RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards ceremony be broadened to a large scale event to recognize seniors across all sectors of the community;

(b) That the 2013 Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards ceremony be postponed until June 2014 to provide adequate time for staff and senior community representatives to plan and organize a more prestigious ceremony; and,

(c) That staff be directed to report back on the financial implications of the Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards ceremony by October 2013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1995, staff and volunteers within the Recreation Division have organized an annual awards event where seniors were recognized for their volunteer contributions to
the City of Hamilton. Over the past few years there has been a general decline in attendance and staff have received feedback that this event should be of a broader scale and should celebrate seniors from all sectors of the community. A planning committee comprised of City staff and seniors has been established to plan for the 2014 Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards ceremony. Staff are recommending that the 2013 Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards event be postponed until June 2014, to provide sufficient time to plan and implement this larger more prestigious ceremony.

**Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable**

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**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:**
The previous Seniors Awards event had a budget of approximately $5,700 that was funded from the Recreation Division. Given the increased scope of the proposed event it is unknown at this time what the total costs (budget) will be. Staff will be pursuing sponsorship for this event which will offset some of the costs. Staff will provide an updated report on the financial implications of the Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards ceremony by October 2013.

**Staffing:**
There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendation of Report CS13023.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation of Report CS13023.

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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** (Chronology of events)

The Ontario Senior of the Year Award provides each municipality in Ontario with the opportunity to honor one outstanding local resident, who, after the age of 65 has enriched the social, cultural or civic life of his or her community. The award is provided by the Ontario Ministry for Citizenship and Immigration and is presented annually in June, the month the Ontario Government recognizes the achievements of seniors.

The award was first introduced in Hamilton in 1995 by a group of volunteers within the former Culture & Recreation Division’s Seniors’ Centers who established a small awards ceremony to honor the accomplishments of their membership. The event was
small scale and organized by volunteers and Recreation staff with a budget of $5,700 for the 2012 event. Specific details included:

- Recreation staff at the Sackville Hill Senior Centre coordinated and hosted the event.
- All of the marketing materials were developed and produced in-house.
- Recreation staff coordinated the nominations, selection committee and the application for the award to the province.
- The awards were presented to the recipients by City Councillors in attendance.
- In 2012, new awards were created to recognize multiple winners in the categories of: Lifetime Achievement, Innovation and Community Service. Those winners received a certificate from the Mayor.
- Nominees were traditionally members on the seniors' centres and clubs and to date, there has been limited engagement of the broader community.
- The price of tickets was in the $20.00-25.00 range with nominees receiving free tickets for themselves and their families.
- Traditionally a dinner ceremony was provided by the kitchen staff at Sackville Hill Senior Centre at a per plate cost of $16.00 (2012).
- The ceremony was hosted in either the Fireside Lounge or the Auditorium, dependent on ticket sales to the event.
- The entertainment was traditionally a choir and a harpist providing music prior to dinner.

Over the last few years there has been a noticeable decline in the quality of the event. This past year, there were only 70 people in attendance and there was a general sense of disappointment from those who participated. City Councillors voiced their concern and directed staff to ensure that future ceremonies reflect the prestigious nature of the award and celebrate seniors from all aspects of the community.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

There are no policy implications for this recommendation.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Staff have consulted with Senior Management Team members, Community Services and Tourism and Culture Directors, the Seniors Advisory Committee as well as previous Ontario Seniors Awards winners.

Staff have also consulted with other municipalities (13) and reviewed their current practices for providing a Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards. Staff found that
there was no consistency in these municipalities on how the Seniors Awards were celebrated. Some municipalities had a large event and spent approximately $20,000, where other municipalities either did not participate in a ceremony or held a very small event. Five municipalities issued multiple awards at the one event, and three municipalities utilized sponsors. This information will be helpful in preparing for the Hamilton ceremony.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

In February 2013 a committee comprised of staff from Macassa Lodge (Volunteer Coordinator playing lead), Recreation (Seniors Services and Marketing), Strategic Services (Communications) and the Tourism and Culture Division of Planning and Economic Development was established to plan for a more comprehensive Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards Ceremony. The committee also includes representation from members of the Seniors Advisory Committee and previous Seniors Award members.

The planning committee will coordinate the event and the nomination process, including the selection committee and the application for the award to the province. The committee has done their due-diligence in researching other municipalities and their criteria for their Senior of the Year Award, including nomination, selection process, costs and the scope of their awards ceremony. The ceremony, which has been held in Sackville’s Auditorium in the past, will now be hosted at an outside venue to accommodate a more formal and upscale atmosphere, as well as a larger number of nominees, their nominators and guests. The new awards created in 2012 for Lifetime Achievement, Innovation and Community Service will continue with recipients receiving a certificate from the Mayor. It is anticipated that in order to reflect the diversity and broader representation of the community that there will be additional awards.

In the past, the selection committee was comprised of community volunteers, and in 2012 had representation from the Seniors Advisory Committee, Hamilton Council on Aging, President of the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario and Recreation staff. The newly proposed selection committee will expand to have broader representation across the community and the event will be advertised in various media channels.

Given the expanded scope, the planning committee has determined that it will take approximately a full year to plan for this ceremony. Therefore they are recommending that the 2013 Hamilton Municipal Senior of the Year Awards event be postponed until June 2014.

There has been some preliminary discussion on costs for the event. In previous years, the price of tickets has ranged from $20-$25 with nominees receiving free tickets for
themselves and their families. Committee members are cognizant of the need to keep tickets at a reasonable price and yet provide a more elaborate and upscale ceremony which may incur additional costs relative to the previous events held. To offset these costs the committee is pursuing sponsorship opportunities. Staff will provide the full anticipated costs and budget for the ceremony to committee in October 2013.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Not Applicable

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**Strategic Priority #1**
A Prosperous & Healthy Community

*We enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

**Strategic Objective**
1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

**APPENDICES:**

None

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OUR Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.  
OUR Mission: WE provide quality public service that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.  
OUR Values: Accountability, Cost Consciousness, Equity, Excellence, Honesty, Innovation, Leadership, Respect and Teamwork