm. Set out times were also limited to between 10 am and 12 noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. These measures were aimed to limit the amount of time garbage, often in plastic bags, were left out to be rummaged through.

The BIAs were instrumental in developing the revised waste collection and set-out schedules based on what would work best for the majority of their members in terms of their hours of operation. Encouraging the use of Tuesday curbside recycling and organic collection was a focus of communications with business owners. Nearly all business owners were engaged at a minimum of three times throughout the project; with select businesses receiving a dozen or more visits. Staff from Policy & Programs and Business Programs, in addition to the BIAs' Alleyway Coordinators, visited businesses to:

- Communicate the new waste management schedule
- Promote and encourage curbside recycling and organics collection
- Provide communications materials such as fridge and door magnets, and posters with set-out and collection times
- Determine individual business needs in terms of tools they would need to comply such as blue boxes and green carts (which were subsequently dropped off by city staff)
- Respond to general questions related to waste management within the alley

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Samples of the communications materials are provided as Appendix C – Alleyway Improvement Program Communications Materials.

The first several months of the pilot were focused on education and engagement with business owners adjacent to the alleyway. Businesses that were reluctant or slow to comply with the revised waste management protocol were visited by Municipal Law Enforcement for further education. Businesses that continued non-compliance after the education phase were pursued by MLE, who subsequently conducted illegal dumping investigations and laid charges where appropriate. More information on the number of charges laid is provided in the Results section below.

Although efforts were undertaken to engage and communicate with residents abutting the alleyway, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. Staff believes this is due to the inaccessibility of many of the residences (e.g. precarious stairways leading to second and third level rear apartments, no doorbells or other method to knock directly on apartment doors, out-of-town property owners that did not cascade letters, and renter turnover, etc.).

Alleyway Pilot Budget

The following table provides the Downtown Alleyway Improvement Pilot Program budget.

Table 1: Downtown Alleyway Improvement Program Budget

Project Element	Cost
LED Lighting Retrofits	\$ 22,039.48
Community Art	\$ 12,982.07
Litter & Cleaning	\$ 19,476.92
BIA Alleyway Coordinators and Communications	\$ 19,800.00
Communications & Public Meetings	\$ 1,083.11
Survey/Evaluation Tools	\$ 3,271.56
Address Plates	\$ 704.82
Total	\$ 79,357.96

Project Results

BIA Feedback

Pilot project feedback from the International Village and Downtown Hamilton BIAs was positive, which is validated by the following quote:

“This was the first time that the Downtown Hamilton BIA has entered into an agreement such as this and I am happy to report to my board that it was a very beneficial and unique experience for us. It allowed the BIA to engage with business owners, operators, and property owners on an issue of mutual concern and we hope that this project will show fruit for the city, its residents and the Downtown business community

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for years to come. I also hope it becomes the template for joint projects in the future.”  
Kathy Drewitt, Executive Director, Downtown Hamilton BIA.

A major component of the pilot was providing funding to each BIA to, in part, hire a part-time Alleyway Coordinator. The two Coordinators were employed from approximately April to November 2014 and acted as “boots on the ground” conducting regular inspections of the alleyway to identify issues and engage business owners, City staff, and other stakeholders to resolve them. Feedback from city staff in Municipal Law Enforcement and Waste Operations indicated that the successes realized during the pilot were in large part due to the persistence and dedication of these Coordinators actively engaging with businesses.

When interviewed at the end of November 2015, which was approximately one year after their Alleyway Coordinator contract positions came to an end, both BIAs agreed that although alleyway beautification had improved as a result of the pilot, issues had begun to “slip” since the absence of the Coordinators; specifically, the BIAs agreed that non-compliance with the waste schedule and illegal dumping are on the rise. The BIA’s both agreed that their top recommendation moving forward was to have an opportunity to hire and share one temporary, part-time, year-round Alleyway Coordinator for a period of two years. If realized, this position would be responsible for regular inspections, engaging business owners, and liaising with City staff from MLE, Waste Operations, and Business Programs to identify and resolve ongoing issues.

