TO: Mayor and Members
General Issues Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: February 20, 2013

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Events Strategy Update (PED13038) (City Wide)

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Council Direction:

The purpose of Report PED13038 is to update the General Issues Committee and Council in respect of the direction provided to the Culture Division (now the Tourism and Culture Division) to prepare an Events Strategy for the City of Hamilton which outlines the City’s role in the delivery and support of Special Events within Hamilton.

Information:

Work on the Events Strategy project began approximately two years ago. Soon after consulting with numerous internal and external stakeholders, it became evident that this project was complex – involving many layers of policy and process related considerations. As work continued, the project team uncovered opportunities to address a number of operational issues. However, due to limited staff resources, these operational issues took priority over the project issues. And for this reason, progress on the development of the Events Strategy was impeded.

Then, in 2012, Tourism and Culture merged and this newly formed Division was moved to the Planning and Economic Development Department. At this point, the Events Strategy project team recognized that more opportunities existed than previously (e.g. Tourism Hamilton’s role in attracting sports and business events; By-law Services’ role in the Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT); Urban Renewal’s role in improving
Hamilton’s image; and, Economic Development’s role in transforming Hamilton into a place of destination).

These changes have necessitated a re-evaluation of the Events Strategy project with respect to its depth and breadth of scope. Therefore, the Tourism and Culture Division recommends that they conduct, in the context of the opportunities that now exist, a review of the Events Strategy project work that has been completed to-date, as well as a gap analysis. When this has been finished, the project team will be better positioned to successfully complete the project deliverables. This approach will result in a comprehensive understanding of how an Events Strategy can effectively align with the rest of the Corporation, better serve the Events Sector, and benefit Hamilton’s citizens.

Background

In October 2007, an Events Strategy was deemed necessary because:

- Community event organizers were frustrated by a lack of capacity and processes at the City to support event activity, and were experiencing sustainability challenges;
- Resource allocations and reductions over the previous years had diminished the City’s capacity to effectively support event activity; and,
- A framework to guide staff decisions regarding the provision of events and event services did not exist.

Project Goal

The goal of the Events Strategy project is to develop and implement an Events Strategy for the City of Hamilton that will serve as a foundation and framework to enable City staff to effectively deliver City-initiated events and to support the Events Sector in a responsible, cost-conscious and sustainable manner, thereby ensuring that Hamilton remains an “events-friendly” City.

Project Objectives

The Events Strategy will:

- Establish the City of Hamilton’s Events Strategy Vision;
- Identify the City’s mandate and role to realize the Event Strategy Vision;
- Develop an Events Policy that guides the City’s involvement in events within the City’s boundaries;
- Include a decision-making framework to inform and align the City’s programs, services, infrastructure, processes, organizational structure, budgets and future relationships with key stakeholders related to events in Hamilton;
- Produce an inventory of current City-run and community-run events in which the City has a level of involvement and which take place on City property;
- Define the types of events and levels of municipal involvement;

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• Identify synergies within the Tourism and Culture Division and also the Planning and Economic Development Department;
• Specify the roles of the municipality (i.e. staff and Council) with respect to event support and delivery (e.g. facilitation, production, promotion);
• Include recommendations regarding Events Sector capacity building;
• Determine levels of sustainability given current staff and budget availability; and,
• Identify gaps and opportunities for events in Hamilton in support of achieving the City's Events Strategy Vision.

The Events Strategy will not:

• Evaluate specific event offerings;
• Review the Community Partnership Program (CPP);
• Review the Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT);
• Increase staff's capacity to deliver City-run events; and,
• Increase the amount of funding dollars that are available to event organizers.

Previous Communications

To date, staff from the Tourism and Culture Division has submitted the following Events Strategy related Reports and Information Updates to Council:

• October 26, 2007 – Report – City of Hamilton Events Strategy (ECS07058): proposed that staff be directed to complete an Events Strategy for the City of Hamilton;
• April 10, 2008 – Information Report: provided (at Council's request) updates on major events initiatives that were to occur in Hamilton and required a coordinated approach for execution;
• September 1, 2009 – Information Update: provided a status update for the Events Strategy;
• March 2, 2011 – Information Report – Event Advisory Team (SEAT) Operational Review Update (CS11027): provided a status update for the operational improvements that had been recommended in an operational review of SEAT in January 2010; and,
• May 23, 2012 – Information Update: listed key issues that staff was addressing, within the overall Events Strategy development, that provided an opportunity to examine the alignment of operational/enforcement issues – in the context of the recent merger of the Culture Division and Tourism Division within the Planning and Economic Development Department.
Staff Resources

In August 2009, the Culture Division reported to Council that two attempts to hire an Events Specialist on a contract basis, via two separate Events Strategy Requests for Proposal (RFPs), were unsuccessful. Submissions to the first RFP (issued in the Fall of 2008) yielded proposals that did not pass the evaluation criteria. Consequently, the RFP was reissued (Spring 2009) and this time a successful proposal emerged; however, the quote for this proposal exceeded the approved budget and thus was rejected.

Therefore, in order to move the Events Strategy forward, staff Work Plans were adjusted and work efforts were distributed among internal and contract staff. However, over the past two years, competing project priorities and operational issues have taken precedence over the Events Strategy project (e.g. managing the Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT); developing an online process for Special Events applications; Special Events evaluation and funding related to the Community Partnership Program).

