



Hamilton

## CITY OF HAMILTON

### City Manager's Office

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| <b>TO:</b> Mayor and Members<br>General Issues Committee   | <b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE                          |
| <b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> February 20, 2013   |   |
| <b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b><br>Funding from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Continue Development of the Hamilton Immigration Portal (CM13004) (City Wide) |   |
| <b>SUBMITTED BY:</b><br>Chris Murray<br>City Manager   | <b>PREPARED BY:</b><br>Paul Johnson (905) 546-2424 ext 5598 |
| <b>SIGNATURE:</b><br>  |   |

### RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the City of Hamilton accept \$110,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to significantly increase the content and quality of the Hamilton Immigration Portal and align the content with the immigrant attraction strategy currently underway; and,
- (b) That the City Manager be authorized to execute an agreement between the City and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, to implement the above recommendation.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November, 2012 the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) issued a grant application guide for the purpose of identifying municipalities that may be interested in receiving grants to improve existing Municipal Immigration Information Online that:

- Promote a municipality as a destination for newcomers to Canada

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- Provide an improved focus on employment opportunities at the local level
- Address local labour market needs through the attraction of immigrants
- Provide a tangible benefit to both newcomers to Canada and the municipality.

An application for funding was submitted by the City and approval has been received for \$110,000. The City created an Immigration Portal ([www.hamilton.ca/connect](http://www.hamilton.ca/connect)) in 2010 and has been working with community partners – most recently Community Information Hamilton – to improve the content and to promote the portal. This latest proposal will continue the enhancement of the site with a focus on utilizing the portal as part of the emerging Foreign Direct Investment Strategy and Immigrant Attraction Action Plan being developed by the Economic Development Division, Community Services Department and the City Manager's Office.

Through this project, content for the Portal will be jointly developed with local businesses, educational institutions and community partners that will focus on and detail the economic development and employment opportunities in the City. The content will also be developed to include appropriate and useful material on the social, cultural, recreational, housing, educational and cosmopolitan resources of the City and pursue the marketing of Hamilton as an international, global City.

This project will begin in March 2013 and will be completed by March 31, 2014.

***Alternatives for Consideration – None***

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)**

**Financial:**

A total budget of \$110,000 (100% funded by MCI) will be allocated to this project. The scope of work has been developed to ensure this budget will cover the costs of all agreed to deliverables. All expenditures related to this funding will be monitored over the duration of the project.

**Staffing:**

The budget provides for contract staff to complete the work required under this project. Staff from various departments including Planning and Economic Development and the Community Services Department will support the work and the coordination will occur by staff in the City Manager's Office.

**Legal:**

A funding agreement will be executed before any work begins as per recommendation (b) above.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** (Chronology of events)

In September 2007, the MCI was awarded \$330,000 in funding over two years to develop a Hamilton immigration portal. In 2010, the City of Hamilton completed and launched the City's Immigration Portal as per the requirements of the contract with MCI.

The City's Immigration Portal project demonstrated how a user-centred design process could be used to understand the needs of a diverse audience and to design a solution that would be both useful and usable to the immigrant audience. The City conducted extensive up-front analysis to understand the needs of immigrants through the use of existing research literature, review of analytics, implementation of a 100-person survey and direct in-person interviews. This information guided the design of the City's Portal at all stages. Prototypes were developed and tested with immigrant users through an iterative process, ensuring that the Portal met the needs of visitors to the site.

The City created a sustainable Portal that incorporates content from various sources including Settlement.org, Community Information Hamilton, the City of Hamilton Economic Development Department and Tourism Hamilton. By integrating content from various sources through technological means, the City avoided costly content creation and management costs, while providing a seamless portal experience for visitors to the site. The City hosts the Portal using the same technology that hosts its municipal website, leveraging existing technology of the City and ensuring long-term sustainability.

In 2012, in response to recommendation stemming from the original project, the City received \$75,000 to improve the integration of information from Community Information Hamilton (report CS12017). This work is due to be completed by the end of Q1 2013.

