



STAFF REPORT
Community Services

Title: Large Street Gatherings
Report Number: COM2020-007
Author: Mark Dykstra, Commissioner, Community Services,
Adam Lauder, Executive to the CAO
Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole Meeting
Council/Committee Date: March 2, 2020
File: N/A
Attachments: Appendix 1 – Large Street Gatherings Taskforce Final
Report
Ward No.: All Wards - City Wide

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive report COM2020-007.
2. That Council direct the Town & Gown Committee to advance monitoring and implementation of the Large Street Gathering Final Report recommendations.
3. That Waterloo City Council thanks the Large Street Gathering Task Force members for their commitment and dedication to completing the Large Street Gatherings final report dated March 2, 2020 and further that the Task Force be dissolved.

A. Executive Summary

This report provides Council with the final taskforce report on large street gatherings. The taskforce report provides 12 recommendations to address the trajectory of large street gatherings currently associated with St. Patrick's Day and Ezra Homecoming.

As an extension of the Town and Gown Committee, the Mayor of the City of Waterloo put into action this task force in 2018, to determine what strategic action is needed by all community agencies and partners to mitigate the risks and growth of unsanctioned street gatherings. At the time of creation, it was recognized that recommendations by the task force would take several years to fully implement. The task force is primarily focused on changes that could be made for St. Patrick's Day 2020 and beyond, with a goal of significantly altering the trajectory of these events in the next 1-3 years.

The task force recognizes the operations team is a multi-agency committee operating independently of the task force. The operations team is successfully managing the large street gatherings, and will continue to do so as a highly professional committee of emergency operations experts.

The task force recognizes this issue is unique to post-secondary cities like Waterloo, and that the local operations team has successfully maintained public safety to date through sound planning. However, these large gatherings are now at a scale where safety of attendees is at risk. With safety being the recognized priority by the task force, significant change is needed.

These large gatherings pose significant safety risks to the community, do not enhance community cohesion, divert resources from other community needs (including emergency response needs) and are negatively impacting the image of all stakeholders and attendees.

The task force has identified 12 recommendations that are needed to be acted on in order to stop the street gatherings from occurring. These 12 recommendations fall under 4 themes, being:

- Theme 1 – Operational Excellence
- Theme 2 – Culture Change
- Theme 3 – Community Impact
- Theme 4 – Ongoing Initiatives

The 12 recommendations have been deliberately structured to respond to the “Key Problems” and “Key Decision Criteria” found in Appendices B, C and D respectively.

As a multi-faceted and complex problem, the task force understands that all 12 recommendations need to be acted on to eliminate the street parties. This issue has been aptly described as a “wicked problem”, and in order to appropriately address this problem, all available tools need to be deployed.

B. Financial Implications

The recommendations within the task force report will lead to a reduction in the financial burden for all partners. In order to achieve the goal of large street gatherings stopping, an initial increase in spending may be required by all partners (in kind and/or direct).

Most significantly, the task force has identified the need for a comprehensive communications plan (recommendation # 10) associated with these events. This recommendation will require approximately \$100,000 to implement. The University of Waterloo, Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University have all agreed to contribute toward this initiative. It is expected that the City will contribute a maximum of \$10,000 from current operating budgets.

C. Technology Implications

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Objectives: Equity, Inclusion and a Sense of Belonging; Sustainability and the Environment; Safe, Sustainable Transportation; Healthy Community & Resilient Neighbourhoods; Infrastructure Renewal; Economic Growth & Development)

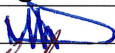


(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Fiscal Responsibility; Healthy and Safe Workplace; Effective Engagement; Personal Leadership; Service Excellence)

This work supports the Healthy Community & Resilient Neighbourhoods and Economic Growth & Development pillars of the City's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan by facilitating post-secondary student integration with the broader community, and by building relationships with key stakeholders and community collaborators

E Previous Reports on this Topic

COM2019-026 Large Public Gatherings Update

F. Approvals

Name	Signature	Date
Author: Mark Dykstra		Feb 25, 2020
Author: Adam Lauder		Feb. 25, 2020
Commissioner: Mark Dykstra		Feb 25, 2020
Finance: N/A		

CAO
T.A.

