To: Chair and Members
   Emergency and Community Services Committee

From: Goce Dimitrioski (Co-chair)
      Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee
      (to be signed by the Chair)

      Fan Yang (Co-chair)
      Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee

Date: November 18, 2009

Re: 2009 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Update (HYAC09-001)

Recommendation:

That Report HYAC09-001, Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee - 2009 Update, be received.

Background:

The purpose of following report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee is to:

- Provide an overview of the City of Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee’s (HYAC) achievements to date
- Outline upcoming HYAC initiatives, activities and/or events

HYAC’s mandate is to ensure that youth are involved in the decisions made within the City of Hamilton and in the community that affect them, their families and their friends. They are working to accomplish this by informing, engaging, and involving youth ages 14-24; through reports to the Emergency and Community Services Committee; and by promoting active citizenship and leadership.
2009 Activities and Achievements of HYAC:

In November 2008 HYAC members reviewed and endorsed the City’s application to Play Works, The Ontario Partnership for Active Youth, seeking designation for Hamilton as a “youth-friendly community”.

Hamilton was officially recognized and designated a “youth-friendly community” by Play Works, The Ontario Partnership for Active Youth, for meeting 10 of the 16 required criterions. Two HYAC members participated in a Hamilton delegation at an awards ceremony held at Queen’s Park in Toronto Oct. 27 2009.

The Committee also participated in several consultations including:

- The City’s plans for the development and implementation of a rapid transit system. HYAC members provided input regarding Metrolinx funding, proposed transit routes and the challenges with implementing a rapid transit system.

- The merits of Hamilton’s bid for the Pan Am Games 2015. The ensuing debate was animated with strong opinions for and against the bid expressed.

- The development of the City’s Equity Policy. HYAC members provided valuable insight about barriers youth experience when entering City buildings, accessing City services and participating in City-run programs.

- A member of HYAC met with Councillor Terry Whitehead and various youth from Ward 8 to support the establishment of a Ward 8 Youth Council.

- Members provided feedback and recommendations to staff on a survey being distributed to the volunteers of the City’s Snow Angels program. HYAC advised of changes needed to make the survey more accessible to youth.

Hamilton’s Green Future Event

HYAC and Mayor Fred Eisenberger hosted a community discussion on Hamilton’s current and future role in the green economy entitled “Hamilton’s Green Future: A Conversation between Youth and the Mayor”. Fifty youth attended the event held at the Staircase Theatre and a further 48 unique viewers “tuned-in” online as the event was web-cast live at “www.hamiltonyouth.com”. The event was intended to establish a connection between youth and municipal government, while discussing a relevant and accessible issue.

Youth Poverty and Homelessness Project

A former street-involved youth, who had spent nearly a year of his life living between shelters in the downtown core while struggling with addiction, led a downtown walking tour for two committee members, the HYAC Youth Advisor and Councillor Tom Jackson. The purpose of the downtown walk was to connect a Councillor with a youth in the community who otherwise would not have access to an official in municipal government. The main topics covered during the walk included the ease of falling victim to addiction and the limited engagement opportunities and services for street-involved youth in Hamilton.
Participants took photos of places highlighted during their walking tour. The committee intends to combine the information, pictures and experience from the walk to produce a “youth-driven” report on the issue of youth homelessness and poverty in Hamilton.

Members continued work on branding/logo design, promotional items and an official website.

Recruitment and Membership

A number of HYAC members identified they would be leaving the committee mainly due to post secondary education. At HYAC’s September meeting, the committee decided that it would not be strategically sound to engage in a new City wide recruitment strategy at this time. Rather, the remaining members suggested inviting youth to join the committee from the pool of applicants interviewed by Councillors Jackson and McHattie in 2008.

Four additional youth were appointed in October 2009 bringing the total membership to 11 youth.

- The age range of HYAC members is from 14 to 24 years.
- Membership reflects a broad socio-economic and culturally diverse group of young people from East, Central and West Hamilton, Hamilton Mountain, Dundas, Ancaster, Waterdown and Stoney Creek.
- Members are students in secondary and post-secondary school.

HYAC members also elected two new co-chairs, Goce Dimitrioski and Fan Yang for a 1 year term.

City of Hamilton Support to HYAC

HYAC continues to be supported by one part-time youth advisor in consultation with a senior policy analyst, both from Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division, as well as the Youth-At-Risk Coordinator from the Recreation Division. Other support is provided through Public Health Services, Councillor Jackson and the Mayor’s Office.

Up-coming HYAC Projects/Events:

Building on what HYAC members and staff have learned and experienced to date, a list of the top 10 new initiatives has been developed for future HYAC consideration.

1. Implement and utilize best practices and Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation, specifically rungs 6-8, as a guide to gauge and continue to ensure meaningful opportunities for young people to participate, lead and succeed.

2. Cultivate more of a ‘grass roots’ approach to advocacy and an increased physical presence in the community.

3. Develop an interactive HYAC website; design innovative branding and create a promotional strategy by youth for youth to generate ‘Buzz’
4. Continue to attract and retain a broader cultural and socio-economically diverse membership.

5. Submit reports to ECS at least two times during the coming year.

6. Conduct an inventory of current youth friendly practices and identify potential gaps.

7. Develop a series of comprehensive pre/post evaluations and surveys to assist youth in identifying the needs and opinions of their peers and to help supporting adults with planning future initiatives and addressing committee challenges.

8. Identify and develop a series of training and skill development opportunities for HYAC members. Some examples include; message development, how to work with the media, advocacy and various leadership building activities/initiatives.

9. Create a presentation for adults developed and delivered by youth about the ‘Boomers’ and Generation X and Y, the 40 Developmental Assets and how to work with youth in a meaningful way.

10. Develop a scale of recognition and celebration of achievement.
HYAC’s Role

Engage       Inform         Involve
How?

• By promoting active citizenship and leadership in contributing to the decisions made within the City of Hamilton.
HYAC’s Mandate

• Ensure youth are involved in decisions made within the City & community
• Provide a youth perspective to Mayor, Council & staff of City
• Inform & involve other youth
HYAC’s Mission

• Address issues identified by youth
• Enhance opportunities
• A voice
• Relationships & Collaboration
• Youth focused events and activities
2009 Activities and Achievements of HYAC:

• Play Works, The Ontario Partnership for Active Youth
• Consultations
• Branding & Website
Events…

Hamilton’s Green Future Event
Recruitment & Membership

- Committee secession
- New Members
- Group composition
- New HYAC Co-chairs
Support to HYAC

- Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division staff
- Recreation Division staff
- Public Health Services staff
- Councillor Jackson & the Mayor’s Office
10 Initiatives for 2010

- Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation
- ‘Grass roots’ approach to advocacy and an increased physical presence in the community.
- HYAC website, branding and promotional strategy
- Diversity
Initiatives continued…

- ECS Reports
- What are other YAC’s up to?
- Evaluations and Surveys
- Skill development and employability
- Presentation
- Recognition and celebration of achievement
Thank You!