Council Direction:

At the September 24, 2008 meeting of City Council, it was requested that staff prepare a report exploring opportunities to create an innovative work environment, including variable work hours, and leveraging information technology to enhance seamless citizen access to City services. This report includes a review of other organizations’ innovative workforce practices, best practice research on this topic, as well as an update on the City’s flexible work arrangements, telecommuting position, and specific initiatives to advance web-enabled services at the City.

Information:

1. Work-Life Conflict Research

At the request of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Dr. Linda Duxbury and Dr. Chris Higgins\(^1\) conducted a study to determine what factors contribute to work-life conflict. According to this research, work-life conflict is defined as role overload, work to family

interference, family to work interference, and caregiver strain. Caregiver strain refers to physical, financial, and emotional strain faced by employees who provide eldercare at home. Higher levels of physical strain are associated with poorer mental health, increased work-life conflict, and increased absenteeism due to eldercare problems. The data from this study revealed that most employees have substantive responsibilities at home (for child care, elder care, or both) that have to be managed while fulfilling duties of employment. According to Duxbury and Higgins (2008), 27.8% of employed Canadians have responsibilities for the care of elderly dependents which will grow as the baby boomer population ages. Almost one in five (16.8%) employed Canadians have responsibility for both childcare and eldercare.

Organizational work culture is one of the most important predictors of role overload. It makes a significant difference as to whether employees perceive work-life conflict depending on whether their employer promotes a culture that supports balance. For example, the belief that if one did not work long hours it would limit his or her advancement. The perception of it being unacceptable to say no to more work, and the perception that family responsibilities limit advancement has a negative impact on employees’ well-being and stress levels. Employees who work in an organization with a culture of hours and a culture of work or family, report higher role overload, work to family interference and family to work interference.

The employee’s manager is a key predictor of how much flexibility an employee perceives they have in regards to work hours and schedules. However, these programs or options do not diminish the fact that most people simply have more work to do than can be accomplished by one person in a standard work week. Research indicates that benefits obtained through flexible work arrangements will have little impact when work demands are unrealistic, management is non-supportive and cultures reward and recognize hours at work and ‘presenteeism’ rather than results.

There are many ways employees attempt to cope with workload issues. These include deciding to reduce their family size or not have children, work harder, cut back on their sleep, take prescription medicine or consume alcohol, reduce work quality, and cut back on outside of work activities. None of these behaviours benefit employees, nor their families, employers or Canadian society in general.

To help employees cope with role overload, organizations can increase the amount of flexibility and control that employees perceive they have over their work hours. In particular, two forms of flexibility appear to be fundamental to the ability to cope with work demands: the ability to arrange one’s work schedule to meet personal or family commitments and the ability to interrupt one’s workday to deal with a personal or family matter and then return to work. The following family-friendly benefits appear to help employees cope with family conflict with work: a childcare referral program, on-site day care, the opportunity to work part-time/reduced work week, the ability to take a personal day off work with pay, an employee assistance program, the ability to take a family/emergency day off work, and short-term personal leave.
According to Duxbury & Higgins, the workloads of managers and knowledge workers increased dramatically from 1991 to 2001. In particular, managers spend a significant amount of time per month performing unpaid overtime at home in the evening and on the weekend. In fact, respondents at all job levels show an increase in the number of weekly work hours. Duxbury’s survey shows that in 1991, one in ten respondents worked over 50 hours per week; whereas in 2001 one in four respondents did. In 2001 respondents surveyed said that the average number of hours worked was 42.2 hours per work week. For managers and professionals, in 2001, the average hours varied from 42.6 hours (for women) to 45.8 hours (for men).

