



DATE: November 9, 2015 **REPORT NO.** PHSS2015-116

TO: Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Operations and Administration

FROM: Jo Atanas, General Manager
Public Health, Safety & Social Services

PREPARED BY: Aaron Wallace, Manager, Strategic Planning
Public Health, Safety & Social Services

1.0 TYPE OF REPORT **CONSENT ITEM** []
ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION [X]

2.0 TOPIC

CityStudio Brantford: Partnership between Laurier Brantford and the City of Brantford [Financial Impact: none] (PHSS2015-116)

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT City of Brantford Council DIRECT staff to engage in planning activities with Laurier Brantford to establish CityStudio Brantford.

4.0 PURPOSE

This report seeks Council approval to participate in planning activities with Laurier Brantford to establish CityStudio Brantford, an experiential learning partnership between the City and the University to provide course credit opportunities to students who are developing projects or research that support the Community Strategic Plan 2014-2018.

5.0 BACKGROUND

CityStudio Vancouver is a partnership between the City of Vancouver, academic institutions¹ and community organizations that provides opportunities for students to create, design and launch community development projects. Students collaborate with city staff and community stakeholders in 'for-credit' projects that address various themes including food security, community safety and neighbourhood building. This work supports Vancouver's three primary strategic goals: 1) Healthy Cities Strategy 2) Engaged Community Strategy and 3) Greenest City Strategy.

The central mission of CityStudio is "to innovate and experiment with the ways cities are co-created, while teaching students the skills needed to collaborate on real projects in Vancouver with City staff and community stakeholders. These projects improve our city and enrich our neighbourhoods, making the city more livable, joyful and sustainable. CityStudio convenes stakeholders, defines problems and creates solutions while improving student skills and retaining talent in the city."

The CityStudio model has been used as an opportunity to apply innovative solutions to complex community challenges, to engage students to take on leadership roles within their community, and to harness the academic and student energy of local universities. In turn, the municipality is provided with student resources and academic support for projects for which funding or staffing may not be available.

In January 2015 CityStudio Vancouver called for applications from delegations that were interested in meeting with administrators, academics and students to explore the CityStudio model and visit project sites. This conference was intended to provide municipalities and academic institutions with an opportunity to discuss the costs, logistics, and benefits of the model with representatives from the City of Vancouver and other stakeholders. A delegation from the City of Brantford and Laurier Brantford submitted a successful joint application to attend the CityStudio Conference held in Vancouver, May 25-27, 2015².

Staff attendance at the conference was endorsed by Council with direction that staff provide a report and recommendations to Council regarding the feasibility and benefits of establishing a similar model in Brantford.

¹ University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Community College, and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design

² Only eight Canadian cities were successful in the Call for Proposal process: Brantford, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Surrey, Toronto, Waterloo, Winnipeg

6.0 CORPORATE POLICY CONTEXT

Economic Vitality and Innovation

Brantford will be known for being a leading centre for learning and innovation, supported by a comprehensive education system.

Strategic Action 1.8: Continue to increase opportunities for higher education and adjust to changes in the marketplace to expand options including exploration of becoming a leader in skilled trades training.

7.0 INPUT FROM OTHER SOURCES

CityStudio Vancouver website www.citystudiovancouver.com

Laurier Brantford

8.0 ANALYSIS

The CityStudio Conference provided an opportunity to meet with senior-level City staff, faculty, students and elected officials to discuss the benefits and challenges of the joint partnership. In discussion, stakeholders focused on the benefits of providing experiential learning opportunities to students including 1) job skills development 2) networking opportunities and 3) greater student engagement with the community. In turn, the City benefits from research, projects and planning support from students and faculty. City of Vancouver officials indicated that the work significantly benefited the City's strategic priorities including the *Healthy Cities, Engaged City Strategy* and the *Greenest City Strategy*, particularly the key actions that are underfunded or understaffed.

Several other communities that attended the conference including Hamilton, Waterloo, Calgary and Edmonton have entered into the planning stages with their respective post-secondary institutions. Leadership staff and faculty from Laurier Brantford have expressed a strong interest in developing CityStudio Brantford and are exploring course curriculum and practicum opportunities at the Brantford Campus that support the Community Strategic Plan 2014-2018. These project-based courses would create a unique learning environment in which the university can deploy a 'teaching hospital' approach, with students collaborating with City staff and academics to create and implement projects. The experimental and teaching design of the model allows for the City to champion and replicate successful student projects throughout the City, and to continue to position Laurier Brantford as a destination of choice for post-secondary students across the Province.

The resourcing and staffing of any CityStudio Brantford project would be managed in accordance with the City's collective agreements and through consultation with organized labour groups as appropriate.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The City of Vancouver currently provides a municipal building (in-kind) to CityStudio Vancouver and funds a full-time staff member to coordinate and manage the relationships between the various post-secondary institutions and the municipal administration. However, it will not be necessary for the City of Brantford to provide either staffing or logistical support at this time. The CityStudio model requires that students seek funding for their projects, and although this funding could be provided by the City if resources were available within a particular Strategic Action or program, there is no expectation that the Municipality will fund student projects. Students are further required to find a 'steward' for their projects to ensure sustainability, and neither the municipality or university is responsible for maintaining, funding, or staffing ongoing projects once the student has completed the course. However, similar to traditional student placements, there will be an expectation that staff who are supporting student projects will be available to the student and faculty for consultation and guidance. The amount of time contributed would be dependent upon the scope of the project, and would be negotiated prior to the beginning of any collaborative planning.

10.0 CONCLUSION

CityStudio Brantford presents an opportunity for enhanced collaboration between the City of Brantford and Laurier Brantford and for greater student and academic engagement within the community. Executive leadership of Laurier Brantford has expressed a strong desire to move forward with planning to establish CityStudio Brantford and have begun identifying project-based courses and curriculum that can support the strategic actions of the City of Brantford. Council approval is needed for the planning and establishment of CityStudio Brantford, with the goal of aligning the efforts of faculty and students in support of the Community Strategic Plan 2014-2018.



Aaron Wallace, Manager
Strategic Planning



Jo Cupoli-Atanas, General Manager
Public Health, Safety & Social Services

Attachment: None

Copy to: None

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? yes no