

Staff Report

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Report To:	General Government Committee	
Date of Meeting:	February 5, 2024	Report Number: LGS-003-24
Submitted By:	Rob Maciver, Deputy CAO/Solicitor	By-law Number:
Reviewed By:	Mary-Anne Dempster, CAO	Resolution#: GG-003-24
Authored By:	Pinder DaSilva, IDEA Officer	
File Number:		
Report Subject:	Intimate Partner Violence – Follow Up on Direction	

Recommendation:

1. That Report LGS-003-24, and any related delegations or communication items, be received for information;
2. That, in an effort to help prevent Intimate Partner Violence, Council take the following actions:
 - a. Affirm that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has reached epidemic proportions;
 - b. Continue to advocate, to the Region of Durham, for transportation services for residents accessing IPV-related support where public transportation is inadequate, or not available;
 - c. Continue advocating for expanded cell service and high-speed internet throughout the community; and
 - d. Continue to promote and support community safety outreach programs across the Municipality.
3. That the IDEA Officer be directed to:
 - a. Arrange training, in 2024, for front-line staff who may encounter IPV situations;

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- b. Incorporate a reference to IPV within Clarington's 2024 Reconciliation Action Plan.
 4. That Clarington Community Engagement Staff take the following actions:
 - a. Promote and share public education campaigns to promote awareness about IPV including, where available, in multiple languages and formats;
 - b. Identify/create, by end of 2024, private confidential spaces in libraries and community centres, where victims of IPV could make phone calls to shelters, police and victim services for support and guidance;
 - c. Co-host age-appropriate community awareness programs which address IPV in 2024/2025;
 - d. Propose a funding stream, as part of the 2025 budget, within the Community Funding Program, which supports community safety programs, including IPV, especially in rural areas of Clarington; and
 - e. Install information and resources in recreation facility washrooms and community message boards in 2024.
 5. That this resolution be forwarded to all Durham MPPs, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, Durham Region Council, all lower-tier Durham municipalities, and Durham Regional Police Service Board.

Report Overview

This report provides recommendations to implement actions to help prevent Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

1. Background

- 1.1 Clarington is committed to providing a safe, diverse, inclusive, and vibrant community for its residents. Strategic Priority C.2.5 is committed to “supporting the proactive management of community safety and well-being” and includes the following actions:
 - Collaborate with Durham Regional Police Service – Community Safety Advisory Council to support the proactive management of community safety matters.
 - Support the development and implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (facilitated by Region of Durham).
 - Prioritize initiatives to improve community safety and well-being.
- 1.2 In March 2023, [a jury made 86 recommendations to the Province resulting from the inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam](#) who were murdered as a result of intimate partner violence (IPV) in 2015.
- 1.3 On April 26, 2023, [Durham Regional Council adopted a resolution](#) to declare an IPV epidemic and to integrate IPV into the Region’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.
- 1.4 In response to the jury’s recommendations, on June 12, 2023, Clarington Council approved Resolution #GG-121-23, a [New Business item brought forward](#).

Whereas Intimate partner violence (IPV) is physical, sexual, coercive control, emotional abuse and aggression that occurs in an intimate relationship;

Whereas supporting efforts to address gender-based violence, which disproportionately impacts BIPOC women and girls would align with the Ontario governments’ Anti-Black Racism Strategy, Ontario Health’s Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework, The National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence, and Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #40”;

Whereas on the morning of September 22, 2015, Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam were murdered by a former partner;

Whereas on June 28, 2022, a five-person jury established as part of a coroner’s inquest into the events of September 22, 2015, delivered 86 recommendations;

Whereas specific legislation addressing family and domestic violence has been passed by six provinces and three territories; however, Ontario has not implemented this type of legislation;

Whereas the Violence Prevention Coordination Council of Durham (VPCC), which represents 35 local agencies including Bethesda House, Luke's Place, Herizon House, Victim Services, and the Durham Rape Crisis Centre, reported a significant increase in demand for assistance from local IPV support providers. In the fiscal year 2021-22, Durham Victim Services supported 4,438 victims of Intimate Partner Violence, up 32% over four years and supported 916 victims of Sexual Violence, up 277% over four years. The four local shelters in the fiscal year of 2021/22 served over 500 survivors in shelter, served 4,400 on their crisis lines, and sadly turned away 1,374 victims of gender-based violence;

In 2022/23 fiscal years the numbers increased, serving over 600 (20% increase) survivors in shelter, served 6,047 (37.5% increase) on the crisis lines, and regrettably had to turn away 1,886 (37.2% increase) women and children seeking safety in our shelters; and

Whereas the City of Ottawa, Renfrew County, and Lanark County have passed motions declaring an IPV epidemic and acknowledging the 86 recommendations in the Renfrew County Inquest.

Now therefore be it resolved:

That the Municipality of Clarington supports the Region of Durham who have declared IPV an epidemic and call on the Ontario Government to do the same, as per recommendation #1 of the Renfrew County Inquest;

That the Region of Durham integrate IPV into the Region's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, as per recommendation #10 of the Renfrew County Inquest;

That Staff investigate the recommendations of the Renfrew County Inquest and report back on which recommendations could be implemented by the Municipality of Clarington; and

That this motion be distributed to all Durham MPPs, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, all lower-tier Durham municipalities, Durham Regional Police Service Board, Renfrew County, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

- 1.5 Staff have reviewed communications from other municipalities and investigated the recommendations.

