



April 24, 2007

Mayor and Council  
City of Brockville  
Box 5000  
Brockville, Ontario

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce acts as the 'Voice of Business' in this community serving over 560 members including businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our mission statement is to foster a competitive business environment in the Brockville region that benefits the people of this region through the growth of jobs, wealth and quality of life. This submission addresses the City of Brockville's Corporate Service Review.

The Corporate Service Review Report proposes using the template "Making Choices" developed by the Ontario Government. If this template is followed closely it will address the questions raised by the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce 2007 Budget Study. However the template does not properly address how to implement the program. A municipality really only has one chance to do it well, otherwise the impact will be lost.

The Chamber commends Council for taking on this ambitious project. It will take a lot of resolve by Council to ensure that the implementation is not side tracked or watered down by resistance to going to the depth needed to achieve results. The Chamber would like to see an actual budget set for the Service Review as Council's commitment of money and resources to ensure this project's very high priority.

To implement the Corporate Service Review properly, it must involve every City employee. It is the employees, not the Supervisors or Department Heads that really know where the inefficiencies, waste, and roadblocks to carrying out their jobs are. Even in getting the data that will be needed to evaluate a particular service, the information lies with the employees on how much time a particular task takes. The accounting data only can provide costs of labour, materials, and some overheads. In almost all cases there is no data on how long a particular task takes, or how often the public calls for a service. City employees must be brought into the project in a positive way to get proper data.

The City employees need to be brought into the process in a meaningful way and have to be "on-side" with the idea of digging deeply into their operations and jobs to find the true costs, and to find alternative ways of doing things. It is those front line employees who will have creative and innovative ideas on how to provide a particular

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service in another way. It is also those employees whose input is needed to evaluate, in detail, an alternative way of delivering a service proposed by Senior Staff.

The Corporate Service Review Project needs an internal Champion to drive the process so that the City gets real value from it. This Champion must ensure that the Project maintains its priority, its focus, its timeliness, and is able to communicate this to all involved. There is a large facilitation role in getting all of the employees to work positively on the project. The Champion would also have coordination and communication responsibilities both internally and externally. Because of the large amount of time required, and the need to have an open dialogue with all levels of employees, the Chamber does not see this as being done by the City Manager.

In addition to having an internal Champion to spearhead the process, keep it on track, and provide proper communication, there is a large facilitation role. While the internal Champion can do some of the facilitator's role, they will need additional help. The facilitation role will involve a large amount of time to set up the parameters in each service area, get buy in, and train and coach the staff and employees to get proper inputs and meaningful data. The facilitation role will also involve working with staff and employees in analyzing data, ideas and alternatives to that particular service being reviewed. An outside facilitator may be advantageous in providing an element of impartiality, which would lead to better buy-in by the employees.

There are many people from business and industry trained in this role. The Chamber believes that the City should look seriously at hiring outside help. In reviewing a particular service or area, a facilitator or consultant could be brought on to do a well-defined task because of his background, with his role limited to that task. For another area, a different consultant with different skills could be brought in. The use of an outside consultant would result in the timely completion of the process, be less of a burden to senior staff and less costly overall.

It is so important that the City get the Corporate Service Review done right the first time. If it isn't done right, besides not getting the savings the City is looking for, it will be a long time in the future before people will accept the process being tried again. Implementation is so important that Council shouldn't rush in without the confidence that the plan they are endorsing is going to be successful in achieving savings, and in having whatever changes resulting from the Corporate Service Review accepted by the public and by the employees.

The Chamber has talked to senior managers of some of Brockville's larger industrial employers about the process. These companies have been through similar processes and have experienced people who have facilitated and implemented these programs. The Chamber believes that Council and City Staff should talk to these people to get their experiences in a process such as this. The implementation is so important that discussion with these people will help Council and Staff with some key details and decisions that must be resolved before the process is started.

The Chamber is available to set up these discussions at any time, in any format that the Council and City Staff want. Again, we commend Council on taking on this process. If it is implemented well, we believe that the Corporate Service Review has the potential to find significant savings, and is key to finding creative ways of delivering services in the future. It is because of the potential of this project, and the resolve needed to get to the depth needed, that the Chamber has such an interest in its success.

Respectfully submitted,

Gord Cameron, Chair  
City of Brockville Corporate Service Review Task Group  
Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce