City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 25-198

To:	**Mayor and Members of Council**
From:	**Craig Desjardins, Director, Office of Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships**
Resource Staff:	**Brandon Forrest, Director, Business, Real Estate & Environment:**
Date of Meeting:	**August 12, 2025**
Subject:	**Update on Kingston Life and Health Sciences Innovation District Development and Next Steps**

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 5. Drive Inclusive Economic Growth

Goal: 5.3 Diversify Kingston's economic base.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on efforts to advance the development of a life and health sciences innovation district in Kingston. Districts are a place-based economic development model that leverages geographic concentration and institutional collaboration to accelerate innovation, increase productivity, and spur job growth and economic development.

The City of Kingston, in partnership with Queen's University, Kingston Health Sciences Centre, and St. Lawrence College, has been exploring the creation of a Life and Health Sciences Innovation District (the District). This initiative builds on the region's strengths in research, education, and healthcare delivery and aims to catalyze economic development, attract private investment, and foster innovation in the life sciences sector and aligns with City strategic goals and provincial and federal strategies.

Supported to date by grant funding from FedDev Ontario and informed by sector partner engagement and best practice research, the potential District envisions research facilities,

clinical and academic spaces, and public-private innovation infrastructure that would be anchored by the new acute care hospital development at the Clogg's Road lands, conditional on the availability of funding and Ministry approval.

As an interim step toward establishing formal governance of the District, staff are seeking Council's approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key partners that will outline a framework that reflects a shared vision and commitment to collaboration and suggests the conditions, planning principles, and expectations that will guide the parties as they move toward definitive agreements and implementation.

Staff are also seeking support for the allocation of funding of up to $300,000 from the Working Fund Reserve to begin the next stage of work, specifically, the engagement of consultants to support the development of a master plan for the District site for commercial development of mixed asset classes, including life science and academic components on multiple sites comprised of private, academic and provincial ownership and develop commercially financeable development proformas for all developments, including anchor tenants for potential investment partners. Staff will also seek out grant funding opportunities to support development of the master plan.

Recommendation:

That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services, with identified project partners to formalize collaboration on the Life and Health Sciences Innovation District initiative; and

That, upon execution of the MOU by all parties, Council approve the allocation of up to $300,000 from the Working Fund Reserve to initiate the development of a comprehensive district master plan for the Life and Health Sciences Innovation District.

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY DIRECTOR

Craig Desjardins, Director, Office of Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	p.p.
Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

Options/Discussion:

Background

Kingston is at a critical moment in its economic and innovation development journey. In response to growing global demand for health solutions, the City of Kingston and its institutional partners are advancing plans to establish a Life and Health Sciences Innovation District (the District), a concentrated, place-based ecosystem that could co-locate healthcare providers, post-secondary institutions, research assets, and innovation infrastructure. This District will anchor a long-term strategy to accelerate research translation, commercialization, and economic growth across health sciences, biotechnology, and medical technologies.

This initiative responds to both a local need to strengthen economic resilience and job creation, but also a national opportunity to fill critical gaps in Canada's life sciences ecosystem, particularly in translational research. It reflects a recognition that geographic proximity alone does not foster innovation; intentional collaboration, shared infrastructure, and aligned strategies are essential to generate impact.

The immediate challenge is to mobilize Kingston’s strong foundational assets including Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC), Queen’s University, and St. Lawrence College, into a coordinated platform that supports high-growth ventures, attracts global talent and capital, and delivers tangible public health and economic outcomes.

The opportunity is underscored by shifting provincial and federal priorities toward life sciences, alongside intensifying competition from other innovation hubs in Canada and abroad. By aligning regional stakeholders around a unified district vision, Kingston has the potential to transform its innovation ecosystem into a nationally relevant engine of economic and social impact.

What is a District Model

The district model is a place-based economic development strategy that leverages geographic concentration and institutional collaboration to accelerate innovation, increase productivity, and spur job growth. These districts are typically anchored by institutions such as hospitals, universities, and research institutes, and often include incubators, startup companies, corporate R&D offices, and specialized infrastructure facilities.

The Life and Health Sciences Innovation District being proposed for Kingston is a geographically concentrated area that will bring together stakeholders Kingston Health Sciences Centre, post-secondary education institutions Queen’s University and St. Lawrence College (subject to availability of funding), industry, and municipal infrastructure to drive research, innovation, commercialization, and economic growth in the fields of health sciences, biotechnology, medical technologies, and related sectors that provide an economic and social return for the community.

