

Animal Storefront: Cat Adoption & Education Centre (CAEC)

Presentation to General Committee – June 22, 2015

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Presentation Overview

- Background
- Municipal Context (Welland & Niagara Falls)
- CAEC Site Suitability Assessment
- CAEC Location – Options Considered
- CAEC Preferred Location
- CAEC Opportunities
- Stakeholder Concerns
- Conclusion
- Staff Recommendations



Background

- Oct 2012 – consultant DPRA Canada Inc provided recommendations to Council on Markham's Animal Services Delivery
- June 2013 – Council adopted recommendations from the DPRA report & requested staff report back on implementation strategy & budget requirements for Animal Storefront (CAEC) operation
- One of the main objectives of a CAEC would be to reduce Markham's cat euthanasia rate by providing a convenient location for cat adoption within the City
- 2014 Budget approval included \$150,000 for the implementation of CAEC (\$50,000 for capital start up costs & \$100,000 for annual operating costs)

Municipal Context: Other Animal Services Storefronts in Ontario

- Summer of 2013 – Legislative Services staff visited Ontario's only 2 Animal Services Storefront operations located in indoor malls (Welland & Niagara Falls)
- Both Storefronts have high cat adoption rates:
 - ❑ Welland – has adopted out over 2,500 cats since opening in Jan 2013
 - ❑ Niagara Falls – has adopted out over 2,000 cats since opening in 2010 & has recently undergone upgrades to the storefront



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Welland Storefront-Located in Seaway Mall





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Niagara Storefront-Located in Niagara Square Mall



Markham CAEC: Site Suitability Assessment

- Staff investigated several different options for a Markham CAEC location
- The main criteria staff used to assess site suitability were:
 - 1) costs
 - 2) high volume, pre-existing or potential customer traffic
 - 3) proximity to potential stakeholders & partners



CAEC Location Options Considered

Option 1 - Rented Mall Space (i.e., Markville Mall)

Option 2 - Community Centres

Option 3 - Strip Plaza/Mall

Option 4 – Vacant City-Owned Building/Facility



CAEC Preferred Location

Staff reviewed all options against the criteria & determined the following:

- costs associated with renting a commercial space in mall or strip plaza are too expensive
- no suitable vacant City-owned buildings/facilities available

✓ **Thornhill Community Centre (THCC) – preferred location for CAEC**



Why Thornhill Community Centre?

- **Prime Location:** Busy area to attract “non-customers” & expose them to concept of pet adoption. Non-customers may not adopt pets but may donate to program (money, food, toys, etc.)
- **Animal Friendly Neighbourhood:** high concentration of Markham’s licensed pets
- **Low Overhead:** Compared to a retail environment
- **Source of Volunteers:** Senior Centre & Schools located close to this facility
- **Innovative service delivery model** – first of its kind
- **Retail style room already in place** – self-contained, suitable for CAEC operation





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Thornhill Community Centre – CAEC Location





Thornhill Community Centre – CAEC Location





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Thornhill Community Centre – CAEC Location



Stakeholder Consultation

- Staff consulted with a number of different stakeholders at the Thornhill Community Centre & Library
- Conceptual drawings of the CAEC were displayed at 2 separate locations within the Community Centre for several weeks & comment cards were distributed
- April 2015 – Staff met with Recreation & Library staff & the Seniors Centre Executive to review the potential impact of the CAEC on their programs
- CAEC proposal was well received with few reservations expressed during these meetings

Stakeholder Consultation (Cont'd)

- Open Houses were held on May 16 & 19 during the day & evening – email invitation sent to all registered program, fitness & ice users
- Approximately 20 people attended the Open Houses
- Attendees were very supportive of the CAEC concept with minimal concerns expressed
- Since Open Houses Staff has received approximately 30 emails expressing support for the CAEC

Stakeholder Consultation (Cont'd)

- Approximately 60 comment cards have now been received – most expressed concerns with various aspects of the CAEC
- A petition signed by 88 Members of the Thornhill Senior Centre – Wellness Group was submitted to staff & expressed concerns
- May 29 – staff met with the Wellness Group to discuss each of their concerns



Addressing Stakeholder Concerns

- Allergies – CAEC to have separate HVAC system & will be designed to animal shelter standards
- Animal Drop Offs – strictly prohibited & OSPCA on call 24/7 to address any issues that arise
- Displacement of Existing Programs – programs are being accommodated within the Thornhill Centre
- Animal Welfare – Fire Services, OSPCA & York Region Health Department consulted in CAEC design
- Impact on Parking – impact on seniors anticipated to be minimal due to CAEC hours of operation

Markham CAEC – Opportunities

- Further reduce cat euthanasia rates by increasing adoptions
- Local community engagement
- Reading therapy programs – to assist children struggling with reading (because animals don't judge)

[ASPCA Reading Program](#)



Markham CAEC – Opportunities (Cont'd)

- Junior Vet program - local schools & students enrolled in the Veterinary Technician Program in College can use the CAEC for co-operative education
- Educational visits for community groups such as Girl Guides & Boy Scouts
- Anxiety therapy - multiple studies have found that interaction with cats increases relaxation hormones in the body, lowers stress levels & contributes to the lowering of blood pressure & anxiety



Markham CAEC – Opportunities (Cont'd)

- Partnership with OSPCA, TWC, ACC, Recreation & Library staff on animal education programs
- Seniors Therapy Opportunities:
 - Animals being used in therapy for seniors

<http://tpoc.ca/programs/for-seniors/>



Financial Considerations

	Amount (\$)
Total Council Approved Budget:	150,000
•Operating Budget: \$100,000	
•Capital Budget: \$50,000	
Capital Budget	50,000
Construction Estimate	115,150
Shortfall	(65,150)
Animal Care Committee Contribution	30,000
Funding Required	(35,150)

Next Steps

1. Asset Management staff will retain a contractor to provide necessary retrofitting for the CAEC
2. Prepare a contract with the OSPCA for the management of the CAEC
3. In partnership with the OSPCA, begin volunteer recruitment for the CAEC opening in Fall 2015

Next Steps (Cont'd)

4. Develop communication strategies for key stakeholders
5. Develop a comprehensive Communication & Marketing Plan for the CAEC
6. Develop performance metrics for the ongoing evaluation & monitoring of the CAEC to ensure it meets the City's objectives

Conclusion

- Markham City Council approved the CAEC in 2013 by adopting the recommendations contained in the DPRRA report. The CAEC is also supported by Markham's Animal Care Committee.
- The National Euthanasia rate for cats is 50% of those that enter a shelter; in Markham it is currently 39%; the CAEC will assist in reducing this further.
- Creation of a CAEC is an innovative approach to animal service delivery & a chance to expand the type of services the City provides to its residents.

Staff Recommendations

1. That the report entitled “Animal Storefront (Cat Adoption & Education Centre)” be received
2. That a Cat Adoption & Education Centre (CAEC) be opened in the Thornhill Community Centre & Library
3. That the operating costs associated with the CAEC in the amount of \$99,191 be funded from account 310-320-5370 (Animal Control)

Staff Recommendations (Cont'd)

4. That the cost for retrofitting the CAEC in the amount of \$115,150.00 be funded from a new capital project called “Cat Adoption & Education Centre”
5. That the shortfall associated with the capital start-up costs in the amount of \$35,150.00 be funded from the Non-Development Charge Capital Contingency
6. That staff be authorized to enter into a contract with the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the provision of managing the CAEC for a term of three years, in a form satisfactory to the City Clerk & City Solicitor

Staff Recommendations (Cont'd)

7. That staff report back to Council within three years of the opening of the CAEC with an assessment of the storefront operation
8. That staff be authorized & directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution





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