

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

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DATE 24 September 1996

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator  
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Regional Chair

SUBJECT/OBJET **RESEARCH PARK TASK FORCE REPORT**

### **DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee and Council receive the Research Park Task Force Report and consider the recommendations and proposed action plan contained therein.**

### **BACKGROUND**

On May 24, 1995, Regional Council adopted a series of recommendations as its response to the National Capital Commission's Draft Greenbelt Master Plan. One of the recommendations related to an NCC proposal to designate land within the Greenbelt for development as a "Research Park". Rather than endorsing such a designation, Council resolved that "the Regional Chair, OCRI and OCEDCO investigate whether other organisations in Ottawa-Carleton would be interested in undertaking a joint feasibility study to examine if the concept of a research park would be successful and enhance economic development in Ottawa-Carleton. The feasibility study would be concluded before any investigation of a location would be undertaken."

The Regional Chair and the then Presidents of OCRI and OCEDCO approached representatives of the private and public sectors as well as the academic research community to serve on a task force to look into the matter of a research park. The Research Park Task Force (hereafter "task force"), which was co-chaired by the then Presidents of OCRI and OCEDCO, undertook the feasibility study to provide Regional Council and the broader Ottawa-Carleton community with a) advice as to whether a research park would enhance economic development in Ottawa-Carleton; b) suggestions (if a research park was viewed as necessary to enhance economic development in Ottawa-Carleton) as to how a research park could be successful in Ottawa-Carleton; and c) specific characteristics of a successful research park or parks in Ottawa-Carleton.

The task force recently submitted its report together with a transmittal letter to the Regional Chair. The purpose of this report is to present the task force's report to Committee and Council and to determine what further action may be appropriate.

## DISCUSSION

The task force report concludes that the development of a campus-like research park has considerable potential for Ottawa-Carleton. The task force reached this conclusion after considering models of research parks and their role in facilitating further economic development. The specific benefits which usually derive from research park development include employment generation, establishment of new firms and the expansion of existing ones, the transfer of technology, the commercialisation of innovative products and processes, corporate venturing, population retention, improved linkages among industry, government and academia, and image enhancement.

The success of a research park depends on many factors. The task force discusses the main factors associated with research park success (availability of skilled labour, quality of life, presence of a major university research institute, public sector support, effective park management, long-term commitment and vision, anchor tenant, well-developed infrastructure, an appropriate site, an effective marketing strategy) and how Ottawa-Carleton stacks up in terms of each factor.

Finally, the task force report makes certain recommendations and suggests the elements of an action plan. It recommends that further work be undertaken to select a location and to estimate the costs associated with the selected location. Federal government officials and agencies need to be approached to explore whether they are willing to assist in the establishment of a research park. The task force recommends that the RMOC establish a working group as the vehicle to carry out the above tasks.

## CONSULTATION

The Task Force consulted senior representatives of small, medium, and large businesses in the region in February 1996. Its consultations generally confirm and lend further support to the specific benefits which usually derive from research park development. The task force was told, amongst other things, that a research park would be a strong marketing and recruiting tool; that a critical mass of people in a research park would provide companies with more flexibility; that a research park would provide access to special capabilities; that a research park would provide space for growth so that growing companies would have an alternative to relocation; and that a research park would provide enhanced visibility and security for companies.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of research park development remain to be determined and depend on Committee and Council's determination as to what further role, if any, is to be assumed by the RMOC.

## CONCLUSION

The task force report concludes that a research park is an important tool to further Ottawa-Carleton's economic development. As site selection and costing were matters outside the task force's mandate and expertise, it now recommends that the RMOC proceed with more detailed work related to the development of a high-profile, campus-like research park by establishing a working group. Committee and Council must now determine what further action by the RMOC is appropriate.

*Approved by  
Peter D. Clark*