2. Flexible Work Arrangements

Workplace flexibility is about defining work differently—with new parameters for when, where and how work gets done. It’s about measuring results, not hours or “face time”; and recognizing diversity - in people (age, gender and ethnicity), lifestyles, work styles and priorities. Workplace flexibility is a tool for both employees and employers, with different motivations and rewards for each. It is a partnership between the employee and the employer that creates results for both. Employees in all sectors are striving to achieve better work-life balance, and employers have responded accordingly. In a 2008 study by Hewitt Associates surveying 90 North American organizations, of which 11 (12.2%) were Canadian employers, a variety of flexible work arrangements are offered as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Prevalence of Flexible Work Arrangements


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While most employers in the Hewitt study offer flexibility, most of the arrangements are ad hoc and not widespread nor consistently practiced throughout the organization. One-third of employers in the Hewitt study indicated that flexible work arrangements are offered only at manager discretion and created as a special accommodation for the employee. It is critical that employees feel comfortable requesting approval to take advantage of a flexible work arrangement; and that it will not hurt their career growth and promotion opportunities. At the same time, flexible work arrangements should not negatively impact the operational requirements of a business unit. Flexible work arrangements need to be widely embraced by the culture and supported by the organization’s management team.

Flexible Work Arrangements at the City of Hamilton

The City of Hamilton has had flexible work arrangements for employees since 1996. Over the course of the last six months, Human Resources has examined innovative work practices in other organizations, reviewed published research on flexible work arrangements, and subsequently updated the corporate Flexible Work Arrangements policy to: reflect the needs of employees for work-life balance, to meet the corporation’s desire to attract and retain high performing employees, and to ensure the City can meet its business objectives and service demands.

The City’s Flexible Work Arrangements policy provides a variety of options for employees to reconcile work demands with family issues, education and community work. Due to service delivery needs and the type of work involved, flexible work arrangements cannot be implemented for all positions within the City. Further, some departments or divisions have greater flexibility than others to approve certain flexible work arrangements due to the nature of the work. Hence, there is variation across the City and within departments regarding the use of flexible work arrangements.

Currently, the most frequently utilized flexible work arrangement accessed by employees is **compressed hours of work**. In this arrangement, employees work longer hours in exchange for a reduction in the number of working days within a specified work cycle (i.e. on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis). Depending on the needs of the employee and the operation, employees may compress their work to take a day off per week, every 2 weeks, or every 4 weeks. There are approximately 530 employees across the organization who compress their hours of work. Other employees flex their work day by staggering the hours they start and finish work e.g. 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, etc. There are currently 9 job share arrangements and 8 reduced hours of work arrangements across the City.

3. **Four Day Work Week**

Council has had discussion regarding the feasibility of the City moving to a 4-day work week as an opportunity to reduce energy costs. The benefits of a 4-day work week have been purported by other jurisdictions to result in lower spending on: staff over-time, fuel and utility costs, janitorial services, and lost time as employees can be encouraged
to book personal appointments on their day off. According to Donna Lero, Chair in Families and Work at the University of Guelph, there is currently an estimated three to ten percent of Canadians who are now on a 4-10 schedule 4.

State of Utah Four Day Work Week Initiative

The State of Utah implemented a one-year pilot project, starting August 2008, to assess the impact of moving to a 4-day work week. The purpose of the initiative was to make a positive impact in the areas of energy consumption, extended customer service, employee recruitment and retention, and to reduce the environmental impact of government operations. The State has approximately 24,000 employees and most are impacted by the four-day work week. Some "essential public services" are exempted from the four-day work week. Criteria for determining if a service is "essential" and therefore exempted include: public health and safety, time sensitivity, customer demand, and need to be open for legislative session or other state functions. Exempted services include: services provided by the department of health, state hospitals, corrections facilities, state mail, state liquor warehouses, highway patrol, state park facilities and golf courses.

The 4-day work week pilot extended state government services (not already available during extended hours and weekends) from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The State buildings participating in the pilot then moved to a Friday-off schedule. It is important to emphasize that web enabled self-services for constituents were in place prior to rolling out this pilot. This allowed constituents to still receive service during the Friday shut-down.

The experiences and lessons learned from Utah were published in February 2009 based on the first six months of data. Early indicators from the pilot showed:

- reduced absenteeism rates;
- cost savings on building operational costs;
- productivity was maintained while improving availability of State services beyond traditional business hours;
- reduced energy usage related to carbon dioxide emissions;
- 70% of the employees who responded to a survey stated they preferred the new 4/10 schedule;
- employee turnover remained the same;
- decreased use of leave time and a decrease in amount of overtime paid;
- 12% of employees experienced a negative impact on childcare (Department of Health extended hours of their onsite day care to meet the 4/10 schedule).

