

Date: September 20, 2019

Subject: **Development and Establishment of Brampton University to complement existing Council partnerships and investments**

Contact: Al Meneses, Commissioner, Community Services

Recommendations:

1. That the report from the C.A.O.'s office and Al Meneses, Commissioner, Community Services, dated September 20, 2019 to the Council Meeting of September 25, 2019, re: **Development and Establishment of Brampton University to complement existing Council partnerships and investments** be received, and
2. That staff be directed to proceed with the following steps, towards developing and establishing a University in the City of Brampton:
 - (a) Commence a public competitive procurement process to retain the services of a qualified and experienced organization to undertake advocacy efforts in order to obtain confirmation of support for the establishment of a University in the City of Brampton and to coordinate various public engagement opportunities, including, but not limited to, Town Hall meetings to inform, educate and seek input from Brampton residents and businesses; and
 - (b) Commence a public competitive procurement process to initiate work on potential University program offerings that reflect the types of identified and required skills in the future economy and current high-demand skills that employers are seeking, by hiring, a qualified organization, and to make recommendations to Council regarding these matters in the future;

Overview:

- City Council has made post-secondary education, specifically, the expansion of post-secondary education opportunities within Brampton's borders, a priority;
- Interest in the establishment of new, and an expansion of existing, post-secondary education opportunities within the City of Brampton has been confirmed through discussions with various stakeholders.

- Staff seek direction to proceed with next steps in the development and establishment of a University in Brampton to gauge public and private sector interest, including the procurement of consulting services to assist in advocating and assessing interest in and programming for expanding post-secondary opportunities within Brampton.

Background:

Despite the Province's decision to pull back funding for a new University campus in Brampton, Council has made post-secondary education, and specifically, establishing additional post-secondary opportunities for Brampton residents in Brampton, a top priority. Both residents and businesses alike have made it clear that there is sufficient demand for increased post-secondary opportunities in Brampton. In response to those demands, Council has demonstrated its support and desire to collaborate with existing institutions by providing support for increased course offerings and a general expansion of opportunities for Brampton residents.

A strong case had been made for the establishment of a Brampton University that could eventually grow to 30,000 students over the next 10 – 20 years. The case is justified by economic, equity, educational and efficiency proposals.

Current Situation:

Following direction from Council, the Mayor has confirmed discussions with various stakeholders were positive and there is a strong interest among existing and new institutions to both expand existing and establish new post-secondary education facilities and programs in the City of Brampton.

At the recent Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference held in August, the Mayor-led City of Brampton delegation advocated for a stronger post-secondary presence in Brampton. Since then and following further meeting with the office of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and University, the Province has expressed a continued interest in and support for a University in Brampton.

More recently, in a meeting with the Parliamentary Assistant (PA) to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference, the Mayor-led City of Brampton delegation advocated for a stronger post-secondary presence in Brampton. The PA made a commitment to continue the dialogue on the proposed concept and follow up meetings with the City were scheduled

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for September 18, 2019. The Province has expressed an interest to consider a business case for a University in the absence of Provincial capital funding

Adding to the positivity surrounding the potential establishment of a University in Brampton, in early September the Province announced that it was reversing its original decision and that it is now prepared to move forward with funding to build the Province's first French-language post-secondary institution. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Federal government to help fund the costs. This announcement signals that the Province is prepared to listen and support new post-secondary models that meets their checklist of accountability, prioritizing students, and institutions that are focused on jobs that employers are seeking.

As a result, the City is positioned to explore and execute a comprehensive plan with a focus on expanding the presence of post-secondary education opportunities within Brampton in a financially responsible manner. The proposed Brampton University will focus on program offerings that meet both the needs of current employers and future needs of employers. The process would include other ancillary issues, such as exploring student housing as part of the overall plan.

Staff seek directions to move forward with the next steps in the development and establishment of a University in Brampton as follows:

- Commence a public competitive procurement process to retain the services of a qualified and experienced organization to undertake advocacy efforts in order to obtain confirmation of support for the establishment of a University in the City of Brampton and to coordinate various public engagement opportunities, including, but not limited to, Town Hall meetings to inform, educate and seek input from Brampton residents and businesses; and
- Commence a public competitive procurement process to initiate work on potential University program offerings that reflect the types of identified and required skills in the future economy and current high-demand skills that employers are seeking, by hiring, a qualified organization, and to make recommendations to Council regarding these matters in the future

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Through previously approved Council direction, staff will utilize an existing available funding source of up to \$300,000 from the Office of the CAO towards further examining, developing and establishing a Brampton University.

Funding and financing requirements for the implementation of a Brampton University will need to be determined through development of a complete business case for Council's consideration.

Other Implications:

Earlier in 2019, staff were directed to initiate the Action Committee on Innovation and Post-Secondary Education, which consists of representatives from Brampton's three post-secondary partners, school boards, library, and members of the former Blue Ribbon Panel, amongst others. Staff will consult with that committee at the appropriate time.

Strategic Plan:

This report achieves the current Term of Council priority of Good Government through the establishment of an incremental process that limits expenditures to reasonable amounts to explore Provincial and Federal support for a Brampton University. As the process unfolds, staff will return to Council on a regular basis with updates and seek Council direction on next steps, which promotes corporate accountability, provides valuable lessons for any possible future exploratory talks of any kind, and governance best practice.

Conclusion:

Staff seek direction to proceed with incremental steps towards developing and establishing a Brampton University, as outlined above.

Staff will return to Council on a regular basis with updates as the process unfolds and develops.

Al Meneses
Commissioner, Community Services