When applied to the health and life sciences sector, the district model offers several distinct advantages that contribute meaningfully to both local and regional economic development. These districts catalyze innovation and commercialization by bringing researchers, clinicians, and entrepreneurs into a shared ecosystem. Proximity fosters faster and more frequent transitions from discovery to market, while access to clinical trial infrastructure and patient populations supports more efficient product testing and regulatory approval.

The model also strengthens investment attraction and ecosystem credibility. By concentrating intellectual capital, advanced infrastructure, and skilled talent, districts reduce investment risk and become more attractive to venture capitalists, private equity firms, and public funders. A well-organized, visible innovation cluster enhances competitiveness and increases access to global investment opportunities. Health and life science districts are powerful drivers of job creation and economic diversification. They support high-value employment across sectors such as research, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, digital health, and support services. This diversification helps municipalities build more resilient, knowledge-based economies that are less susceptible to external shocks.

Public-private partnerships are another key benefit. Districts promote sustained collaboration among government, academia, and industry, leading to shared investments in infrastructure, joint innovation initiatives, and workforce development programs that enable long-term, sustainable growth. Additionally, life science districts enhance regional branding and talent attraction. By positioning a municipality as a hub for innovation, these districts help draw international talent, encourage global research partnerships, and attract multinational companies seeking to engage in a thriving innovation ecosystem.

Life Science District Model Best Practices

Across Canada and the United States, city-hospital-university life science districts are emerging as transformative models for economic development, innovation, and public health advancement. These districts are place-based ecosystems that co-locate hospitals, research institutions, post-secondary campuses, and innovation assets such as incubators, industry partners, and venture capital. When supported by municipal leadership, these districts catalyze regional competitiveness, attract private investment, create high-quality jobs, and significantly enhance local healthcare delivery and education outcomes.

The following case studies collectively highlight the value of municipal leadership in fostering life science districts.

Hamilton

The McMaster Innovation Park in Hamilton is tightly integrated with Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster University. The park is undergoing a major expansion, projected to reach nearly 2 million square feet of wet lab and innovation space, designed to accommodate scale-ups, advanced manufacturing, and commercialization infrastructure. Hamilton’s life sciences cluster currently supports over 35,000 jobs and generates

approximately $5.7 billion in annual economic output. The city's role in enabling infrastructure, zoning, and cluster development has been critical in helping Hamilton transition from its industrial past to a knowledge-based, health innovation economy.

Montreal

The Health Innovation District (District d'Innovation en Santé) in Montreal is a city-led initiative developed in collaboration with academic health institutions such as the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM) and artificial intelligence research leaders like Mila. This living laboratory enables real-world testing of new technologies and treatments, directly involving patients and clinicians. With support from all three levels of government, the district enhances accessibility to care, accelerates technology transfer, and strengthens community health outcomes while attracting global attention and investment in Québec's life sciences sector.

Calgary

The University Innovation Quarter (UIQ) is a 76-acre innovation district adjacent to UCalgary's main campus. Formerly the Research Park, UIQ is being transformed into a mixed-use ecosystem featuring labs, startups, collaborative spaces, offices, residential and retail developments. The goal is to catalyze research-driven entrepreneurship and diversify Calgary's economy.

UIQ is strategically significant in that it brings together research, entrepreneurship, urban redevelopment, and university investment in a purpose-built district, positioning Calgary to grow its knowledge economy in line with the University's 2024-27 plans to foster start-ups and partner with industry at scale.

Philadelphia

The University City Science Center, founded in 1963 as the first and largest urban research park in the U.S., was created through a collaboration led by leading Philadelphia institutions including the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, Presbyterian Hospital, and Temple University. Its core mission has consistently centered on technology-based economic development, with strategic objectives including accelerating the commercialization of academic research, supporting life science and tech entrepreneurship, and nurturing an inclusive innovation ecosystem—providing incubation space, capital access, networking (e.g., Quorum), and STEM workforce development to drive regional growth.

Since inception, 442 firms have participated in UCSC incubation; 214 remain active, and 155 graduate firms in the region employ roughly 12,000 people. Together, these firms support about 40,000 jobs in Greater Philadelphia (direct + indirect), representing approximately 1% of regional employment. These firms generate roughly $12.9 billion in

annual economic activity, equating to around 2.2% of regional GDP, with wage taxes contributing about $55 million annually to Philadelphia and the state.

