

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
***Social Development & Early Childhood Division***

<b>Report to:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>Submitted by:</b> Joe-Anne Priel General Manager, Community Services Department
<b>Date:</b> February 6, 2007	<b>Prepared by:</b> Carmen Rachelle Bian ext. 2187

**SUBJECT: City of Hamilton Social Inclusion Policy (ECS07014) (City Wide)**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Emergency and Community Services Committee support the development of a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton.

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Joe-Anne Priel  
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Community Services Department

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Social Vision document, approved by City Council in 2001, clearly identifies social inclusion as a key value upon which a social vision could be implemented for the City of Hamilton. The need to address social inclusion has been identified not only in Report ECS07014, but a number of other reports and community initiatives such as the Inventory of Subsidized User Fees report, Vision 2020, and the Poverty Roundtable, etc.

Other research on social inclusion draws a definitive link between the enhancement of social inclusion in cities and economic growth. Originating from the social development aspect of social inclusion, other municipalities in Ontario and Canada have developed social inclusion guidelines or policies. In many of these cases, the social inclusion component is also seen as an important aspect of a City's growth strategy (both population and economic development).

To further enhance the alignment of the City's current corporate policies, Vision 2020 and GRIDS in particular, Report ECS07014 recommends that the Emergency and

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Community Services Committee support the development of guidelines and a filter that would form the basis of a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Caledon Report: A Social Vision for the New City of Hamilton:**

In response to a number of alarming demographic trends in our community, local support was obtained to develop a Social Development Strategy for the City of Hamilton.

The Social Vision for the City of Hamilton Report articulated a social vision for the City of Hamilton and also suggested how the vision could be implemented via three specific and relevant community flagships: children and families, skills development and affordable housing.

The Social Vision document describes the City of Hamilton as a:

*“ . . . safe, healthy and caring community, which fosters a sense of belonging and pride. It is a culturally rich and diverse community, which ensures that all citizens have access to opportunities and resources to meet their basic needs and promote their active participation. It is a vibrant community, which promotes support for basic needs as well as inclusion and learning for all”.<sup>1</sup>*

Four key values form the foundation of the Social Vision statement. These are: Democracy, Active Citizenship, Social Justice and Inclusion. The values also support the key goals of the Social Vision listed below:

1. Pursue new ways to enable citizens to share their views and shape city life.
2. Increase the awareness about, monitor and improve the well-being of the community and try to develop the sense of “shared” community responsibility to do so.
3. Ensure that basic needs for food, clothing and adequate housing for all citizens are met.
4. Promote inclusion by encouraging citizen participation in the City’s social, economic, cultural and recreational life.
5. Create a learning culture that fosters continual improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Based upon the document, **A Social Vision for the City of Hamilton,** Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002.

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A Social Inclusion Policy will assist the City to promote inclusion by encouraging citizen participation in the City's social, economic, cultural and recreational life (goal number four above).

The Social Vision for the City of Hamilton provides the conceptual or philosophical framework upon which the City of Hamilton has developed a number of practical actions and strategies in order to realize the social vision statement. These include the Affordability and Accessibility Issues Task Force, the Inventory of Subsidized Citizen User Fees Review, and the co-convening of the Hamilton Poverty Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. Each of these will be discussed in subsequent sections.

As well as these practical examples, the Social Development Strategy has continued to play a significant role in assisting the City of Hamilton maintain alignment with its key corporate policies including the City's Mission, Vision and Values statement as well as Vision 2020.

**Affordability & Accessibility Issues Task Force: Review of Citizen User Fees Project:**

The Affordability & Accessibility Issues Task Force was approved by City Council in 2001, and functioned as an advisory committee reporting directly to City Council. The membership included four City Councillors with staff acting as resources to this committee. The mandate of the Task Force was: "To develop a framework for a "City of Hamilton Affordability and Accessibility Strategy", built upon the principles of access and equity for all residents that would ameliorate or reduce the impact of program or service fees as a barrier to accessing City of Hamilton, programs, services or benefits."