In December 2012 an Information Report was provided to Council updating the immigration work occurring at the City (CS12037/CMO12018/PED12223). In addition to an update on the on-going work of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC), information was provided about the development of an immigrant attraction action plan. With the support of the HIPC staff, the Economic Development Division and the City Manager's Office are undertaking an initiative to outline a preliminary set of feasible tasks intended to attract and support economic class immigrants, immigrant entrepreneurs and international students to the City of Hamilton. While these two initiatives have two distinct objectives – the HIPC focuses on improving the system of services for newcomers to Hamilton and the Immigrant Attraction work establishes the groundwork for an action plan to attract immigrants to Hamilton – the two nonetheless converge since a key element of attracting newcomers is the creation of a welcoming community, part of which includes provision of an effective system of settlement services.

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Council has received the first two reports under the immigrant attraction initiative and as work on the action plan continues it was felt the funding from MCI offered a timely opportunity to advance this work.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

The project team will work with Corporate Services to ensure that any changes to the portal are consistent with web accessibility policies and are connected to the broader web redevelopment strategy.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Staff within the City Manager's Office, Community Services Department and Planning and Economic Development Department were consulted prior to the submission of the application. Work on this project will also be coordinated with Community Information Hamilton as they finish their work on integrating information with the portal under the previous project. As part of the project plan significant consultation will occur with community partners in education and business in the development of the information for the portal.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

In developing the application for MCI the City proposed activities that would enhance the Immigration Portal and additional activities that would allow conversations with key businesses and institutions to help the City build stronger relationships and forge a strong partnership around immigrant attraction.

The project plan components approved under the funding application include:

**1. Increasing the marketing of Hamilton as a Welcoming, International Global City**

Building on the current development of an updated, expanded communications strategy by the City of Hamilton Economic Development Division, additional supplementary marketing materials will be developed for the Immigration Portal in support of the immigrant attraction strategy that will include:

- Identification and development of profiles of successful local immigrant entrepreneurs

- Summary overviews of Hamilton's welcoming environment (including the settlement service infrastructure)
- Profile of the City's diversity
- Descriptions of Hamilton's cosmopolitan social, cultural, culinary and recreational life
- Overview of Hamilton's global connections through its industries, businesses and people
- Profile of Hamilton as a centre of innovation supported by a world class university and research facilities
  
- Activities:
  - Establish collaborative partnerships with Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Hamilton, etc.
  - Materials researched, developed, designed and produced
  - Enhance the translation and language capabilities of the portal

## **2. Supporting International Student Attraction and Retention**

The number of international students in Hamilton is over 5,500 and growing. Given current changes to federal legislation, Hamilton has identified the opportunity to encourage and support more of them to stay in the City after graduation. Formal working relationships will be established by the City with all local postsecondary educational institutions to help market Hamilton to international students as a final destination after they graduate – from the moment they are recruited, during their orientation once they are here, throughout their time on campus, and as they prepare to graduate.

### **Activities:**

- Establish protocols between the City and postsecondary institutions
- Ensure that the attraction materials are both custom designed and expanded for the international student population
- Identify local, national and international programs to link local employers to high skilled graduates and professionals trained overseas and locally
- Develop information to facilitate the applications for work permits and permanent residency by international students
- Establish collaborative partnership for Immigration Portal linkage with Skills International

## **3. Marketing Hamilton for Secondary Migration**

This task builds on the recent initiative by the City of Hamilton Economic Development Division in promoting Hamilton as a business and investment opportunity through various media outlets in the GTA. Our analysis suggests that Hamilton's best opportunity for attracting new residents may well be through

secondary migration movements. Hamilton can appeal to immigrant groups in the GTA seeking lower housing costs, and for immigrant entrepreneurs, lower start up costs.

Activities:

- Continue and refine the GTA marketing strategy by expanding to the ethnic media
- Develop an Immigration Portal stream for this target audience with follow up information on Hamilton

**4. Connecting Immigrant Communities to Local Economic Development and Labour Market Agencies**

The immigrant attraction strategy will be marketed through the existing ethnic and immigrant communities in the City.

Activities:

- Build demographic profiles, and a comprehensive directory and database of organizations within the ethnic/immigrant communities in Hamilton
- Assess the need for multi-lingual materials promoting Hamilton to potential immigrant entrepreneurs
- Initiate quarterly forums with ethnic leaders
- Initiate “start your own business” and “how to write a business plan” for immigrant communities
- Engage five pilot ethnic communities (e.g. Italian, Muslim, Jewish) to solicit community input, develop community profiles, and develop these into materials to market Hamilton to their networks in their countries of origin.

Staff will provide a report to Council following the completion of the activities above.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

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 Objectives**

1.1 – Continue to grow the non-residential tax base

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

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

None.