TO: Chair and Members
Audit and Administration Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: February 3, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Immigration Portal Promotion (CM10001) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Murray
City Manager

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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the City of Hamilton accept the $20,000 in additional funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to promote the Hamilton Immigration Portal; and

(b) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute all necessary documents between the City of Hamilton and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, with respect to the funding for Hamilton Immigration Portal promotion, in a form satisfactory to the City Manager and City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2007, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration released a third call for proposals for municipalities to apply for funding to develop a municipal immigration portal that links with federal and provincial online immigration initiatives. In March, 2008, the City of Hamilton was awarded $330,000 in funding over two years to develop a Hamilton immigration portal (ECS08015).
Staff within the Office of the City Manager are leading the initiative to the project’s completion scheduled for March 31, 2010. For the sustainability of the site, it will reside on the City’s website (www.hamilton.ca). To further support municipalities in the sustainability of their solutions, additional funds – to a maximum of $20,000 – were made available through the Municipal Immigration Information Online initiative (MIIO). A call for proposals was made in August, 2009 with a three week window to respond. Last fall, the City of Hamilton was awarded the full $20,000 requested for online marketing (search engine optimization, advertising placement, email marketing and potential web 2.0 promotion), promotional items and online design. These strategies are based upon audience research undertaken during the course of the project.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 6

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

Financial:
An additional promotional budget of $20,000 (100% funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) will be directed to the project before its completion March 31, 2010. Upon completion of the project, audited financial statements will be prepared for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Staffing:
Existing staff will manage the additional promotional funding.

Legal:
Legal Services will be consulted prior to signing the contract with the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** (Chronology of events)

The City of Hamilton’s funded immigration portal project is based on a user centred design methodology. The strength of this approach is that the majority of the work has been in engaging the end users throughout the development of the portal -- the skilled immigrants which Hamilton wishes to integrate into this community.

The first step in the process was the convening of a stakeholder focus group to discuss issues, trends and data related to new immigrants in Hamilton. The following organizations participated:

- Settlement & Integration Services Organization (SISO)
- Hamilton's Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI)
- St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre
- Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara
- Hamilton Training Advisory Board (HTAB)
- Mohawk College of Applied Arts & Technology
- City of Hamilton Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee
- McMaster University
In summary, the stakeholder focus group uncovered that the issues relating to the attraction and retention of recent immigrants are:

- Lack of understanding (from the perspective of employer, immigrant, government)
- Difficulty in accessing and understanding information (especially local labour market information)
- Multiple barriers to successful employment/settlement
- Lack of credentials recognition (by the employer)
- Need to assist current immigrants living in Hamilton with employment needs
- Lack of collaboration (government, employer, agencies)
- Lack of a 'welcoming' environment/city for the immigrant population

The key stakeholders (the representatives of organizations who attended the focus group):

- Supported the City’s funded process to do a user-centered design methodology, which places immigrants themselves as the main audience for the portal;
- Will assist and be engaged in the project through providing access to immigrants and use of their facilities for further research and testing of the target audiences.

An immigration strategy for the City of Hamilton does not exist at this time. This is being led and developed by the Hamilton Local Immigration Council.

To meet contractual deadlines for the Ministry (completion by March 31, 2010), the portal team has done its early work understanding potential ways to segment the audience in order to decide how to frame and scope the work for the portal. Until such time as this strategy exists, the portal team concluded that a focus on the existing skilled immigrant population in Hamilton is most prudent. Further, by focusing on retention and improving satisfaction of our current immigrants already living in Hamilton, we will address current gaps for those immigrants, improving their quality of life and potentially attracting future immigrants. As well,

- Local labour market information is currently limited. It is not clear where shortages in labour market exist (Hamilton Training and Advisory Board, City of Hamilton and the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative are undertaking a project to properly assess Hamilton’s potential future shortages and opportunities).
- Hamilton already has a well established settlement services, and the portal project will not duplicate existing work.

