



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	July 14, 2022
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-12-22
Title:	Sydenham Campus Innovation Update
Prepared by:	Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development Tourism and Culture Steve Furness, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report EDTC-CW-12-22 regarding the Sydenham Campus Innovation Update be received for information.

Executive Summary

The first half of 2022 saw Sydenham Campus begin its journey to realizing the vision set out in the business plan. Bringing together the right mix of tenants and end users means Sydenham is becoming an environment, an ecosystem, where like-minded individuals, organizations and businesses come together to innovate and grow.

Year one of the FedDev funding agreement saw the launch of Catapult's Fast Lane Plus program. Now in year two, staff will launch the Fab Lab at Sydenham to further support regional entrepreneurs and employers.

Background and Discussion

Business Enterprise Centre

Starter Company Plus and Summer Company programs are in full swing through the Business Enterprise Centre. A few notable trends are outlined below.

Five of six summer company spaces were filled this year by young entrepreneurs. The remaining space was left vacant after multiple students were forced to decline the offer to maintain their ongoing employment.

Starter Company Plus saw 19 businesses complete training, 14 submitted a completed business plan for adjudication and 10 businesses received grant funding. In 2022, there were no hospitality/tourism-based businesses or trades-based businesses as per previous years. New this year were three medical/medical research businesses and three food-based businesses.

To further enhance entrepreneurial services, staff applied to and were successful in receiving funding through the fourth intake of Digital Main Street to serve Owen Sound, Chatsworth, Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, Hanover, Southgate and West Grey. Meaford and The Blue Mountains are served by the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre and therefore not eligible for further funding. Recent intakes of the program removed the requirement to serve downtown businesses only, which enabled the County to consider this opportunity for enhanced service. Staff project to serve 360 businesses from 2022 to 2024 through the program. An RFP for program will be released mid-July.

Catapult Grey Bruce

The first Fast Lane Plus cohort is progressing through the program with completion expected this fall. Eight companies are taking part in the acceleration training and an additional 16 companies received formalized mentorship. To date, 66 jobs have been maintained and one job created through these programs.

The Catapult Tech Network is designed with and for members to help accelerate connections, knowledge exchange and collaborative experiences. Members come together at knowledge sharing events, tech focused projects and to shine a light on Grey Bruce's technology sector.

The Crashpad at Sydenham is open and available to book by entrepreneurs Tuesday to Thursdays from 9am to 4pm. The space includes flexible workstations, brainstorm station, coffee on demand and a free business library.

On May 31, after a year of successfully launching Catapult Grey Bruce, Jennifer Christie, inaugural executive director departed to continue her entrepreneurial pursuit. After a successful search, Cathryn Love, an entrepreneur from Collingwood was appointed to the position on May 16. Leading to the AGM this fall, Catapult is seeking volunteers to join the board of directors and further support the local entrepreneur-led accelerator.

Campus Clients

One of the key performance indicators for Sydenham is client composition. Bringing together the right mix of tenants and end users, Sydenham is quickly becoming an environment, encouraging the collision of like-minded individuals, organizations and businesses.

Today, the activities occurring at Sydenham include healthcare micro-credential training, childcare, business start-up and scaling services, along with education and health and safety training.

Sydenham played host to the Specialist High Skills Major demonstration day with our neighbour Georgian College. Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program organized the event with over 400 students attending and more than 1000 expected in 2023.

Sydenham was also headquarters for Elections Ontario's Grey Bruce Owen Sound returning office this spring. The layout functioned very well, and many residents were introduced to Sydenham through their visit.

Staff will soon begin marketing Sydenham to generate further use of the space. Tenants and rentals are required to align with the business plan to maintain the vision of the space and reduce competition with local landlords and community centres. Permitted uses include: training, education, research and innovation, entrepreneurs, business/employee support services and government services.

Tenants and rentals are the primary sources of revenue for the Campus. As of May 31, 2022, over \$58,000 has been invoiced.

Fab Lab

A group of volunteers are in the final stages of forming a not-for-profit group to manage the day-to-day operations of the Fab Lab. The group is made of up maker space experts from across the province who are helping to define the equipment, layout and guiding principles for use of the space.

The Fab Lab is planned to support two key functions: prototyping and training. Entrepreneurs, employers, service agencies, students and individuals alike will be able to utilize the equipment through membership. Details of membership, code of conduct and training requirements are currently in development.

Two RFPs have been issued to date to assist with procurement of major equipment. Small equipment is being purchased directly from available suppliers. Architects and engineers are also being engaged to assist with the renovations required for installation.

Originally drafted to occupy the four classrooms adjacent to the entrance and gym, the Fab Lab is now proposed to fill the west wing of the Campus to provide more space and limit disruption to the rest of the building. All fabrication equipment and contractor costs associated with installation are covered through FedDev funding.

Capital Projects

Two major capital projects were awarded this spring. The first, a parking lot expansion as required through site plan approval. With work now complete, the square footage restrictions will be lifted and the full building permitted for occupancy. The second, a final roofing project identified through the five-year RAMP. This project consists of metal roof repairs over the innovation wing.

The next major capital project from the Building Condition Assessment (BCA) will be related to the HVAC systems. Multiple solutions are being examined, though funding avenues are limited. The campus currently utilizes individual electric heating and cooling units in each classroom (26), except for the kindergarten wing and the gym, both powered by rooftop units. The operation cost of this system will exceed the budgeted \$70,000 in 2022.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None.

Financial and Resource Implications

All revenues and expenses are included in the 2022 budget. Staff were unsuccessful in filling

the part-time Campus Coordinator contract. Next steps are being reviewed for Council consideration at a future meeting.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal - Deputy CAO, Financial Analyst, Business Enterprise Manager
- External – Catapult Grey Bruce

Appendices and Attachments

None.