In November 2009, a telephone interview was held with Michael Hansen, Director of Management, Utah Governor's Office of Planning & Budget, which revealed the following:

- **The State of Utah is a leader in web-enabled services and automation.** Prior to rolling out the pilot 4-day work week, the State had all of its departments and 900 services web-enabled. This allows customers to self-serve during the Friday shutdown. According to Mike Hansen, this is a critical must for any government considering rolling out a 4-day work week.

- **The projected energy cost savings were not achieved.** Mike Hansen recommends projecting energy savings not in dollars but in energy consumption units. The State projected dollars saved based on their assumed future gas prices; and their assumptions behind the projections were inaccurate. Utility costs went up and the projected energy cost savings were not achieved over the course of the entire year. At the same time, their government cut budgets based on inaccurate projected cost savings.

- **Child care issue proved to be insurmountable.** Managers were instructed to be flexible with their employees who had childcare and eldercare responsibilities. However, Utah’s experience was that the new standard of 10 hour days resulted in “driving a number of these employees out of their jobs”; in actuality, managers did not adopt the flexibility to accommodate these employees, and a number of them left their positions.

- **Change in State Governor leadership resulted in shifting priorities.** Since the pilot began, a new State Governor was elected who has more of a focus on providing superior customer service rather than energy cost savings. As energy cost savings was why the pilot was initiated, there is a potential disconnect in the overall strategic mandate behind continuing with a 4-day work week. The majority of customer complaints which came in during the pilot, were for services requiring a customer service counter. The most common complaint scenario was that customers would show up on a Friday and expect a customer service counter such as a driver license renewal office to be open and then complain when they discovered it was closed. The State is in the process of spending $10,000 to conduct a telemarketing customer satisfaction survey to find out the satisfaction level of constituents with the 4-day shift. This will be part of their final report.

The State of Utah will make a final decision by the end of 2009 on whether to continue with the 4-day week, modify it, or discontinue beyond the one-year pilot. A final report will be made available to the public over the upcoming weeks.

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Other Government Experiences with a 4-Day Work Week Model

A number of government organizations have trialled and adopted a four-day work week model. In Ohio, for instance, workers in 23 state agencies benefited from flexible hours and four-day weeks for eight years; however administrators changed state policies in February 2008 to open offices again on Fridays as customer service had suffered. The City of Spanish Fork in Utah also tested moving to a 4 day (10 hours per day) work week schedule. As a result of their study and discussions within the City, Spanish Fork changed its schedule to allow greater flexibility for a portion of its employees to voluntarily work the 4/10 schedule and others to work on Fridays (where the office is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

The City of Windsor reviewed the concept of moving to a four-day work week (four 10 hour days Monday through Thursday) for their Planning Department and the Policy and Design staff who work out of the same office. Their analysis was put together in consultation with the City Planner, the Building Manager of City Hall, and Accounting staff. The recommendations from Windsor’s report were to expand consideration of a conceptual four day work week to include additional Departments across the organization classified as either “customer based” or “support activity” by location.

The City of Windsor’s analysis determined that the financial benefit to the Corporation measured at under $10,000 total per annum. This savings applied to 15 employees who occupy less than 20% of the 4th floor of their City Hall. Since this report was published in September 2008, further action has not occurred and no test pilot has taken place. It has been parked for future consideration due to other priorities including establishing a new administration and potential re-organization.

Potential for City of Hamilton to Implement a Four Day Work Week

If the City of Hamilton wanted to pilot a 4-day work model, the following would need to be considered:

- citizen access to web-enabled services should be put in place first for those services currently accessed by phone or over a counter.
- staff ability to access earlier and later child care services. The alternative of opening an on-site day-care could be assessed.
- the feasibility of extended hours within the context of existing collective agreements (discussed further below)
- potential for increased health & safety risk with potential increase of errors or injuries resulting from extended business hours.
- public desire and acceptance of a 4-day work week

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Labour Relations Considerations with respect to a Four Day Work Week

Utah is one of twenty-two ‘right-to-work’ states. The significance of this, from any labour relations comparative analysis, is that right-to-work states typically have much lower union density than their non-right-to-work counterparts. Utah has a union density of 5.8%, ninth lowest rate of unionization in the United States. In contrast, the rate of unionization in Ontario is 28% and Canada is 32%.