APPENDIX 1

Large Street Gatherings

Task Force Final Report

March 2, 2020

Executive Summary

This report provides recommendations to address the trajectory of unsanctioned public gatherings associated with St. Patrick's Day and Ezra Homecoming. As an extension of the Town and Gown Committee, the Mayor of the City of Waterloo created this task force in 2018 (see Appendix A for the Terms of Reference) to determine what strategic action is needed by all community agencies and partners to mitigate the risks and growth of unsanctioned public gatherings (UPGs). At the time of creation, it was recognized that recommendations by the task force would take several years to fully implement. The task force is primarily focused on changes that could be made for 2020 and beyond, with a goal of significantly altering the trajectory of these events in the next 1-3 years.

The task force recognizes this issue is unique to post-secondary cities like Waterloo, and that the multi-agency operations team has successfully maintained public safety to date through their sound planning. However, these large street gatherings are now at a scale where safety of attendees is at risk. Beyond the inherent safety risks for attendees, these large gatherings pose significant safety risks to the community, do not enhance community cohesion, divert financial and human resources from other community needs (such as homelessness, opioid and substance abuse issues) and are negatively impacting the image of all stakeholders and attendees.

The task force has undertaken a multi-pronged research program, which has included an academic literature review, an academic survey of students pre and post the 2019 St. Patrick's Day event, student focus groups (world café), a community survey as well as neighbourhood consultation. Results of that program were identified in the Interim Report released in September 2019.

Through engagement undertaken with students, it is clear that these large gatherings are viewed as a rite of passage / tradition, which will make it more difficult to shift the street culture surrounding these events. To be effective at changing the culture, the taskforce believes it will be critical to utilize a collaborative, multi-faceted approach, with a strong communication plan that focusses on peer to peer messaging/influence.

The task force has identified 12 recommendations that are needed to be acted on in order to stop the street gatherings from occurring. These 12 recommendations fall under 4 themes, being: Operational Excellence, Culture Change, Community Impact, and Ongoing Initiatives.

The 12 recommendations have been deliberately structured to respond to the Key Problems and Key Decision Criteria found in Appendices B, C and D respectively.

The task force believes that all 12 recommendations need to be acted on in order to realize the goal of no street gatherings occurring in the future. This issue has been aptly

described as a “wicked problem”, and in order to appropriately address this problem, all available tools need to be deployed.

To drive successful implementation, a total of 41 “actions” have also been assigned to the recommendations. Success will be largely dependent on the collective ability to move these recommendations and associated actions forward.

Acknowledgements

Participants on the Task Force were:

Name	Title	Organization
Mark Dykstra*	Commissioner of Community Services	City of Waterloo
Tom Berczi*	Superintendent - Operational Support Division	Waterloo Regional Police Service
Aimee Calma, Scot Wyles	President	Conestoga Students Inc.
Brenda Cassidy	Director, Corporate Communications	Conestoga College
James Craig	Chair	Town and Gown Committee
Shawn Cruz, Skye Nip	Associate Vice President, University Affairs	Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union
Ian Muller	Director, Policy, Research & Advocacy	
D'Arcy Delamere**	Lecturer	University of Waterloo (School of Accounting & Finance)
Benjamin Easton, Jas Dhillon Matthew Gerrits	Municipal Affairs Commissioner Vice President, Education	Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association
Richard Eibach	Associate Professor and Associate Chair – Undergraduate Affairs	University of Waterloo
Sandra Hanmer	Councillor	City of Waterloo
Catherine Heale	Manager, Governance and Corporate Projects	Grand River Hospital
Leanne Holland-Brown	Dean of Students	
Antonio Araujo	Vice President (Acting), Finance and Administration	Wilfrid Laurier University
Carleen Carroll	Assistant Vice President, External Relations	
Adam Lauder	Executive Officer to the Chief Administrative Office	City of Waterloo
Ellen Menage Kathy Bazinet	Executive Director President & CEO	Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Students' Association
Chris Read	Associate Provost, Students	University of Waterloo
Larry Richardson	Representative	MacGregor Albert Community Association

Name	Title	Organization
Naima Samuel	President	University of Waterloo Graduate Student Association
Jill Schitka	Program Director, Emergency Department	Grand River Hospital
John Shewchuk	Chief Managing Officer	Waterloo Catholic District School Board
Steve Van Valkenburg	Chief	Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services

*Task Force Co-Chair

**Taskforce Facilitator

A note on Leanne Holland-Brown:

Unfortunately, during the term of the task force, Leanne Holland-Brown passed away. She had an impact on all members, and her tremendous spirit propelled the task force through some difficult conversations. Our thoughts go out to her friends and family as well as the broader WLU community.

