TO: Mayor and Members Committee of the Whole
WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: June 18, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Immigration Strategy and Action Plan (CS09030(b)) (City Wide)

SUBMITTED BY:
Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

PREPARED BY:
Tim Rees (905) 546-2424 ext. 4244
Linda Button (905) 546-2424 ext. 4992

SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION:

That Appendices A and B attached to Report CS09030(b) respecting the made-for-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and Action Plan be endorsed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2010, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council adopted a made-for-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and Action Plan.

This report seeks the support and endorsement of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan by City Council. This Strategy, in recognizing that immigration must continue to be a key generator of new and innovative ideas, products, services and people that will infuse and enrich the economic and cultural life of Hamilton, compliments and reinforces the Economic Development Strategy, Cultural Plan and Human Services Plan that are also before City Council.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 7

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.
Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
Financial:

There are no financial implications associated with Report CS09030(b).

Funding for the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council and the development of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan is provided by the Federal Government through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). At its meeting of March 24, 2010 the Emergency and Community Services (ECS) Committee approved Item 8.4 Renewal of Funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to Develop and Implement an Immigration Strategy (Report CS10043). An operating budget of $393,145 is completely funded by CIC and will be allocated over the course of 12 months, (from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011) in accordance with the extended Contribution Agreement signed by CIC and the City of Hamilton.

It should also be noted that CIC has indicated its interest and commitment to consider ongoing financial support beyond this fiscal year to support a seamless transition process from this development phase to ensure the implementation of the Immigration Strategy.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CS09030(b).

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CS09030(b).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Many discussions over a number of years have taken place among various communities in Hamilton regarding the importance of immigration to the city’s future prosperity. These discussions have also reflected and reinforced the recognition that all residents and all local institutions have an important role to play in creating a more welcoming and inclusive city.

In 2008, the Community Services Department and key community partners answered a call for proposals from CIC to apply for funding to strengthen the local community and municipal role in serving and integrating immigrants into the community through the formation of a Local Immigration Partnership Council and the development of an immigration strategy.

At its meeting of April 8, 2009, the ECS Committee approved Item 8.1, Funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to Create an Immigration Strategy (Report...
CS09030). In July 2009, the City of Hamilton was awarded $285,195 over 8.5 months up to March 31, 2010, to establish the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council and develop an immigration strategy for Hamilton. The City of Hamilton, through the Community Services Department, took the lead in establishing the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council. The City of Hamilton is the contract holder for the CIC funding and also provides space, administrative support and supervision to the Immigration Strategy Office under the office of the General Manager, Community Services Department.

There are a number of reasons why Hamilton is taking this proactive approach to immigration. For example, our population is not growing, our labour force is aging, newcomers are facing unnecessary barriers accessing the labour market and too many are living in poverty. Yet many immigrants to Hamilton are highly educated with job-specific skills and entrepreneurial talents that are the very ingredients that will allow Hamilton to prosper.

In responding to these challenges, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council was established in early 2009, with the task of drafting a made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and Action Plan.

In seeking the support and endorsement of Hamilton City Council, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council is also calling on all Hamiltonians – as residents and as members of voluntary, private or public organizations – to take collective ownership of the Strategy as a guide and means of strengthening Hamilton’s identity as a welcoming and inclusive city.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Endorsing and supporting the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council’s Immigration Strategy and Action Plan provides City Council the opportunity to demonstrate its leadership role in establishing Hamilton as an inclusive, welcoming community. Supporting the Strategy provides the opportunity for City Council to serve as a model in recognizing and responding to the importance of immigration in Hamilton.

Part of the ongoing responsibilities of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council is to continue to engage Hamiltonians and key institutional partners in the city and encourage them to take ownership of the Strategy. The Immigration Strategy provides a guide and outlines a process by which the City of Hamilton itself can increase a collective comfort level and integrate and mainstream the issues of immigration into the everyday practices of the municipal government.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
In addition to the extensive discussion undertaken by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council itself (see Appendix C attached to Report CS09030(b) for a list of members), the development of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan has been based on extensive public consultation. Over 400 community residents have been involved in these discussions. This included 12 focus groups with specific immigrant and refugee communities (African Francophone, Chinese, Karen, South Asian, Spanish, Iraqi and Arab) as well as youth and women. Numerous meetings and consultations have been undertaken with leaders of faith groups, residents of neighbourhood hubs, settlement service providers, union leaders, academics, social service agencies, the Mayor, members of City Council and municipal staff (Human Resources, Planning and Economic Development, Corporate Services, Public Works, Emergency Services, Community Services).

