

CIF Report Back- Calgary Economic Development LearningCITY Community Pilot

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Committee recommend that Council receive this report for the Corporate Record.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2021 DECEMEBER 14:

That Council receive this report for the Corporate Record.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This report presents Calgary Economic Development's final report for the *Competencies for Life* pilot funded through a 2021 Council Innovation Fund grant and conducted in partnership with Mount Royal University's CityXLab. The full *LearningCITY Community Prototype Final Report: Competencies for Life* document is included as Attachment 2 and includes an executive summary, scope of the pilot, program deployment including the impact of COVID-19, development of the pilot tool, pilot evaluation, key insights, and the path forward.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** The *Competencies for Life* model that evolved through the pilot includes twenty-five competencies that provide a foundation for individuals to embrace uncertainty and adopt new roles and skills in the workplace. The pilot project supported educators, facilitators, mentors and others to more intentionally identify and communicate what competencies participants and learners will develop in their programs, courses, and other learning opportunities. The model also supported individual Calgarians ability to understand what enabling competencies they possess, and which ones they can further develop to support their career goals. Finally, the model also helped employers attract and recruit talent.
- **Why does this matter?** A city's ability to attract, develop and retain talent is the greatest predictor of social and economic prosperity. Formal education systems are only one way people develop competencies. People also learn and refine competencies through informal learning and professional, volunteer and other experiences. Having a common language to identify, target and talk about these competencies is critical for educators, facilitators, mentors, coaches, and others; Calgarians seeking employment; and employers.
- The pilot identified 25 competencies across six focus areas: problem solving, self-reliance, collaborating, communicating, core literacies, and core workplace skills.
- The pilot identified two key next steps: establish a new *Calgary Talent Backbone* to coordinate at the systems level and adjust the model to include a consistent competency assessment and verification process.
- The project was a partnership between Calgary Economic Development, Mount Royal University's CityXLab, other post secondary institutions, and a diverse range of community partners with a focus on those operating in north east Calgary including the Calgary Public Library, the Genesis Centre, and the Centre for Newcomers.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A well-run city
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

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DISCUSSION

LearningCITY is a collaborative community initiative facilitated by Calgary Economic Development Ltd. in partnership with Mount Royal University's CityXLab aimed at working with community organizations, the business community and Calgarians to develop a support network to support productive life-long learning for all Calgarians. The initiative supports implementation of *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*, with a focus on the Talent pillar.

Pilot Results

The *Competencies for Life* (C4L) pilot worked with a diverse range of learning providers, both certified (formal K-12 education) and non-certified learning (sports, arts camps, and others) to develop a suite of tools including a website; eguidebooks for learners, talent developers, and talent seekers; a *Guide to Becoming a Competency Based Organization*; *Designing You* guide and tools for high school students and advanced learners; teaching modules; podcasts; videos; quizzes; marketing materials and more.

As detailed in Attachment 2, seven key insights from the pilot include:

- Success of C4L will be driven by talent seekers (i.e., employers) adopting the model.
- C4L must be flexible to support diverse talent developers (i.e., ranging from informal education programs to post secondary and training institutions).
- The critical role of enabling competencies (i.e., “soft skills”) is not widely or consistently recognized or prioritized by key stakeholders in Calgary’s talent ecosystem.
- C4L must be integrated with purpose-based talent development programming to maximize impact.
- For C4L to achieve scale, a critical mass of partners must commit to C4L.
- Harmonized assessment and verification are essential for C4L to achieve scale.
- C4L can be scaled through digitization.

The pilot identified two key next steps based on the pilot results and feedback from the community. The first is to establish an independent *Calgary Talent Backbone* to coordinate community stakeholders, focus on future work including conducting demand forecasts, facilitate system-level strategy, align system-level resources, and harmonize the competency verification process. This recommendation is based on a community-identified need for improved coordination between stakeholders, and the proposed backbone needs to be responsive to the needs of both talent developers (formal and informal learning providers) and talent seekers (employers, industry, etc.).

The second recommendation is to pilot community-based micro credentials (CBMC) to act as a mechanism to support consistent competency assessment and verification. This follow up pilot would test the following series of questions:

- What role do different forms of evidence play in competency verification?
- How can diverse talent developers collaborate in a shared C4L and CBMC model?
- How can CBMCs be integrated into existing talent development programming?
- Who should be able to certify the competencies required to grant C4L CBMCs?

Background

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C4L was led by an Advisory Committee that included representatives from SAIT, Canada West Foundation, Winsport, Suncor, Mount Royal University, Livingstone School Range District, Centre for Newcomers, and the Trico Group.

About Calgary Economic Development Ltd.

Calgary Economic Development Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary, and a Civic Partner. Calgary Economic Development stewards *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*.

About CityXLab

The Institute for Community Prosperity at Mount Royal University established the City Experience Lab (CityXLab) to support the transformation of Calgary from a city of experiences, to an experience city.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

This report was prepared in collaboration with Calgary Economic Development, and the *LearningCITY Community Prototype Final Report: Competencies for Life* was prepared by Calgary Economic Development and included in full as Attachment 2.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

This project aligns with imagineCALGARY's social system targets related to lifelong learning including skill development and access to formal/informal learning opportunities. It also contributes to enhancing access to diverse communities.

Environmental

Not Applicable

Economic

This project aligns with imagineCALGARY's economic system targets related to economic well-being (e.g., supporting research), meaningful work (e.g., supporting full employment – particularly with immigrants and new graduates), and sufficient income (e.g., all Calgarians have access to appropriate training).

It also aligns with 2019-2022 Council Directives related to building a prosperous city, focused on Calgary as a magnet for talent, and contributes to implementation of *Calgary in the New*

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Economy: An Economic Strategy for Calgary and its focus on enhancing program access to diverse communities, expanding work-integrated learning, and increase collaboration between post secondary institutions, community organizations, and businesses.

RISK

No risks are identified with the approval of the recommendation included in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. LearningCITY Community Prototype Final Report

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Not applicable		