1.0 Evolution and Trajectory of Unsanctioned Public Gatherings

Unsanctioned street gatherings in communities with post-secondary institutions are growing in Canada and abroad. Cities, police, paramedic and by-law departments are responding to events that are increasing in scope and scale. Neighbourhoods are increasingly experiencing impacts of these events, as these gatherings directly impact quality of life. The growth of these unsanctioned public gatherings has required municipal responses, and the taskforce is aware of a number of other Ontario municipalities that are reviewing how to best manage these events.

Locally, St. Patrick's Day and Ezra Avenue Homecoming are the largest unsanctioned public gatherings, both of which result in a street party on Ezra Avenue and surrounding area.

Waterloo Regional Police Service has been tracking the St. Patrick's Day crowd size since 2015, and Homecoming crowd size since 2017:

Year	St. Patrick's Day Crowd Size	Ezra Homecoming Crowd Size
2015	5,000-7,000	Not tracked
2016	10,000	Not tracked
2017	14,500	9,000
2018	22,000	14,000
2019	33,000	4,700

The trajectory of these events is leading to a number of key issues moving forward:

- Other than WLU 2019 Homecoming, crowd densities for these events have been approaching critical levels, with the streets being physically unable to accommodate the growing crowds. This is placing risks on the attendees and emergency service providers. At the crowd density levels seen for St Patrick's Day 2019, even minor disruptions in the crowd can have significant effects on crowd safety. In such a scenario, emergency service providers will likely not be able to control the crowd or maintain safety.
- The growing crowd size is lending itself to crimes of opportunity within the crowd and at house parties. The crimes leave lasting impacts on individuals.
- While the majority of attendees are local, the events are attracting attendees from other Ontario communities.
- Costs are increasing to unsustainable levels. For example, annual combined costs of St. Patrick's Day and Ezra Avenue Homecoming were approximately \$750,000 for service providers (police, paramedic and city) in both 2018 and 2019. With no current avenue to recover these costs, taxpayers throughout the region are paying for these events.
- Public safety is being impacted, as service providers are diverting their resources to these events and away from the rest of the community. Response times for the remaining community could be impacted, should these events continue to grow.
- Local neighbourhoods are being impacted by the crowds. Property damage, noise, litter and other nuisances are increasing during these events, which are negatively impacting surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The image of the community, city, post-secondary institutions and emergency responders is at significant risk. This was seen during Orientation Week 2019 where over 1,000 students gathered on Ezra Avenue and lit fire to a couch on the street. This particular event garnered significant media coverage, with a decidedly negative tone directed at WLU students.

2.0 Task Force Research

The taskforce has undertaken a robust research program to gain a wide variety of perspectives and develop a deep understanding of factors influencing these large gatherings. This research has included a world café to gain student perspectives, an academic literature review, a pre and post survey of attendees of the gatherings, eliciting comments from the neighbourhood, and an online survey for anyone interested in participating. The findings from this research were discussed in detail in the Interim Report released in September 2019. A brief synopsis is provided below:

Students

1. Attendees recognize these large gatherings as a rite of passage/iconic event(s) and/or tradition.
2. The size of the events is attractive to attendees and evokes a sense of collective enthusiasm.

3. In the lead-up to these large gatherings, many local students are approached by out-of-town acquaintances for a place to stay. As an example, the task force heard directly from a student that her 5-bedroom apartment had 30 guests stay over for St. Patrick's Day 2019.
4. Messages around the risks of attending these larger gatherings are not being taken seriously, or reaching student social media feeds/other media.

Neighbourhood

5. The majority within the neighbourhood believe these larger gatherings should be shut down.
6. The majority within the neighbourhood believe the financial burden should be placed on those responsible for these large gatherings.
7. The large gatherings have negative impacts on private property.

Broader Public

8. It appears that the broader public is mixed on what should be done, with 48% of EngageWaterloo survey respondents indicating the gatherings should either be commercialized or sanctioned.
9. The broader public appears to view unsanctioned street gatherings negatively, with 69% indicating they are either expensive burdens or a community nuisance.
10. There may be opportunities to introduce charities, not for profits and other groups to promote wellness at these events.

