BRAMPTON

Date: 2024-06-18

Subject: **City-wide Hackathon**

Contact: Clare Barnett, Director, Economic Development

Report number: CAO's Office-2024-538

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Clare Barnett, Director, Economic Development & International Relations, to the City Council Meeting of June 26, 2024, re: **City-wide Hackathon**, be received; and

2. That staff be directed to begin organizing a city-wide hackathon, including identifying an appropriate local challenge, defining a problem statement, and implementing marketing and promotional tactics.

OVERVIEW:

- **The City of Brampton has a demonstrated history of supporting innovation through various initiatives, including community-led hackathons like Wolfhacks, ElleHacks and HackHERfest.**

- **At the June 5, 2024, Committee of Council meeting, a motion was brought forward by Regional Councillor Toor directing staff to investigate the feasibility of executing a city-wide hackathon.**

- **The City of Brampton's Economic Development Office proposes a day long hackathon at City Hall for youth and young adults from Brampton, to take place on Sunday, September 22, 2024. A problem statement will be defined to address the specific details of this challenge.**

- **The hackathon aims to foster collaboration, promote local talent within the Innovation District and stimulate economic development through potential business creation.**

- **The recommendations in this report to host a city-wide hackathon will result in expected costs of $30,000, which will be funded from the 2024 Economic Development approved operating budget.**

BACKGROUND:

The City of Brampton has a demonstrated history of supporting innovation through various initiatives, including community-led hackathons such as WolfHacks and HackHERfest.

At the June 5, 2024, Committee of Council meeting, staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of executing a city-wide hackathon (Attachment 1).

Hackathons are intensive computer programming events where participants collaborate to develop solutions to specific challenges within a short timeframe. They offer several advantages:

- **Develop Local Talent**: They provide a platform for Brampton's talented individuals to showcase their skills and gain exposure to potential employers.

- **Stimulate Entrepreneurship**: They can ignite entrepreneurial spirit, with winning ideas potentially leading to new startups and job creation.

- **Address Local Challenges**: By focusing on local issues relevant to the City, hackathons can generate solutions that directly benefit Brampton's residents and businesses.

A city-wide hackathon aligns with the City's established commitment to nurturing a vibrant Innovation District and fostering collaborative problem-solving to address local challenges.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The City faces a number of challenges that impact the community's well-being and prosperity. This hackathon presents a unique opportunity for participants to leverage their creativity and technical expertise to tackle these challenges and develop innovative solutions.

Following consultation with key stakeholders, a specific local challenge will be identified. This challenge will define the focus areas for the hackathon, allowing participants to develop targeted solutions.

Staff will work closely with community partners to provide mentorship and support to participating teams and will collaborate with Innovation District partners to advance products and solutions and develop new companies as a result of the hackathon. Staff will also work to attract sponsors to secure funding for the event.

The hackathon will take place on Sunday, September 22, 2024, at Brampton City Hall.

The top three teams will be awarded prizes for their innovative contributions. The specific prizes will be announced closer to the event date.

Following the event, staff will conduct an evaluation to assess its effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

The recommendations in this report to host a city-wide hackathon will result in expected costs of $30,000, which will be funded from the 2024 Economic Development approved operating budget.

Purchasing Implications:

To support the development and implementation of viable solutions post-hackathon, Economic Development staff will work with Purchasing to determine the appropriate procurement pathway.

Any solutions shall be aligned to and in accordance with the Purchasing By-Law.

Communications Implications:

Economic Development staff will work with Strategic Communications to develop a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy for this event. Staff will also engage with post-secondary institutions and Innovation District partners to market the opportunity to students and founders.

Legal Implications:

Legal will review, provide advice as requested, and approve as to form any Agreement(s) related to this hackathon.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report supports the Strategic Focus Areas of Growing Urban Centres & Neighbourhoods, Transit & Connectivity, and Environmental Resilience & Sustainability.

CONCLUSION:

By bringing together talented minds and fostering collaboration, the proposed city-wide hackathon offers a unique opportunity to drive innovation and economic development and has the potential to generate impactful solutions for the Logistics Innovation Zone.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – City-wide Hackathon Motion