Waterloo

The David Johnston Research & Technology Park (R+T Park) is one of Canada's largest innovation districts born from a partnership among the University, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, provincial and federal governments, and Canada's Technology Triangle to attract high-tech firms, accelerate research commercialization, and provide start-ups access to world-class talent and student co-ops. In July 2024, the University and Waterloo Region selected a roughly 60-acre parcel within R+T Park as the site for the region's new acute care hospital, a joint venture of Grand River and St. Mary's hospitals under the "Building the Future of Care, Together" initiative. The project aims to integrate health-care delivery, university research, experiential learning, and health-tech innovation positioning the future hospital as a catalyst for regional economic development, research translation, startup growth, and deeper collaboration between academia and health care providers.

Pheonix

The Phoenix Bioscience Core (PBC) is a city-owned, 30-acre life sciences innovation district in downtown Phoenix, established in 2004 through a partnership between the City of Phoenix, the Arizona Board of Regents, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. Its founding vision was to bring together academic institutions, research organizations and clinical enterprises in a single urban campus to drive biotechnology commercialization and medical education. Anchored by global leaders such as TGen (Translational Genomics Research Institute) and the International Genomics Consortium, PBC was designed to accelerate precision medicine and genomics research, support academic spin-outs, and foster public–private collaboration for medical breakthroughs.

PBC's economic development objectives focus on creating a high-density bioscience ecosystem that generates new biotech startups, attracts capital, fosters workforce development, and drives regional growth. An economic study projected PBC would create approximately 9,400 jobs and $1.3 billion in impact by 2013, expanding to 22,100 jobs and $3.1 billion by 2025. Through facilities like the Wexford-developed 850 PBC innovation hub, incubator labs (e.g., Connect Labs and CEI), and Investor Corner, the Core continues to support scale-ready startups, training programs, and capital networks helping realize its original goals of innovation-led economic transformation in the Phoenix region.

St. Louis

Founded in 2002, the Cortex Innovation Community began as the Center of Research, Technology, and Entrepreneurial Exchange, launched by five anchor institutions including Washington University in St. Louis, Saint Louis University, University of Missouri–St. Louis,

BJC HealthCare, and the Missouri Botanical Garden. Those founders together invested $29 million to acquire and redevelop a 200-acre former industrial area in Midtown/St. Louis with the support and authority of the city, including tax increment financing and eminent-domain powers allowed under Missouri redevelopment law. The district was designed to knit together adjacent research, clinical, academic, and civic anchors into a curated innovation ecosystem that would foster start-ups, attract talent, incubate commercialization, and drive urban redevelopment.

Cortex's core economic development objectives have been to establish a high-density, mixed-use innovation district that retains local talent, commercializes university and medical research, launch new life-science and tech companies, attract national corporations, and create inclusive, equitable growth. By 2018, Cortex had grown to over 400 companies employing nearly 6,000 people in about 2 million square feet, generating $2.1 billion in annual regional economic output and supporting roughly 7,300 additional indirect jobs, with over $1 billion in direct impact from tenants and operations. The district has leveraged ~$100 million in TIF funds plus over $700 million in private investment to date, creating net new tax revenue above $40 million, and is projected at full build-out to deliver $2.3 billion in construction, 4.5 million ft² of development, and 13,000–15,000 jobs for the St. Louis region.

