




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**Tourism and Culture Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	June 15, 2022
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Pilot Program, Partnership Between Hamilton Civic Museums and the Hamilton Public Library for Free Museum Admission (PED20069(a)) (City Wide) <b>(Outstanding Business List Item)</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	John Summers (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1747
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Carrie Brooks-Joiner Director, Tourism and Culture Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) Staff be directed to extend the Pilot Program, Partnership Between Hamilton Civic Museums and the Hamilton Public Library for Free Museum Admission, for a period of two years, until March 25, 2024; and
- (b) That staff continue to monitor the impact of this program on Hamilton Civic Museums' revenue, attendance and visitor demographics and report back to the General Issues Committee for direction.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A one-year pilot program offering Hamilton Public Library card holders' free general admission to the Hamilton Civic Museums was launched in February 2019. In March 2020, the program was extended for an additional two years (See Report PED20069).

Since March 2020, the Hamilton Civic Museums have experienced minimal attendance owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to properly assess the impact of this program on Hamilton Civic Museums' revenue, attendance and visitor demographics, a further two-year extension to March 25, 2024 is Recommended.

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**Alternatives for Consideration - Not Applicable**

**FINANCIAL - STAFFING - LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: Implementation of the extension of the pilot program is not expected to have a significant adverse effect on museum admission revenue.

Staffing: No impact on staffing levels.

Legal: N/A

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

At the January 16, 2019, General Issues Committee meeting, it was resolved:

- (a) “That staff be directed to conduct a one-year pilot project that allows Hamilton library card holders free general admission (excluding paid special events, booked programs and workshops) to any of the City of Hamilton operated museums (Dundurn National Historic Site, Hamilton Military Museum, Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum, Griffin House Museum, Whitehern Historic House and Garden, Hamilton Children’s Museum, Battlefield House Museum and Park and the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology); and
- (b) That staff report back to the General Issues Committee after a period of one year with the outcomes of the pilot project that provides free museum visits with a Hamilton Public Library card.”

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

The pilot program aligns with Action 7.1 in Transforming Hamilton Through Culture: The Cultural Plan 2013: “Work with major cultural institutions and organizations (such as the Hamilton Public Library, local universities and colleges, arts service organizations) to identify, share and celebrate cultural assets” and Action 11.3 “Examine the feasibility of providing free admission opportunities to Hamilton’s civic museums.” The objective of the program was to determine if it would increase accessibility to Hamilton Civic Museums among residents for whom the admission price would otherwise be a barrier.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

### **Internal**

Director, Tourism and Culture Division, Planning and Economic Development Department

### **External**

CEO and Chief Librarian, Hamilton Public Library

Manager, Communications, Hamilton Public Library

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This program benefits residents by removing a financial barrier for access to Hamilton Civic Museums. It benefits the Hamilton Public Library by incentivizing resident registration for library cards. It aligns with Action 7.1 in Transforming Hamilton Through Culture: The Cultural Plan 2013 by establishing a partnership between Hamilton Civic Museums and the Hamilton Public Library and by exploring the feasibility of providing free admission opportunities to Hamilton Civic Museums.

More than 12,292 Hamilton residents as museum visitors were admitted with HPL cards from February 19, 2019 to January 31, 2020 (5,605 adults; 3,236 children; 2,677 family members; 541 seniors and 233 students). The total admission revenue showed only a slight variation from 2019 to 2020. The minor negative impact on admission revenue was offset by increases in merchandise sales and paid ticketed events (such as workshops).

Based on the limited data currently available on the profile of users of the library card and anecdotal visitor feedback, the pilot program successfully increased access to museum visitors for whom the price might otherwise have been a barrier.

The 2019 7% decline in established free special event attendance suggests that some residents took advantage of the library pass program to visit on regular admission days (which would previously have been ticketed) instead of visiting on the occasional free event days.

During the same period, the Hamilton Public Library saw a 48% year-over-year increase in new library card registrations which HPL staff attribute almost entirely to the incentive of free civic museum visitation.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

N/A

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Community Engagement and Participation**

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

**Culture and Diversity**

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

N/A

JS:ac