Measurables

Evaluation of the pilot included pre- and post-pilot visual audits of curbside blue box and green cart use, alleyway waste collection weights, BIA member business surveys, and consultation with the International Village and Downtown Hamilton BIAs.

Visual audits of curbside waste collection showed an increase in blue box use, a nominal decrease in the use of green carts, and a significant reduction in waste placed at the curb.

Table 2: Visual Audit of Curbside Waste Results

Measure	Pre-Pilot Curbside Waste Visual Audits (May 2014)	Post-Pilot Curbside Waste Visual Audits (June 2015)	Variation
Total number of Blue Bins (or bags, or pile of cardboard) on collection day	27	52	93% increase
Total number of Green Carts on collection day	7	2	71% decrease
Total number of curbside garbage bags on collection day	74	20	73% decrease



Table 3: Alleyway Collection Rates

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Pre-Pilot (May 11 to May 17 2014)</b>	<b>Post-pilot (June 1, 3, and 5 2015)</b>	<b>Variation</b>
Weight of alleyway waste collected over an 8-day period	8,210 kgs	7,010 kgs	Reduction of 1,200 kgs (2,640 lbs) (15%)

Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE)

MLE's Illegal Dumping team was brought into the educational phase to accompany Public Works staff in engaging business owners that were reluctant or slow to comply with the revised waste management schedule. After approximately eight weeks following the implementation of the revised waste management schedule, and after an intensive coordinated educational campaign by Public Works (Business Programs and Policy & Programs), MLE, and the BIAs' two Alleyway Coordinators, MLE began an enforcement phase targeting businesses unwilling to comply with the revised waste management schedule.

The following information was provided by MLE's Illegal Dumping team regarding investigations and charges laid as part of the alleyway improvement pilot from the period of August 2014 to February 2015 (approximately six months):

- Over 100 site visits to alleyway
- Illegal dumping team removed over 250 bags of waste (in addition to those removed by Alleyway Management staff directed under Public Works)
- Contents were found to be both residential and commercial waste
- Over fifty bags with identifiers resulting in numerous educational visits and over twenty five charges ranging from \$125 to \$610 each.
- Final results from these charges are not available as some are still proceeding through the courts.

Post-Pilot Business Survey

A post-pilot survey of the businesses adjacent to the King St. alley was completed with thirty eight of the ninety six businesses in the pilot area (forty percent of businesses surveyed). The following presents selected results from this survey.

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Table 4: Post-Pilot Business Survey Questions

Survey Question	Yes	No
<i>Do you feel that the pilot has improved the alley?</i>	57%	43%
Do you know the correct collection times in the alleyway?	70%	30%
Does your business put waste out in the alley?	79%	21%
Have you noticed a reduction in illegal dumping in the alley?	34%	66%

Table 5: Satisfaction with Pilot Elements

Survey Question	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Did Not Notice
Rate your satisfaction of the current waste collection schedule	5%	11%	26%	42%	16%	N/A
Rate your satisfaction of the LED lighting. Brighter, safer?	0%	3%	3%	13%	18%	63%
Rate your satisfaction of the powerwashing	0%	8%	8%	13%	13%	58%
Rate your satisfaction of the art murals	5%	5%	3%	16%	11%	60%
Survey Question	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Did Not Receive One
Rate your satisfaction of the address plate in alley	0%	0%	8%	24%	2%	66%

Post-Pilot Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback from internal stakeholders including Public Works and Municipal Law Enforcement staff was positive in terms of improvements realized during the pilot. The Downtown Hamilton and International Village BIAs also agreed that overall the pilot was a success and improvements to the alleyway space had contributed to an improved neighbourhood space. According to the post-pilot business survey, fifty seven percent of businesses adjacent to the alley believed the pilot was a success and eighty seven percent stated they were 'Neutral' to 'Very Satisfied' with the revised waste management program.