Focusing on skilled immigrants already living in Hamilton has the following benefits:

- It will improve the quality of life for immigrants living here which is mutually beneficial for the city and its need to retain immigrants.
- If we are able to understand the needs of our current skilled immigrants, we can find ways to improve their satisfaction. Satisfied immigrants will encourage other skilled friends and family to choose Hamilton as a destination.
With a focus on immigrants currently living in Hamilton, the portal team has completed the following activities:

- Secondary data analysis (profiles of local immigrants completed based on Statistics Canada and other data sources)
- Interim site developed ([www.hamilton.ca/immigration](http://www.hamilton.ca/immigration)) as a means to measure and test current traffic/interest from the page
- Heuristic (Expert) site reviews (8 immigration sites investigated)
- Survey of skilled immigrants (100 immigrants interviewed in one hour, in-depth sessions)
- Persona interviews (15 immigrants were interviewed to develop behavioural/attitudinal profiles)
- Profiles/Personas developed (3 personas were developed based on the research gathered to understand specific knowledge, awareness, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and key tasks undertaken by immigrants in different stages of integration)
- Site usability testing results (8 immigration related sites and tasks were live tested and recorded with 15 immigrants (based on the three personas) to assess success of using the sites and performing the tasks)
- Meta-Analysis of findings (data was compiled to determine where best technology could be used to support the unmet needs of immigrants)
- Prototype built and tested – prototypes were developed based on the research and were tested with 10 immigrants across 2 personas to assess success in the achieving the tasks embedded in the prototypes

**Outstanding (Under Development)**

- Revise prototypes and design
- Development and testing of the built out prototypes
- Promotion plan developed and implemented
- Evaluation plan/results and final report to the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration

As part of the promotion plan currently under development is an online marketing strategy that will showcase our immigration portal to local and international audiences. This will include using online advertising, search engine optimization and targeted promotional materials.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy implications.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The development of the immigration portal is centred around the skilled immigrants already living in the community. Hamilton immigrants have been engaged in a variety of ways to aid in the development of the portal including insights as to how best approach the promotion plan and how to reach.
ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

People need to find value on the site and be able to complete the task they came to do quickly and easily. But they also need to know that the information and tasks on the site exists and how to find it. To properly promote our web presence we believe that we need to make it findable. We can do this with some promotion, a linking strategy and largely by using online marketing tools and techniques.

In general we intend to take an integrated marketing approach - by this we mean that we will provide a consistent look and feel and we will use consistent messaging across all vehicles and materials.

The following is a breakdown of the promotional strategy that will be used with this new funding:

i) Promotional Materials
   Depending upon the audience and final product – we envision relevant promotional giveaways which would include a branded look and feel as well as the website address prominently displayed.

ii) Graphic Design for Online Marketing
   We anticipate the majority of our promotional efforts will be most effective in the online realm and so based on our research, we will develop a strategy to place ads in some form on web sites that our audience research shows they use.

iii) Online Marketing
   Using the user research derived from the analysis of our portal web metrics, we will be developing an ongoing Internet marketing strategy to continually engage new users and new markets in order to achieve our goals. Online marketing refers to the placement of media along different stages of the customer engagement cycle through search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), banner ads on specific websites, e-mail marketing and Web 2.0 marketing strategies.

There are several advantages to using these promotional techniques, including:

- Higher placement of the portal as a result in relevant search engines
- Increased traffic to the web portal (e.g. direct and referred visits, # of visitors, page views, time on site, reduced bounce rate, etc.)
- Increased user goal conversion (e.g. contact made, resources accessed, etc.)
- More qualified leads through advanced user profiles and audience segmentation, leading to greater emphasis on targeting the right users in the right contexts
- Geo-targeting by location, including city, province and country segmentation and differentiation
- Increased attraction and engagement to the city of Hamilton’s brand and image within desired immigrant communities
Budget:
The City of Hamilton provided a budget to the province outlining expected expenditures. A total of $20,000 was requested over three months to promote the Hamilton immigration portal. These are costs associated with the development and production of promotional materials and online design and promotion through email, websites, search engines and web 2.0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Activity</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Material Production and Distribution</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Advertising</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,000</strong></td>
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Based on the plan and documentation provided, the City of Hamilton was successful in achieving the full amount of funding requested.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

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

Although not recommended, the City of Hamilton could choose to reject the funding for additional promotion. The immigration portal project is nearing completion and will require online marketing as part of the sustainability plan.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN** (Linkage to Desired End Results)


**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**

- A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus

**Financial Sustainability**

- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

**Intergovernmental Relationships**

- Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies
Growing Our Economy
♦ A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
♦ An improved customer service

Social Development
♦ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Healthy Community
♦ An engaged Citizenry

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES
N/A