

NO: R184

COUNCIL DATE: July 23, 2018

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

**TO: Mayor & Council** **DATE: July 19, 2018**

**FROM: General Manager, Planning & Development** **FILE: 0510-02**  
**General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**  
**General Manager, Engineering**

**SUBJECT: Surrey City Lab: Proposed Partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University,  
Simon Fraser University and City of Surrey**

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning & Development, Parks, Recreation & Culture and Engineering Departments that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Endorse, in principle, entering into a three (3) year partnership agreement with Kwantlen Polytechnic University (“KPU”) and Simon Fraser University (“SFU”) to support a student experiential learning initiative focused on City of Surrey priorities and challenges, as documented in this report (“Surrey City Lab”);
3. Authorize staff to enter into a detailed partnership agreement with KPU and SFU; and
4. Authorize staff to proceed as generally outlined in this report.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the proposed Surrey City Lab.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey has strong relationships with SFU and KPU and staff regularly collaborate with students and instructors on research and applied projects. Two examples of this in recent years are:

1. SFU Health Change Lab: Offered for the past two years as a partnership course with RADIUS, SFU Health Science Faculty and Beedie School of Business, which brought together a cohort of interdisciplinary students to do focused project work in the City of Surrey.

2. KPU's Policy Studies (POST) program: Applied seminar courses for students to work on City-defined challenges related to sustainability.

At a higher level, KPU and SFU staff and administrators are integral collaborators on Surrey community-wide initiatives such as the *Poverty Reduction Coalition*, *Community Leaders Igniting Change*, and the *Social Innovation Summit*, among many projects and initiatives. There are a number of initiatives that bring together these post-secondary institutions with the City's and community's priorities and interests.

Taken together, these relationships have had significant impact beyond the number of hours and projects completed; they form part of these post-secondary institutions delivering on the broad vision of a thriving, green, inclusive City. And while these activities have provided benefits to each partner, the high level of engagement for City staff and university faculty is substantial, given the time needed to identify and define projects that are suitable for students, as well as coordinate communications among City staff, faculty and students, and share the results broadly within the community.

Several city-university partnership programs are in place in other cities across Canada and elsewhere in the world, including *CityStudio* in Vancouver, and form part of a growing City Lab network. Representatives from the City of Surrey, KPU and SFU (the "Partners") attended a *CityStudio* "Art of Cities" workshop to explore how best to establish a similar student-city network within Surrey. Since that time, these representatives have worked to develop the Surrey City Lab concept, including clarifying the benefits to all partners, reflecting on how to best build on the existing collaborative work that is already taking place within Surrey, and exploring options around space and funding. Late in 2017, the City engaged Trina Isaakson, a strategic planning consultant, to complete interviews with all three parties to ascertain the final steps needed to bring these discussions to fruition. Her recommendations have been reviewed by staff from the City, KPU and SFU, and are reflected in the proposal below.

## DISCUSSION

Recognizing the potential to systematize and scale this impact in service of City of Surrey goals, the three institutions now seek to forge a more robust, coordinated, and focused partnership that will:

- Identify innovative and interdisciplinary opportunities for City-student collaboration;
- Reduce demands on City staff and faculty time; and
- Further opportunities for KPU and SFU to develop integrated and interdisciplinary learning and research opportunities that focus on Surrey goals.

The formalization of this partnership is proposed to be called the Surrey City Lab and, if approved by Council, will begin September 2018.

This initiative will, over a pilot period of three years (2018 - 2021), point multiple KPU and SFU courses towards City of Surrey priorities, engage the region's post-secondary students in real-world issues affecting the City, and grow to offer interdisciplinary and integrated opportunities for KPU and SFU students to learn and work together. The Surrey City Lab represents a unique opportunity to build on existing resources and other tested models to create a unique made-in-Surrey approach to community-university partnerships that delivers measurable value to all partners and their key stakeholders.

The Surrey City Lab will start in September 2018 to align with the academic year; it will be a learning lab, exploring such questions as: What do students need, how do we work best together, and what might be possible? The Partners will focus efforts on relationship building among City staff, committees and partnerships, with willing faculties and supportive Deans. KPU and SFU will work in parallel and test early integration, and all Partners with support from the City Lab Coordinator will scan for immediate and longer-term opportunities for collaboration and City-student interaction.

The recently announced partnership between the City, KPU and SFU for the Surrey Centre for Community Safety will allow students and researchers to support directed, safety-focused projects such as those related to gang violence and integrated service delivery, whereas the Surrey City Lab will allow for co-created projects between students and City staff and will include direct curriculum connections (i.e., courses offered through the City Lab will be focused on Surrey priorities and challenges, and students will get course credit for the projects they work on). Both partnerships will focus on interdisciplinary and experiential projects that benefit the community.

### **Proposed Activities**

The Partners believe that, in the spirit of innovation, entrepreneurship, and learning, the best path forward involves starting small with existing courses and interested faculty, and growing over time based on Surrey-specific learning, the interests of students, and the needs of the broader community. Over time, the partners will better be able to envision what is possible as they learn how they work best together.

The three year pilot period proposes to offer SFU and KPU courses beginning in Year 1 with current individual courses, and work over three years to build interdisciplinary options that integrate KPU and SFU students. The Partners will work with current courses and with KPU and SFU faculty willing to engage their students and curriculum with City issues and challenges. This builds upon the existing SFU Health Change Lab and KPU Policy Studies courses. The courses will be offered in their existing spaces, with some opportunity to host classes in City spaces such as City Hall and the City Centre Library.