The Immigration Strategy and Action Plan has also been informed by recent research and consultations undertaken by other key partners in the city including the Immigration Portal, Social Planning and Research Council, Hamilton Training Advisory Board and the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative.

The following are just some of the themes resulting from the consultations and meetings that have been undertaken thus far:

- The very existence of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council and the commitment to develop a ‘made in Hamilton’ Immigration Strategy has been positively received and garnered unanimous and strong support. Apart from the ‘it’s about time’ feedback, there was some concern that this must not be another ‘talk-fest’ group with a report that sits on the shelf and ignored.

- There is an appreciation of the importance of immigration to Hamilton, but a need was expressed for the Immigration Strategy and the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council to help guide and direct local institutions and community stakeholders as to the practical steps by which they can respond.

- The consultations undertaken with immigrant and refugee communities have reinforced the importance of ‘voice’ and the community empowerment process.

- The issue of the development, provision, and access to accurate, reliable and timely information and services required by immigrants was repeatedly emphasized.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council has defined a vision that complements and reinforces that of the City of Hamilton:

*Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.*

*Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork*
Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork

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 pursuit of this vision the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council has identified four strategic priorities:

- Collaborative leadership through strategic partnerships
- Identifying gaps and areas for improvement in the delivery of settlement services
- Building a welcoming community with the broader community and local stakeholders
- Improving the evidence base and data on new immigrants and the diversity of Hamilton’s population in order to better inform local policymaking and service provision

These priorities recognize that immigration is a critical, indispensable driver for our city’s urban revitalization and economic growth. The Immigration Strategy and Action Plan outline how Hamilton can continue to maintain and build an inclusive culture of welcome, access and opportunity. Hamilton’s past economic success and the key for future growth are immigrants. Both national and international research reinforces the fact that immigrants are a major lifeline that will allow cities such as Hamilton to prosper in the new global economy. As such the implementation of the Immigration Strategy is an essential component to ensure the success of the City’s Economic Development Strategy.

The complex, multi-faceted nature of the immigrant integration process requires that local services must take into account the varied and changing nature and needs of newcomers to Hamilton. While federal and provincial programs are generally focused on the immediate, short-term transitional settlement needs such as language training and employment counselling, it is local agencies and in particular municipal services that are faced with supporting the crucial medium-term integration process. With current settlement programs sometimes being too short to be effective, the result is an increased dependence and pressure on local services to foster effective settlement and integration.

It has been suggested in fact, that with local services carrying most of the costs of medium and long-term settlement, we are witnessing a downloading process without the transfer of resources.

Notwithstanding this fiscal reality, the successful integration of newcomers has always relied on the ‘bedrock’ of local human services such as education, health care,
transportation, economic development, recreation, culture, social/community services, etc. The needs and potential contributions of newcomers link up with almost every one of the City of Hamilton’s strategic priorities. Their housing needs for example, are a crucial factor in planning Hamilton’s future housing provision, similarly with other human services.

The City of Hamilton

While it 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.
5. Build a receptive climate for immigrants with measures that include anti-discrimination, access and equity.
6. Develop 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.

In seeking the City Council endorsement of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council considers this a timely opportunity to determine how immigration impacts municipal programs and services and what activities are currently being undertaken that respond to our changing demographics. The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council 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 Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council is the recognition that the municipal government itself is a key partner in helping to remove barriers to and provide the support for the full economic and social integration of immigrants.
Appendices A and B attached to Report CS09030(b), define a vision, strategic priorities and objectives for immigration and show how organizations, institutions and community groups can work to achieve these goals as an imperative first step toward addressing the challenges that face Hamilton in the near future.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Should the recommendation not be approved it will be considerably more challenging to implement Hamilton’s Immigration Strategy and Action Plan and to begin the process of making Hamilton a more welcoming, inclusive and prosperous city. However, the City of Hamilton will have fewer short-term responsibilities in terms of being accountable for and implementing the strategies and goals outlined in the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan.