- 1.6 Staff have reviewed the recommendations of the Renfrew County Inquest, and this Report outlines actions that could be implemented, by Clarington, the IDEA Officer, Community Engagement Staff and by the Region of Durham.
- 1.7 The Region of Durham has provided an update on September 25, 2023 Report [#2023-A-15](#) indicating a motion was made to implement Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 10 of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations, and have been developing a joint work plan outlining the regional response to the intimate partner violence epidemic.
- 1.8 Bethesda House serves the Clarington community through a comprehensive system of professional supports to diverse individuals dealing with all types of abuse and gender-based violence including but not limited to, domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, familial abuse, cultural violence, and elder abuse. Bethesda House is part of a Region-wide network of organizations that include other women's shelters, police service, victim service and the Region of Durham.

2. Other Municipalities

- 2.1 Many municipalities and regions including OBCM (Ontario Big City Mayors), and MARCO (Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario) members have declared a gender-based violence and/or intimate partner violence epidemic.

3. Clarington Council Actions

- 3.1 Previously, Clarington had supported the Region of Durham's declaration of the IPV epidemic. Staff are suggesting that Clarington could take it a step further and affirm that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has reached epidemic proportions as the impetus for taking these other steps.
- 3.2 Having access to reliable public transportation may be the only means for some IPV victims to access supports and resources. Given the fact that some areas across Clarington have inadequate, or lack of, public transportation, staff recommend that the Municipality of Clarington Council continue to advocate to the Region of Durham for transportation services, through Durham Region Transit and other transit providers (taxis, Uber, etc.), for residents accessing IPV-related support where public transportation is inadequate or not available.
- 3.3 Clarington residents in key, under-serviced rural areas continue to face challenges with access to cell service and high-speed internet, potentially impacting their health and safety. Staff are suggesting that the Municipality of Clarington continue advocating for expanded cell service and high-speed internet throughout the community to improve safety and access to services.

- 3.4 Creating a safe community where residents have access to resources and services in a timely manner, requires a collaborative approach between different partners across Clarington. Staff suggest that the Municipality of Clarington, in collaboration with Durham Region, Durham Regional Police Service, and Clarington Libraries, Museums & Archives (CLMA), promote and support community safety outreach programs across the Municipality.

4. Clarington IDEA Officer Actions

- 4.1 It is essential that front-line staff has the training and skills needed to recognize intimate partner violence and provide referrals to support and resources to victims. It is recommended that the 2024 IDEA staff training schedule include collaborating with subject matter experts in the community (Durham Region Police Service (DRPS), Bethesda House, Community Development Council of Durham, and more) to provide specialized, job and culturally appropriate education/training for front-line staff who may encounter IPV situations (Municipal Law Enforcement Officers, Library, Customer Service, Recreation program/facility staff, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Animal Services, and more). This training would include gender-based violence awareness training, perhaps lived experience sessions, etc.
- 4.2 Clarington is committed to creating a safe community for everyone, including those experiencing intimate partner violence. To highlight the importance of this commitment, the IDEA Officer will incorporate a reference to IPV within Clarington's 2024 Reconciliation Action Plan (currently in development) (which includes similar Calls for Justice found in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report).

5. Clarington Community Engagement Staff Actions

- 5.1 Community Engagement staff sit on the Durham Regional Police Central East Division Community Safety Advisory Council (CSAC) as a participant and liaison for the Municipality. Through the existing relationship with DRPS Community Safety Advisory Council, and the Durham Region Community Safety and Well Being Plan Municipal Working Group, promote and share new and/or existing public education campaigns to promote awareness about IPV including seeking support, access to resources, risk factors and warning signs, community, and bystander engagement, and where available, in multiple languages and formats. Consideration will be given to ensure the inclusion of our rural residents in the messaging and materials.
- 5.2 Easy-to-access community-based safer spaces are integral to ensuring the well-being of the community. It is recommended the Municipality of Clarington by the end of 2024, working with the CLMA, identify/create safe and private spaces in libraries and community centres, where victims of IPV could make phone calls to shelters, police and victim services for support and guidance.

- 5.3 There is a need for additional financial supports to develop resources, especially in rural areas of Clarington. Community Services staff will research, propose, and develop a funding stream, starting in 2025, within the Community Funding Program, which supports community safety programs, including IPV.
- 5.4 Public awareness programs can have a tremendous impact on bringing communities together to mobilize local knowledge and resources. It is recommended that, with our community partners, the Community Services staff co-host age-appropriate community awareness programs which address IPV in 2024/2025.
- 5.5 It can be difficult for many victims of intimate partner violence to easily access information on supports and resources without repercussions that impact their safety and health. It is recommended that information, and resources (e.g. pamphlets, handouts from women's shelters, men's programs, etc.) be installed in recreation facility washrooms and community message boards in 2024.

6. Financial Considerations

- 6.1 A funding stream is being recommended, for consideration in the budget of the Community Funding Program, beginning in 2025. Amounts and projects to be determined prior to submission of the 2025 budget.

7. Concurrence

This report has been reviewed by the Deputy CAO, Public Services who concurs with the recommendation.

8. Strategic Plan

- 8.1 This report aligns with Strategic Priority C.2.5 which states that Clarington is committed to "supporting the proactive management of community safety and well-being" and includes the following actions:
 - Collaborate with Durham Regional Police Service - Community Safety Advisory Council to support the proactive management of community safety matters;
 - Support the development and implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (facilitated by Region of Durham); and
 - Prioritize initiatives to improve community safety and well-being.

9. Conclusion

It is respectfully recommended that Council approve the Staff recommendations made in this report to enact action plans for Council, the IDEA Officer, and Community Services Staff to combat Intimate Partner Violence.

Staff Contact: Pinder DaSilva, IDEA Officer, 905-623-3379 ext. 2563 or pdasilva@clarington.net.

Attachments:

Not Applicable

The following interested parties will be notified of Council's decision:

Regional Municipality of Durham

Clarington Library, Museums and Archives

Bethesda House

Community Development Council Durham