Task Force Ideation & Evaluation

The task force has considered every comment received, as well as all information gleaned from its research program. All ideas have been assessed against the Key Decision Criteria (Appendix B), with multiple options being considered and consultation having occurred with a broad range of stakeholders. Further, the task force has understood, from the operational group associated with these large street gatherings, how various pilots have performed for Ezra Homecoming 2019. This work has been instrumental in arriving at a set of recommendations to stop the large street gatherings.

3.0 Recommendations

The task force has identified 12 recommendations that are needed to be acted on in order to stop the street gatherings from occurring. These 12 recommendations fall under 4 themes, being:

- Theme 1 – Operational Excellence
- Theme 2 – Culture Change
- Theme 3 – Community Impact
- Theme 4 – Ongoing Initiatives

The 12 recommendations have been deliberately structured to respond to the “Key Problems” and “Key Decision Criteria” found in Appendices B, C and D respectively.

The task force believes that all 12 recommendations need to be acted on in order to realize the goal of no street gatherings occurring in the future. This issue has been aptly described as a “wicked problem”, and in order to appropriately address this problem, all available tools need to be deployed.

To drive successful implementation, “actions” have also been assigned to each recommendation. Success will be largely dependent on the collective ability to move these recommendations and associated actions forward.

Below are the 12 recommendations and corresponding 4 themes.

THEME 1 - OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Significant efforts have been made by emergency responders and others to coordinate efforts to effectively manage crowds on Ezra Avenue. These efforts have resulted in other jurisdictions seeking to learn from our effective coordination.

The task force has been pleased with the early successes to date, particularly surrounding day-of operations. Having Guelph, Waterloo, Laurier and McMaster hold their Homecoming on the same day in 2019 resulted in a significant drop in attendance on Ezra Avenue. The security pods and fencing were also a significant effort that may have refocused the on-street energy. These items in particular should be expanded for future events.

The task force recognizes that the operations team is a multi-agency committee operating independently of the mandate of the task force. The operations team is successfully managing the large street gatherings, and will continue to do so as a highly professional committee of emergency operations experts.

To ensure success in the future, it is imperative for all partners to continue the progressive coordination efforts in a manner that evolves with needs on Ezra and surrounding streets.

Recommendation 1 - Operational Excellence

Continue and enhance progressive coordinated planning for unsanctioned street gatherings, with a focus on decreasing crowd sizes and reducing risks to public safety.

- 1.1 Led by the Waterloo Regional Police Service and the City of Waterloo, continue with, and expand where possible, the use of successful pilot initiatives and other innovative crowd management strategies to reduce crowd size and density.

- 1.2 All post-secondary institutions in the Region should participate in the coordinated operational planning process.

THEME 2 - CULTURE CHANGE

Beyond ongoing operational excellence, altering the trajectory of these events requires a fundamental culture change. The efforts to change the culture need to be multi-faceted, and delivered by many partners.

In order to achieve the goal of the street gatherings no longer occurring, significant efforts need to be directed at changing the nature of events which drive the gatherings. Specifically, celebrations around St Patrick's Day and Ezra Homecoming need to reflect the community's expectation that such celebrations will be peaceful, responsible, and not include street gatherings.

Given that attendees are primarily those affiliated with or have local connections with local universities and Conestoga College, post-secondary institutions have a particularly important role in shifting internal culture to one of respect for the surrounding community.

In order to have lasting impact, local students should be involved in helping find lasting solutions to ensure such gatherings do not occur. Efforts such as annual ideation competitions are envisioned in order to create that lasting impact.

Recommendation 2 - Change the Nature of the Event

Currently, St. Patrick's Day and Ezra Homecoming generate the street parties. These street gatherings are seen as entitlements for young adults, or a rite-of-passage. These celebratory days need to shift focus toward responsible celebration, community wellness and involvement of social not-for-profits such that street parties are not expected.

- 2.1 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should recognize that their students attend these street gatherings, and that their students also invite friends from out of town. In conjunction with Recommendations 3 & 4, engagement with the student bodies should occur to eliminate the expectation for a street gathering, with a focus on responsible celebration via sanctioned events (such as WLU's sanctioned homecoming events) or at private residences and licensed establishments.
- 2.2 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should undertake a campaign to further educate attendees on the harmful impacts of large street gathering and abuse of alcohol and other substances.
- 2.3 WLU should engage its current students and alumni on what Ezra Homecoming should and should not entail. While not sanctioned by the University, there is currently

an expectation by participants that Homecoming will lead to a street gathering. WLU should take steps to end this expectation for its students and alumni.

- 2.4 WLU should share the outcomes of their Homecoming review with the Town & Gown Committee.
- 2.5 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should seek opportunities to engage social not-for-profits and community-oriented organizations during events such as St Patrick's Day, Homecoming and Orientation, with a lens on attendees learning from and potentially giving back to such groups.
- 2.6 WLU should seek opportunities to hold wellness fairs around events such as Homecoming.
- 2.7 Waterloo Mayor should host an annual meeting of post-secondary school Presidents to discuss large street gatherings.
- 2.8 Waterloo Mayor should engage local school board Trustees to discuss large street gatherings.

Recommendation 3 - Institutional Culture

Post-secondary institutions need to shift the party culture to one of community respect, even when celebrating events on campus, in private residences, or in licensed establishments. Existing Strategic Plans within respective institutions should guide this work.

- 3.1 Led by WLU, UW and Conestoga College, internal engagement should occur that focusses on responsible ways to celebrate events. This engagement should be direct, multi-faceted, and have a goal of reaching as many students as possible on an annual basis.
- 3.2 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should ensure mechanisms exist to effectively deal with negative student behaviours that may arise from attending these large gatherings.
- 3.3 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should review existing operations to ensure no actions are indirectly supporting street party culture.
- 3.4 WLU should continue operational review of Homecoming that reduces desirability of street parties specifically with respect to Homecoming but also incorporating concepts that could be applied to St Patrick's Day and Orientation.
- 3.5 Post-secondary and secondary school institutions should strengthen messaging (including student orientation messaging) around being a responsible community member.

Recommendation 4 - Student Solutions

A comprehensive, multi-institutional program is needed to allow students to further identify and implement solutions to meeting the goal of no street gatherings.

- 4.1 WLU, UW and Conestoga College should formalize programs that actively engage students to further identify and implement solutions that meet the task force's goal. These could include multi-disciplinary problem solving events, Pitch Competitions, course projects, case competitions and other events/activities that seek student involvement in creating implementable solutions.
- 4.2 Each institution should actively support implementation of student led/created solutions through co-ordination with other stakeholders and report back to the Town and Gown Committee on their student engagement activities and resulting programs.

THEME 3 - COMMUNITY IMPACT

The street gatherings have annual impacts on emergency responders and the community. The trajectory of the events will be most successfully changed if it is supported by a shift in the financial burden, so that taxpayers are not covering the bulk of the costs for these gatherings.

Efforts also need to be directed at advocating for legislative improvements that would allow the best possible response to the street gatherings. Currently, municipal by-law enforcement cannot require individuals to produce identification when being issued an infraction. This results in individuals providing inaccurate personal identification, and ultimately, not being held responsible for their actions or the resulting fines.

Over the long term, there may be an opportunity for the City and Laurier to work on re-planning the neighbourhood to be predominantly institutional in function. This could include closure of the municipal streets.

Landlords have been clear that they are looking for support as to how they can address crowding in their units during these street gatherings. The City has a role to play in providing that information.

Recommendation 5 – Reduce the Financial Burden

Post-secondary institutions and their student bodies need to engage with emergency responders to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the taxpayer costs to manage street gatherings.

- 5.1 Emergency responders and other agencies that are incurring significant costs should engage directly with WLU, UW and Conestoga College, to explore opportunities to reduce these ongoing costs.
- 5.2 WLU, UW and Conestoga College, as well as their student associations, should provide direct and/or in-kind support toward the communications and other plans to reduce costs (see recommendation # 10).

- 5.3 A joint event budgeting process involving the City of Waterloo and local post-secondary institutions should be used to find efficiencies in procurement and asset deployment.
- 5.4 Led by the Waterloo Regional Police Service and in partnership with local post-secondary institutions, a review should be conducted to determine the most cost-efficient and effective manner of deploying police, university and private event security services.
- 5.5 As a short term funding mechanism, the City should continue to lobby the province to increase heads and beds allocations. As post-secondary institutions do not pay local property taxes, but rather the Province provides municipalities with a \$75/student "Heads and Beds" allocation, this Heads and Beds funding allocation, which has not changed in 30 years, should be increased to recognize the significant costs these gatherings place on local taxpayers.

