

Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity

Date: October 31, 2023
To: The Board of Directors of CreateTO
From: Chief Executive Officer
Wards: Ward 5 - York South-Weston

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The attachment to this report is about a position, plan, procedure, criteria, or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Board of Directors of CreateTO.

SUMMARY

The CreateTO Board and City Council directed the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to report back to the CreateTO Board in 2023 on the status of the viability of the three sites identified in the Mount Dennis area, pursuant to [RA30.6 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#), referred by the CreateTO Board to City Council as [GL30.16 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#). This report provides a further update on this review and confirms the addition of one site after a thorough review and the continued due diligence on the first three potential sites.

A Memorandum of Understanding was executed between CreateTO and George Brown College to continue this due diligence work which speaks to the feasibility of a post-secondary campus and City-building opportunities in the Mount Dennis area, feeding into the George Brown College lead Campus Master Plan review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer of CreateTO recommends that:

1. The Board of Directors of CreateTO direct that the confidential information contained in Confidential Attachment 1 remain confidential in its entirety, as it is about a position,

plan, procedure, criteria, or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Board of Directors of CreateTO.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate additional financial impacts arising from the recommendations in this report. Resources required to support this project including the feasibility exercise and the necessary due diligence work undertaken by CreateTO and the City are being allocated from the current staffing complement and are part of the 2023 Council Approved Budgets for CreateTO as well as partnering City Divisions. Any potential costs and funding requirements will be presented for City Council consideration in future budget submissions by partnering City Divisions.

DECISION HISTORY

On May 11, 2022, City Council authorized CreateTO, City Manager, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and other Divisions as needed, to engage and if required, enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with representatives from George Brown College, and to participate in a Campus Master Plan review exercise that includes the exploration of the feasibility of a post-secondary campus and City-building opportunity in the Mount Dennis area and potentially other areas of the City in relation to the Campus Master Plan review.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.GL30.16>

On April 12, 2022, The Board of Directors of CreateTO recommended that CreateTO engage with the named stakeholders, and if required, enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to explore the feasibility of a post-secondary campus and City-building opportunity in the Mount Dennis area and potentially other areas of the City. CreateTO to update the Board of Directors of CreateTO with results of this work, next steps and recommendations.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/gl/bgrd/backgroundfile-224525.pdf>

On March 30, 2022, The Board of Directors of CreateTO recommended that CreateTO engage with the named stakeholders, and if required, enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to explore the feasibility of a post-secondary campus and City-building opportunity in the Mount Dennis area and potentially other areas of the City. CreateTO to update the Board of Directors of CreateTO with results of this work, next steps and recommendations.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/gl/bgrd/backgroundfile-224526.pdf>

On April 27, 2022 the Name of the George Brown College was made public.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/gl/bgrd/backgroundfile-224527.pdf>

On March 10, 2021, City Council requested CreateTO, in consultation with Corporate Real Estate Management and Economic Development and Culture, to identify City owned, other publicly-owned and privately-owned land in the Mount Dennis area that would be suitable for a post-secondary campus and that the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to continue to engage post-secondary institutions on the creation of a post-secondary campus or presence in the area.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.MM30.12>

COMMENTS

Pursuant to [RA30.6 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#), referred by the CreateTO Board to City Council as [GL30.16 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#), the CreateTO Board and City Council directed the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to report back to the CreateTO Board in 2023 on the status of CreateTO's participation in a Campus Master Plan review and exploration of the feasibility of a locating a George Brown College campus and City-building opportunity in the Mount Dennis area.

Background

In 2020, the Economic Development and Culture Division oversaw completion of the final consultant's report for the [Mount Dennis Economic Development Strategy](#), which identified potential initiatives for a multi-year action plan focused on realizing economic growth opportunities within the local business community comprised of the Mount Dennis "main street" area along Weston Road and the nearby industrial/employment lands.

