



CITY OF HAMILTON
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Taxation Division

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 13, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	City of Hamilton Taxation Policies (FCS15068) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Larry Friday (905) 546-2424, Ext. 2425
SUBMITTED BY:	Larry Friday Acting General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the City of Hamilton Taxation Policies referred to in Appendix "A" to Report FCS15068 be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, City Council approved a number of taxation policies by report FCS0711, attached as Appendix "B" and Appendix "C". The approved Call Handling project has the City Call Centre staff answering most of the taxation calls effective November 2015. The call handling project will result in the loss of 1 FTE in the tax area due to reduced call volumes in tax. The policy is, therefore, being updated to allow front line staff certain authority limits around some of the more contentious issues faced by staff on an almost daily basis. This will allow the call centre staff to answer an estimated 90 to 95% of the calls, reducing call volumes to taxation.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 2

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for recommendation(s) only)

Financial: None.
Staffing: None
Legal: None

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Tax Policies were initially approved by the Transition Board in 2001 and then updated in 2007. With the Call Centre taking on more calls and responsibilities around taxes, these policies need to be updated to ensure proper approvals are in place, and as a guide for all staff to follow when dealing with requests for such items as removal of penalty and interest charges.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

While there are various acts such as the Assessment Act and Municipal Act that govern how the tax area functions, many parts of the act are silent around such issues as penalty and interest write-offs. The Taxation Policies previously approved in report FCS07011, enclosed as Appendix “B” and Appendix “C”, are being amended to allow front-line Call Centre staff the flexibility needed to ensure success of the call handling project.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Call Handling Project Team

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

(Include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data if applicable)

The call handling project has the Call Centre staff fielding all tax inquiries and requests starting in November 2015. The intent of the call handling project is to allow staff to take a call to completion without having to transfer a large percentage of calls to the tax area. Tax will also be losing 1 FTE due to the call handling project and it is imperative that the proper processes and approvals are in place to ensure the number of calls being transferred to taxation is significantly reduced. Empowering staff at the Call Centre to make some routine approvals, based on some set policies and guidelines, will ensure that the taxpayers’ requests can be dealt with by one phone call to the Call Centre, for the most part.

The Tax Division will still be initiating and approving any adjustments made to tax accounts, as well as working closely with the Call Centre area to ensure compliance with policy is being met.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

(Include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and Pros and Cons for each alternative)

Council can add, change or delete any of the policies recommended in Appendix “A” to FCS15068.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

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

- 2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report FCS15068 – City of Hamilton Tax Collection Policy.

Appendix “B” to Report FCS15068 – Report FCS07011 (City Wide).

Appendix “C” to Report FCS15068 – City of Hamilton Tax Collection Policy Appendix “A” to Report FCS07011.