The Surrey City Lab is able to join and learn from a small, but rapidly growing, global network of innovative cities adopting university partnerships to advance civic strategic priorities. In this way, the Surrey City Lab can benefit from six years of learnings from CityStudio Vancouver, plus cities across Canada and in the United States and Australia. The Surrey City Lab also benefits from a rich tradition of experiential learning at both KPU and SFU. While the Surrey City Lab will not directly adopt the CityStudio model, it can adapt key lessons to the Surrey context, working with Surrey-specific assets to create a model unique to Surrey. Therefore it is proposed that the City Lab join the CityStudio network in order to access templates (including MOUs, job descriptions, and course support), mentorship and advice, and the peer network of cities in Canada and the United States who are testing models unique to their own municipal context.

It is proposed that the City hire a City Lab Coordinator (“Coordinator”), equally funded by all three Partners, with responsibilities to each the City, Kwantlen, and SFU. The Coordinator will be a high level strategic thinker, and support City of Surrey staff and advisory committees in developing research questions, policy challenges, and project ideas for students. This position is critical to progress in the three year pilot timeframe, by taking responsibility for tasks such as:

- Overall logistics support;
- Identifying project ideas;
- Outreach and liaison with City staff and advisory committees, to identify and align with City priorities and challenges;
- Liaising with KPU and SFU staff and faculty;
- Exploring space options (see below); and
- Pursuing long term funding opportunities.

While existing City and campus spaces will be sufficient in Year 1, beyond that the partners will explore opportunities to secure a dedicated space in Surrey City Centre, which can be activated with student learning and community engagement. The eventual Surrey City Lab space will ideally be in a city-owned/operated building in City Centre, as this provides neutral space for a new way of thinking and working together.

It is proposed that the Partners, through the Surrey City Lab, hold a showcase and other event(s) during the three year pilot to bring institutions and students together. These showcases will provide an opportunity for Mayor and Council, staff, and the broader community to connect with youth. In Year 1, the main connection between KPU and SFU students would be through one-time events where students share their work.

### **Measuring Success**

The Partners will establish success metrics that go beyond the products or projects that the students will create, and that incorporate goals related to relationships, interesting conversations, civic engagement, and new ideas (one example is the number of SFU and KPU students engaged in Surrey City Lab -related courses). These longer-term success metrics will be developed over the first year, facilitated by the Coordinator once in place.

### **Benefits to Partners**

Benefits to the City of entering into a partnership with SFU and KPU to launch the Surrey City Lab include:

- City priorities and strategies supported through student research, program/policy development, entrepreneurship, and innovation;
- Improved youth civic engagement and student awareness of City priorities, issues, and opportunities;
- Additional research and innovation capacity provided by student projects;
- Increased coordination and decreased workload for City staff and committees partnering with SFU and KPU courses;
- Enhanced profile for the City and its efforts to build a sustainable and livable urban community through the promotion of the Surrey City Lab and public events;
- Enhanced relationships and coordination with the City's key post-secondary partners;
- Increased engagement, retention, and employment of youth in Surrey; and
- Enhanced opportunity to test innovative ideas at arms' length from the City.

Benefits to KPU and SFU include:

- Improve the sustainability of workload for faculty partnering with City staff and committees;
- Enable more faculty to incorporate experiential learning, community-engaged learning;
- Contribute to university community engagement and experiential learning goals;
- Increased student engagement, retention, and employability outcomes;
- Increased interest in Surrey-based programming and increased enrollments in Surrey-based programming; and
- Support and encouragement from City staff and council, with an indicated interest in coordinating City-student interactions.

## **FUNDING**

The proposed City funding for the Surrey City Lab is \$138,000 over the full three year pilot (\$31,000 from each Partner in Year 1, increasing to \$49,000 from each Partner in Year 2, and \$58,000 from each Partner in Year 3). The three Partners are committed to funding the Surrey City Lab equally for these initial costs, which will provide for the Coordinator salary, events, material costs such as office expenses, and City Studio network fees.

The City's annual \$46,000 contribution to the Surrey City Lab will be funded through three Departments: Engineering, Planning & Development, and Parks, Recreation & Culture. Funds are available in the annual budgets of the three Departments. Longer term, the Partners will explore the opportunities for external funding such as from foundations and other levels of government focused on innovation, sustainability, and city building.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Surrey City Lab will assist in achieving the objectives of in the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. The Surrey City Lab will specifically support the following Desired Outcomes (DO) and Strategic Directions (SD):

- Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods DO 2: Quality education, training and skills development programs area available in the city, which help to create a highly skilled workforce.
- Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods DO 3: Job creation and entrepreneurship are widely fostered.
- Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods DO 15: An innovation network attracts and retains talent, and enables new company formation.
- Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods DO 17: Surrey is a leader in social enterprise and social innovation.
- Education and Culture DO 1: Surrey has a culture of learning, with a broad range of diverse learning opportunities available and accessible to meet the needs of all residents.
- Education and Culture DO 6: Surrey is a provider of advanced education, producing cutting-edge research and cultivating leaders in innovative practices.
- Education and Culture SD 1: Support the expansion of education opportunities, including increased space and schools for students and nice programs only available in Surrey.
- Education and Culture SD 7: Promote collaboration between public partners, educational institutions, arts and heritage groups, and the community.

## CONCLUSION

Based above discussion it is recommended that Council:

- Endorse, in principle, entering into a three year partnership agreement with KPU and SFU to support a student experiential learning initiative focused on City of Surrey priorities and challenges, as documented in this report (“Surrey City Lab”);
- Authorize staff to enter into a detailed partnership agreement with KPU and SFU; and
- Authorize staff to proceed as generally outlined in this report.

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