

Peel partners with Service Ontario to offer integrated service centre

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The Province and Region of Peel will be working together through a new service centre.

At Region of Peel Council's January 23 meeting, Councillors approved a staff recommendation to begin a two-year pilot partnership between Service Ontario and the Region of Peel for an integrated service centre at 10 Peel Centre Drive in Brampton.

In a report, Regional staff said the centre will increase access to services and improve the customer experience.

The proposed launch date of the centre is March 17 and it will integrate with the existing Service Peel counter at 10 Peel Centre Drive. The centre will be operated by Peel Region and staffed by Peel employees.

The pilot is expected to be cost-neutral for Peel Region. It will use a cost recovery funding model with the province covering costs for staffing, administration, training, technology and support, reads the report. The partnership aims to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and customer satisfaction by taking an integrated approach to service delivery, bringing more government services to residents in a convenient and familiar space.

The pilot will be monitored by Regional staff throughout its duration and if it's successful, staff will consider the feasibility of adding more integrated service centres throughout Peel's three municipalities.

According to the report, other larger municipalities will be following Peel's pilot to see if it is successful as well.

The report states Service Peel will expect an up to four times increase in visits thanks to the pilot project, with an estimated 59,000 visits a year.

Critically, the service centre will make it easier for vulnerable populations to access social and health services, including income support, disability support, addiction treatment, counseling, hospitalization, and more, reads the report. Currently, applicants to these programs without identification are referred to other providers. Under the pilot program, Human Services employees can visually confirm the identity of individuals who lack the necessary information to acquire the requested identification. Individuals with no fixed address can also use this service to obtain ID. And a temporary health card can be issued immediately to a client in need of health care services.