

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM47.87	ACTION			Ward: All
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CivicLabTO 2.0 - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with Toronto-based higher education institutions and selected research-oriented urban research institutions, to report back to City Council by Spring 2023 on ways to strengthen the City-university-college relationship, including consideration of establishing a new CivicLabTO non-governmental organization.

Summary

The first iteration of CivicLabTO has been a tremendous success. Initiatives including the Academic Working Group, the CivicLabTO Curriculum, and the CivicLabTO Summit have strengthened collaborations with academic partners to facilitate intellectual exchange, support data-driven decision making, and to advance a new model for connecting the City's strategic priorities to higher education institutions. Further accomplishments are detailed in the recent report from the City Manager dated April 21, 2022 (EX32.7).

How do we take CivicLabTO to the next level? A dedicated non-governmental organization (NGO) could build on our existing accomplishments to scale up and accelerate the work of CivicLabTO. Learning from precedents in Boston, USA, and London, UK, as well as the analogous local example of the Toronto Academic Health Science Network, the CivicLabTO NGO could be a shared venture between the City of Toronto and higher education institutions – combining our strengths, and reducing the individual resource burden. Once established, the NGO should seek self-sufficiency through grants and partnerships with the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors.

The opportunities of a CivicLabTO NGO include:

- Accessing new funding opportunities traditionally not accessible to municipalities;
- An annual or bi-annual working Summit to develop the top issues where research opportunities would meet City needs;
- The development of mechanisms for connecting the relevant faculty with City staff;
- Creating university and college courses for students as the next generation of City administrators to meet senior City staff and understand the City's functioning and issues

first hand;

- Ensuring City staff have awareness and actionable knowledge of global best practices on the wide range of issues confronting Toronto;
- Breaking down barriers and silos between the practical expertise of City staff and the research expertise of Toronto's academic community.

This Motion recommends that the City Manager initiate discussions about a CivicLabTO NGO with leadership at higher education institutions in Toronto as well as relevant stakeholders, and report back to City Council in 2023.

This Motion is urgent in order for discussions with partners to begin during the summer of this year, due to the length of time before the next regularly-scheduled City Council meeting in the new term.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM47.87