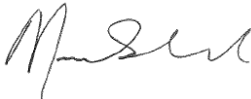




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**Economic Development Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	October 4, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	2023 Economic Development Workforce Strategy (PED23194) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Adam Durrant (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4486
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Norm Schleeahn Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

### RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Council receive the Workforce Strategy attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED23194;
- (b) That the strategy and the actions contained therein be used to guide the work and to inform future workplans of the Economic Development Division.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Q4 2022, Deloitte Economic Advisory Practice (Deloitte), an international consulting firm that recently acquired MDB Insight Ltd. – previously one of Canada’s leading economic and workforce development consulting firms – was awarded the contract to produce the City of Hamilton’s Workforce Strategy.

The purpose of this strategy is to identify the role and function of the City of Hamilton’s Economic Development Division within Hamilton’s broader, and well-established, workforce development and training ecosystem. This strategy includes a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative overview of labour force trends and opportunities in Hamilton, included both in the strategy (Appendix “A” to Report PED23194) and as a standalone research document (Appendix “C” to Report PED23194). The combination of secondary source data, primary data – as gathered

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through a survey of Hamilton's labour force, delivered in Q2-Q3 of 2023 and existing employer survey data gathered in Q1 2023 – and extensive consultations with local employers, service providers, educational institutions, and other interested and affected parties culminated in an action plan encompassing of 40 action items.

The strategy articulates where the Economic Development Division is positioned to lead on workforce development where it can best support the existing ecosystem.

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

### **FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Financial/Staffing impacts associated with the adoption of this Report. Any financial/staffing implications associated with advancing actions contained within the Workforce Strategy would be subject to future approvals as part of future reports.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Economic Development undertook this study as part of the Council-approved action items to the 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan. Specifically, Action Item No. 5 from the Economic Development Action Plan states: In collaboration with the workforce development community, create and implement a Workforce Attraction, Retention and Development (Talent) Strategy.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

N/A

### **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan, 2020 Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery, the 2021 and 2023 Just Recovery for Hamilton Report, and all of Economic Development's sector strategies recognize that workforce development is integral to a sustained economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Economic Development's existing sector strategies speak to workforce development as a key enabler for both attracting and retaining business investment into Hamilton. These sentiments are closely aligned to those noted in the extensive consultation and engagement process which involved over 270 interactions with a range of stakeholders across five priority sectors, employers, jobseekers, community organizations, municipal leaders, and business associations. Specific examples of the consultation include:

- An online labour force survey was launched on May 15, 2023 and ran until July 10, 2023. The survey sought input from individuals working in the City of Hamilton or

looking for work in the city. The survey was designed to better understand workforce related challenges and needed supports. The survey received a total of 133 responses and primarily captured input from individuals aged 25 to 54 with post-secondary degrees, or certificates;

- A total of 42 stakeholders were interviewed, including secondary and post-secondary partners, adult education and literacy providers, employment and training services, Hamilton Street Railway, Chambers of Commerce, members of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, Housing Hamilton, Workforce Planning Hamilton, and major employers. These discussions provided input into the availability and readiness of Hamilton's workforce, labour force gaps and challenges, the role of the Economic Development Division in supporting talent recruitment and retention, and insights to advance a strong, resilient, and aligned labour market environment in Hamilton;
- Workforce partners were also engaged through a roundtable discussion in May 2023 to further inform the workforce development review within the Hamilton region. A total of 25 stakeholders participated in the two-hour online session, validating findings to date, and offering a deeper dive into the current workforce ecosystem, including gaps in services and related systems and solutions to strengthen labour supply and demand alignment;
- Five sector-specific workshops were also hosted between May and June 2023, seeking input from businesses in target sectors including Manufacturing and Goods Movement, Agri-food and Food and Beverage Processing, Life Sciences, Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, Information and Communications Technology, Creative Industries, and Mainstreet/Retail/Tourism/Small Business. A total of 70 businesses and support organizations provided input into regional assets, sector-specific workforce challenges, the role of the workforce ecosystem in supporting labour force needs and solutions to overcome recruitment and retention barriers; and,
- Further informing the employer input, Economic Development and Workforce Planning Hamilton shared insights emerging through the joint annual EmployerONE Survey, which collected responses from 630 employers across Hamilton.

The engagement results were aggregated and thematically analysed into the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks and Results Framework. This framework serves as the pivot point from asking "What has been learned?" to asking, "What needs to happen?". This approach guided the overall direction and strategic priorities for Hamilton's Workforce Strategy. This document is attached to this Report as Appendix "B" to Report PED23194 - Hamilton's Workforce Strategy: Engagement Summary.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

### **The Need for A Workforce Strategy**

With the need for a workforce-focused strategy clearly articulated and validated through consultation, Economic Development sought to undertake the role of convenor, facilitator, and collaborator to advance Hamilton's position as a workforce hub and city of choice to live and work.

The resulting strategy offers a series of evidence-based areas of focus and objectives, and a tailored action plan. These areas of focus state the aspirational outcomes for Hamilton's future labour market. An Action Plan will be delivered over the life of the strategy through the collaborative efforts of Hamilton's workforce ecosystem. The ultimate strategy outcome is for local industries and employers to have access to a skilled and resilient talent pool that fuels the city's competitive position to attract and retain businesses and talent.

### **The Workforce Strategy's Vision**

The Hamilton Workforce Development Strategy is grounded in a vision that reflects Hamilton as an inter-connected workforce hub, where economic development and workforce development efforts contribute to the city's competitiveness and prosperity. The labour market is aligned, businesses have access to a ready and skilled talent pool to fill job vacancies, labour force participation reflects an active and engaged labour force, and the community is recognized as a great place to live and work.

**Vision Statement:** Hamilton is recognized and celebrated for its workforce excellence where talent thrives, businesses succeed, and society prospers.

We know we have achieved our vision when:

- Hamilton has an active and goal-directed workforce ecosystem that fosters collaboration among industry and business, education, labour force participants, and community intermediaries;
- The workforce is empowered and responsive to shifting employer demands in an evolving economy;
- Where decision making is grounded in relevant, reliable data and labour market analysis;

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- Hamilton is an inclusive and celebrated destination known for its diverse talent pool and equitable access to opportunity for all;
- Performance indicators validate the outcomes and the impact emerging from strategy implementation; and,
- Strong partnerships across public, private, and the voluntary sector collaboratively advance talent development, and leverage evidence-based insights to position the labour market for today and tomorrow.

### **Strategic Areas of Focus**

The strategy highlights five areas of focus that are highly interrelated and work collectively to strengthen workforce collaboration within the ecosystem. They support talent development initiatives and leverage evidence-based insights to position Hamilton's labour market to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. The areas of focus and objectives of this strategy begin with and are grounded in local strengths. They aim to bridge skills gaps, strengthen partnerships, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, the strategy emphasizes marketing and advocacy efforts to enable talent attraction, retention, and talent development.

### **Five Areas of Focus:**

1. Partnerships and Collaboration;
2. Skills Development and Training;
3. Ongoing Data Utilization;
4. Marketing and Promotion; and,
5. Policy Creation and Advocacy.

### **The Workforce Strategy's Objectives**

The areas of focus are underpinned by a total of 13 objectives that anchor the broader Action Plan. These objectives were shaped to build on local strengths, mitigate areas of challenge, and convey outcomes articulated through primary and secondary research, that was subsequently validated through engagement with local employers and workforce partners.

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1. Foster a collective leadership approach to support workforce development and labour market planning;
2. Activate and foster collaboration within Hamilton's workforce ecosystem (Government, Institutions, Employers, and Local Employment Support Organizations);
3. Strengthen partnerships to demonstrate Hamilton's ability to support investments and economic growth;
4. Work with education institutions and industry partners to identify and respond in a timely manner to market needs;
5. Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among Hamilton's local labour force;
6. Disseminate reliable resources that inform on in-demand occupations and skills, and the broader future of work considerations;
7. Continue to promote new and existing training and employment programs and supports;
8. Ensure that the labour force has access to learning and tools that consider employers needs today and in the future;
9. Develop and share common marketing communications and tools to be used by the Hamilton workforce ecosystem, and across Hamilton's business community to increase familiarity and consistency in the message;
10. Increase awareness through promotion of local initiatives that influence workforce development and labour market planning;
11. Advocate for addressing core labour force wraparound supports for Hamilton's diverse communities;
12. Undertake concerted efforts to achieve the immigration Stretch Target identified in the Economic Development Action Plan 2021-2025; and,
13. Advocate for leadership on the wider range of issues impacting the labour force and the workplace.

## **Action Plan**

A list of 40 actions comprises the Workforce Strategy's Action Plan. These actions reflect the five key areas of focus and their related objectives. Each Area focus also lists Key Performance Indicators to track success.

The list of actions is a starting point (although not presented in any priority sequence) based on input and research at a point in time. It is by no means an exhaustive or comprehensive list of all the potential actions, and it is recognized that new actions will emerge over time, based on influencing factors at a local, national, and international level.

Each action identifies a selected lead and internal/external supports, partners, or those that can make connections to advance implementation. Each Action is also provided an estimated timeline for implementation. See Appendix "A" to Report PED23194 – Hamilton's Workforce Strategy: Harnessing the Ecosystem for Shared Success.

With the recommendation that Council receive the Workforce Strategy and that Economic Development staff be directed to monitor and implement its Action Plan, staff have now completed Action Item No. 5 of the Council-approved 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan.

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

N/A

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report PED23194 – Hamilton's Workforce Strategy: Harnessing the Ecosystem for Shared Success

Appendix "B" to Report PED23194 – Hamilton's Workforce Strategy: Engagement Summary

Appendix "C" to Report PED23194 – Hamilton's Workforce Strategy: Data and Desktop Research