Further, in ‘right-to-work’ states, weak unions and restrictive collective bargaining laws and processes, favour the ability of state management to achieve desirable outcomes with little resistance from their union counterparts.

The primary focus of consideration with respect to moving to a 4-day week at the City of Hamilton rests within the confines of the collective agreements. In order to achieve implementation, the City would need to secure agreement with its respective unions. Appendix A provides a summary of the clauses that the City will require agreement to change for the relevant bargaining units.

The terms and conditions of the existing collective agreements and the provisions of the Employment Standards Act render the imposition of extended work days more difficult to achieve than what was the case in Utah with its low union density, weaker union orientation, and significantly less restrictive collective bargaining and national and state labour laws.

Should Council wish to pursue a 4 day-work week for City of Hamilton employees who do not work in a 24/7 operation, Labour Relations would need to sit down with each of the unions under consideration for a 4-day work week, and negotiate all necessary changes to the collective agreement. If successful, the parties would need to enter into a tentative agreement. CUPE 5167 would require a ratification vote of its members. It is likely that the other unions would also require a ratification vote on the matter.

Another approach would be to leave all of the existing language in the collective agreements and negotiate what is know as “Innovative Scheduling” language. This is common in hospital collective agreements; however, the introduction of extended hours of work requires a vote by the majority of those employees affected.

Health and Safety Considerations of a Four-Day Work Week

There may be health and safety consequences related to some employee groups working an extended day. For example, the physical demands of waste collection could give rise to an increase in work-related injuries commensurate with the longer work day. Other physically demanding jobs where the use of dangerous equipment is involved may also increase the risk of injuries. Having said that, employees working longer hours through overtime, would experience the same longer work day, even longer in some cases. The only difference here that could be reasonably argued is that overtime is voluntary and employees who do not have the physical capacity to work longer hours, do not.
Potential for Increased Overtime, Standby and Call-Out Costs

Given the seasonal nature of many of the City’s services and citizen expectations for timely response, it is anticipated that urgent situations will occur that will necessitate employees coming in to work on Fridays which will lead to increased overtime, standby and call-out costs.

Potential for Lost Productivity

Consideration should be given to the loss of working hours that would likely be experienced with the non-union group of employees. For instance, many non-union employees, currently work in excess of 9 hours per day 5 days per week. A likely outcome would be that these employees would continue to work 9-10 hours from Monday to Thursday and take the Friday off, resulting in a net loss of hours worked per week.

It should also be noted that there are 12 statutory holidays throughout the year. In consideration of a 4-day week, on those work weeks that contain a statutory holiday, the work week would be shortened to 3 days. In terms of that week’s productivity, only a period of 26.25 hours would be worked in comparison to the current 28 hours of a 35 hour work week – a loss of productivity of 1.75 hours per employee (6% loss).

A similar situation would occur when an employee is ill. Currently, an employee who misses a day of work due to illness loses 7 hours of productivity. In a 4 day work week, the productivity loss would be 8.75 to 10 hours per day of illness depending on the standard hours of work per week.

Other Considerations

Most organizations, institutions, businesses and agencies that the City of Hamilton does business with work a 5 day work week. Moving to a 4 day work week would have a significant impact on the City’s ability to sustain the same level of connections, networks and meetings with City partners.

Shutting City offices down on Friday could also have a significant economic impact on the downtown core merchants who benefit from City employees who buy lunch and purchase merchandise on Fridays.

Moving to a 4 day work week would also likely result in fewer staff taking voluntary unpaid days.
Which City Services Could be Delivered in a Four Day Work Week

Human Resources surveyed all departments to determine what services could be delivered in a 4 day work week and asked what the anticipated cost savings of moving to a 4 day work week would be, and whether there were any anticipated additional costs. The survey also asked what services needed to be maintained at 5 days per week. The results of the survey are summarized as follows:

- Services that cannot move to a 4 day work week include the following:
  - Community Services – Ontario Works, Homes for the Aged, Recreation Facilities & Operations, Recreation Administration, Red Hill Family Centre, Culture Events, Hamilton Farmers Market, Museums
  - Corporate Services - Information Services, Clerks POA, Legal Services – OMB Hearings, Appeals, Civil Litigation, POA prosecutions, Treasury Services, Financial Services, Accounts Payable, Non-Tax Revenue Collection, Purchasing, Payroll/Pensions
  - Hamilton Emergency Services – 24/7 operation
  - Public Health Services – Infectious Disease Investigations, Sexual Health Programs, Surveillance Unit, Vaccine Preventable Programs, Environmental Health Inspection, Marketing & Communications, Mental Health Programs, BScN student coordination, Library Services, Emergency Preparedness, Health Connections Phone Line, Breastfeeding Clinic, Health Living Programs
  - City Manager’s Office – areas within Human Resources that are governed by legislated timelines e.g. Labour Relations, Health and Safety, WSIB Administration, as well as those that have payroll deadlines

- For all services that could be run for longer hours over 4 days, all General Managers indicated that there would be no or minimal cost savings because hydro expenses on Fridays would be offset by longer usage from Monday to Thursday; those that are in rental facilities have limited control over heat and lighting.
- Most General Managers anticipated additional overtime, standby and call-out costs with a four day work week for urgent situations that arise on Fridays.
- Planning & Economic Development was most able to move to a 4 day work week with 75% of their services being appropriate for extended hours, Monday to Thursday. Corporate Services identified 62% of their services being conducive to a
4-Day Work Week. This is in contrast to Public Health Services that had 14% of their services, Emergency Services 16% of their services, and Community Services with 29% of their services compatible with a 4 day work week service delivery model. Public Works had 43% of their services suitable for a 4 day work week.

4. Telecommuting

Telecommuting is normally a voluntary arrangement between a manager and an employee that permits an employee to work by electronic means at a place other than the primary work-site. The most common example is where employees are allowed to work from home or another location (such as a satellite office) on a temporary basis, while working on particular projects. In many instances, employees are permitted to telecommute on a more permanent basis because of the nature of their work (e.g. computer administrators, project managers, and other knowledge workers who have a limited requirement to interact in person to fulfil the responsibilities of their job), or who do not need to be in a central office on a full time basis.

Employer Benefits

There are a number of employer benefits to having employees telecommute. In a 2008 report, the Regional & Single Tier Policy Review Group reported the following benefits to the Regional & Single Tier Human Resource Directors:9

- **Improved recruitment and retention of employees.** A telecommuting program can attract new employees and prevent the loss of valued employees to competitors.

- **Increased employee morale and job satisfaction,** which can lead to better employee performance and ultimately, increased customer satisfaction.

- **New opportunities to accommodate** existing employees, who have disabilities, and retain existing employees who develop disabilities.

- **Reduced business disruptions** due to emergencies and pandemics.

- **Increased employee productivity** as a result of less or no commuting time, allowing employees to better use the time they would have spent travelling. Fewer interruptions allow for improved concentration and work productivity. In most cases the time that employees normally spend in traffic and/or commuting to the office is returned to the employer in the form of additional work hours. The average productivity gains of employees who engage in telework are 10–40% over that which they experience in an office environment.10

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Reduced absenteeism. Weather-related work loss is reduced or eliminated. Additionally, an employee may be able to continue to work in circumstances where they must remain at home with a sick family member.

Real estate savings. The average reduction in office space requirements is roughly 130 to 170 square feet per telecommuter. Assuming a rental cost of $35.00 to $50.00 per square foot, an organization could save anywhere from $4,550 to $8,500 per full-time telecommuter annually.

Reduced need for parking space. This occurs as a result of fewer employees working on-site; and the ability to plan for it in advance.

Enhanced organizational image for innovation, which can enhance an employer brand and attract new employees.

Reductions in air pollution and traffic congestion, which can be used to foster a green, "good neighbour" image for the organization and can be used as part of its employer brand.

Employee Benefits

Reduced commuting costs. Telecommuting can translate into big savings in commuting costs considering that Canadians, on average, spend 12 per cent of their income on transportation (Statistics Canada).

Reduced stress caused by not spending time commuting each day.