As part of its mandate and work plan, the Affordability & Accessibility Issues Task Force had intended to review all citizen user fees within the City of Hamilton. The Task Force was not able to complete this work before the committee was disbanded when the previous term of Council ended in 2003. After the 2003 municipal elections, Council adopted a new committee structure and the Affordability & Accessibility Issues Task Force was not reconstituted. All outstanding work of the Task Force was to be addressed by the Social and Public Health Committee at that time. Staff from Public Health and Community Services took the lead for the project and worked with the cross-departmental team to complete the Inventory of City of Hamilton Subsidized Citizen User Fees Report

**Inventory of Subsidized Citizen User Fees Report:**

The staff project team completed all tasks required for the project from June to November 2004 including a draft report and the findings<sup>2</sup>, which were presented to the Social & Public Health Committee in April 2005. The report prepared describes the process used to obtain the data for the inventory, some of the limitations of the data, a review of policies and

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<sup>2</sup> The report contained two appendices: one listing all citizen user fees reviewed (around 1,500) and the other highlighting only citizen user fees for which the City provides a subsidized rate or fee waiver (58).

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procedures, eligibility, program administration, financial considerations, and corporate strategy. The following key findings are most relevant to the development of a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton:

**Eligibility:**

- In order to determine eligibility for the subsidized rate, staff apply certain “filters” in order to identify those who are eligible. For the subsidized citizen user fees reviewed, the filter that is applied most often is “age” (38%). The second most common filter is a combination of age/ability (31%). Affordability as a filter is used for only 17% of the citizen user fees reviewed.
- The policies and procedures for the subsidized citizen user fees include some definitions of eligibility criteria or filters (age for example).
- Current definitions of filters are not used consistently nor is there a consistent approach in the requirement for proof of eligibility.

**Program Administration:**

- Public awareness with respect to availability of these subsidized rates is mixed. For 69% of the fees reviewed, information about the availability of the subsidy is posted on the City’s website and there is written information accessible at all Municipal Service Centres. For another 14%, information about the subsidized rate is available only on the City’s website, while for the remaining 17% the availability of the subsidized rate is not advertised at all.

**Corporate Strategy:**

- The project team was to develop a draft corporate strategy that would streamline current processes and criteria used to determine eligibility. The project team agreed that while this would be a worthwhile undertaking, they did not wish to proceed until Council clarified whether the intent of a Corporate Strategy is to enhance the efficiency of current subsidized citizen user fees, or to shift focus from the current eligibility criteria to “ability to pay” as the main, or only filter. No further work has progressed on this strategy.

The development of a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton would be a significant first step in addressing many of the issues highlighted in the Inventory of Subsidized User Fees Report.

**Poverty Reduction/Prevention Strategies- Poverty Roundtable:**

Poverty has been identified as one significant barrier that excludes individuals and families from participating fully (socially & economically) in the life of the community and results in

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higher costs to our health care, education, justice and social services systems costs. To further develop strategies to implement the Social Development Strategy, the City of Hamilton is a co-convenor of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction Initiative. This initiative, with its focus on children and youth, will be a significant catalyst on both a practical and systemic level to identify and implement poverty reduction/prevention strategies for the priority target group.

Although significant, the focus on inclusion using a poverty filter concentrating on children and youth, will not address inclusiveness on a broader level, particularly from a municipal perspective. A Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton would broaden the concept for a wider citizenry.

**Corporate Alignment, Sustainable Development and Triple Bottom Line:**

The City of Hamilton's Mission, Vision and Values and Vision 2020 set out strategic directions for the future of the City of Hamilton. These two documents are important planning tools that emphasize the principles of sustainable development and the "interconnectivity" between three important sectors in our City: social/health, economic, and environmental. The Social Development Strategy focuses specifically on the "social/health" component of sustainable development principles.

To evaluate the GRIDS strategy and to further emphasize the interconnectivity of sustainable development measures, City of Hamilton approved the use of a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach for the GRIDS process. TBL is a decision making methodology used to ensure that social, economic and environmental impacts are taken into consideration. Other municipalities like Calgary in particular have made significant strides in the corporate use of a TBL approach. A Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton would be consistent with current corporate policies and form a significant framework for the "social" component of sustainability and a Triple Bottom Line approach.