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**


The support and endorsement of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council appended Immigration Strategy and Action Plan fulfils the Corporate Strategic Plan in the following ways:

**Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization**

- A culture of excellence
- A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- An enabling work environment - respectful culture, well-being and safety, effective communication
- Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity

**Financial Sustainability**

- Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- Effective and sustainable Growth Management
- Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner
- Address infrastructure deficiencies and unfunded liabilities
- Generate assessment growth/non-tax revenues

---

Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities. Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork
Vision: To be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Values: Honesty, Accountability, Innovation, Leadership, Respect, Excellence, Teamwork

- Sustainable Tri-party Government Agreement

**Intergovernmental Relationships**
- Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

**Growing Our Economy**
- Newly created or revitalized employment sites
- Competitive business environment
- A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
- An improved customer service
- A visitor and convention destination

**Social Development**
- Everyone has a home they can afford that is well maintained and safe
- Hamilton residents are optimally employed earning a living wage
- Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

**Healthy Community**
- An engaged Citizenry
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Immigration Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Immigration Strategy Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council Member List</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council

The Immigration Strategy

April 2010
Introduction

For many reasons, Hamilton needs to take a proactive approach to immigration. Population growth is stalled, our labour force is aging, newcomers trying to access the labour market are faced with unnecessary barriers and too many of them are living in poverty. Many immigrants to Hamilton are highly educated with job-specific skills and entrepreneurial talents – the very ingredients that are essential for Hamilton to compete and prosper in the knowledge-based, global economy.

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council has been established to respond to these challenges. This small, independent community collaborative consists of leaders representing key organizations and sectors in Hamilton and has been tasked with drawing up a made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and Action Plan to address the issues surrounding immigration for the betterment of the city as a whole.

To guide its work, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council has articulated this vision:

*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.*

Based on the numerous community consultations and research undertaken, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council has identified four strategic priorities for Hamilton in pursuit of this vision:

1. Building collective and collaborative leadership in pursuit of Hamilton’s immigration vision
2. Strengthening the delivery of immigrant and refugee settlement services
3. Creating a welcoming community and thereby the conditions that encourage immigrants to both settle and stay in Hamilton
4. Creating and disseminating foundational knowledge of immigration and immigrants in Hamilton

The Hamilton Partnership Immigration Council calls on all Hamiltonians – as residents and as members of voluntary, private or public organizations – to endorse, support and commit to this Immigration Strategy. This collective support is necessary to strengthen Hamilton’s identity as an immigrant-friendly and welcoming city.
The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council will continue to drive this Immigration Strategy forward by championing with various community partners and stakeholders to determine ownership of the Immigration Strategy and the actions they must take to incorporate it into their particular contexts.

This Immigration Strategy can only be achieved through a collective commitment by all residents in all our different roles and capacities, working together toward the goal of Hamilton as a welcoming, inclusive community.

The following chart briefly summarizes the made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and identifies the needs and drivers for the Immigration Strategy. In responding to these imperatives, the middle column identifies the four strategic priorities which recognize and stress the notion that settlement and integration is a two-way process involving responsibilities on the part of both the newcomer and Hamilton as the host society. The remaining column identifies some of the potential benefits and outcome measures of successfully implementing these four strategic priorities.
The Immigration Strategy

The vision of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council is 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.” The pursuit of this vision recognizes that immigrant integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society of Hamilton work together to build a secure, vibrant and cohesive community. Achieving this vision requires an intentional effort that must engage all members of Hamilton’s community. Mutual responsibility, multi-sector involvement, and a multi-strategy approach are the cornerstones of the Immigration Strategy.

**Why Now: The Imperatives for Hamilton Immigration Strategy**

The confluence of demographic, economic and social factors creates an urgent imperative for a local, coordinated immigrant integration strategy. To continue thriving, Hamilton must be intentional about weaving newcomers into the fabric of our society. How well we integrate immigrants and provide opportunities for all members has far-reaching implications for our current and future vitality.

**DEMOGRAPHIC**

- Immigration can help counteract an aging and declining population.
- Global migration is a growing phenomenon that shows no signs of abatement. This trend has enormous implications for Hamilton, to ensure we attract our “fair share” as a migrant-receiving city.
- The increasing diversity and dispersion of newcomer populations throughout Hamilton requires adapting immigrant settlement services and strengthening our inclusionary traditions.

**ECONOMIC**

- Current and future economic growth and stability in Hamilton will depend increasingly on immigrants and refugees who can help to address labour market shortages and expand Hamilton’s global competitiveness.
- Immigrants and their children – as workers, taxpayers, consumers, and entrepreneurs – will become even more critical to our economic vitality, as birth rates continue to decline and as the Baby Boom generation begins to retire.

