

**INVEST BARRIE AND CREATIVE ECONOMY
MEMORANDUM**

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: K. DUBEAU, DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE ECONOMY

NOTED: Z. LIFSHIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INVEST BARRIE
M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: ONE DEGREE PLATFORM FOR ENTREPRENEURS PILOT PROJECT

DATE: MAY 14, 2018

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update on a pilot project that will be launching in the community, supporting the growth and development of the City's Entrepreneurship and Start Up Communities.

Since 2016, Invest Barrie has been collaborating with Georgian College and a local company, The Networking Effect, regarding the need for a purpose-built community platform designed to connect businesses and startups with each other, and also to provide the tools and resources to deepen and track business engagement within the community. The proposed project would incorporate machine learning technology to ensure high value to the end users, and be integrated with existing local entrepreneurship platforms, including the Entrepreneurs Connect portal. The first-of-its-kind tool was developed with the objective of building Barrie as a startup destination in mind.

In the spring of 2017, the company applied for project funding from the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), with \$3,000 in support from the City and \$3,000 from Henry Bernick Centre for Entrepreneurship, as well as in-kind contributions of staff time to guide the development of needed functionality for ecosystem partners to track and report on the depth and breadth of engagement within the ecosystem. Further, the proposed system would support the delivery of the brand promise of Barrie's unique startup ecosystem that people here are only one degree of separation from the resources they need to succeed.

The Networking Effect was successful in their application, with a total project cost of \$100,000. The project launched in the fall of 2017, with direct engagement with staff from Creative Economy, Access Barrie and the Henry Bernick Centre. While the funding from OCE was formally approved and authority for the project to proceed was given by OCE, the public announcements and press releases have not yet been released by the provincial agency and no timeline has been given as to when the announcements will be made. The pending provincial election will impact the timing of future announcements.

A major component of the project is a marketing campaign in the community to launch this fall, promoting the availability of the platform and encouraging people to engage with the resource. The marketing campaign for the platform, called One Degree Network, was designed with input from Access Barrie. The ads will be featured on Barrie Transit buses, on the radio, print advertisements in This Week in Barrie, leverage our digital monitors, bulk radio advertisements, and our various online channels. While the City of Barrie logo is not currently featured in the marketing campaign, we are referenced as a partner on the project. Examples of the draft campaign ads are included in Appendix A. Inclusion of the City logo and the logo for Georgian College may be added prior to the formal campaign launch. This phase of the project is essential for building a critical mass of users on the platform, and to begin generating the insights from the usage data that helps both the City and the Henry Bernick Centre to track the growth and development of the ecosystem.

The project is a strong example of how the City and the community can be a platform to showcase innovative technologies from local companies, while at the same time, taking a leading edge approach to cultivating a dynamic startup ecosystem locally.

APPENDIX "A"

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