Corporate Management Team has provided feedback and support for the development of a Social Inclusion Policy. All relevant departments have either already identified staff resources to sit on a cross-departmental work team or are in the process of committing staff resources for the project.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The development of Social Inclusion policies actually has a long history in Europe where conceptually these types of policies have been around for over thirty years. There has been increased interest in the development of such policies in countries like Canada where investment in "strong" local infrastructure is gaining momentum. A strong infrastructure refers to the integration of physical and social planning and development with acknowledgement that municipalities must invest adequately in both. The concept of social

inclusion on the international scene recognizes that, ***“investments in human and civic assets are core foundations to economic prosperity and social well-being”***<sup>3</sup>

A social inclusion policy, ***“is not just about the periphery versus the centre; it is about participating as a valued member of society. Inclusion makes the link between the well being of children, our common humanity, and the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions that must exist in a just and compassionate society”***<sup>4</sup>

Developing a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton will strengthen both the current Social Vision for the City of Hamilton and corporate strategies, and demonstrate the City’s commitment to inclusiveness.

### **Social Inclusion Policies in Other Municipalities:**

Although the format and scope varies, a number of other municipalities in Ontario and beyond have a social inclusion policy. Specifically, the Cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver all have such policies. In fact, three of these municipalities are part of the Inclusive Cities Canada Civic Initiative. This initiative represents a collaborative venture between five municipal partners (Saint John, Toronto, Burlington, Edmonton, and Vancouver/North Vancouver), local social planning councils, and the Social Infrastructure Sub-Committee of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen the capacity of cities to create and sustain inclusive cities for the mutual benefit of all people. The City of Calgary, however, has undertaken some innovative work with respect to both the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) methodology and social inclusion.

### **Fair Calgary: A Commitment to Well-Being & Social Inclusion:**

The City of Calgary is recognized across Canada for being a leader in using a Triple Bottom Line policy framework. The TBL approach was adopted by the City of Calgary in 2004 to integrate and balance the social, economic, and environmental impacts of decisions by the City. To provide more focus to the social aspect of the City’s sustainable development principles, City Council directed staff to develop the report: **Fair Calgary: A Commitment to Well-Being.**

The City’s TBL reporting guidelines identify the key themes of the social component of Fair Calgary as:

1. Promoting Social Inclusion
2. Promoting and Maintaining a Safe Community

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<sup>3</sup> Clutterback, Peter & Novick, Marvyn, Building Inclusive Communities: Cross-Canada perspectives and strategies, Federation of Canadian Municipalities & Laidlaw Foundation, April 2003, p. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.4.

3. Promoting and Maintaining a High Quality of Life
4. Promoting Active Living
5. Promoting Community Stability
6. Supporting the Disadvantaged
7. Supporting Diversity
8. Fostering Accountability & Responsiveness through Participation and Partnership

The Fair Calgary policy seeks to remove barriers and create the conditions that would foster the social well-being of all Calgarians. They use the term “fairness” to refer to an individual’s ability to participate adequately in society in education, employment, public services, social and recreational activities. Recognizing the need to focus on both the strategy and the process required, the intent of the policy is to acknowledge the impact that social barriers like poverty, language, ability, racism and classism have on the ability of a person to participate fully in life within a community. The key principle of the fairness used in their model is attributed to John Rawls<sup>5</sup> wherein everyone begins with the same entitlement to participation. Any inequalities that exist must satisfy two very specific conditions: (1) the opportunity for participation must be equally available to all; and, (2) the greatest advantage goes to the most disadvantaged.

Seven filters are used as a tool for assessment, planning and policy development. These seven filters are:

1. **Accessibility:** considers location factors to optimize public access considering the resources available, travel time, distance, cost and effort of use.
2. **Availability:** considers factors such as scheduling and ease of use for citizens who value and/or need these services.
3. **Affordability:** considers people’s ability to pay user fees and related charges as well as their perception of worth regarding the facilities, programs or services.
4. **Acceptability:** focuses on the sensitivity to diversity of City policies, programs, services, etc.
5. **Accommodation:** deals with issues related to persons with special needs.
6. **Adequacy:** considers suitability and issues related to the amount or volume of services required to meet the particular needs of citizens as well as the conditions, which ensures safety of persons and properties.

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<sup>5</sup>Fair Calgary and the Fairness Filter – A Brief Overview, Karen Peterson, August 2005

7. **Achievement:** considers the metrics associated with the impact of the city's actions and policies including citizens' level of satisfaction and the efficient and effective use of resources.

Fair Calgary and its fairness filters form the conceptual and philosophical framework upon which the City of Calgary is currently using to develop its own Corporate Social Policy Initiative as one component of their overall social inclusion initiatives. Once approved by their City Council, Calgary's Corporate Social Policy Initiative will be used to guide all of the City's activities, decisions and services to ensure they contribute to the social well-being of all Calgarians.