**SOCIAL & CIVIC**

- Levels of marginalization and exclusion on the basis of race, religion, language, immigrant and refugee status, and so on, are realities in Hamilton that need to be urgently addressed.

**Strategic Priorities to Integration**

Through these four strategic priorities, all stakeholders in Hamilton can work together to leverage immigrants’ human capital to the benefit of our entire community. Immigrant integration efforts can draw upon a myriad of strategies from organizing and advocacy to research and communications.

**NEWCOMERS — RECEIVING COMMUNITY**

1. **Building Collective and Collaborative Leadership**
   All community partners, institutions, organizations, residents and levels of government work together to ensure the successful integration of newcomers into our community.
   - Seek opportunities to participate actively in all areas of community life
   - Systematically engage newcomers in developing inclusive policies, programs and practices.

2. **Strengthening the Delivery of Settlement Services**
   A sustainable and seamless settlement service delivery system that is well-coordinated and readily accessed enables the successful and prompt integration of all newcomers.
   - Access services addressing immediate settlement needs
   - Offer appropriate and well-coordinated settlement services
   - Utilize and support mainstream services
   - Provide equitable access to quality services i.e. education, health, housing
   - Access to jobs
   - Provide bridging and access to employment

3. **Creating a Welcoming Community**
   Being proactive in developing an inclusive public and civic culture will help to ensure that all the people who reside in our city really feel at home here.
   - Capacity and confidence to participate in all areas of Hamilton’s social, cultural, political and economic life
   - Take robust steps to eliminate exclusionary practices in organizational policies and programs

4. **Creating and Disseminating Knowledge of Immigration**
   The achievement of the successful integration of newcomers and the pursuit of a welcoming community must be built on a solid base of information and research.
   - Engage in identifying appropriate integrative and inclusionary services
   - Learn about and respect diverse cultures. Reduced public anxieties towards immigrants
   - Increase community engagement capacity building
   - More informed public, private and voluntary sectors can better respond to newcomer needs and benefit from the assets newcomers bring.

**Benefits of Integration**

Through collaboration among all stakeholder groups in Hamilton, increased immigration and a well-coordinated immigrant integration process holds the potential to create:

- **Stronger communities with the ability to meet wide ranging needs:** address racial, ethnic, and economic diversity and enrich the social and cultural fabric of our city.
- **Increased productivity and a robust economy** through an expanded base of workers, consumers, taxpayers, and entrepreneurs.
- **Improved global competitiveness** through a multi-lingual, multi-cultural workforce.
- **A more vibrant Hamilton community** in which all groups are accepted as equal members with the opportunity and responsibility to engage and contribute to the common good.
- **A more cohesive, inclusive community** where all residents of Hamilton—regardless of race, national origin, or socioeconomic status—live in dignity and equality.
Strategic Priorities

What is the roadmap in pursuit of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council’s vision?

The behaviours of the host society in providing a welcoming environment are fundamental to the successful settlement of immigrants and refugees to Hamilton and the notion of integration and an inclusive community. This is confirmed by international research that indicates the level of involvement and understanding by the receiving society that is the most important factor and has the greatest impact on immigrant integration (Public Policy Forum, Ottawa, 2008).

The four theme areas – corroborating the international research – have been identified by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council as the strategic priorities by which we in Hamilton can support the successful settlement of immigrants and refugees to our city:

1. Building collective and collaborative leadership in pursuit of Hamilton’s immigration vision
2. Strengthening the delivery of immigrant and refugee settlement services
3. Creating a welcoming community and thereby the conditions that encourage immigrants to both settle and stay in Hamilton
4. Creating and disseminating foundational knowledge of immigration and immigrants in Hamilton

Priority: Building Collective and Collaborative Leadership

All community partners, institutions, organizations, residents and levels of government must work together to ensure the successful integration of newcomers into our community.

To more fully embrace and realize the enormous social, cultural and economic assets that immigrants offer and that already exist within our extraordinarily diverse city, significant changes must be made to our civic, cultural and organizational practices.

This Immigration Strategy is a guidance document that encourages all sectors in Hamilton to recognize the importance of immigration and to consider how they can demonstrate their particular leadership roles in facilitating a more inclusive and welcoming community.

