Council Direction:

Not applicable.

Information:

At the February 21, 2007, Emergency and Community Services meeting, staff from the Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division of the Community Services Department presented a report on the potential development of a Social Inclusion Policy for the City of Hamilton (ECS07014).

As described in Report ECS07014, the intent of the proposed Social Inclusion Policy is to acknowledge the impact that social barriers like poverty, language, ability, racism and classism have on the ability of a person to participate fully in life within a community. The City of Calgary has already approved such a model, based upon the framework proposed by John Rawls\(^1\), wherein everyone begins with the same entitlement to participation.

Any inequalities that exist must satisfy two very specific conditions:

1. The opportunity for participation must be equally available to all; and,
2. The greatest advantage goes to the most disadvantaged.

While formulating the work plan to initiate the development of this new policy, staff learned that the Access and Equity Office was in the process of developing a proposal seeking the assistance of a consultant to design and develop a draft Corporate Equity and Inclusion Policy, procedures, guidelines and an implementation framework that

\(^1\) Fair Calgary and the Fairness Filter – A Brief Overview, Karen Peterson, August 2005
would ensure the diversities of all Hamiltonians are fully protected and promoted in all areas of city life – be it abilities, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, family status, immigrant status, level of literacy, language, etc. The Consultant will also revise the City of Hamilton’s current Race Relations Policy.

Staff from both the Community Services and Corporate Services Departments engaged in dialogue to determine whether the Social Inclusion Policy proposed by the Community Services Department and the Corporate Equity and Inclusion Policy to be completed by the Corporate Services Department were similar in nature. There was general agreement by staff, from both departments, that both of these proposed policies had a number of similar elements and it made sense to combine efforts to the greatest extent possible. To that end, the Corporate Services Department has developed a Request for Proposal document to secure the services of a consultant to complete this work.

The successful proponent will be expected to:

1. Develop a framework of analysis to guide City staff and leadership in identifying and prioritizing diversity, inclusion, and equity needs and priorities for the City of Hamilton. The framework of analysis will address the context for diversity, equity and inclusion within the City of Hamilton;

2. Develop concrete and specific recommendations for benchmarking equity and inclusion policies and practices in every area of City life and work; especially those of governance, partnerships with community, service and program provision and human resources;

3. Provide an implementation framework that outlines City strengths upon which to build as well as barriers and challenges that need to be decisively met; and,

4. Build an evaluation plan including a process with measures and timelines.

The work of the Consultant will be overseen by the Access and Equity Coordinator, the Staff Access and Equity Committee, of which the Community Services Department is a member, and the Advisory Committees of Council. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by July 31, 2008. Upon completion of the project, staff from both the Community Services and Corporate Services Departments will meet to determine if the scope of the proposed Social Inclusion Policy was met and forward any subsequent recommendations to the Emergency and Community Services Committee as required at that time.

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Joe-Anne Priel
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Community Services Department