

**DATE:** November 4, 2022

**TO:** Hon. Mayor and Members of Council  
cc. SLT-E

**FROM:** Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development  
cc. Nick Spensieri, City Manager  
cc. Michael Genova, Chief, Communications and Economic Development  
cc. Julie Flesch, Senior Advisor, Strategic Economic Initiatives  
cc. Office of Communications and Economic Development

**RE: WebSummit – Day 5**

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The City of Vaughan through Economic Development is taking part in the 2022 WebSummit Conference to help advance an international economic development program for the 2022-2026 Term of Council and elevate the local innovation, health innovation, and creative industries clusters.

Staff are providing daily updates on activities.

### **Key Messages**

- Staff met with one investment-ready company
- Two economic development agencies engaged Vaughan staff to explore future collaboration
- Staff will bring a summary report to Council in December 2022
- The plan for WebSummit participation was [approved by Council in September 2022](#)

### ***On November 3, staff met with one investment-ready international company.***

On November 4, in partnership with Toronto Global, staff met one pre-qualified international company with an interest in expanding to Canada.

#### **1. Planet Farms**

Planet Farms is an Italian operator of vertical farming services intended for large-scale farms. The company's platform has developed a fully automated process that starts with seeds and ends with packaged products without any manual intervention in between, enabling clients to get access to uniformity in the production of crops and addressing the issues related to urbanization, food safety, and food access. Planet Farms is looking to enter the North American market and Vaughan is a prime location for investment as it would offer the company unparalleled access to distribution centres for major grocery chains.

Next steps include:

- Toronto Global will lead the follow-up and explore a future visit by the company to Vaughan
- Staff will connect *Planet Farms* with Vaughan-based grocery and food distribution centres to explore a pilot that would enhance the City's position as a transformative, ambitious, and purpose-driven economy
- *Planet Farms* left staff with an open invitation to tour their 10,000 square metre facility in northern Italy as a best practice in advanced vertical farming

***Staff explored collaboration with six economic development agencies and support assets.***

1. Lisbon's Mouraria Creative Hub

The Mouraria Creative Hub was established in 2014 by Lisbon's City Council, which recognized the significant economic and social potential of creativity and knowledge transfer for the city of Lisbon. The Hub provides services and support to entrepreneurs in the creative industries. This support includes access to a shared workspace, mentorship, tailor-made business training and advisory focused on go-to-market strategies and tools and help in finding sources of financing.

Each of the services is uniquely designed to meet the needs of the community, to bridge the worlds of business and arts/culture and to provide space for new encounters which can create innovation with commercial potential with positive economic and regeneration impacts.

Mouraria Creative Hub represents a systemic network approach to coping with uncertain social, cultural and economic environments using creativity to explore new paths towards economic development and job creation through knowledge transfer policies, providing new solutions to urban development issues by triggering creativity.

Lessons learned:

- The City of Lisbon values qualitative outcomes as much as the quantitative outputs that incubating creative entrepreneurs provides: they value the contribution an artistic business makes to the local culture as much as the number of jobs created. Creative entrepreneurship development is not about building unicorn (valuation of \$1B or more) companies
- The City of Lisbon is developing a one-window access point for creative entrepreneurs to access the network of creative supports across Lisbon: a one-window approach is client-centric
- Creative spaces must adapt to, and be led by, the local community
- The margins of a culture drive advancements in local culture and are major sources of creative originality. It is the municipalities' place to ensure there is support for actors on the margins.

Next steps:

- Staff will invite the managing director of the Mouraria Creative Hub to attend and deliver a presentation to the forthcoming Creative Industries Advisory Group and the Economic Prosperity Task Force
- Staff will integrate learnings from the City of Lisbon into ongoing strategy development for cultural arts centre development

## 2. Cultural Centre of Belem

The Belém Cultural Center is a complex of artistic venues located in Belém in the city of Lisbon. It is the largest building with cultural facilities in Portugal, with over 1,500,000 sq ft of usable space. The centre provides permanent venues for conferences, exhibitions and performance arts such as opera, ballet and concerts, in addition to meeting halls, shops and cafés.

Facilities within the CCB include:

- The Conference Centre: provides a close link with the most varied business and professional sectors; conceived in order to support conferences and meetings, as well as the cultural center's operational services, stores, a restaurant, two bars, parking areas and the Jacques Delors European Information Centre;
- The Performing Arts Centre: the core of the site's cultural and artistic activities, it includes two auditoriums (the larger holding 1,429 seats and the smaller with 348 seats), a rehearsal hall with 72 seats, in order to support film, opera, ballet, theatre and music events;
- The Exhibition Centre: which includes four galleries for exhibitions of modern art, architecture, design and photography, in addition to cafés and shops; since June 2007, it has been the venue for the Foundation of Modern and Contemporary Art (the Berardo Museum Collection).

Lessons learned:

- Residents are considered the Centre's first and most important clients
- The Centre features three functions: a conference centre; a performing arts facility; and two museum spaces
- The Centre employs more than 150 people
- The Centre integrates public art into the design
- Two additions are planned to supplement the three existing functions: a hotel and a retail podium
- The existing facility features community retail amenities
- The Centre embraces its position as a spoke in the broader cultural ecosystem in Lisbon

Next Steps

- Staff will invite the managing director of the Cultural Centre of Belem to attend and deliver a presentation to the forthcoming Creative Industries Advisory Group and the Economic Prosperity Task Force
- Staff will integrate learnings from the Centre into ongoing strategy development for Vaughan's cultural arts centre development

- Economic Development will connect the Centre's leadership to the McMichael and Film Festival to share best practices

***Corporate and Strategic Communications will provide social media content as appropriate.***

***Economic Development staff will bring a report to Council in December 2022 summarizing the outcomes and lessons learned from Websummit participation.***

For more information, please contact Raphael Costa at [Raphael.Costa@vaughan.ca](mailto:Raphael.Costa@vaughan.ca) or Julie Flesch at [Julie.Flesch@vaughan.ca](mailto:Julie.Flesch@vaughan.ca).