Despite the successes realized during the pilot however, the participating BIAs and City staff agreed that the pilot was relatively short in duration (less-than-one year of

implementation) and that waste management issues began to slip back to a pre-pilot state after the BIA's Alleyway Coordinators contract ended in November 2014:

“Although the program was overall a success, the issue is still evident that once the program was over, many of the businesses and residents of the area went back to their old ways and the schedule faltered as well as problems that had been addressed in the project arose again. We'd like to see a similar effort implemented over a longer period of time, so that we can get back on track and continue to educate the appropriate parties. Eventually we hope that all parties involved can work cohesively to make this alleyway and project a sustainable success story in Hamilton.” Susie Braithwaite, Executive Director, International Village BIA.

City staff continues to collaborate on an ongoing basis with the BIAs and their members on various issues within the alleyway; predominately with waste management issues. The BIAs have suggested that a temporary, two-year Alleyway Coordinator position shared between the BIAs would offer an opportunity to continue to support members in their efforts to comply to the waste management program. City staff agrees that a continued short-term commitment of a part-time Alleyway Coordinator would provide the necessary resources that waste management demands within this alley space.

### Learnings

The following provides a summary of lessons learned during the pilot that can be applied to similar projects in the future:

1. Significantly altering the waste management program within the alley proved to be a slow and resource-intensive activity. Ample time, such as a multi-year effort, and resources, such as multiple collaborating partners, and staff time to provide support and engage businesses as issues arise, should be made available in order to realize success.
2. Painted addresses for all properties on the public-owned portion of the alleyway (concrete surface) are useful for alley users, and city staff (MLE and Waste Collection) to more easily identify addresses and report property standard infractions, waste issues, and crime in general.
3. Engaging residents living adjacent to the alley proved very difficult overall and impossible in some situations. This is due to the often inaccessible living quarters of residences adjacent to the alley; most of which did not have a door that provided direct access to their living quarters, and many of which lacked doorbells or other communicating devices. Other challenges in communicating with residents adjacent to the alley included the inability to communicate with renters due to the lack of communication between residents and their property owners, and due to high tenant turnover rates within these private living spaces. This presented real challenges as direct mailings were often addressed to former tenants as indicated from the thirty eight percent 'return to sender' rate from one direct mailing effort. Overall, there was no recorded contact with the tenants from any of the forty five units adjacent to the alleyway. Having eyes-on-the-ground in the form of an Alleyway Coordinator or

similar, may allow for 'chance' tenant engagement as tenants are seen available within the alleyway space.

4. LED alleyway lighting appears to be a wise long-term investment that will provide an estimated nine year ROI (Return On Investment) over the twenty year plus expected lifetime of these energy-efficient bulbs (i.e. eleven years of realized savings after initial capital investment costs are recouped).
5. Powerwashing and litter clean-up services within the alleyway were appreciated by the BIAs and their members; however these services are expensive and are temporary in nature (i.e. do not provide long-term aesthetic value or a lasting effect on behaviour change).
6. Partnering with the Downtown Hamilton and International Village BIAs was instrumental in the success of the program. For a relatively small investment, the BIAs offered established relationships with their members (trust) and established communications channels such as social media and member newsletters. They also provided a dual communication outlet (in addition to the City's) that proved essential in providing the necessary support to businesses during this time of change; particularly with the adaptation to the revised waste management program.

#### Next Steps

At its meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, Public Works Committee approved the following motion, Item 9.2, giving staff the following direction:

- (a) That the Alleyway Improvement Pilot Program be extended until 2018 at a total cost of \$46,500; to be funded with the remaining \$20,000 from the original pilot program budget (project ID 4041311350), and an upwards cost of \$26,500 to be funded from the Ward 2 Area Rating Account (Reserve # 108052)

As directed by Council, Program Development staff will continue to consult with the International Village and Downtown Hamilton BIAs to establish a shared part-time Alleyway Coordinator. The Alleyway Coordinator position would be responsible for regular inspections of the alleyway, actively engaging business owners, and liaise with staff from MLE and Waste Operations to help ensure compliance with the waste schedule and address illegal dumping.

As the Alleyway Coordinator position is important to support the continuing education on waste management to adjacent commercial and residential properties, staff will continue to monitor the program and provide a further update following its conclusion in March 2018.

Results from this pilot have also been shared with staff from relevant Divisions within Public Works and Planning and Economic Development to apply to other appropriate initiatives.