



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	October 13, 2015
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	"Learning Annex" Partnership Initiative of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (CES15046) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the City of Hamilton (Community & Emergency Services Department) accept \$573,000 from the Treasury Board Secretariat for the purpose of implementing a "Learning Annex";
- (b) That the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (#2051255204) fund \$183,000 over 3 years for a temporary .5 FTE senior project manager for the youth engagement and job development program attached to the "Learning Annex"; and,
- (c) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized and directed to execute the agreement for the period commencing October 15, 2015 to June 2018 between the City of Hamilton and Treasury Board Secretariat to implement the above project, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In September 2015, the Treasury Board Secretariat, through the Local Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, announced that the Neighbourhood Action Strategy's grant application for the Learning Annex was successful. In total, \$573,000 will be awarded to the Learning Annex initiative over a 3 year period. The Local Poverty Reduction Fund is a \$50 million, six-year initiative created to support innovative, community-driven projects that measurably improve the lives of those most affected by poverty.

The Fund issued a Call for Proposals in May 2015, and the Neighbourhood Action Strategy submitted a completed application in support of the Learning Annex initiative

(attached as Appendix "A" to Report CES15046). As part of the application, a total estimated budget, including in-kind support, of \$1,110,042 was submitted. \$572,942 was requested from the Local Poverty Reduction Fund for the Learning Annex. Further, a recent opportunity to create a youth job skills development program, in conjunction with the Snow Angels program, arose and will be developed and managed by the senior project manager (Report CES14041(a)).

The Learning Annex is focused on improving educational attainment, skill building and employment opportunities for youth in Hamilton by:

- Engaging youth where they live;
- Empowering youth around program development;
- Providing youth with decision-making authority on programming;
- Utilizing partnerships and collaboration to develop programming and co-ordinate services related to education, skill building and employment;
- Encouraging mentorship; and,
- Navigating the current system of youth services to create navigation pathways to fully utilize youth services.

Once the funding is received, staff will begin to formalize the Learning Annex Steering Committee, the proposed Hamilton Employment and Education Partnership Network and will hire two temporary staff to support the implementation of the Learning Annex. Youth engagement is an important component and will be conducted from October to December of 2015. Following this, a detailed operations and implementation plan with programming identified, will begin in January 2016. It is anticipated that the Learning Annex will be launched in the spring of 2016.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** Funding totalling \$573,000 will be provided by the Provincial Treasury Board Secretariat (administered through the Local Poverty Reduction Fund) over the course of three (3) years to cover staffing, project development and administrative requirements (October 2015 to June 2018).

Funding from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project #2051255204) totalling \$183,000 will be allocated over the course of three (3) years to fund a temporary .5 FTE senior project manager with \$551,800 remaining in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy fund.

**Staffing:** Two temporary FTE, one Youth Animator and one Youth Navigator, will be hired using funds received from the Treasury Board Secretariat over the three year period. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy will fund the temporary .5 FTE senior project manager over the three year period.

**Legal:**

A funding agreement will be developed in accordance with a Contribution Agreement to be signed by the Treasury Board Secretariat and the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services. The funding agreement will be reviewed by Legal Services to ensure it is consistent with City of Hamilton policies and procedures.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Nine of the ten completed action plans identify access to education, job skills training and employment opportunities as issues for youth. In response, a partnership between the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, Mohawk College and Workforce Planning Hamilton, together with support from key community stakeholders, facilitated the development of a Learning Annex concept Report CES14028 (September 17, 2014). A funding application to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) in the amount of \$153,107 was submitted and a further \$111,558 from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy capital budget was requested in order to coordinate the implementation and operationalization of the Learning Annex. Report CES14028 was supported by Council, however, the grant application was not approved by the Province.

In order to ensure momentum on this project was maintained, existing Neighbourhood Action Strategy staff, supported by the Learning Annex working group, continued the necessary research, community engagement and the development of a business plan in support of the objectives of the Learning Annex. Appendix "B" to Report CES15046 summarizes the background work conducted to-date.

Engagement with community partners has played a significant role in the refinement of the Learning Annex concept. The working Together Report (Appendix "C" to Report CES15046) provided neighbourhood-specific strategies to improve educational outcomes and participation in job-skill training programs. Stakeholder discussions held in December 2014 and May 2015 provided insight into the services that are currently provided for youth in Hamilton, and identified the next steps and approaches for youth engagement, together with potential delivery models for the Learning Annex. The work conducted through Our Future Hamilton is informed the development of the recent application which was submitted to the Provincial Local Poverty Reduction fund.

