

NO: **R187**

COUNCIL DATE: **NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **October 30, 2014**

FROM: **Manager, Economic Development**

FILE: **0400-01**

SUBJECT: **Chair Position in Mental Health and Addictions**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Economic Development Division recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize the appropriate City staff to work with Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Fraser Health Authority (FHA) to create an agreement to fund a Chair position in Mental Health and Addictions at SFU with the City contributing up to \$100,000 per year for five years. The agreement would be modeled after the existing agreement between the City of Surrey, Powertech Labs and SFU to fund the Executive Industrial Research Chair in Energy Systems for Smart Cities.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to allow City staff to work with Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Fraser Health Authority (FHA) to create an agreement to fund a Chair position in Mental Health and Addictions at SFU. The agreement could be modeled after the existing agreement between the City of Surrey, Powertech Labs and SFU to fund the Executive Industrial Research Chair in Energy Systems for Smart Cities.

A further Corporate Report including a copy of the agreement and a budget would be brought forward to Council for approval prior to the City entering into the agreement.

## BACKGROUND

Surrey continues to be the fastest growing City in BC. Providing a high quality of life in Surrey is the common catalyst that drives city programs and initiatives. This is evident in the City's role as co-founder of Innovation Boulevard, a partnership of health, business, education and government creating new health technologies to improve peoples' lives while generating companies and jobs.

Innovation Boulevard is guided by a regional Working Group with representatives from the City, FHA, SFU, KPU, BCIT, UBC, health-related industry associations, businesses and entrepreneurs. This Working Group identified Mental Health and Addictions as a priority area and will focus on creating an action plan to address these issues through health technologies and other related means. This is a promising step in the right direction but more is needed.

Establishing a Chair of Mental Health and Addictions at SFU could build capacity and fuel advancements in this highly complex and specialized field. The Chair would be responsible for leading a regionally-based expert advisory group in the development and implementation of a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

## DISCUSSION

Mental health and addictions issues are increasing in cities world-wide. The devastating effects of these conditions are endured by countless individuals and their families and are often visible on city streets. Government continues to invest in addressing these issues but the needs continue to grow, as illustrated in the following examples:

- A report released by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in March, 2013 entitled “*Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada*”, states that 1 in 5 people in Canada live with a mental illness. The report also states the economic cost to Canada is at least \$50 billion per year.
- The BC Mayors’ Caucus recently identified mental illness as a factor driving up policing costs across BC. At the October 14, 2015 Surrey Police Committee meeting, the RCMP reported that calls for service related to mental illness and substance abuse in the Lower Mainland District rose 75% between 2009 and 2013.

Establishing a Chair of Mental Health and Addictions at SFU could help stem this rising tide. In the future the Chair position could serve as the cornerstone in the creation of a Surrey-based Centre of Excellence in Mental Health and Addictions.

## Funding

The funding required to establish a 5-year term Chair position is \$1.0 million. The City would commit to fund up to \$100,000 per year over 5 years. Other potential funding partners include:

- Simon Fraser University
- Fraser Health Authority
- Corporate and individual donors
- Hospital and Community Foundations
- NSERC (Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council) matching funds if eligible.

The funding model could be similar to the one used to fund the Executive Industrial Research Chair in Energy Systems for Smart Cities (currently being recruited), as noted below:

<i>City of Surrey:</i>	<i>\$100,000 per year for 5 years</i>
<i>Powertech:</i>	<i>\$100,000 per year for 5 years</i>
<i>SFU:</i>	<i>\$ 50,000 per year for 5 years</i>
<i>NSERC:</i>	<i>SFU applied for a matching grant of \$1.0 million</i>

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The recommendation of this report will assist in achieving the objectives of the Sustainability Charter as stated below.

*“The Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents assists the City in achieving the socio-cultural objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly, action item SC5, which addresses the implementation of the recommendations of the Social Plan.”*

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the information provided in this report, the Economic Development Division recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize the appropriate City staff to work with Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Fraser Health Authority (FHA) to create an agreement to fund a Chair position in Mental Health and Addictions at SFU with the City contributing up to \$100,000 per year for five years. The agreement would be modeled after the existing agreement between the City of Surrey, Powertech Labs and SFU to fund the Executive Industrial Research Chair in Energy Systems for Smart Cities.

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