



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b> Mayor and Members General Issues Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> April 3, 2013	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) (PED13061) (City Wide)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Tim McCabe General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Neil Everson (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2359
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

N/A

## Information:

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC), located in Washington, D.C., is the world's largest professional organization for economic development practitioners, with more than 5,000 members across the United States (U.S.), as well as Canada, Europe, Australia, and other nations. The primary purpose of IEDC is to provide leadership in professional development as well as advisory and research services to economic development organizations and municipalities. IEDC and its members have also been directly involved with the U.S. government's economic recovery efforts related to Hurricane Katrina, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and Super Storm Sandy.

In today's competitive environment for business attraction and expansion opportunities it is vital to demonstrate that your municipality's economic development function is at the top of the field. The IEDC's Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) Program is one of the best means to accomplish this goal. AEDO accreditation immediately tells investors, businesses, ICI realtors, and the community that the local economic development department is part of an elite group of only 32 economic

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*OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.*

*OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork*

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development organizations world-wide. This is very similar to an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification that manufacturers and related suppliers work to achieve in an industrial environment.

In 2009, the IEDC and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute jointly worked on an initiative to create up-to-date benchmarks in economic development by surveying all of the current AEDO organizations. Senior staff from each of the organizations were requested to assess their respective operations on the basis of ten (10) key indicators related to quality management. The results of this survey found a number of key similarities amongst these AEDO communities. They included the following:

- Superior customer service;
- Strong market focus based on a comprehensive economic development strategy;
- Strong quantifiable performance measures and corresponding results; and,
- Solid community relationships and partnerships.

In August 2012, Hamilton Economic Development commenced the IEDC accreditation process for AEDO Certification. This was a lengthy process designed to elicit specific information about the organization structure, the business and political environment, the funding model, incentive programs, staffing and activity levels. The primary objective is to provide the local organization with independent and authoritative feedback on operations, structure and structure as a means of improving programs and enhancing business and community support. Phase 1 involved a comprehensive documentation review where Hamilton was required to submit detailed documents including the following:

- Mission and Goals statement (Hamilton used our Corporate statement);
- Detailed annual operating and capital budgets;
- Annual reports;
- Position descriptions of all employees;
- Resumes of Senior Management;
- Organization charts;
- Staff policies and procedures manuals;
- Strategic and marketing plans;
- Copies of all newsletters and press releases; and,
- Letter of commitment from Mayor or Board Chair.

This information was sent to an independent Accreditation Committee in the U.S. that reviewed the submission and later approved the successful completion of the Phase 1 requirements before a Phase 2 Site Team visit to Hamilton was authorized.

In early February, the AEDO Site Team visit assessed the local Economic Development Division staff in action and interviewed politicians, senior staff, as well as business and

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community stakeholders from every sector. Their review also included tours of Hamilton's business parks, City infrastructure, recent and planned developments, and major employers. Hamilton's Planning and Economic Development integrated service delivery model thoroughly impressed both the independent Accreditation Team and the Site Team and was the primary focus of their questions to City staff. Upon entering City Hall, the Site Team was so amazed that they immediately began taking pictures of our "One-Stop Business Centre". To quote the team member from Albany, N.Y.:

*"This is a City that really gets it! Instead of seeing pictures of former Mayors when you walk in the front door of City Hall, in Hamilton you see a One-Stop Business Centre."*

The Site Visit Final Report made the following recommendations for improvements:

1. **Private Sector Advisory Capacity** - Hamilton Economic Development (HED) should help ensure the creation of the planned Mayor's Advisory Committee, which will be comprised of local business people, to engage volunteers and receive direct feedback on issues such as economic development and growth. This group could meet with the Mayor and/or City Council two-to-four times per year and bring the voice of the business community to local elected officials. ***(N.B. This item is on the OSBL for the end of this term of Council).***
2. **Website Development** - There are two (2) distinct websites, one for the City of Hamilton and one for Invest in Hamilton. While all of the required basic information is present on both websites, it is recommended that HED explore creating more dynamic content for both sites. On the other hand, HED should be commended for making the basic information easy to find. There is not a confusing interface or any unnecessary visuals.
3. **Marketing Effort** - While HED's marketing efforts are very good (and in the case of social media, a national leader), it is recommended that the Economic Development Division expand its marketing efforts.
4. **Testimonials** - Given the strong support evident from clients of the Economic Development Division, it is recommended that the use of testimonials in marketing be expanded beyond the current level. Indeed, it may be useful to use this goodwill in an Ambassadors Program.

On March 22, 2013, the City of Hamilton's Planning and Economic Development Department became the first municipal economic development organization in Canada to achieve AEDO status. Nova Scotia's arm's length Regional Development Authority (the Greater Halifax Partnership) is the only other AEDO in the country and they received their status in January 2012. The following logo will now be appearing on all economic related promotional materials, the investinhamilton website, as well as

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Economic Development Division letterhead, business cards, etc. See Appendix “A” for an example.



Finally, the “Overall Recommendation” from the International Economic Development Council provides an exceptional endorsement of the current service delivery model of economic development in Hamilton.

**Overall Recommendation**

The Hamilton Economic Development Division submitted a comprehensive AEDO application that details the organization’s significant work in its community. HED was very responsive to the Review Team’s requests and provided strong supplemental materials where necessary. In addition, HED hosted an outstanding site visit that highlighted the organization’s undeniably positive impact on the City of Hamilton. The organization is efficient, effective, and well-run. Therefore, the AEDO Review Team recommends AEDO Accreditation for the City of Hamilton’s Economic Development Division.

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

Appendix “A” to Report PED13061- Example of Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO)

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