**Rationale for a City of Hamilton Social Inclusion Policy:**

Council should consider proceeding with the development of a Social Inclusion Policy for a number of reasons:

1. A Social Inclusion Policy speaks directly to the challenge faced by Council (in the absence of a policy) of setting user fees that actually reflect the true cost recovery of services provided; while addressing the ability of some residents who would be affected by the user fees to pay.
2. A Social Inclusion Policy would further demonstrate a strong commitment on the part of Council that couples their support of the Poverty Roundtable's principles with concrete action on corporate policies. There also already exists, within the City of Hamilton, a number of key consultation and policy documents that would support the development of such a policy including Vision 2020 and the Social Vision report.
3. Finally, a Social Inclusion policy could support the further development of the social component of the Triple Bottom Line work piloted at the City of Hamilton. Furthermore, there is growing momentum across Canada to develop Social Inclusion policies and increasing acknowledgement that enhancing social inclusion as part of the development of "inclusive or sustainable cities" has support from multiple sectors in varying municipalities across Canada.

**Next Steps:**

If the Emergency and Community Services Committee and Council support the development of a Social Inclusion Policy, a number of activities will take place over 2007. Some of the key activities would be as follows over a year (March 2007-March 2008):

1. Creation of a staff cross-departmental team with representatives from as many City departments will be convened. The purpose of the team will be to provide input and advice and oversee the developmental work required in identifying the principles and guidelines for a Social Inclusion Policy.

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2. The project team would review all relevant corporate policies and completed community consultations to identify elements that could be used to identify filters for the Social Inclusion Policy.
3. A draft set of social inclusion statements and filters would be developed.
4. The draft statements/filters would be reviewed by the City's various advisory committees.
5. A draft report, identifying the filters that could be applied to a City of Hamilton Social Inclusion Policy, would be completed and presented to the Emergency and Community Services Committee in September 2007.
6. In order to demonstrate how a Social Inclusion Policy could be implemented at the City of Hamilton, the project team would identify three pilot projects for the consideration of the Emergency and Community Services Committee and Council (October 2007).
7. The project team would monitor any approved pilot projects and report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee as to the outcome of the pilot and suggestions for additional phases of implementation (March 2008).

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Council could decide not to proceed with a corporate Social Inclusion Policy, but rather rely on Departments to address issues of social inclusion individually.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial:**

Throughout 2007, it is anticipated that there would be no additional costs associated with the development of the principles and guidelines for a Social Inclusion Policy. If the work plan for the project proceeds as planned, however, three pilot projects will be presented for the consideration of the Emergency and Community Services Committee and Council. If Council chooses to support one of these pilot projects, there may be a financial impact in the 2008 budget.

**Staffing:**

The Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division is prepared to allocate up to 0.4 of a Senior Policy Analyst position to provide project assistance. Project team members may be required to commit up to 7 hours per month over the course of the project (March 2007-March 2008).

**Legal:**

No legal implications are anticipated at this time.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

The Human Rights Legislation and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act will need to be reviewed while the project team completes their work. As well, the project team will draw heavily on the Social Vision document, Vision 2020, Building a Strong Foundation, etc. while completing their draft social inclusion statements and filters.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

Corporate Management Team has provided feedback and support for the development of a Social Inclusion Policy. All relevant departments have either already identified staff resources to sit on a cross-departmental work team or are in the process of committing staff resources for the project.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “**Triple Bottom Line**”, (community, environment, and 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**

The sole purpose of a Social Inclusion Policy is to enhance the quality of life of citizens by creating a municipal environment that actively promote inclusion.

**Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.**

**Yes**    **No**

Depending upon the filters chosen for the Social Inclusion Policy, the City could potentially make better use of current facilities and infrastructure lessening our imprint on an ecological footprint.

**Economic Well-Being is enhanced.**

**Yes**       **No**

Studies have shown that economic development and social inclusion are linked and complement each other. Developing a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton would be an important foundation for future economic development strategies, human service, and immigration strategies.

**Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?**

**Yes**       **No**

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

In addition to strategies described in the Human Resources Strategy to create an inclusive work place, the Social Inclusion Policy would provide a basis upon which future policies, program decisions, user fees, etc. could be determined. Creating an inclusive “municipal” environment could not only attract business to the City of Hamilton, but the labour supply required to assist in achieving both the City of Hamilton’s goals, but the municipalities’ goals overall.