RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That Council authorize the City of Hamilton’s bid for the 2010 and 2011 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference.

(b) That Council authorize Tourism Hamilton to coordinate the City’s bid initiative and, if successful, refer any City-related financial contributions for hosting the Conference to the 2010 and 2011 Budget process.

(c) That, if successful with the bid, staff form a Coordinating Committee to service the convention.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On July 25, 2008, the City received an invitation to submit a proposal to host either or both of the 2010 and 2011 annual general meeting, conference and trade shows for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). This annual event is the largest municipal conference in Ontario. Proposals are due September 18, 2008, and will be evaluated by a selection panel that will announce the successful host cities the first week of December, 2008.
This is the first time that AMO has invited selected municipalities to bid for its Conference. For the 2010 convention, Hamilton, London, Niagara Falls and Windsor have been invited to submit proposals. For the 2011 convention, the list also includes Ottawa. The prestigious Conference attracts approximately 2,600 attendees over four days. Attendees include delegates, exhibitors, senior Provincial and Federal government elected officials and opinion makers from across Ontario. Hosting AMO's annual convention would provide a similar benefit to when Hamilton hosted the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference in 2002. These kinds of conferences provide the City with the opportunity to bring senior levels of government officials and opinion makers to Hamilton and experience the city in a business setting. Hosting conferences of this stature address one of Council’s strategic priorities of addressing the City’s image.

Two requirements of the bid submission are a signature on the final bid from the City Manager and “appropriate Council or other endorsement”. Should Hamilton’s bid be successful, hosting responsibilities for the City will include liaising with AMO and its conference coordinator (through Tourism Hamilton) for conference planning purposes, providing transportation services for delegates while in the City, and offering a convention grant.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO):**

AMO is a not-for-profit association that represents almost all of Ontario’s 445 municipalities and provides services, including the annual convention, to members and non-members.

**What are the benefits from bidding and hosting the AMO convention?**

There is a variety of benefits from bidding and hosting a convention of this stature, including:

- Image and profile enhancement: conventions can raise a city’s profile domestically and expose the city and its assets to a broader audience. Feedback from previous conventions such as the 2002 FCM Conference indicate that delegates had a positive experience with Hamilton.
- Advance Hamilton’s agenda: senior levels of government officials, including elected officials, attend the AMO convention. There would be ample opportunity during the Conference proceedings to showcase and discuss Hamilton’s priorities.
- Tourism impacts: conventions have a positive economic impact. Accepted industry standards indicate an economic impact of approximately $270.00 per delegate per day for a conference. Using this benchmark, the AMO convention could have an economic impact of approximately $702,000.00. This Conference takes place in August, traditionally a slower time period for conventions. The convention also provides an opportunity to welcome visitors and showcase the City. Hosting a convention like this also adds to Hamilton’s convention resume.
and increases the City’s appeal for other associations to bring their convention to Hamilton.

- Use of HECFI facilities: the convention would use all three HECFI properties including plenary sessions at Hamilton Place, trade show at Copps Coliseum and conference sessions at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

The Convention:

- Takes place annually in August;
- Approximately 2,600 delegates;
- Trade show with 142 booths;
- Banquet for 1,100 delegates; and,
- Requires minimum of 120,000 square feet of meeting and trade show space.

Staff has begun working on the bid proposal, having assessed the Conference’s specifications. Staff is working with HECFI, hotels, City Departments and other hospitality partners to create the bid proposal.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

Hamilton has the opportunity to compete against four other Ontario cities to host this prestigious convention. This is the first time, in recent memory, that AMO has sought proposals for its event. Bringing this convention to Hamilton will add to the City’s convention resume and help in attracting other, similar conventions in the future. The City will need to invest in the convention, including both a cash contribution and services in-kind. There will be both a tangible return on that investment in the form of delegate expenditure in the City through use of the HECFI facilities, parking, accommodations, meals, shopping and transportation. There will also be a soft return on investment with the opportunity to showcase Hamilton and enhance our image with decision-makers and opinion leaders. Although this is a larger convention than Hamilton typically hosts, the City meets the accommodation requirements in the bid specifications. Should additional accommodations be required, there are partnership opportunities with neighbouring Burlington to offer those additional accommodations. This is similar to the plan used successfully to host the 2002 FCM convention.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Council could direct staff not to submit a proposal to host the AMO annual convention.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial:

Bid Costs: Any costs associated with bidding for the convention will be covered in Tourism Hamilton’s 2008 Operating Budget.
Hosting Costs: Should Hamilton be successful with the bid, the costs to host the convention would include the following services: busing (with HSR services); convention grant and services in-kind through Tourism Hamilton. Using the 2002 FCM convention as an example, the total costs to host the convention may range from $50,000.00 to $75,000.00 with costs incurred in each year of hosting the convention (2010 and/or 2011).

Staffing: Tourism Hamilton would project manage the City’s involvement with hosting the convention, including liaising with AMO. There may also be a need for staff to assist with hosting the convention during the event.

Legal: N/A

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Tourism Hamilton Board of Directors
HECFI
Public Works, HSR
Corporate Services, Finance
Local Hotels
Tourism Burlington

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Community Impact:

Hosting conventions is good for municipalities. They provide an opportunity to showcase the city and its attractions to out-of-town delegates. Often delegates visit a city for the first time when attending a convention. Favourable impressions left from a convention can result in the delegate returning as a leisure tourist and sharing the positive convention story with colleagues, friends and family.

Cultural Impact:

Convention delegates will visit many of Hamilton’s cultural facilities, whether as part of the formal program or as part of the companions’ program.
Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.  ☑ Yes ☐ No

N/A.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Conventions provide an economic impact on their host communities. The AMO convention would provide an impact of approximately $702,000.00. This impact comes from expenditures on accommodation, food and beverage, parking, shopping and visiting attractions.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?  ☑ Yes ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?  ☑ Yes ☐ No

Hosting a convention of this stature can provide an opportunity for the City’s staff to welcome peers to their municipality and showcase key projects, providing career development and a point of pride for staff.

:DA