**Local Poverty Reduction Fund**

In 2014, the Ontario government moved forward with renewed efforts to prevent and reduce poverty with the launch of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy, "Realizing our Potential". The Poverty Reduction Strategy focusses on four key pillars: continuing to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth, moving towards employment and income security for vulnerable groups, ending homelessness and investing in what works by using evidence to measure success. The Local Poverty Reduction Fund ("Fund") fosters the development of local, community-driven solutions to poverty and encourages collaborative partnerships. The Fund will assist recipients to strengthen

local efforts in poverty reduction by providing funding for evidence-based initiatives that prevent or reduce poverty for vulnerable groups.

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy, in partnership with the Learning Annex Steering Committee, submitted an Expression of Interest to the Fund in May 2015 for the Learning Annex initiative. In June 2015, a formal application was submitted through the Call for Proposals stage, requesting funding in the amount of \$572,942 in order to develop and implement a Learning Annex model for Hamilton.

In September 2015, the Treasury Board Secretariat announced that the Neighbourhood Action Strategy grant application was successful. In total, \$573,000 will be awarded to the Learning Annex initiative over a 3 year period.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

There are no policy implications associated with Report CES15046.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

### **Internal Stakeholders:**

#### **Community and Emergency Services Department**

- Recreation Division: staff have been consulted on the concept of the Learning Annex and youth engagement. This Division has no concerns with Report CES15046.
- Ontario Works Division: staff have been consulted on the concept of the Learning Annex and will be a member of the Steering Committee. Ontario Works will partner in the implementation and provision of service at the Learning Annex. This Division has no concerns with Report CES15046.

#### **Public Health Services**

- Tobacco Control Program: staff have been consulted on the concept of the Learning Annex and youth engagement. Staff will provide consultation support during the development of the youth engagement process. Public Health Services has no concerns with Report CES15046.
- Social Determinants of Health Program: staff have been consulted on the concept of the Learning Annex and will participate on the Steering Committee. Public Health Services has no concerns with Report CES15046.

#### **Planning and Economic Development Department**

- Economic Development Division: staff participated in the early stages of the Learning Annex concept to provide information on employment and business needs in Hamilton. The Planning and Economic Development Department has no concerns with Report CES15046.

Corporate Services

- Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation Division have reviewed this report and have no concerns with Report CES15046.
- Legal Services Division has reviewed the funding agreement and has no concerns accepting the grant. This Division has no concerns with Report CES15046.

Hamilton Public Library

- Staff from the Hamilton Public Library have been consulted on the Learning Annex concept and are a committed partner in its implementation. The Learning Annex will be located at the Central Library. Staff will sit as part of the Steering Committee.

**ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Learning Annex will be located at the Hamilton Central Library. It will:

- Engage youth where they live;
- Empower youth around program development;
- Provide youth with decision-making authority (Steering Committee) on programming;
- Utilize partnerships and collaboration to develop programming and co-ordinate services related to education, skill building and employment;
- Encourage mentorship; and,
- Navigate the current system of youth services to create navigation pathways to fully utilize youth services.

Goal: To increase aspirations and enable educational attainment and job skill training in order to obtain long-term, sustainable, living-wage employment for at-risk youth in Hamilton.

Target Population: youth aged 18-24, including women, street-involved youth, single parents, newcomers, Aboriginal youth and visible minorities who are most affected by health and income inequities. We are aiming to target 25 youth in the early stage of the Learning Annex.

**Outcomes**

Short-term outcomes: youth participation rates in the Learning Annex, retention rates within the Learning Annex, education courses taken, utilization rates of existing services (Employment Ontario, health).

Medium-term outcomes: General equivalency diploma obtained/completed, number of post-secondary education applications, acceptance and completion rates, decrease in unemployment rate, reduced OW/ODSP caseloads.

Long-term outcomes: Raise aspirations, improved health outcomes, stable full-time employment, and retention of youth in Hamilton.

Relationships are the foundation of the Learning Annex. The content and service delivery model will be shaped and marketed by youth who are engaged through the youth animator. Innovative tools of engagement will be used to build and maintain positive relationships with youth and supported through the lived experience of mentors. This model will foster strong, trusting relationships. The utilization of technology, athletics and recreation as engagement and service-delivery tools will also be explored.

A youth navigator will work with youth to identify immediate and long-term goals that provide a holistic approach to service provision and which support youth in securing living wage employment. The Learning Annex will identify, co-ordinate and navigate access to community services related to basic needs, employment, education and skill building, using the Social Determinants of Health framework.