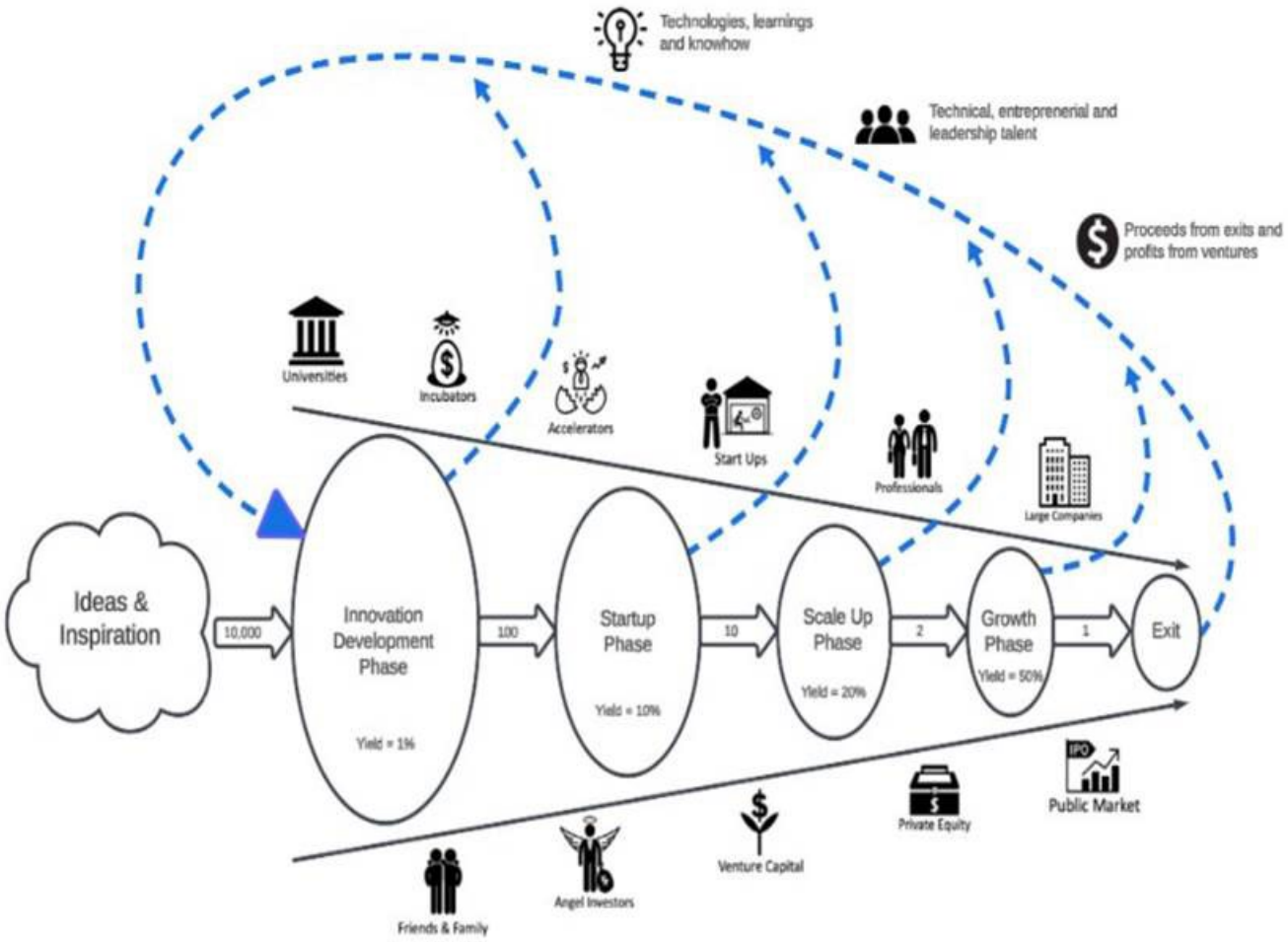
When cities proactively engage in land use planning, infrastructure investment, and partnership development, they help unlock the full potential of hospital and university assets. For communities, the benefits extend beyond economic development, they include improved access to health innovations, opportunities for local talent, enhanced civic identity, and more resilient, future-ready urban systems. As Kingston explores its own potential in this space, these models provide compelling evidence that integrated, place-based health innovation can drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

Kingston's Life Science Ecosystem

A comprehensive analysis of the Kingston innovation ecosystem, particularly in relation to its aspiration to become a global leader in life and health sciences has been completed. Positioned at the intersection of scientific excellence, emerging technologies, and increasing global health challenges, Kingston is well-placed to pursue sustained innovation. Achieving this goal requires a well-functioning life sciences ecosystem built on strong collaboration between academia, industry, investors, and government.

The innovation journey is visualized through the Hakim model (Figure 1) below, which highlights the flow of ideas from conception to market-ready enterprises. The top of the model reflects institutional enablers, while the bottom edge illustrates essential funding mechanisms. Notably, sustainable innovation ecosystems are characterized by closed-loop systems in which intellectual property, capital, and talent are continually recycled. This systemic regeneration is critical to long-term resilience and growth.

Figure 1: Hakim Model



Insights gathered from stakeholder interviews provide valuable context. Many emphasized the importance of integrated health systems—linking hospitals, primary care, and community health services—to support population-level innovation. Interviewees noted that Ontario universities are increasingly forming partnerships with hospitals and communities to co-create health solutions, reflecting broader provincial trends.

The ecosystem's strengths include strong public and academic partners, a motivated research community, the presence of an academic health sciences centre, excellent basic research capabilities, and strong clinical trials and vivarium infrastructure. However, there are also significant weaknesses: the absence of a unifying leader, limited life science incubator space and programming, a small deal pipeline, weak private sector involvement, and insufficient mechanisms for inter-institutional collaboration.

Opportunities for growth include improving coordination among local and global partners, expanding translational research, leveraging unique clinical assets, and tapping into the region's aging population as a distinct research focus. Yet, the ecosystem also faces notable threats: economic downturns affecting life science funding, government underinvestment in hospitals and universities, regional competition from larger centers, and bureaucratic decision-making processes within partner institutions.