Reduced personal expenditures for food, clothing, dry cleaning, parking, auto insurance, and gasoline and car maintenance.

Improved quality of life. Telecommuting is about flexibility and providing employees alternative ways to balance work and family responsibilities. It improves quality of life by allowing for more family time and personal time.

Boost employee morale, work satisfaction, and productivity. Providing employees with the ability to work from home gives employees more control over their work environment and minimizes disruptions.

Community Benefits

Reduced road congestion by employees avoiding peak commute times. Fewer cars on the roads means fewer accidents; particularly on severe weather days.

Reduction in vehicle emissions and improved air quality will have a positive impact on the health of the community.
Reduction or delay in infrastructure improvements, as a result of less road usage. This translates into lower costs or more efficient use of taxpayers’ dollars.

Makes emergency preparedness easier, helps a community continue to provide essential services during an emergency or pandemic.

Common Telecommuting Issues

The most frequently cited telecommuting issues relate to coordination of work and communication with telecommuters, a lack of control over quality of work, and problems associated with information security. For employees, there is a concern for becoming disconnected and socially isolated from the work group which could lead to fewer career prospects because of their lack of visibility in the office.¹¹

Telecommuting involves far more than an agreement, either formal or informal, that an employee can “work at home.” Telecommuting impacts the design of work systems, team dynamics and organizational culture. As a result, telecommuting programs require a shift in management practices and philosophies about work, supervision, control and autonomy. Managers need to feel comfortable with subordinates having more discretion in how they complete work assignments and projects and with delegation and decentralization of the work unit’s overall responsibility. Work relationships need to be re-examined to ensure that individual departments continue to function both efficiently and effectively as well as maintain productive working relationships with external departments and clients.¹²

Another employer issue is the initial financial investment to ensure that a telecommuting employee has the appropriate hardware, software, and telecommunications equipment to be as productive off-site as at the office. This can be a significant expense and the employer has to consider how much of the costs are to be employer-assumed and/or subsidized.

A common barrier to implementing telecommuting is lack of support from senior executives and managers. Telecommuting will fail if managers do not really support the implementation of the policy. Some managers reject telecommuting as it does not fit with their management style, particularly in organizations with a culture of control. Managers who are uncomfortable with losing physical proximity to their employees may not support telecommuting in their work environments because they are concerned about employee participation at meetings; not being able to monitor work and work hours; the possible negative impact on the supervisor and/or other employees within the work unit; and the technical support required to sustain employees at remote worksites.

To garner management support for telecommuting, employers need to involve managers in every aspect of the program. Managers should help determine which jobs and which

employees should be eligible for telecommuting. It is also important to have a clear Telecommuting Policy and Procedures so both employees and managers understand their responsibilities. Research shows that training and change management support are critical for telecommuting success. Managers have a more positive attitude about telecommuting if they understand the benefits and how to deal with potential challenges. Training managers about the benefits has been found to be positively related to the organizational adoption of telecommuting.\(^{13}\)

Other municipalities that have embarked on telecommuting programs include the City of Vancouver, the Town of Oakville, the City of Burlington (used primarily by IT employees), and Town of Richmond Hill. Richmond Hill completed a one-year pilot on telecommuting with a small number of participants. This program was started by the Town's Clean Air Initiatives Team, a group formed to help the Town reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. One of Richmond Hill’s recommendations for piloting a telecommuting program is to create a committee to help champion the program.\(^{14}\)

**Telecommuting at the City of Hamilton**

While telecommuting occurs on an ad-hoc basis in some areas of the City, it does not occur as a consistent program or on a regular basis. Human Resources prepared a draft Telecommuting Policy and Procedures document with input and review from Information Services, Legal Services and the corporate Policy Review Group. Recently a Telecommuting Advisory Group was established to determine the City’s readiness for a Telecommuting Program and to oversee a potential Telecommuting Pilot with a group of non-unionized employees.

Phase I activities of this Telecommuting Advisory Group include:

- Documenting where telecommuting currently occurs;
- Assessing the City’s organizational readiness to implement telecommuting across the organization;
- Determining positions conducive to telecommuting;
- Identifying business units who are positioned well to participate in a telecommuting pilot program.