One of the identified actions was to initiate efforts to attract a post-secondary institution/satellite facility to the Mount Dennis area. Phase 1 of the study found that Mount Dennis is one of the most underserved areas of the city with respect to access to post secondary education. In addition, the study recommended that the City leverage the area's new transit infrastructure and connectivity by promoting available or underutilized sites for revitalization, investment and job growth.

The Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework Study, which was adopted with amendments by Etobicoke York Community Council at its meeting of January 5, 2022 ([EY29.2](#)) also identified a potential post-secondary campus opportunity under the broader theme of economic development and local employment. This study resulted in the recommendation to adopt the new Secondary Plan for the Mount Dennis area, which was adopted by City Council on July 19, 2022 ([EY33.11](#))

There has been long-standing interest in the Mount Dennis community for the attraction of a post-secondary institution. With the support of the local Councillor, the community (through the Mount Dennis Community Association's (MDCA) "Mount Dennis ecoCampus Development Planning Group") has been actively exploring a campus opportunity in parallel with work being conducted by the City.

In response to City Council direction ([MM30.12](#)), Economic Development and Culture staff convened a workshop with post-secondary institutions that was held on November

15, 2021, to discuss a Mount Dennis campus opportunity. The workshop was a further outreach opportunity for staff to engage with the Toronto post-secondary school sector in relation to Mount Dennis, for which efforts had commenced in Q4 2020. The session focused on the opportunities and the strengths of the Mount Dennis community: the availability of high order transit; a significant population of post-secondary aged residents and the current lack of access; key economic development strategies underway to focus and drive economic growth; alignment with and support from key City initiatives; and, business and local community support. The workshop was well received as it gave the post-secondary institutions an opportunity to think strategically about their programs and building assets and how to best serve the needs of existing and future students within a changing educational environment.

Since the time of the Q4 2021 workshop held by City staff, George Brown College has come forward identifying an interest in investigating the feasibility of a campus investment project in the Mount Dennis area, as part of its Campus Master Planning exercise that is currently underway. George Brown College has discussed this opportunity with City and CreateTO representatives.

The establishment of a post-secondary campus/satellite campus in the Mount Dennis area, in coordination with the appropriate City Divisions, programs and services, represents a potentially transformational City-building opportunity for a traditionally under-served area of Toronto, and in the context of the Campus Master Plan review may identify other potential partnership opportunities between the George Brown College and the City.

A preliminary list of sites was identified and presented to the CreateTO and City Council pursuant to [RA30.6 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#) and [GL30.16 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#). Numerous sites have been reviewed, with one additional potential site identified. There may be other sites, including other publicly and privately-held lands that are evaluated in the context of George Brown College's specific needs for land/space/real estate and educational programming. How and if the sites play a role in the Campus Master Plan review will be further articulated as CreateTO and City staff work collaboratively with George Brown College. Due diligence with respect to the preliminary list of sites identified are discussed within the confidential attachment.

Ministry of Colleges and Universities Requirements

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has established a policy framework governing any campus expansion opportunity, which George Brown College would need to fulfill:

<https://files.ontario.ca/mcu-major-capacity-expansion-policy-framework-july-2020-en-2020-08-11.pdf>

Next Steps

CreateTO will continue to engage George Brown College in exploring the feasibility of a post-secondary campus and city-building opportunity in the Mount Dennis area and potentially other areas of the city, in relation to the Campus Master Plan review lead by George Brown College, as previously directed by City Council pursuant to [GL30.16 - Mount Dennis Campus Opportunity](#).

CONTACT

Melita Varga, Director, Client & Stakeholder Relations, CreateTO, (416) 981 - 2470,
mvarga@createto.ca

Carlo Bonanni, Senior Vice President, Planning and Design, CreateTO, (416) 981-1927,
CBonanni@createto.ca

SIGNATURE

Vic Gupta
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Confidential Attachment 1 - Update of Feasibility Work