

Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee

Meeting No. 14
Meeting Date Friday, October 22, 2021
Start Time 1:00 PM
Location Video Conference

Contact Jonathan Canchela, Committee Secretary
Phone 416-338-5089
E-mail aaac@toronto.ca

AA14.1	ACTION	Amended		Ward: All
--------	--------	---------	--	-----------

The Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship: A Step Along the Long Road of Reconciliation

Committee Decision

The Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, to select an Indigenous-led organization or consortium to operate the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship through an open competitive solicitation process in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Code Chapters 71 and 195, City policies and procedures.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, and when appropriate, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, to negotiate, enter into, and execute, on behalf of the City, an operating, contribution/funding or any related Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship program agreements on such terms deemed necessary and appropriate by the City and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, with the designated operator of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship or other parties wishing to financially support the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, provided that required City funding is approved through the City's budget process. All such agreements, which may have a term of up to 10 years, shall be based upon respect, consultation and co-operation with the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship operator and draw inspiration from the Two Row Wampum that upholds Indigenous autonomy.

3. City Council endorse the key goals and elements of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship program model, as detailed in this report, which include: to provide a culturally safe space, connections, supports, programming and resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs and innovators; and to be an entrepreneurial resource centre by and for the Indigenous community.
4. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to recommend for City Council's consideration, as part of the 2022 budget process, adequate and appropriate funding for (a) the City's portion of Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship start-up costs between 2022 and first quarter 2024 and (b) a reasonable share of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's annual operating expenses for a period of not less than 10 years.
5. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, to report back to Council on the status of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in fourth quarter 2022.
6. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, to report regularly on the progress of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee.

Decision Advice and Other Information

Michele Baptiste, Project Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and Tobias Novogrodsky, Director, Business Growth Services, Economic Development and Culture, gave a presentation to the Committee.

Origin

(September 20, 2021) Report from the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office

Summary

At its meeting on October 22, 2021, Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee considered Item [AA14.1](#) and made recommendations to City Council.

Summary from the report (September 20, 2021) from the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office:

This report acknowledges that the land we call Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

This report updates City Council on the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's purpose, construction, funding, program model, and proposed Indigenous governance and accountability framework.

The planned 22,000 sq. ft. Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship facility will be situated in a commercial space located at 200 Dundas Street East. The first of its kind in Ontario, when it opens in 2023 the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship will become one of only a handful of incubators in Canada dedicated to Indigenous economic empowerment and business development. As such, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship presents a significant opportunity to support and connect First Nations, Inuit and Métis entrepreneurs across Toronto, Ontario and Canada to critical resources and each other.

After many years of planning, collaboration and conversation with and among Indigenous communities in Toronto and beyond, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is now moving from planning to implementation. This project is a central pillar of the City of Toronto's collective reconciliation commitments and strategies, including the Reconciliation Action Plan, and concretely addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92 which states: "Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects."

A Leadership Advisory Circle of Indigenous leaders, entrepreneurs, Elders and community members has guided the planning and implementation of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship since April 2019. The Leadership Advisory Circle's advice informs this report's core recommendations that (i) Council direct City staff to use an open, transparent, competitive process to select an Indigenous-led organization or consortium to serve as the operator of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and that (ii) agreements between the City of Toronto and the operator of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship be inspired by the Two Row Wampum's notion of equitable, peaceful, respectful co-existence between different nations.

A preliminary Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship program model has been developed through conversations with the Indigenous community and based on the "Nothing About Us Without Us" principle of self-determination. Grounded in needs and objectives defined by the Indigenous community, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship will aim to provide culturally safe spaces, connections, and resources for Indigenous business and social entrepreneurs.

To date, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship project and facility has been funded through a combination of Council approved Section 37 funds, reallocations within Economic Development and Culture's approved operating budget, and a grant from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).

Looking ahead, the City's portion of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship project's forecast operating costs for 2022 through first quarter 2024, totaling

\$3,304,729, are currently unfunded. There is also a need and opportunity for the City to confirm a longer-term funding contribution to support annual Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship operating expenses in a manner which strengthens the centre's ability to attract third party funding, advances Toronto's economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19, and represents a generational investment in Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity.

Accordingly, this report proposes that adequate and appropriate funding to cover the City's portion of Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship start-up costs and to provide an annual contribution for the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's annual operating expenses be recommended for Council's consideration as part of the 2022 budget process.

Background Information

(September 20, 2021) Report and Attachment 1 from the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office on the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship: A Step Along the Long Road of Reconciliation (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/aa/bgrd/backgroundfile-171917.pdf>)

(October 22, 2021) Presentation from the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office on Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/aa/bgrd/backgroundfile-172280.pdf>)

Speakers

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam