Information:

Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council – Background:

The Community Services Department and key community partners\(^1\) submitted a proposal in May 2008 to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for funding the development of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) and a local immigration strategy. In capitalizing on the momentum created through the preparation and submission of the funding proposal, the HIPC was formed and met for the first time in January 2009\(^2\), and has met on a bi-monthly basis since that time. On April 15, 2009, the Community Services Department received Council’s support for this initiative and authorization to enter into an agreement with CIC (Report CS09030). While CIC

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\(^1\) Centre de Santé Communautaire, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Immigration Strategy Advisory Committee, Jobs Prosperity Collaborative, Settlement and Immigration Services Organization, St. Joseph Immigrant Women’s Centre.

\(^2\) The HIPC is comprised of the following 15 members: Manuel Bastos, Business Manager, Labourers Union Local 837; Judith Bishop, Trustee, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board; Ali Cheaib (Co-chair), Faculty, Mohawk College of Applied Arts & Technology; Jim Commerford, President & CEO, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford; Mike des Jardins, Program Manager, Youth Engagement & Action in Hamilton; Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board; Gisèle Dupuis, Chef Régional, Collège Boréal; Howard Elliott, Managing Editor, The Hamilton Spectator; Morteza Jafarpour, Executive Director, Settlement and Integration Services Organization; Yasmeen Khattab, McMaster University student; Richard Koroscil (Co-chair), President & CEO, Hamilton International Airport; Frank Passaro, Branch Manager, Scotiabank; Dr. Gary Warner, McMaster University (retired); Madina Wasuge, Executive Director, Hamilton’s Centre for Civic Inclusion; Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager, Community Services Department, City of Hamilton.
funding was approved for $360,715, it was put on hold for a number of months while the Federal government reviewed its budget. It was reinstated in July 2009. The original 12 month agreement was consequently amended, and the City will receive $285,000 over 8.5 months. While timelines have been compressed, the deliverables remain the same.

In July of 2009, following an open competition, the Immigration Strategy Program Manager was appointed and, subsequently, two Program Analysts have also been hired.

In addition to drawing up a made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy, the Contribution Agreement with CIC requires that a number of research tasks be undertaken for this developmental phase. These tasks include compiling an inventory of settlement services, a demographic analysis, a survey of settlement needs, and an analysis of service gaps. It also requires establishing Terms of Reference (ToR) for the HIPC, defining a vision, strategic priorities and objectives for immigrant integration in Hamilton, and identifying how the relevant agencies and communities in Hamilton can work together to fulfil them.

The HIPC has proceeded with addressing and fulfilling these tasks within a compressed timeframe. It has defined as its vision – to complement and reinforce the vision of the City of Hamilton – that:

“Hamilton is an inclusive community where the talents and experience that immigrants and refugees bring are valued because they are integral to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.”

In the pursuit of this vision, HIPC has identified four strategic priorities:

1. Collaborative leadership through strategic partnerships;

2. Involvement and communication with the broader community and local stakeholders;

3. Improving the evidence base on new immigrants and the diversity of Hamilton’s population in order to better inform local policymaking and service provision; and,

4. To identify gaps and areas for improvement in the delivery of settlement services.

The HIPC’s work plan to March 2010 is based on seven major developmental objectives in pursuit of these Strategic priorities:

1. Organizational Development of HIPC: Building the organization - e.g., membership, structure, terms of reference, format of meetings, staffing, etc.
2. Partnership Development: Building ownership - e.g., consultation with key stakeholder groups and organizations in the City (i.e., develop and identify how the HIPC adds value to existing services.).

3. Community Development: Community engagement and development - e.g., a structured process of involving, consulting with and engaging key groups and organizations in the development of the Immigration Strategy.

4. Awareness and Public Education Development: Building awareness and understanding - e.g., developing a communications and public education strategy.

5. Institutional Development: Anchoring the strategy - e.g., translating the vision and aspirations of the HIPC into key local institutional systems and practices.

6. Immigration Strategy Development - e.g., based on the requirements of the Contribution Agreement with CIC (July 2009) and the original Hamilton Proposal Submission (May 2008), a number of research and data collection tasks are being undertaken.

7. Financial Development: Sustainability - e.g., accountability and reporting systems, etc.

The City of Hamilton:

While the City of Hamilton, as a municipal level of government, has no formal policy or management powers regarding immigration, it is at the city level where the settlement and integration process takes place. While the City does not fund or provide primary settlement services, as defined by the other levels of government, the City of Hamilton does:

1. address specific immigrant needs within the context of the development and provision of broad-based municipal services;

2. work with community agencies to ensure that newcomers have equitable access to the services required to promote successful settlement and integration;

3. provide grants and other supports to community agencies working with immigrants;

4. help build community networks and collaboratives;

5. build a receptive climate for immigrants with measures that include anti-discrimination, anti-racism, access and equity; and,
6. develops strategies on its own and with other partners to facilitate the full participation of all residents, including immigrants, in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Hamilton.

As the HIPC completes Phase One of its work over the next few months, it is appropriate that the municipal government begin to consider how immigration does in fact have a considerable impact upon its own responsibilities. The HIPC is looking to the municipal government as being uniquely positioned to serve as a model in recognizing the importance of immigration to Hamilton. Through its own responsibilities as a major employer, as a provider of services, and as a significant influencer of public opinion, the municipal government has a distinct leadership and managerial role to play in making Hamilton a more welcoming community.

Implicit in supporting and strengthening the work of the HIPC is the recognition that the municipal government itself is a key partner in helping to remove barriers to, and provide support for, the full economic and social integration of immigrants.

It is expected that the HIPC will wish to present its draft Immigration Strategy to the Emergency and Community Services Committee in March 2010 for its consideration and endorsement.