





**REPORT NO. 31**  
of the  
**International Relations Committee**  
at its meetings held  
April 12, 2012  
3:00 o'clock p.m.  
Walkerville Room, 350 CityHall Square West

**Members Present at April 12, 20 meeting:**

Councillor Drew Dilkens, Chair  
Councillor Percy Hatfield  
Councillor Ron Jones  
Councillor Al Maghnieh  
Jerry Barycki  
GuyDiPonio  
Blake Roberts  
Dr. Frank Simpson

Your Committee submits the following recommendation:

Moved by Councillor Hatfield, seconded by Councillor Jones,  
That the administrative report entitled "Invitation to Participate in, an  
International Desk Exchange Program through the Downtown Windsor Business  
Accelerator" **BE FORWARDED** to City Council for support.  
Carried.

**Livelihood #15649**

**Clerk's Note:** The administrative report authored by the Chief Administrative Officer dated March 19, 2012 entitled "Invitation to Participate in an International Desk Exchange Program through the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator" is attached as background information.

**CHAIRPERSON**

**SECRETARY**

<b>NOTIFICATION</b>		
International Relations . Committee		

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR  
Office of Chief Administrative Officer

MISSION STATEMENT:

"The City of Windsor, with the involvement of its citizens, will deliver effective and responsive municipal services, and will mobilize innovative community partnerships"

<b>LiveLink REPORT#: 15649</b>	<b>Report Date: March 19, 2012</b>
<b>Author's Name: Diane Ryan</b>	<b>Date to Committee:</b>
<b>Author's Phone: 519 255-6100 ext. 6312</b>	<b>Classification #:</b>
<b>Author's E-mail: dryan@city.windsor.on.ca</b>	

**To: Members of the International Relations Committee**

**Subject:** Invitation to Participate in an International Desk Exchange Program through the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator

1. **RECOMMENDATION:** City Wide:  Ward(s): \_\_\_

THAT Members of the International Relations Committee **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** this report regarding an International Desk Exchange Program and direct their comment or recommendations, if any, to City Council.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

N/A

**2 BACKGROUND:**

Windsor has been approached to participate in the International Desk program because Windsor is a sister city of Mannheim, Germany and Mannheim has extended this invitation to all of its partner and related towns. We understand the following partners have already signed the agreement to participate: Bygdoszcz (Poland); Berlin (Germany); Haifa (Israel); Klaipeda (Lithuania); Qingdao (China); Mannheim (Germany); and that the following partners were also considering participation: Swansea (Wales/Great Britain); Toulon (France); and Beyoglu (Istanbul/Turkey).

**What is the International Desk Exchange Program?**

The International Desk Exchange Program is designed so the participating locales provide office space within start-up centres, together with technical infrastructure for small and medium sized enterprises, for a maximum of three months. The participating centres support "guest companies" in their search for contacts and networking within the local structure and in overcoming administrative hurdles in order to make it easier to enter the international market. This is an economic development program created to initiate, expand and strengthen the international exchange of companies, economic potential, innovation, knowledge and networks between the involved partners.

### What is the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator?

The Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator is Windsor's local start-up centre. It is a not-for profit organization enterprise initiated by the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Association. It opened June 1, 2011 and is located at 720 Ouellette Avenue in a facility of 7,000 square feet. The space is comprised of 23 open concept offices, 14 offices, three group-meeting rooms, three living rooms, a library, kitchen and copy room. Tenants have access to fully furnished workspaces, telephone and internet, a shared receptionist, training opportunities, and mentoring from local business professionals. Rates are charged according to use. This location is also home to WETech Alliance, Windsor Essex's Technology Accelerator-focused on building a regional technology community.

### 3. **DISCUSSION:**

Because the City of Windsor does not operate or fund our local start-up centre, the CAO assumed the role of liaison with the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator and the Windsor Essex Economic Development Commission (WEEDC) to evaluate the benefits of the exchange program and gauge interest in pursuing this agreement with Mannheim and its sister cities.

There was consensus by the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator's Board of Directors that the exchange program appears to have merit and to be a good fit with the start-up centre, in line with the goals of developing business, creating jobs and enhancing prosperity for our region.

Companies enlisting the services of the International Desk may do so for a maximum of three months per partnering city. Although the start-up centres coordinate the infrastructure and advisory support services, costs associated with these provisions should be kept to a minimum as they are charged to the guest company.

It is noted that participating partners/host start-up centres have the benefit of exchanging information with one another.

Signing of the agreement is subject to approval by the Board of Directors of the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator. It is brought to the International Relations Committee for information purposes and to ensure there are no objections to this venture given that the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator is not funded or sponsored by the City of Windsor, but may be perceived as Windsor's "ambassador" in this area only. The Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator seeks comments from the International Relations Committee and City Council.

### 4. **RISK ANALYSIS:**

There is no financial risk associated with the City of Windsor facilitating the agreement between the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator and the international partner cities participating in this exchange program.

Not participating in the program could potentially create a false impression that the City of Windsor is not actively engaged in economic development initiatives that foster business attraction and growth. There is also potential that a real opportunity could be missed through lack of participation.

**5. FINANCIAL MATIERS:**

There is no cost to the Corporation of the City of Windsor for this endeavour.

Costs associated with provision of space, equipment, and internet access within the start-up centre as provided by the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator are charged to the guest company. Advisory support services are provided free of charge and are considered a contribution to mutual cooperation and exchange between the partner and the host city.

**6. CONSULTATIONS:**

Tony Paniccia, Manager, Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator  
Ron Gaudet, CEO, Windsor Essex Economic Development Commission

**7. CONCLUSION:**

The potential benefits of participating in the International Desk Exchange Program appear to have merit and have been deemed worthwhile through discussions with the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator and the Windsor Essex Economic Development Committee.

The decision to enter into this agreement is a decision left to the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator's Board of Directors; however, City Council, through its International Relations Committee, is advised of this initiative as it is the City of Windsor who holds the twin city relationship with Mannheim, Germany.

**Manager of Corporate Administration  
and Assistant to the CAO**

/dr

**APPENDICES: N/A**

<b>NOTIFICATION:</b>				
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