The issues of immigration have an impact on all areas of life in Hamilton. To have legitimacy, significance and impact, this made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy
requires community ownership and buy-in. The involvement of the residents of the city is essential along with the active involvement and participation of the major organizational and institutional sectors in Hamilton.

By articulating this collective commitment and leadership, the Immigration Strategy seeks the formal support and endorsement of key stakeholder organizations throughout Greater Hamilton. This formal support is secured through obtaining signatories to the Declaration of Intent that follows.
THE HAMILTON IMMIGRATION STRATEGY

DECLARATION OF INTENT

In a city that is increasingly diverse in the makeup of its people, and functioning in an increasingly global age, immigration and the integration of immigrants and refugees is a key determinant of the future success and prosperity of Hamilton.

Consistent with the vision of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council we, the undersigned do hereby endorse the priorities and actions set out in the strategy. This strategic framework enables us to manage and influence the impact of immigration for the benefit of all the residents of Hamilton.

We will continue to facilitate, cooperate and collaborate in measures, actions and policies which will effectively contribute to the concept of Hamilton as an open, welcoming and inclusive city.

Furthermore, we as stakeholders in the economic, social and cultural life of Hamilton undertake to continue to take a proactive and robust approach in integrating immigrant settlement issues and a diversity and inclusive dimension in all our strategic planning and business processes and encourage those with whom we work to do the same.

________________________________________

Possible signatories with corporate logos:

Mayor and City of Hamilton
Board of Trade/Chamber of Commerce
President, McMaster and Mohawk
Chairs, Boards of Education
Unions
RBG
AGH
Priority: Strengthening the Delivery of Settlement Services

A sustainable and seamless settlement service delivery system that is well-coordinated and readily accessed enables the successful and prompt integration of all newcomers.

Hamilton can be proud of a long and well-established settlement service delivery system. Still, there are a number of barriers that prevent newcomers to the city from being integrated efficiently:

Settlement is taking Longer:

In the past twenty years, the levels of unemployment, income and poverty among recent newcomers to Hamilton indicate that the settlement period for immigrants – in terms of their economic outcomes converging with those of the native-born population – has practically doubled in the last twenty years to more than ten years. Consequently, the backlog of unsettled and un-serviced newcomer clientele in the city's settlement agencies continues to balloon.

Barriers to Integration:

The barriers to settlement for immigrants and refugees in Hamilton have been well-documented and continue to persist. These barriers have generally been grouped into the following main areas:

- Immigration process (e.g., there is a 5 to 6 year waiting period for people to enter Canada and an estimated 1 million people waiting)
- Employment (e.g. lack of Canadian experience, insufficient recognition of credentials earned outside of Canada, etc.)
- Initial settlement process
- Language education (e.g. eligibility criteria for accessing language training)
- Access to addressing health needs
- Access to affordable housing

The Role of the Settlement Sector:

Historically, publicly-funded settlement services have provided specifically defined services to individual newcomers and they have also performed other critical functions including research, public education, advocacy and community development.

Due to the current economic climate and funding restrictions, there is a danger that these broader critical functions to effective settlement and the provision of more individualized services might be lost.
All community partners must work together to address the pressures faced by the settlement sector along with gaps in service provision to create a more responsive and integrated service provision system.

It is also important to distinguish between formal settlement services and more informal associations/voluntary groups in Hamilton that are accessed by immigrants and refugees to help manage their transition. Informal networking activities initiated by immigrants (available and accessible through their ethno-cultural associations) meet both instrumental and expressive needs. Faith-based institutions are particularly important in this regard.

It is necessary to identify, acknowledge and support the informal and voluntary settlement sectors for their important role in the integration of newcomers. A well-coordinated system of settlement services that ensures effective integration of all newcomers will require the creation of strong linkages between formal and informal settlement services.

**Priority: Creating a Welcoming Community**

*Being proactive in developing an inclusive public and civic culture will help to ensure that all the people who reside in our city really feel at home here.*

Private and public partnerships need to be established in order to implement a number of public education programs that support a climate where all immigrants and refugees to Hamilton feel welcomed and are able to participate in all aspects of civic life. Constructive discussion about immigration needs to be brought in from the margins to the mainstream of Hamilton life.

A welcoming community is one in which anxieties, misconceptions, discrimination, exclusionary practices and hate activity with regard to immigration is uncommon. Instead, the contributions and achievements of immigrants are promoted, diversity is encouraged and celebrated, inclusivity is regularly practiced, community cohesion is evident and there is meaningful interaction between newcomers and the settled community.

**Priority: Creating and Disseminating Knowledge of Immigration**

*The achievement of the successful integration of newcomers and the pursuit of a welcoming community must be built on a solid base of information and research.*

The lack of information and intelligence and the lack of widely sharing that information is part of the reason for the absence of coordination and the ad-hoc and crisis reaction stance to too many settlement and integration activities. This lack of shared knowledge also contributes to a heightened level of ambivalence and uncertainty among residents about the impacts of immigration on their community.
Building foundational knowledge and data is crucial to achieving the outcomes of this local immigration strategy because:

- Service providers and employers who have access to the most recent immigrant research and data and are more aware of immigrants’ needs and values will be less inclined to engage in exclusionary practices, allowing greater access.

- Strengthening awareness and capacity to integrate immigrants is best achieved through a sharpened narrative and a more informed body of knowledge about immigration, particularly on the longer-term effects on Hamilton.

- The first step toward planning and coordinating settlement services is to ensure that local stakeholders are fully aware of the issues, impact and importance of immigration so that they are well-informed and well-equipped to plan and deliver quality services that meet the specific needs of all immigrants to Hamilton.

- The provision of enhanced information/intelligence on immigration and immigrants in Hamilton will improve due diligence in promoting relevant, high-quality settlement and integration services in Hamilton and facilitate effective monitoring and oversight.

**The Immigration Strategy: Action Plan**

The attached document outlines some of the major goals and corresponding strategic actions necessary to implement each of the four priorities outlined in the Immigration Strategy. This is the starting point for more detail to be developed by community partners who will create actions specific to their own institutions and organizations.

The implementation of the Immigration Strategy requires multi-dimensional cooperation and collaboration among and within all of the community's institutions, organizations, private sector and not-for-profit groups.

This Strategy also requires implementation of the four strategic priorities at different levels of the community individual, local, neighbourhood level, organizational and city wide.
The Individual Level:

Every individual is responsible for taking part in dispelling the myths and misconceptions of immigration to become more accepting and tolerant. This positive practice will lead to a more welcoming community for newcomers. Individual immigrants are also responsible for becoming integrated into the host society by:

- Seeking opportunities to participate actively in all areas of community life
- Accessing services that address immediate settlement needs
- Utilizing and supporting mainstream services
- Actively seeking employment
- Building the capacity and confidence to participate in all areas of Hamilton’s social, cultural, political and economic life
- Engaging in identifying appropriate integrative and inclusive services.

The Community/Neighbourhood Level:

Newcomers emigrate to Canada but they settle and integrate into local communities and neighbourhoods. The friendliness of neighbours and the quality of interactions in the neighbourhoods of our city are key determinants for newcomers in feeling that they “belong” in their locality. It is in the neighbourhoods of Hamilton where a sense of belonging and feeling welcomed is articulated and negotiated. It is the quality of the relationships made at the local, neighbourhood level that can bind diverse communities.

The Organizational Level:

While settlement services in Hamilton are focused primarily on the immediate, short-term transitional settlement needs of immigrants and refugees, it is the institutional sectors – whether it is education, human services, health, or employment services – that play a critical role in the medium and long-term settlement and integration process. This reality reinforces the point that immigration is everybody’s business and that the settlement and integration process cannot be left only to settlement service providers in Hamilton.

The City-Wide Level

The Immigration Strategy also requires action at a city-wide level. Only when the public as a whole realizes and accepts the value of immigration to Hamilton’s social, cultural and economic life will immigrants be completely integrated and fully involved in the community and experience a true sense of belonging. Creating a cohesive community and a civic identity through the inclusive behaviours and practices of the host city benefits all of its residents.
Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council

The Immigration Strategy:

Action Plan

This Action Plan provides a framework for implementing the strategic priorities identified in the Immigration Strategy. It is organized by the goals and major strategic actions necessary to achieve each of the Strategy’s four priorities. More detailed strategic actions are to be created by community partners including the municipal government, community institutions and organizations, both profit and not-for-profit, as well as community-based groups.

The implementation of this plan will be carried out collectively and collaboratively by all community partners at all levels of the community with support from the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council.