Education is a cornerstone to the Learning Annex. Strategic partnerships with McMaster University, Mohawk College and Redeemer University College allow for the development and provision of courses designed to maximize student success. Youth will contribute to the development of curriculum, and innovative approaches, including dual credits and micro-credential opportunities will also be developed and incorporated.

### **Business Case**

Hamilton is one of Ontario's most economically diverse cities; however, economic disparities vary between neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy works in 11 neighbourhoods to address social and economic inequities. There are many different approaches to addressing economic inequities. However, the literature identifies four streams of local solutions: meeting basic needs, removing barriers, developing skills and promoting economic development. The Learning Annex addresses all these areas.

Through the Neighbourhood Action Plans, residents identified challenges in employment, education and job-skill training. Workforce Planning Hamilton estimates that there were 5,225 youth living in Hamilton in 2011 (last year for which data is available) that were detached from employment, education and training. In Hamilton, retirements by 2016 are expected to create an estimated 21,000 job vacancies - with most jobs requiring at least a two-year college diploma. Anticipated skills shortages will require job searchers to have post-secondary credentials to be competitive in the job market. These broad changes in the labour market present an opportunity for the Learning Annex to address the needs of Hamilton youth.

Research identified key findings and best practices related to high school completion, post-secondary attendance and skills training. Students who do not complete high school face challenges not only finding jobs, but advancing into high paid positions. The literature notes that successful interventions to support at-risk youth in their educational journey include mentoring, flexible learning environments, sufficient re-entry points, support addressing engagement and academic improvement, provision of non-academic skill building programs, wrap-around services and other stabilizing support

programs, and emphasizing career options and training. Additionally, the research states that parents' educational history is the biggest determining factor in students pursuing post-secondary education. The likelihood of attending post-secondary education also varies based on ethno-cultural background, socio-economic status and gender. According to the research, the process of increasing post-secondary attendance can be divided into four stages: 1) raising aspirations for college, 2) navigating the admission process, 3) easing the transition, and 4) retaining the students.

Changes to the labour market are requiring an increasingly complex set of skills on the part of workers. Opportunities for the Learning Annex include; programs that align skills training with current labour market needs in Hamilton; flexible programs and opportunities; additional supports for youth with low employment skills; skill development offered through micro credentials; and, provide ongoing flexible digital literacy programs. Support from mentors and staff will ensure youth can access and complete programs.

The Learning Annex is unique because the need was identified by residents and the programming will be developed by the youth that it serves. It will bring together youth, youth serving agencies, municipal and educational institutions and community organizations to provide a holistic range of services within one location.

### **Evaluation**

Problem statement: "Low income youth, aged 18-24, in priority neighbourhoods of Hamilton have low levels of education and limited use of/access to services and skill development opportunities. They experience high rates of under- and un-employment and therefore, struggle to become self-sufficient and continue the cycle of poverty." The Learning Annex Logic Model is attached as Appendix "D" to Report CES15046)

The evaluation of the Learning Annex is a key component to its sustainability and success. A mixed methods approach to program evaluation will be employed, including:

1. Evaluating Learning Annex Usage – the extent to which it is regularly accessed by the target population.
2. Evaluating Learning Annex User Outcomes – using qualitative and quantitative analysis to explore indicators such as individual income, employment and educational attainment rates and other factors associated with standard of living.
3. Evaluating Internal Learning Annex Practices – open-ended interviews of front line staff will be conducted to determine what modifications need to be made in order to improve the Learning Annex and user outcomes.

The evaluation will be conducted by researchers at McMaster University, Department of Sociology.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships are an integral component to the Learning Annex, and will contribute to its development and sustainability. The existing partnerships that the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has fostered as part of the Learning Annex initiative will be strengthened and refined as the consultation with youth defines and clarifies the inputs required for the development and implementation of the initiative. New partnerships and enhanced collaborations will also be explored across a variety of sectors once the needs are identified as part of the consultation process. These sectors include: youth-serving organizations, employment agencies and services, health services, financial institutions, community services, educational supports, housing support services, newcomer supports, legal aid and advocacy groups. Partnerships with local employers will also be explored and encouraged in order to understand the educational and job skill requirements that are needed by the Hamilton workforce. Appendix "E" to Report CES15046 outlines the Community Partners who are committed to the implementation of the Learning Annex and will support curriculum development, service delivery program funding, sharing of data and relevant information, staffing and in-kind contributions.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee has built a strong base of invested experts in the different facets of community development, neighbourhood labour market planning, education and citizen-centred service delivery. The Steering Committee will oversee the next phase of the Learning Annex including monitoring project deliverables and timelines. An integral component to this Committee is the youth of Hamilton and the inclusion of youth in the decision-making process. The Steering Committee will be finalized at the upcoming October 2015 stakeholder meeting.