To complete the remaining work on the Events Strategy, existing Tourism and Culture Division staff members have now been assigned to this project.

Progress

Despite the fact that limited resources have been available to work on this project, progress has still been made. Although the Events Strategy, as a whole, is not complete, the following components have been addressed:

- Project charter;
- Stakeholder consultation;
- Draft events vision statement;
- Draft guiding principles;
- Draft events policy statement;
- Categorization of event types;
- Identification of key focus areas;
- List of most pressing event issues;
- Draft Work Plan containing a list of action items; and,
- Identification of the various roles that the City takes related to the delivery of events.

In addition, considerable work has been done to improve the City’s capacity to effectively support event activity, as listed below:

- A Steering Committee (comprised of Community Members and staff) was struck to assist in the development of an Events Policy for the City of Hamilton;
- An Arts and Events Section was created in the Culture Division to provide stronger management of event-related initiatives, such as:
- Delivery of major events (including the Olympic Torch Relay, Royal Visit to Dundurn Castle, the Rick Hansen Relay, the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration, and the State Funeral of Lincoln Alexander);
- Delivery of civic events such as Remembrance Day, Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration, Winterfest); and,
- Review and improvement of the community event approval process through the Special Events Advisory Team (SEAT) resulting in:
  - The hiring of a Festival and Events Officer to provide effective leadership to SEAT;
  - Coordination among all Divisions involved in event approval and delivery to improve processes and strengthen representation on SEAT;
  - Increased communication with event organizers through public meetings and SEAT application clinics;
  - Development of an on-line SEAT application system to replace an outdated paper-based system;
  - Improved liaising with individual event organizers to assist them in meeting regulatory requirements of SEAT; and,
  - Implementation of on-line guidelines and resources to assist event organizers to successfully achieve their goals.

Gaps

To deliver a solid Events Strategy for the City of Hamilton, more work needs to be completed in the following areas:

- Alignment with key stakeholders' plans in the City of Hamilton:
  - Tourism Hamilton Strategic Plan;
  - Cultural Plan;
  - Economic Development Strategy; and,
  - Hamilton’s Strategic Plan.
- Situational analysis including (but not limited to):
  - Inventory of Hamilton's current cultural, sports and business events run by the City, community and private sector;
  - Understanding of the markets to which Hamilton events cater;
  - Inventory and analysis of Hamilton's strengths and areas in need of improvement (e.g. various assets and attractors like venues, facilities, transportation, accommodations, entertainment, hospitality, tourism destinations, cultural heritage and natural heritage); and,
  - Impact assessment of the economic value (both direct and indirect) that current events bring to Hamilton.
- Strategic aims and goals that:
  - Link to the vision statement;
  - Identify outcomes; and,
  - Articulate impacts.

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Decision-making framework used to assess event opportunities by not only considering an event’s costs and financial return on investment, but also the following criteria:
- Profile;
- Tourism draw;
- Economic impact (direct and indirect);
- Community impact (Quality of Life);
- Infrastructure needs;
- Capacity building potential (Events Sector);
- Sustainability;
- Pride of Place development; and,
- Legacy Building potential.

Business processes that ensure effective targeting, prioritizing and development of major cultural, sports and business events.

Define the roles and responsibilities of event stakeholders (e.g. Council, Tourism and Culture Division, Public Works, Public Health Services, Police Services, HECFI, SEAT).

Identify strategic and/or funding partners and their potential roles (RTO3, Provincial and Federal government, private sector, sponsors, community groups, volunteers, etc.).

Business process documentation and potential process re-engineering – including an organizational flowchart that outlines job responsibilities/key functions on how each City Section/Department relates to the other through the provision of services for events.

Set of action recommendations to address resource deficiencies, confirm roles and set the future direction for successful implementation.

Implementation plan.

Monitoring and evaluation plan (Success/Performance Indicators; Cultural Indicators, Cultural Report Card).

Continuous improvement plan.

Special Events Tool Kit.

Communications plan.

**Challenges**

- Defining Council’s and City Staff’s direct and indirect roles in events;
- Council’s, Events organizers’ and citizens’ view of the City’s role in events delivery;
- Determining the City’s level of involvement (i.e. resources, time, funding) related to the different roles involved in event delivery;
- Limited funding for the Events Sector;
- Community engagement occurred in 2010 – may not represent the views/concerns of today; and,
- Capacity (staff and financial resources) within the Tourism and Culture Division to implement the Events Strategy and sustain the current level of involvement in City-run events delivery.

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Opportunities

- Integration of Tourism's role in sports and business events attraction and management;
- Capacity building to foster Events Sector self-sufficiency and reduce the dependency on City funding;
- 4th Pillar Sustainability (in light of the recently approved City of Hamilton Cultural Policy);
- Hamilton’s strengths (especially its rich cultural and natural heritage);
- Hamilton’s transition from hub to destination;
- Hamilton’s "brand" development (synergies with the rest of Planning and Economic Development);
- Hamilton’s continued urban renewal efforts (synergies with the rest of Planning and Economic Development); and,
- Hamilton’s on-going image improvements (synergies with the rest of Planning and Economic Development).

Next Steps

Based on the Events Strategy work that has been completed, the gaps that remain, the available staff resources and the competing project priorities, the Tourism and Culture Division anticipates that the Events Strategy project will require an extensive reassessment in order to ensure that the final project deliverables effectively meet the expectations of the stakeholders involved.

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