

CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development and Real Estate Division

Report to: Chair and Members Economic Development and Planning Committee	Submitted by: Tim McCabe General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
Date: October 29, 2008	Prepared by: Jacqueline Norton (905) 546-2424, Ext. 4122

SUBJECT: Building a Creative Catalyst (PED08280) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That staff be authorized and directed to investigate collaborative opportunities with the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts for the purpose of identifying Cultural Industry based projects within Arts and Culture development projects in Hamilton.
- (b) That staff be authorized to develop a terms of reference to retain a consultant to investigate such opportunities including a needs analysis, potential site locations and analysis of targeted sites, potential uses within the building(s), future funding for the project, best practices, legal structure and management of the facility and the partnership with the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts.
- (c) That the City's role in this initiative be led by the Economic Development and Real Estate Division in cooperation with the Portfolio Management Committee.
- (d) That \$150,000 for the estimated financing of this study be funded from the Economic Development Investment Fund, Account No. 112221.

Tim McCabe
General Manager
Planning and Economic Development Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Hamilton has been approached by representatives of the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts (ICCA) with a proposal to develop a cultural anchor in the City.

This cultural anchor or, Creative Catalyst, would be a mixed use and artistic centre, bringing together a number of disciplines and uses such as artists, filmmakers, technology companies and support/tertiary agencies and companies within a publicly accessible space in a key location within the City. Staff have met with the ICCA Executive Director and Board along with the Mayor and Councillor Bratina to review the proposal and now recommend support for moving this project forward for further investigation.

BACKGROUND:

The Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts (ICCA) is a non-profit organization, founded in 2004, which manages three (3) studio facilities in Hamilton including a portion of 270 Sherman Avenue North, the Paper Box Studios on Cumberland and 302 Cumberland. The mission of the ICCA is to make the creation, exploration and self-presentation of artistic works affordable for artists in every discipline, and to act as a feeder space for the burgeoning professional arts community in the City. Within the greater community, the ICCA sees its role as being a catalyst for creativity in Hamilton; not only in the arts but other areas of innovation where creativity is pivotal.

The City of Hamilton has been approached by ICCA representatives with a proposal to develop a cultural and creative space in the City which will function as an anchor and a spur to the creative community as an economic hub. This creative community would include artists, musicians, filmmakers, technology companies and related industries and associations. This facility would serve as an international example of creativity within the urban environment of the City. A site has not been chosen but there are some locations that are currently owned by the City of Hamilton that are of specific interest for this project. The choice of a location for the "Creative Catalyst" would be analyzed as part of the necessary investigation into this project.

The chosen building will be transformed by an innovative architectural plan into an exciting and user friendly creative centre incorporating studios, practice facilities, performance spaces and ancillary areas with access by the public to certain spaces within the building. It is also anticipated that there would be opportunities, adjacent to the building, for other related developments such as residential/live-work space.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The role of creative industries was recognized by the City of Hamilton through the 2005 Economic Development Strategy with the identification of 'Film and Culture' industries as a unique emerging cluster in the city. The creation of this cluster was an important first step in recognizing the economic impact that creative industries play in the Hamilton economy.

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Growth of Hamilton's culture cluster has been reported a number of times over the last three (3) years in the local and Toronto based media outlets and has garnered strong support in the community. The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Toronto This Week, CBC Radio, among others, have focused new interest on the growing arts and culture scene in Hamilton.

Most of these references have centred around the significant movement of the Toronto-based Arts community to Hamilton. At the same time, we are seeing an incredible mobilization of our local arts and culture community, particularly in the City's downtown core. Activities of organizations such as the ICCA, the Pearl Company, the Factory Media Arts Centre, Hamilton Artists' Inc., Arts Hamilton and many others in and around James Street, are bringing together artists and organizations to create synergies, develop space and improve awareness and community interest.

On any given Friday of every month one can find the Art Bus cruising to different galleries in the City or a James North Art Crawl where people experience many forms of art and stroll the sidewalks and savour the tastes of nearby cafes and restaurants. These artistic tours are a perfect fit for James Street since it is one of Hamilton's most historic neighbourhoods. This, coupled with growth in the Downtown housing market which is drawing people back to the Core, is having a strong, positive impact on the cultural fabric of the City.

The proposal by the ICCA to develop a 'Creative Catalyst' in the City therefore, comes to us at an opportune time. Hamilton's Film and Culture Cluster is poised for exponential growth yet we still lack a well-supported, focused location to spur the growth of arts, culture and film in the City.

There are many examples of creative spaces in other cities such as:

- Torpedo Factory, Alexandria, VI
- Steelyard, Providence, RI
- Chelsea Piers, NY
- Green Arts Barns and 401, Richmond, Toronto

These examples of creative developments link together arts and culture with a multitude of other uses and public access within older industrial, underutilized spaces in their cities. In many cases, they have become major economic and creative catalysts of growth. The ICCA project, in collaboration with the City of Hamilton, also has the potential to serve as an economic and creative catalyst.

Through the Portfolio Management Committee, with the addition of other key staff and partners, a review of public/private partnerships would be undertaken with a view to crafting a relationship with the ICCA that fits Hamilton's specific needs.

Secondly, a terms of reference to hire a consultant would be drafted and tendered to further this public/private collaborative, detail the framework for this joint project, identify potential sites and undertake a technical, neighbourhood and design-based analysis of a preferred site(s). It is anticipated that this process will be completed by the summer of 2009 with a full report coming back to this Committee/Council for review and approval.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

N/A

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial: \$150,000 be funded from the Economic Development Investment Fund, Account No. 112221.

Staffing: Project lead will come from Economic Development and Real Estate Division coordinated through the Portfolio Management Committee. It will be a major time commitment of one (1) Business Development Consultant (Film).

Legal: Legal implications will be identified as part of the scope of work by the consultants to be hired in 2009.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Consultation has taken place with staff from the Portfolio Management Committee as well as other staff from Planning and Economic Development, Community Services (Housing Division and Culture Division) and Public Works Departments.

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

Arts, culture, archaeological and cultural heritage are supported and enhanced.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

Brownfield sites will be reviewed and considered along with sustainable building practices under LEED.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. Yes No

Cultural industries are enhanced.

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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

JN:db