Pending the outcome of Phase I, the Telecommuting Advisory Group will:

- Determine the operational requirements for the pilot – e.g technology support – hardware, software, helpdesk support; management and employee training; budget necessary for technology support
- Oversee the implementation of the pilot(s)
- Document and problem solve any issues that arise e.g. Information Services capacity to provide application support for at-home workers;


Refine the draft Telecommuting Policy & Procedures based on the Pilot(s) findings;
Make recommendations to Senior Management for a telecommuting program that would realize efficiencies for the City.

Leveraging the Internet to Improve Citizen Access to Municipal Government

At an increasing rate, citizens are expecting government online service to be as good or better as what they have come to expect in the private sector. The most recent national Citizens First survey\textsuperscript{15} showed that the Internet channel has grown in use beyond all of the other service delivery channels. The trend towards greater provision of government services on the Internet will continue to increase as savvy Internet generations age and request more services online. With this stage set, a focus on government service delivery online is increasingly critical for the City of Hamilton.

Governments are recognizing that while citizens want 24/7 self-service, they are also seeing the potential of online service delivery to reduce service delivery costs. In a recent Forrester Research Report there is a simple model of the cost savings from web usability improvements for service inquiries. The model shows that shifting even a small number of calls and emails to the web can lead to significant return on investment. A small change to a big number is still a big number. For example, through reducing a 1% to 2% change in call volumes can translate into a large number of actual calls and thus large cost savings.

Even when the volume of calls or emails shifted to the web site is low, the difference in cost between the web and contact centre can still lead to significant savings. Research shows that average call centre costs are $5.50 per call, with costs going as high as $50 per contact – counter service is even more expensive. In contrast, a conservative estimate of the average cost per web self-service transaction is $0.10. Deflecting even a small number of calls can produce significant savings annually. This will aid in managing organizational costs to deliver service\textsuperscript{16}.

In general, the use of technology will have a significant impact on the nature of work and composition of the workforce. New roles and functions that develop through changing or eliminating manual processes and reducing or eliminating duplication will supplant previous roles. New roles will also be required to aid the organization in achieving productivity improvements through understanding how to create lower cost citizen services as well as how to use technology to find internal efficiencies. While old roles may disappear, the organization will need to be committed to retooling and reskilling the existing workforce in order to meet these changing skills requirements.

Although services will continue to be delivered through traditional channels, improved and increased online service delivery will enable greater staff productivity, fewer staff required for traditional service delivery (telephone and face-to-face), and opportunities to create new roles that advance the strategic objectives of the organization. Online

\textsuperscript{15} Institute for Citizen Centred Service: Citizens First Five, 2008
\textsuperscript{16} Forrester Research: Need to Cut Costs? Improve the Web Site Experience, December, 2008
service delivery also frees the organization from the physical constraints of serving citizens, visitors, and businesses within defined locations and hours. A virtual service world can allow the organization to have the flexibility to have staff work from multiple locations including teleworking from home.

What is the City of Hamilton Doing to Enhance Web-Enabled Services?

In 2010, staff are focused on enhancing the online service delivery channel through the following initiatives:

- Hamilton Immigration Portal
  The provincially funded immigration portal is investigating how to use technology to meet the needs of skilled immigrants in Hamilton. Through research and using a citizen-centred design methodology the project is focused on skilled immigrants who are beyond requiring basic settlement services and are integrating into Hamilton. The completion of the project is scheduled for March 31, 2010. Through a citizen-centred design process, the City is creating an electronic solution that will meet the audience’s needs. The solution will address new media, improving existing online services and building new ones.

- Search Engine Optimization –
  Based on the learnings from the website’s analytics, optimizing internal and external search engines are a critical requirement for the site. Since a substantial (and growing) number of visitors to the site use external search engines, improving how search engines find City content will be the single biggest improvement to provide our citizens with a quick and efficient way of finding the site’s rich content (4-5,000 pages of content and 20,000 documents).