### **Hamilton Employment and Education Partnership Network**

In order to better understand and navigate the existing employment, education and job skill training services, agencies and programs, the development of a partnership network is proposed. This network will incorporate multiple stakeholders in achieving the Learning Annex's goals, decisions and results. This form of partnership will enable the various service providers in Hamilton to understand and respond to this complex issue in new and innovative ways. It is anticipated that working groups may emerge as progress is made on the implementation of the Learning Annex. The Hamilton Skills Development Flagship shares many common members who are participating within discussions around the Learning Annex. The governance structure between the two networks will be finalized in 2015.

Providing navigation services delivered on-site and opportunities for partner organizations to provide on-site services provides benefits to the Learning Annex, the target population and service providers. Additional benefits achieved include the enhancement of and increased utilization of existing services; leveraging existing community trust and relationships around existing services and service providers;



prevention of a duplication of services and a focus on enhancement to existing services and service delivery; and the opportunity to work collaboratively with partners, including youth, to meet the needs of our target population and effectively utilize existing services and resources. This partnership network will contribute to the sustainability of the Learning Annex and the provision of a holistic support system that includes wrap-around services designed to break down barriers, support youth and improve education and employment outcomes.

### **Timeline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>October 2015 to December 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formalize the Learning Annex Steering Committee and the Hamilton Employment and Education Partnership Network</li><li>• Learning Annex project team appointed</li><li>• Develop project charter</li><li>• Hire new staff</li><li>• Conduct youth engagement process to determine the needs, assets, type of programming and services required</li><li>• Develop a marketing approach for the Learning Annex</li><li>• Develop a youth working group</li><li>• Rename and rebrand the Learning Annex</li><li>• Develop protocols and partnerships to provide navigation support to enhance and strengthen connections for youth who are interested in training, upgrading, employment and career aspirations</li></ul>
<b>October 2015 to January 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refine the program evaluation strategy</li></ul>
<b>January – February 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a detailed operations and implementation plan</li><li>• The plan will outline programs and services to be offered at the Learning Annex. (N.B. this will continue to grow and evolve with time)</li><li>• Prepare a draft action plan</li></ul>
<b>March 2015 to June 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create innovative and flexible opportunities to engage youth in training and employment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore stackable, micro-credentials to incentivize participant motivation and engagement. Micro-credentials allow learners to take compact, flexible and job-focused credentials that can be combined over time to be full college credit. Micro-credentials are an important component of active learning and promote early success in tentative learners.</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop innovative training programs using a variety of modalities (e.g. pop-up classrooms, virtual and mobile platforms)</li><li>• Links to current employment and labour market needs</li><li>• Essential employability skills development to help provide career clarity</li><li>• Build and strengthen relationships with employers</li><li>• Develop strategies designed to raise aspirations around education, training and employment with neighbourhood and community organizations (expand/refine youth navigator role)</li><li>• Work closely with the Education and Training sub-committees of partnering organizations and neighbourhood planning teams</li></ul>
<b>March 2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Launch the Learning Annex (renamed and branded) in downtown Hamilton</li></ul>

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

## **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Strategic Priority #1**

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

*WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

### **Strategic Objective**

1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

### **Strategic Priority #2**

Valued & Sustainable Services

*WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.*

### **Strategic Objective**

2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

### **Strategic Priority #3**

#### **Leadership & Governance**

*WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.*

#### **Strategic Objective**

- 3.1 Engage in a range of inter-governmental relations (IGR) work that will advance partnerships and projects that benefit the City of Hamilton.
- 3.2 Build organizational capacity to ensure the City has a skilled workforce that is capable and enabled to deliver its business objectives.
- 3.4 Enhance opportunities for administrative and operational efficiencies.

### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report CES15046: Local Poverty Reduction Fund Call for Proposals Application

Appendix "B" to Report CES15046: Learning Annex Background Summary

Appendix "C" to Report CES15046: Working Together: Examining Employment, Education, and Training Strategies for the Jamesville, Beasley, and Keith Neighbourhoods – A Report of the Labour Market Action Partnership

Appendix "D" to Report CES15046: Learning Annex Logic Model

Appendix "E" to Report CES15046: Community Partners in the Learning Annex

Appendix "F" to Report CES15046: Map of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy Boundaries

Appendix "G" to Report CES15046: Graphic Panel Summaries from May 2014 Community Workshop

Appendix "H" to Report CES15046: Youth Engagement Recommendations for Planning of a Learning Annex

Appendix "I" to Report CES15046: Youth Engagement Strategies Recommendations Report