

CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development Division

Report to: Chair and Members Planning & Economic Development Committee	Submitted by: Lee Ann Coveyduck General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
Date: January 20, 2006	Prepared by: Robert J. Plant (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7398

**SUBJECT: Hamilton Business Ambassador Program (PED06045) (City Wide) –
Referred from Planning and Economic Development Committee on
June 7, 2005**

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) That the creation and establishment of a Business Ambassador Program be referred to the 2006 Tax Operating Budget process for consideration.
- b) That the Business Ambassador Program item, referred from the Planning and Economic Development Committee on June 7, 2005, be identified as completed and removed from the Planning and Economic Development Committee Outstanding Business List.

Lee Ann Coveyduck
General Manager
Planning and Economic Development Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Economic Development has been identified as the number one priority of the City of Hamilton. Given that the mandate of the Economic Development Division is to increase the non-residential assessment base through an economic cluster strategy, the Division has devised a number of attraction and retention programs. To build upon these and in an effort to encourage local business leaders to generate leads, a Business Ambassador Program would be beneficial for the City. This program would see business leaders act as "Hamilton Business Ambassadors" in their daily activities and in their business travels. It is recommended that in order to support these activities that a

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tool kit would need to be developed for this program as well as a recognition component.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 7, 2005 meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, Committee Chair, Councillor Terry Whitehead put forward the following Motion:

- (a) That Economic Development Division staff be authorized and directed to research and develop a "Business Ambassador" program that will capitalize on the network of our local business community;
- (b) That staff be directed to return to Planning and Economic Development Committee with a draft of this proposed program for committee's input and review; and,
- (c) That upon Committee and Council approval, that staff be authorized and directed to include the implementation of this program in 2006 department work plans and any related budget impacts in the 2006 Planning and Economic Development Department Budget.

Hamilton has a mature local economy with a total of approximately 17,000 businesses in the City. It is critical to garner the strengths of the leaders of these organizations to keep the local economy strong and growing. There are a number of existing programs to attract business such as the new Invest in Hamilton Team as well as a Business Retention and Expansion Program to service the existing company base. A Business Ambassador Program will complement both attraction and retention efforts.

The implementation of a Business Ambassador Program will:

- Generate business leads
- Build upon the network of local business leaders
- Recognize local business leaders' contribution to this community

Goal:

Foster local business opportunities and grow local economy.

How it will work:

The Business Ambassador Program will encourage local business leaders to share "leads" by providing one point of contact (dedicated e-mail) in order that Economic Development may follow up. Promoting the Business Ambassador Program will require a partnership between staff, politicians and business leaders. The comprehensive program will complement existing business visits and the Corporate Calling Program.

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Tactics include:

- One point of contact to supply leads - dedicated e-mail address
- Ambassador Tool Kit
 - o Business Card CD which could include everything from a promotional video, quality of life information, the Economic Development Review and/or an Economic Profile
 - o Relocation Brochure
- Recognition for leads
 - o High-quality plaque to recognize a Hamilton Business Ambassador for a lead; presentation at Council
 - o Recognition in Economic Development publications such as the Annual Review
 - o Recognition meeting or luncheon with the Mayor, Chair of the Planning and Economic Development Committee

Note: the level of recognition would be at the discretion of the Hamilton Business Ambassador.

- Business Ambassador Section on the Economic Development section of the City's Web site

Objectives:

- To generate business leads
- To reinforce the City of Hamilton's commitment to the local business community
- To recognize individual business achievements, and to celebrate successes
- To provide an invaluable opportunity for both Economic Development staff, politicians to get to know local business leaders
- To increase two-way communications
- To demonstrate the City of Hamilton's commitment to promoting and retaining business; and to building a sense of "business" civic pride and loyalty

Opportunities:

There are opportunities to partner with McMaster University, Redeemer University College and Mohawk College to establish business forums and opportunities for business network with other business leaders.

As referenced previously, the Business Ambassador Program will complement other initiatives and programs and also fits with other grass root initiatives coming out of the 2004 Power Conference. One of the two priorities focused on improving the City's image and the promotion of Hamilton as a great place to live, work and enjoy life. The focus of this program is on Hamilton as a great place to do business. It fits nicely with programs such as:

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- I Love Hamilton Campaign
- Recruitment, Relocation and Retention Program
- Invest in Hamilton Team

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Staff researched which cities in Canada have a “business ambassador program” or lead generation initiative. The review consisted of Fredricton, Quebec City, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and Edmonton. Of these cities, both Fredricton and Regina have formal “business ambassador programs” while Edmonton has established a mechanism for business opportunity “tips”.

Fredricton, New Brunswick

Fredricton, New Brunswick’s “Business Ambassador Program” is targeted at those businesses that receive clients from out of town or travel to meet with clients. This includes companies that attend conferences outside the city.

Fredricton encourages their Business Ambassadors to Channel Leads – “if you come across a business lead during your meetings and travels, you can e-mail the information, and we will follow-up”.

The “Business Ambassador Program” in Fredricton also provides tools to recruit staff and require relocation tools including:

- A Business Card CD to stimulate interest in Fredricton. It includes a promotional video, showcases Fredricton’s business environment and quality of life plus contains the Economic Profile.
- Relocation Kit

Regina, Saskatchewan

In February 2005 the City of Regina launched a new initiative called “Team Regina”. Team Regina consists of a group of Ambassadors dedicated to growing Regina’s community. They are actively engaged in the process of promoting Regina, seeking out opportunities for attraction of new jobs to Regina, and building a positive attitude about the opportunities that abound in the region.

Team Regina is a community-led initiative which is part of Regina’s Regional Economic Development Authority (RREDA’s) overall strategy to grow the region and help the City meet its vision of 250,000 - 300,000 people in the city and region by 2010. Team Regina’s role is to contribute to that growth by identifying and recruiting people and businesses who will help make Regina an increasingly enthusiastic, dynamic and profitable place to live, work, raise a family and invest.

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The goals of Team Regina are:

- Identify and strategically target and solicit key companies worldwide to locate in the Regina region
- Promote Regina and region as a good place to invest and do business, especially in key clusters
- Raise awareness among current and potential investors of the competitiveness of Regina's business environment
- Support the ongoing efforts of businesses in the region, in their efforts to expand their businesses both locally and internationally
- Strengthen relationships between Regina and other key urban communities throughout the world

Edmonton, Alberta

The City of Edmonton is looking for tips to help grow the local economy. Anyone contacting the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) with a tip on any new business opportunities will be rewarded. A tip includes any information about a business, conference or event that might consider Greater Edmonton as their location of choice. All "Grow Edmonton" contributors are entered into a prize draw taking place throughout the year. Business tips can be submitted on the homepage with a simple description of a new business opportunity and Edmonton Economic Development staff will contact the individual who provided the tip and follow up.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

N/A

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial: \$30,000 for promotional materials, awards and receptions.

Staffing: Provision for this function does not currently exist within the 2005 work plan of the Division. The additional workload for this Program is estimated at close to 0.5 FTE, which would be accommodated as follows:

Option 1: Addition of 0.5 FTE at a cost of approximately \$40,000.

Option 2: Activities could be shared by existing staff with a reduction of specific activities in their respective clusters.

Legal: None

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

See Analysis/Rationale for best practices.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “**Triple Bottom Line**”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No
Partnerships are promoted.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No
Investment in Hamilton is enhanced and supported.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?
 Yes No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?
 Yes No

:RJP