- Priority Web Projects Aligned with City’s Strategic Plan
  Aligned to the priorities of the strategic plan and through high usage as reflected in the site's metrics and citizen emails, the City is looking for opportunities to improve key City services (as confirmed through ongoing testing with citizens). For example, improving the process to apply for jobs online is a priority identified in the strategic plan (aligned to Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization and Social Development) and improves a highly used, large enterprise system in the organization. Research will identify other opportunities to make tangible improvements while addressing the needs of citizens. Ultimately, online service delivery will aid in the City to find ways to alleviate costs.

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Chris Murray,  
City Manager
Collective Agreements Language Regarding Days of Work

CUPE 5167 City

Article 5.1

The standard daily hours for each classification shall be as specified in Schedule “A”.

Schedule “A” provides a list of all classifications, wage rates, and daily hours of work. It is possible to change the start and stop times without agreement, however, it is not possible to change the total number of hours worked in a day without agreement to do so.

Article 5.1 (a) Meal Breaks (Lunch Period)

The collective agreement provides for a one (1) hour unpaid meal break within their 7 or 8 hours work day. The addition of additional hours to the work schedule may require the City to provide an additional meal break of 30 minutes depending on how breaks are structured. Union consent would be required to adjust the language accordingly.

Article 5.4

The standard working days shall be five (5), Monday to Friday inclusive, with the exception that Employees assigned to shift work and trouble calls will be required to work on any regular assigned consecutive five (5) day period in any weekly period of seven (7) days. Employees may be excluded from this provision by mutual consent.

Union consent will be required to move to a 4-day week.

Article 6.1 Overtime

Both full-time and part-time employees who work beyond their standard hours of work, receive pay at overtime rates.

6.7 Meal Allowance

Those who work a minimum of two (2) hours beyond their standard work day as described in Schedule “A” are entitled to a $7.00 meal allowance.

9.1 Statutory Holidays

Those who work on a statutory holiday are remunerated at 2X overtime or time off in lieu. A longer day will increase the cost of holiday pay where employees are paid rather than taking time off in lieu.

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1 Collective Agreement Between the City of Hamilton and the Canadian Union of Public Employees And It’s Local 5167, January 1, 2007 to December 2010. Retrieved on November 9, 2009: http://www.myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/34F72BC9-4C1B-40B7-AA97-1E8EB037CFDA/0/Jan12007Dec312010CUPE5167FormerInsideOutside.pdf
CUPE 1041

Article 5.1

The standard hours of work for the various classifications shall be as set out in Schedule “A” attached hereto.

Schedule “A” provides a list of all classifications, wage rates, and hours of work. Supervisors have no set daily maximum of hours that would allow working a longer work day without overtime considerations, the following clause requires a five (5) day work day. Union consent will be required to move to a 4-day week.

Article 4.2 Standard Hours of Work

In all departments the standard working days shall be five (5), Monday to Friday inclusive, with the exception that Employees assigned to shift work, maintenance, and trouble calls will be required to work on any regularly scheduled five (5) calendar day period in any weekly period of seven (7) days and the exception noted for EMS and water/waste water treatment facility supervisors.

CUPE 5167 Lodges

ONA Lodges

OPSEU 256

IAFF Local 288

The majority of the functions performed by the employees belonging to these unions require a 24/7 work schedule rotation that renders the 4-day week untenable.

ATU Local 107

The Operator function requires a work schedule rotation that renders the 4-day week untenable. The Maintenance functions will require agreement if it is desirable to move toward a 4-day work week.

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2 Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Hamilton and the Canadian Union of Public Employees and Its Local 1041. Retrieved on November 9, 2009: [link]

ONA Public Health

The Health Protection Division provides 24/7 coverage as mandated by the Province. There are a number of mandatory programs that require continuous coverage. Reduction of service days may result in non-compliance with Provincial Mandatory Program Requirements and would ultimately present a potential liability to the Board of Health should the Province wish to issue charges under the HPPA. It is estimated that in order to meet Mandatory Program Requirements, any potential savings realized through a shutdown will be significantly reduced or eliminated via increased costs associated with overtime, standby and call-outs, etc. in accordance with the applicable collective agreement. Further, a reduction of the days per week that services are provided, may also jeopardize future funding for such programs.

Non-Union

In order for non-union staff to move to a 4-day work week, the Employment Standards Act requires that agreement be secured from individual employees who will be subject to increasing their hours of work beyond eight (8).

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