



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Prosperity Initiative: Establishing The Path To Growth

Date:	May 16, 2011
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:/2011/Cluster A/EDC/ECON DEV/June 2/ed1106-019

SUMMARY

This report presents the priority action area recommendations and future initiatives developed by the Toronto Prosperity Initiative Advisory Committee and contained in their report, *Toronto Prosperity Initiative: Establishing The Path For Growth*.
http://www.toronto.ca/business_publications/pdf/path_for_growth.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council endorse in principle the recommendations and future initiatives contained in the report from the Toronto Prosperity Initiative Advisory Committee, and direct the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture Division to report back in the fall with an implementation plan, including financial impacts, within the context of the core service review.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There are no immediate financial impacts to the City as a result of the approval of this report. Any financial impacts resulting from the implementation of the recommendations and future initiatives contained in the Toronto Prosperity Initiative's report will be

included in the report back from the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In appointing Councillor Michael Thompson as Chair of the Economic Development Committee, Mayor Ford tasked him with developing an action plan to improve the business and cultural climate in Toronto and accelerate sustainable economic activity.

In December 2010, Councillor Thompson convened the Toronto Prosperity Initiative Advisory Committee comprised of prominent business and labour leaders. Ensuring direct input from business and labour was essential to the success of this initiative, as it is the private sector, not government that creates jobs. The Advisory Committee was asked to develop a short list of actionable recommendations to stimulate job creation and economic growth by improving the efficiency of City policies, programs and operations and establishing a positive, customer focussed service delivery culture.

Subject to City Council approval in principle of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, implementation plans will be prepared by appropriate City staff.

OVERVIEW

Cities around the world are facing an array of economic, fiscal and operational challenges. Toronto, like many other cities, has in the past sought to address these issues with a series of temporary solutions and property tax increases. While the recession of 2008/2009 exacerbated the prevailing situation, Toronto emerged from the economic downturn better positioned for success than most other major cities around the world. Realizing this success, however, will require thoughtful, focussed and deliberate actions.

At Councillor Thompson's invitation, Blake Goldring, Chairman & CEO, AGF Management Ltd., agreed to serve as Chair of an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was comprised of seventeen senior executive business and labour leaders. The members brought a broad base of knowledge, expertise and both strategic and practical experience to the discussion of relevant city issues and how they affect the economy.

Five meetings of the Advisory Committee were convened by the Chair to discuss issues and opportunities, generate a long list of potential action areas, develop assessment criteria, identify priorities and make recommendations.

The Committee members noted that effecting the fundamental change necessary for sustained success would require a cultural shift in how the City does business. The Committee also recognized that there is no quick fix; however, it is essential that the City take quick action to initiate the change process. Consequently, it focussed its attention on identifying actions that could be implemented and show results in the short-term, while also contributing to the cultural shift necessary for long term sustainability. The

Committee deliberated on actions that would increase transparency and accountability, improve efficiencies, make better use of existing assets, and establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration.

The Advisory Committee recommended action areas for priority implementation by City Council and staff. These priority action areas have a strong emphasis on achieving results quickly but effecting change that will have long lasting impacts. Additional action areas that would take longer to implement and generate results are also included in the Advisory Committee's report as future initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The Advisory Committee recommendations align with the strategic framework presented to the Economic Development Committee by its Chair at its meeting in January 2011. That is, to improve Toronto's business climate and accelerate sustainable jobs and investment growth by expanding external and internal collaboration, focusing on quality jobs, re-engineering the business/government interface, and emphasizing measurement.

Implementing the recommended priority action areas quickly will create some much needed positive momentum and make it easier to gain the public and stakeholder support necessary to advance longer term objectives. Other benefits arising from the implementation of the Committee's recommendations include: reducing the friction too often encountered in day-to-day interactions with the City, reduce costs and generate additional revenue for the City, and increase accountability for results

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SIGNATURE

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