The task force understands that costs will likely increase in the short term, as operational teams seek to further manage crowds. This is particularly relevant for St Patrick's Day events, given the uncertainty around crowd growth for this event. The task force anticipates that the reduction of costs, particularly around Ezra Homecoming, will help to offset the increased costs for emergency responder budgets.

Recommendation 6 - Advocacy

A systematic, multi-partner advocacy strategy at a provincial level must be utilized to promote the cessation of a street gathering at all times of the year.

- 6.1 Recognizing the ongoing work of stakeholder professional associations, each stakeholder should advocate with their peers at a provincial level to emphasize the need to end large unsanctioned gatherings, through implementation of best practices and new change initiatives/trends.
- 6.2 The City should engage with the Ontario Town and Gown Association in order to harmonize approaches in applicable Ontario municipalities.
- 6.3 The City should engage with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and other municipalities on legislative improvement sought (see recommendation #7 below).
- 6.4 WLU and UW should engage with the Council of Ontario Universities in order to harmonize approaches across Ontario's University system.
- 6.5 Conestoga College should engage with the Colleges of Ontario in order to harmonize approaches and/or share best practices across Ontario's College system.
- 6.6 WRPS should continue to engage with the Ontario Chiefs of Police to share best practices regarding operational approaches.
- 6.7 WLU, UW and Conestoga College student unions should engage with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the College Student Alliance to share best practices.

Recommendation 7 - Legislative Improvements

The City needs to lobby the province for changes that will enhance municipal enforcement's capabilities during operations. Overall impacts associated with large street gatherings should be considered when advancing legislative and community safety provisions.

7.1 Led by the City, the province should be lobbied on a range of matters to provide municipal enforcement with enhanced tools to effectively enforce City by-laws. These should include:

- a. Providing municipalities with the authority to create community safety zones during designated times, which would provide for increased fines for certain types of by-law violations associated with street gatherings.
- b. Seek powers to allow for municipal by-laws to place an onus on a person, being charged with a by-law violation, to produce valid personal identification for the purposes of the by-law charge being commenced.
- c. Increasing the legislative tools available to collect on defaulted municipal by-law fines, in order to provide for an increased measure of accountability

7.2 The City of Waterloo should look at enhancements to its public nuisance regulations to provide for a process whereby house parties can be registered beforehand, to support a safer environment for celebrations.

Recommendation 8 - Change the Built Form

The City and WLU should explore the opportunity to replan/redesign the Ezra/Bricker neighbourhood as a mixed-use, predominantly institutional area, with a pedestrian focus. There may be potential for the public road network to be closed through this redesign.

8.1 During the City's next Official Plan Review (launching in 2020), the City should engage with WLU and other landowners on the desirability of allowing institutional growth in the Ezra/Bricker neighbourhood.

8.2 WLU should consider diversifying the neighbourhood, and broadening the housing stock to include non-students and mature students.

Recommendation 9 - Landlord Education

Landlords on and adjacent to Ezra Avenue should be provided material on methods to manage overcrowding during peak days, both inside and outside of their buildings.

9.1 The City should educate landowners and other stakeholders on the unique risks from overcrowding on peak days, and the benefits of using fencing during these peak days to control their property.

- a. WLU and private landlords should collaborate on joint fence procurement around peak days.

- b. The City should host an annual landlord information session on responsibilities regarding crowding, parties and property maintenance.

THEME 4 - ONGOING INITIATIVES

To ensure the collective efforts are sustained, significant efforts need to be directed at communicating with potential attendees on the personal and community impacts of attending. The key peer-to-peer messaging needs to be multi-year in order to gradually impact the rite-of-passage mentality that currently surrounds the events.

The task force envisions the current level of collaboration will continue between partners until the street gatherings cease. While this collaboration will primarily take place through the Town and Gown Committee and operations groups, there may be a need for other ad hoc meetings into the future.

Finally, the task force believes a research program should be undertaken to understand the success of the efforts to have the street gatherings cease.