April 2010
### Priority: BUILDING COLLECTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

All community partners, institutions, organizations, residents and levels of government work together to ensure the successful integration of newcomers into our community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal community support and endorsement of the Immigration strategy</td>
<td>• Obtain signatories to the Declaration of Intent (see the Immigration Strategy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each institution and organization in Hamilton will take the lead to</td>
<td>• Work toward integrating immigration in all strategic documents which may affect Hamilton’s settlement and integration efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure that immigration issues become a normal part of their everyday</td>
<td>• Systematically engage newcomers in developing inclusive policies, programs and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business</td>
<td>• Establish and implement an immigrant settlement policy and inclusionary strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Undertake Inclusionary Impact Assessments for operational policies, procedures, processes and practices to ensure they do not exclude immigrants and refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop strategies for leadership capacity building that ensures representation of all of Hamilton’s diverse communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify barriers to employment and implement initiatives to remove barriers and improve representation of the workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide equal access to purchasing requirements for all diverse businesses and encourage local diverse and immigrant-owned businesses to register on supplier lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop effective communications mechanisms to promote greater awareness of the importance of immigration at all levels of the organization, disseminate inclusive ‘good practices’ and support greater public access to data and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement ongoing diversity training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop a community engagement strategy to include external outreach with diverse and newcomer communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Produce and disseminate Annual Inclusion Reports and establish other such reporting and accountability structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sectors in Hamilton work toward the same vision and goals</td>
<td>• Serve and provide direction and oversight as a standard bearer for immigration issues in Hamilton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Actively promote the development of policies, protocols and structures that will embed best practices regarding settlement services in the public institutions of Hamilton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review performance data on settlement and integration and make recommendations to support policy and/or operational initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer collaboration and agreements among all three levels of</td>
<td>• Recommend that the municipal government lobby for a seat at the immigration policy table at the provincial and federal levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>• Create opportunities for real exchanges of information among the three levels of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve communication and collaboration among the municipal departments within the City of Hamilton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Priority: STRENGTHENING THE DELIVERY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

A sustainable and seamless settlement service delivery system that is well-coordinated and readily accessed enables the successful and prompt integration of all newcomers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A detailed analysis of the nature and role of all agencies in Hamilton involved with the provision of short and medium term settlement and integration support | • Compile an inventory of Hamilton's formal settlement services  
• Undertake an assessment of the informal services and voluntary networks that assist in settling newcomers in Hamilton  
• Identify programs and services that have particular impact and relevance to the settlement process |
| A fuller understanding of the settlement process in Hamilton as experienced by newcomers including the nature of newcomers’ needs and the barriers to successful integration | • Undertake ongoing consultations with newcomer communities  
• Partner with local and regional settlement research initiatives to access recent trends and issues  
• Collect the appropriate data to measure and assess whether fair and equitable services are provided to newcomers and publicly share this data to allow for public monitoring  
• Ensure the recognition and participation of immigrant and ethno-specific agencies in various areas of service planning and delivery |
| A well-coordinated and seamless settlement service system in Hamilton | • Identify and address gaps in settlement service provision  
• Facilitate mechanisms for ongoing collaboration with local settlement agencies  
• Strengthen the linkages between the informal and formal settlement sector |
| Increased awareness of and access to settlement services               | • Provide ongoing support to the Hamilton Immigration Portal and other online settlement and newcomer information systems  
• Develop and establish a Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council website with links to settlement services information  
• Publish and disseminate information on both the formal and informal settlement services in Hamilton |
| Recognition of and support for the informal and voluntary sectors in the provision of settlement services | • Consult with funding agencies to establish a funding stream that recognize and gives support to the informal, voluntary sector and its critical role in the settlement and integration process  
• Recognize informal settlement services and develop complementary forms of collaboration and assistance  
• Disseminate information about formal settlement services to newcomers to these informal networks |
| Enhanced services such as language training, employment, housing, health and public transit to facilitate the settlement process | • Identify policy and program improvements that reduce the barriers to efficient integration  
• Establish and expand such initiatives as internships, mentoring, job-shadowing and co-op placements to improve newcomer access to the labour market  
• Provide bridging access to employment  
• Identify and address newcomer needs to improve access to affordable and stable housing  
• Determine usage among newcomers to public transit and address concerns regarding cost, availability, etc.  
• Identify the differential healthcare needs of newcomers and develop appropriate responses for accessible and suitable healthcare provision |
**Priority: CREATING A WELCOMING COMMUNITY**

