

 City of Maple Ridge

**TO:** Her Worship Mayor Nicole Read **MEETING** **DATE:** June 12, 2018

 and Members of Council **FILE NO:**

**FROM:** Chief Administrative Officer **MEETING:** Council

**SUBJECT**: Innovation in Emerging Cities report

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On April 4, 2018, the City of Maple Ridge successfully hosted the Innovation in Emerging Cities forum at the ACT Arts Centre. This free event attracted approximately 175 attendees to hear from a variety of keynote speakers and panels involving business, education and government on topics relating to innovation in our community. The event attracted business leaders, residents, tech entrepreneurs, educators and government leaders from throughout the region.

The event has received positive feedback from attendees and the Economic Development Committee (EDC) has already held a meeting of people interested in joining a task force to plan the next innovation forum tentatively scheduled for March 2019.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**Receive for information**

**DISCUSSION:**

1. **Background Context**

The objective of the Innovation in Emerging Cities forum was to highlight the critical role that innovation plays in the local economy. In addition to the keynote speakers, the forum used panels to highlight the roles that local businesses, post-secondary education, First Nations, and municipal, provincial and federal governments play in supporting innovation. The major topics covered included: fostering a culture of innovation in organizations; how government supports innovation; and attracting, developing and retaining talent.

The forum was planned and organized through a collaborative effort of the Economic Development Committee, the Technology Task Force, the local offices of MP Dan Ruimy and MLA Bob D’Eith, and staff in the Economic Development and Information Technology departments.

The registration target for the Innovation forum was set at 175 registrations and capacity was limited to 250 registrants. The forum ended up with 250 registrants for the day; information from the registration table indicates that 175 individuals attended the forum throughout the day.

The registration goals were achieved through the intensive, integrated marketing campaign developed in partnership with Black Press. This campaign combined online and newspaper advertising with a series of feature stories on the event and innovative local businesses leading up to the event. The marketing plan included the use of online “programmatic” advertising that targeted mobile devices in selected geographic areas of Vancouver with a high number of tech firms which allowed us to extend our reach to a key demographic for the event. This advertising campaign was supplemented with social media and direct marketing conducted by the City, and online and social media marketing conducted with partners including SRCTec, BC Technology Industry Association, BC Innovation Council, and the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce.

The Innovation in Emerging Cities trade show component included displays from:

* Pitt Meadows Plumbing and Mechanical
* Pitt Meadows Airport (drone and WW1 aircraft)
* Garibaldi Senior Secondary Robotics Team
* Mica Systems
* Fraser Valley Regional Library
* Work BC
* SRCTec
* Industry Training Authority
* Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

There have also been a number of follow up activates that have occurred as a result of the Innovation Forum. These include:

* City staff have met with senior staff from the Ministry of Advanced Education to discuss post-secondary education options in Maple Ridge. Preparations are being made to have a follow-up meeting with senior representatives from KPU, the local MLAs and MP, School District 42 and the City.
* Two local businesses that participated in the Innovation Forum—Brikers and Pitt Meadows Plumbing and Mechanical—have hosted the Mayor and Council for Mayor’s Business Walks.
* Pitt Meadows Plumbing and Mechanical is hosting a public Open House on June 16.
* City staff have met with TerraTap Technologies to discuss partnership options which include tourism apps and an online code-a-thon with BCIT in fall 2018.
* City staff have met with Meadowridge School to discuss potential collaboration opportunities for the 2019 Innovation in Emerging Cities forum.
* The formation of a volunteer Innovation in Emerging Cities Forum Task force to begin planning the 2019 forum.
* Ongoing discussions with the City of New Westminster to partner on a more extensive Innovation event for 2019.
* Videos of the event have been posted on the City’s YouTube channel.

The total cost for the Innovation in Emerging Cities forum was slightly below the $30,000 estimate provided in the Council report on January 30, 2018. The Economic Development Department was able to leverage the City’s $15,000 in allocated funding to secure an additional $20,200 in sponsorships for a total event budget of $35,200 resulting in a surplus of approximately $5,200. The Economic Development Department is planning to use this as “seed money” for the planned 2019 forum.

**CONCLUSION**

Innovation in Emerging Cities was a successful event on a number of fronts. The forum has received positive reviews from both attendees and participants on the topic matter and organization of the event. Many of the attendees have commented that they are looking forward to attending the next Innovation in Emerging Cities forum.

The EDC used a highly collaborative approach to plan and organize the event which has helped strengthen relationships with the local business community, post-secondary education (KPU and BCIT in particular), Kwantlen First Nation, and with our local MP and MLAs. This collaborative approach also helped secure participation in the forum from the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Jesse Dougherty, the General Manager for Amazon Vancouver.

“Original signed by Bruce Livingstone”

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“Original signed by Paul Gill”

*Concurrence:* **Paul Gill**

**Chief Administrative Officer**

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