Recommendation 10 - Comprehensive Communications Plan

A multi-faceted, comprehensive communications plan is needed that targets all relevant audiences, includes peer-to-peer messaging on risks to attending street gatherings, and features an influencer campaign to maximize its reach.

Communications will be embedded within all other recommendations, and will be a key tool to integrate all activities.

- 10.1 Led by the City, a communication plan should be developed and implemented that adequately responds to students' current attitudes towards large street gatherings (e.g. "rite of passage", Fear of Missing Out, safety of the event, larger crowds are better etc.). The communications plan should target students, alumni, parents, local school boards as well as non-locals. A particular focus should be placed on using peer-to-peer messaging in a way that uses influencers, is authentic, focused on motivations for Gen Z, and highlights the impacts of attending.
- 10.2 WLU and UW should take a leadership role in engaging Council of Ontario Universities on provincial messaging.
- 10.3 Conestoga College should take a leadership role in engaging Colleges of Ontario on provincial messaging.
- 10.4 Messaging coming from hospitals and paramedics should be leveraged, as this messaging is impactful and authentic.

Recommendation 11 - Ongoing Collaboration

Taskforce partners will be needed as key implementers. Ongoing collaboration at least until the street gatherings cease, should be expected.

11.1 Led by the Town & Gown Committee, ongoing collaboration should occur with task force partners. As identified in this report, partners should be key implementers of recommendations.

Recommendation 12 - Measuring Outcomes

Use empirical research to determine the efficacy of our efforts, including whether motivations to attend are shifting, the trajectory of attendance and costs.

12.1 Led by the Town & Gown Committee, implementation of these recommendations should be monitored on an annual basis.

- a. Report to City Council and other governing bodies on a not less than annual basis.

12.2 Led by the Town & Gown Committee, opportunities to partner with academic institutions/professors/researchers should be sought to undertake rigorous academic research regarding the underlying motivations for attendance, and opportunities to influence those motivations.

4.0 Accountability, Next Steps & Timing*Accountability, Next Steps & Timing*

As it relates to the 12 recommendations, the following table identifies specific roles for task force member organizations.

Table 1: Responsibilities for Driving Change

Initiative	Lead	Key Collaborators
Operational Excellence	WRPS	City, Paramedics, WLU, UW, Conestoga College
Change Nature of Event	WLU, UW, Conestoga College	Student Unions
Institutional Culture	WLU, UW, Conestoga College	Student Unions
Student Solutions	WLU, UW, Conestoga College	College
Shift Financial Burden	WLU, UW, Conestoga College	City, Student Unions
Advocacy	City	WRPS, WLU, UW, Conestoga College, Student Unions

Legislative Improvements	City	WRPS
Landlord Education	City	WLU, Landlord Association(s)
Comprehensive Communications Plan	City + Town & Gown Committee	WLU, UW, Conestoga College, Student Unions, WRPS
Ongoing Collaboration	Town & Gown Committee	All Partners
Measuring Outcomes	Town & Gown Committee	All Partners

While not specifically identified in Table 1, the task force understands that local school boards have a role in the Comprehensive Communications Plan and Student Solutions recommendations, as collaborators. Their involvement will help target senior high school students, a group that attends these gatherings.

Grand River Hospital also has a role, as a collaborator, in the comprehensive communications plan. There is an opportunity to continue the hospital's YouTube video series on the impacts of attending these events, as well as using their social media presence to push other messages.

This report will need to be presented to appropriate governing bodies over the spring of 2020. It is anticipated that the Town & Gown Committee will then be charged with monitoring progression on the recommendations contained within this report, and report to Waterloo City Council and others on an annual basis.

APPENDIX A
Terms of Reference -
Unsanctioned Public Gatherings Task Force

Mandate:

The Town & Gown Committee of the City of Waterloo has created an Unsanctioned Public Gatherings Task Force. The task force has been asked to assess the growth of unsanctioned public gatherings, understand the impact on the community and various community service providers, and to make recommendations and provide potential strategies to the task force agencies/groups on how such unsanctioned public gatherings can be appropriately managed.

Task Force Composition:

Representatives from the following agencies / groups will form the task force. The Task Force steering committee shall be co-chaired by Mark Dykstra (City of Waterloo) and Tom Berczi (Waterloo Regional Police Service).

