To: Chair and Members, Audit and Administration Committee

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Re: City Workforce Diversity Initiatives - Update HUR07002 - (City Wide)

Information:
This report is an information update on progress on the City’s workforce diversity initiatives.

The Human Resources department has the organizational or staff “lead” role on diversity initiatives for the City’s own workforce, while the Customer Service, Access & Equity division within the Corporate Services department leads on diversity and equity matters relating to City services and community relations.

Background:
The concept of diversity equates to any characteristic that helps shape a person’s attitudes, behaviour, perspective and interpretation of what is “normal”. Characteristics include (but are not limited to): gender, race, age, ethno-cultural background, sexual orientation, disability, religion, education, class and marital and family status.

The intention of an effective diversity approach and associated programs/initiatives in a municipal context is to result in accessible and inclusive public services, as well as attraction, retention, motivation and leverage of talent.

It is important to note that diversity does not necessarily include the concept of mandated targets or “quotas” and there is currently no “legal” requirement to address diversity. Diversity however is an imperative that is driven by demography, immigration and competition for talent.
In November of 2004, City Council approved the Human Resources Strategy. Included in the "Respectful and Supportive Workplace" strategic direction contained within the Strategy is a commitment to, and acknowledgement of, the value of diversity.

To advance the City’s position as a “City of Choice for High Performance Public Servants”, the City’s Human Resources Strategy contemplates a workplace where -

- "Teamwork, integrity and respect for individual perspectives, expertise and diversity are valued and recognized"

- "There is universal respect and support for the diversity of all individuals who comprise the workforce", and

- “The workforce is representative of the community it serves”

To achieve this desired end state, there are a number of areas where the City is engaged in diversity initiatives. They include:

- In 2005, the City engaged a number of internationally trained professionals in 'co-op' placements through a Hamilton Board of Education sponsored program.

- In 2006, the City worked with Career Edge to launch their program in the greater Hamilton area. Career Edge is an organization that provides internships for internationally trained professionals, persons with disabilities, and recent university graduates. The City currently has an intern in the Corporate Services Department and, subject to budget approval, is hoping to have several more interns in 2007.

- The City has accepted several co-op type placements from SISO starting in 2006 and continuing currently, primarily in the Water/Wastewater division of the Public Works department.

- A lot of work is being done to ensure that the City provides respectful and supportive workplaces for all. For example, over 4,400 City staff have been through “Respectful and Supportive Workplace – It Starts with You” training to date.

- In 2005, the extended management team (EMT) (i.e. managers, directors and department heads) participated in a session on respectful workplace practices and the concept of “Neighbour at Work”. In 2006 an EMT session to promote awareness of the benefits of diversity was conducted.

- Recruitment staff have received cross cultural interviewing skills/techniques training and are using this information to better prepare hiring managers as they recruit from a more diverse applicant pool. Training for hiring managers is planned for the fourth quarter in 2007.
The City is participating with SISO in the development of the Workplace Development Toolkit, designed to assist employers in the greater Hamilton area as they recruit from a more diverse population.

With respect to “youth” initiatives, as another component of diversity, the City as employer hires on average 550 students each summer, and substantial numbers of co-op and internship placements during the school year for both university and high-school students. The City also participates annually in the provincially sponsored “Take Your Kids to Work Day”, an event focused on students in Grade 9 who attend, with their parents, the workplace for a day in November of each year.

The City’s Human Resources staff are working to ensure that job opportunities are made available through “targeted” outreach to the multi-cultural community and to other diverse populations. Staff participates in a number of recruitment fairs and other outreach efforts and have worked to simplify and automate the job application process.

Human Resources and Ontario Works staff in the Career Centre have worked together to ensure Ontario Work clients are made aware of city job opportunities and that members of the public who visit Human Resources are aware of the services of the Career Centre.

The City has in place a variety of “flexible work arrangement” policies to accommodate staff as they attempt to balance work and life responsibilities e.g. Voluntary Leave of Absence policy, Compressed Work Week, Job Sharing.

The City has implemented redesigned work accommodation processes for ill/injured workers to focus on functional abilities and early, safe returns to work.

The City has promoted its diversity efforts through speaking engagements at a variety of conferences and community meetings.

Human Resources staff have consulted with Council’s Advisory Committees on the development of the Human Resource Strategy and associated policies.

Human Resources staff are currently developing for Council’s consideration a more formal “diversity” plan for the City of Hamilton as employer, which will include education/awareness initiatives, employment outreach initiatives, and a city workforce diversity/equity policy proposal.

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