*Being proactive in developing an inclusive public and civic culture will help to ensure that all the people who reside in our city really feel at home here.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reduced public apprehension, anxieties and misconceptions about immigrants and immigration to Hamilton | - Develop and implement a Public Education Strategy that highlights the contributions and achievements made by Hamilton’s diverse immigrant communities  
- Produce and widely disseminate information combating the myths and misconceptions about migrants and immigration |
| The elimination of racial discrimination, incidents of hate activity and the marginalization of residents because of their immigrant and refugee status | - Reconfirm through various public means and political platforms Hamilton’s commitment to the elimination and unacceptability of discrimination and exclusionary practices |
| Institutional practices that are inclusive and the elimination of barriers that exclude newcomers from participating in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the city | - Identify the best practices of Hamilton’s institutional sectors and promote the strategies that benefit from and celebrate Hamilton’s immigrant communities  
- Ensure all communications reflect and represent the diversity of Hamilton and are disseminated through a variety of channels, formats and languages  
- Establish proactive community engagement initiatives that seek and identify the needs and aspirations of newcomer communities  
- Involve newcomers in making decisions that affect their settlement experience in Hamilton and their participation in every aspect of life in the city  
- Take robust steps to eliminate exclusionary practices in organizational policies and programs |
| A cohesive community with an inclusive civic identity                  | - Promote mechanisms for meaningful interaction between newcomers and the resident community at the local neighbourhood level  
- Increase the capacity, skills and confidence of newcomers to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the city |
**Priority: CREATING AND DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE OF IMMIGRATION**

*The achievement of the successful integration of newcomers and the pursuit of a welcoming community must be built on a solid base of information and research.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| An up-to-date, evidence-based body of information and intelligence to support well-coordinated settlement services | **Commission, collect and review research in areas such as:**  
  - immigration demographics  
  - inventory of settlement services provided in Hamilton  
  - informal settlement services  
  - gap analysis of settlement services  
  - newcomer needs  
  - immigration bibliography  
  - immigrants and the Hamilton economy  
  - institutional sectors and settlement issues  
  - specific immigrant population groups (e.g., youth, women, seniors, children, etc.; and diverse ethnicities and races) |
| Knowledge about immigration in Hamilton is continually disseminated, promoted and utilized | **Develop and disseminate both electronic and print versions of a variety of materials including a Newcomer Guide to Hamilton, Fact Sheets about immigration, newsletters, position papers, newspaper articles, etc.**  
  **Ensure service providers have access to the most recent research and data on immigrants to Hamilton to facilitate inclusive and equitable planning and delivery of services**  
  **Develop and provide information on settlement services in Hamilton:**  
    - Create an electronic directory of settlement services available in Hamilton in partnership with Inform Hamilton  
    - Support the Hamilton Immigration Portal and the development of other online settlement and newcomer information systems  
  **Develop a Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council website containing all research compiled as well as links to settlement services available**  
  **Learn about and respect diverse cultures to help reduce public anxieties towards immigrants and enable public and private sectors to better respond to immigrants’ needs while benefiting from the assets they bring to our community** |
## HAMILTON IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

### MEMBER LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manuel Bastos</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Labourers Union Local 837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Bishop</td>
<td>Trustee and former Chair of the Board</td>
<td>Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Cheaib (Co-chair)</td>
<td>Faculty Member</td>
<td>Mohawk College of Applied Arts &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Commerford</td>
<td>President &amp; CEO</td>
<td>YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Des Jardins</td>
<td>Community Engagement Coordinator</td>
<td>Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy DiGregorio</td>
<td>Superintendent of Education</td>
<td>Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisèle Dupuis</td>
<td>Directrice</td>
<td>Services et programmes aux immigrants Collège Boréal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Elliott</td>
<td>Managing Editor</td>
<td>The Hamilton Spectator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morteza Jafarpour</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Settlement &amp; Integration Services Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Koroscil (Co-chair)</td>
<td>President &amp; CEO</td>
<td>Hamilton International Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmeen Khattab</td>
<td>McMaster University student and active in the immigrant youth community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Passaro</td>
<td>Branch Manager</td>
<td>Scotiabank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gary Warner</td>
<td>McMaster University retiree and active in the immigrant community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madina Wasuge</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Hamilton’s Centre for Civic Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe-Anne Priel</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Community Services Dept. City of Hamilton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>