- City of Waterloo (CoW)
- Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS)
- Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services
- Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU)
- Wilfrid Laurier University Student Union (WLUSU)
- Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Student Association
- University of Waterloo (UW)
- Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA)
- University of Waterloo Graduate Student Union (GSA)
- Conestoga College (CC)
- Conestoga College Student Union (CCSU)
- Town and Gown Committee (T&G)
- Waterloo Catholic District School Board
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Grand River Hospital
- MacGregor Albert Community Association (MACA)

Task Force Role:

- The task force will meet quarterly at a minimum, and will receive information and create recommendations on ways to reduce, refocus and prevent any negative impacts of unsanctioned public gatherings. It is anticipated this task force will be operational for approximately 2 years with an understanding that implementation of its recommended strategies may take an additional three years.
- The task force will outline the challenges and benefits that unsanctioned public gatherings have on the community.

- The task force's work will include research on crowd science and will gather information on the experiences and strategies of other jurisdictions pertaining to unsanctioned public gatherings.

Communications

- Task force members will report to their governing bodies with the understanding that deliberations of the task force will be confidential until there is agreement, within the task force, that information can be released to the public. As needed, the Co-chairs will speak on behalf of the task force.

APPENDIX B**Key Problems and Key Decision Criteria**

The following was approved by the taskforce on November 20, 2018.

Key Problems

The task force believes the 4 key problems associated with unsanctioned public gatherings are:

1. **Public Safety** – the safety of attendees, emergency responders and the broader community is at risk during these events due to very large and dense crowds congregating, the potential for incidents occurring that may result in injuries (from minor to major injuries, including the potential loss of life) and the reduced capacity of emergency services to effectively serve the rest of the community.
2. **Reputational Risk** – Some of the behaviours at unsanctioned public gatherings do not reflect the values of our community or its institutions. These behaviours create reputational risk for all stakeholders.
3. **Cost** – Costs are escalating, and are not sustainable. Further, costs are currently borne by service responders, which is not an appropriate model.
4. **Crowd Behaviour** – While most attendees are respectful, there are issues with crowd behaviour that need to be addressed, including unlawful activities and the attitude of attendees legitimizing such gatherings.

Key Decision Criteria

The task force recognized the following key decision criteria will guide the process of analyzing identified options:

1. **The approach enhances community & personal safety**
2. **The approach creates peer – driven culture change**
3. **The approach is cost-effective, financially sustainable, and operationally feasible**
4. **The approach yields positive outcomes for stakeholders collectively**

The task force also recognized that each option will need:

- Progress tracking: Indicators will need to be selected to ensure we're able to track progress.
- Communications: Key messages will need to be developed and communicated by all major stakeholders in a consistent manner. Communications will need to be easily understood and match the proposed approach.

APPENDIX C
RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY DECISION CRITERIA

Recommendation	Key Decision Criteria			
	Enhances Community & Personal Safety	Creates Peer- driven Culture Change	Cost Effective, Financially Sustainable, Operationally Feasible	Yields Positive Outcomes for Stakeholders Collectively
Operational Excellence	√		√	√
Change the Nature of the Event	√	√	√	√
Institutional Culture		√	√	√
Student Solutions	√	√		
Shift the Financial Burden			√	
Advocacy	√	√	√	√
Legislative Improvements	√		√	√
Change the Built Form	√		√	
Landlord Education	√			√
Comprehensive Communications Plan	√	√		√
Ongoing Collaboration	√	√		√
Measuring Outcomes				√

**APPENDIX D
RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY PROBLEMS**

Recommendation	Key Problems			
	Public Safety	Reputational Risk	Cost	Crowd Behaviour
Operational Excellence	√	√	√	√
Change the Nature of the Event	√	√	√	√
Institutional Culture	√	√	√	√
Student Solutions	√	√	√	√
Shift the Financial Burden			√	
Advocacy	√	√	√	√
Legislative Improvements	√		√	√
Change the Built Form	√	√	√	√
Landlord Education	√			√
Comprehensive Communications Plan	√	√	√	√
Ongoing Collaboration	√	√	√	√
Measuring Outcomes	√	√	√	√

APPENDIX E
TASK FORCE INTERIM REPORT

See the September 9, 2019 [Interim Report](#) for findings from the World Café, Academic Literature Review, EngageWaterloo Survey as well as Public Comments. The Interim Report begins on page 32 of the link above.

