

DATE OF MEETING February 1, 2021

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SUBJECT **MID-ISLAND BUSINESS INITIATIVE – TECH NANAIMO FINAL REPORT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide Council with the final report from Tech Nanaimo.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the 2019-MAR-20 Finance and Audit Committee meeting, members from the Mid-Island Business Initiative (MIBI) presented details on the Manufacturing Technology & Entrepreneurship Council (MTEC), which is geared to grow the fledging Technology Sector in Nanaimo.

As part of the presentation, MIBI asked Council to allocate funding to MTEC to help launch the program. MIBI identified a number of deliverables that could be produced within a six-month timeframe, including a Tech Stack survey, school programs with School District 68 and Vancouver Island University, and growing the local technology talent pool.

At the 2019-MAR-20 Finance and Audit meeting, the following motion was passed:

*“It was moved and seconded that the Finance and Audit Committee direct Staff to prepare a report regarding the request from Mid-Island Business Initiative for a \$48,000 investment over the next six months.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

The MIBI report was received by Staff in early 2020, and the results of study were incorporated into the Economic Development Strategy prepared by the City’s Economic Development Task Force.

During the course of the work, MIBI rebranded the project from MTEC to TECH Nanaimo as part of a naming and branding exercise.

### **Key Outputs**

The TECH Nanaimo project undertook a number of key tasks to better understand the sector in Nanaimo. This included:

- Mapping of existing technology business locations in Nanaimo
- Securing a website and developing a logo (TECH Nanaimo)

- Connecting with the Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Tourism
- Holding network events
- Surveying existing people working in the tech sector (Tec Stack Survey) in Nanaimo to understand skill shortage (28 responses)
- Mapping of training providers
- Helped to promote Nanaimo as a technology hub

### **Tech Nanaimo Report Recommendations**

The report set out four key recommendations, namely:

1. Encourage collaborative participation of all community leaders in the economic development structure
2. Focus economic development strategies on the broader view of the technology sector
3. Identify the technology sectors where Nanaimo can offer a competitive advantage
4. Continue to actively support a dedicated Tech Nanaimo organization (the recommendation includes discussion on staffing, governance, and funding)

The findings of the report were incorporated into the Economic Development Strategy.

### **CONCLUSION**

The TECH Nanaimo report is a useful tool for the proposed Economic Development Corporation as it provides an excellent baseline analysis of the existing technology sector in Nanaimo. The TECH Nanaimo report outlines a need for collaboration and partnership to help grow the technology sector. This collaborative approach is the foundation of the City's approach to economic development through the Economic Development Corporation (City of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island University, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Chamber of Commerce, Nanaimo Port Authority and Nanaimo Airport).

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- At the 2019-MAR-20 Finance and Audit Committee meeting, members from the Mid-Island Business Initiative (MIBI) presented details on the Manufacturing Technology & Entrepreneurship Council (MTEC), which is geared to grow the fledging Technology Sector in Nanaimo.
- At the 2019-MAR-20 Finance and Audit meeting, Council provided \$48,000 to MIBI to undertake a study into the technology sector in Nanaimo.
- The report was received in early 2020 and contains background information on the existing technology sector in Nanaimo and provides recommendations going forward.
- The recommendations of the TECH Nanaimo study were incorporated into the Economic Development Strategy.
- The proposed Economic Development Corporation will be able to use this report to advance initiatives around the technology sector.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Tech Nanaimo Final Report |

**Submitted by:**

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**Concurrence by:**

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