Translational research—converting basic science into real-world applications—is particularly underdeveloped in Canada, making it an area of strategic focus for Kingston. With strong clinical testing assets and KHSC's capabilities, Kingston is well-positioned to lead nationally in this area and differentiate itself on the global stage. This positioning could attract both life science companies and investment.

Importantly, stakeholder engagement emphasized that Kingston cannot operate as a self-contained life science ecosystem given its current size and deal flow. Instead, Kingston must actively integrate with the broader provincial, national, and international innovation landscape. Partnerships with organizations like Mayo Clinic (via Providence), Lonza (via Octane), and provincial entities such as Ontario Bioscience Innovation Organization (OBIO), and the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) must be strengthened. Kingston should position itself and be seen as a strategic leader within this wider network.

A key asset in this landscape is the Octane Group of Companies, a local venture creation firm that has successfully launched several health ventures, including partnerships with Jubilant and Lonza. Octane has also acquired the Aesculap unit from B. Braun, rebranding it as Octane Biotherapeutics (BioTx). Employing over 150 staff locally and over 100 internationally, Octane is widely supported by all levels of government and will play a central role in Kingston's innovation narrative.

While development capital is essential, so too is a sustainable funding model for long-term operations. Rather than rely indefinitely on public subsidies, stakeholders recommended adopting an enterprise model. Revenues from leases, property management, and ecosystem services should be reinvested back into the District to support programming and growth.

Process for Creating the Kingston Life and Health Sciences Innovation District

The consulting firm, Spatial Alchemists Ltd., was engaged by the City of Kingston to provide advisory and consulting services supporting the development of a long-term vision and strategy for a Life and Health Sciences Innovation District. Their scope of work focused on both strategic planning and implementation support to help Kingston establish a nationally significant campus that integrates healthcare, education, research, and commercial activity. The engagement was divided into two main phases.

In Phase 1, Spatial Alchemists concentrated on developing a governance and operational framework for the proposed campus. This included identifying options for legal, governance, and funding structures required to support the development of the new District. It assessed

Kingston's competitive position in the national life sciences and health innovation ecosystem. This involved reviewing existing assets, identifying infrastructure gaps, and analyzing how Kingston's unique value proposition could complement other markets. Deliverables for this phase included a report on land and infrastructure options, a report on governance and funding models, a gap analysis of local assets and opportunities, and an executive summary synthesizing the findings.

Phase 2 focused on developing a health innovation and life science cluster strategy that aligns with regional priorities and positions Kingston as a strategic economic destination. Spatial Alchemists supported the creation of a real estate development and investment strategy to attract both commercial tenants and investors. This included assessing infrastructure priorities such as wet lab development, evaluating preliminary demand from local and external companies, and identifying potential shared lab operators. The firm also advised on optimal land use, development mix, and tenure models—ranging from leasing and build-to-suit to land ownership options—to ensure a vibrant, flexible, and sustainable ecosystem. Coordination and alignment across healthcare, academic, and commercial uses were also part of the advisory mandate. Key deliverables in this phase included a cluster strategy report, a report on land and development mix, a real estate and investment strategy document, and a final executive summary consolidating the work.

Phase 3 - Master Plan Development

Consultants will be engaged to support the development a master plan for the District site for commercial development of mixed asset classes, including life science and academic components on multiple sites comprised of private, academic and provincial ownership and develop commercially financeable development proformas for all developments, including anchor tenants for potential investment partners.

A detailed Real Estate Development Strategy Master Plan will outline the critical role of master planning in driving transformative change and strategic alignment across partners involved in Kingston's proposed Life and Health Sciences Innovation District. It will emphasize that true innovation cannot emerge from simple co-location; rather, it requires intentional design that fosters both random interactions and deliberate collaboration among a diversity of organizations at different stages of development. Master planning is positioned as a tool to overcome institutional silos and to align landowners and stakeholders around a shared vision, mission, and purpose that transcend individual interests.

The strategy underscores the need to determine the optimal level of integration across district developments. These include: full integration (shared facilities, operations, and infrastructure), partial integration (some shared services and common goals), and mere co-location (proximity without functional alignment). Achieving the right level of integration can enhance collaboration and innovation, though it also introduces complexity in financing and cost-sharing arrangements and there are complexities due to restrictions imposed by some funders. Therefore, master planning must strike a balance between unified district goals and the practical realities of individual parcel development.

The plan will also highlight that district land requirements will evolve as tenants' goals and technologies change over time. Flexible infrastructure planning is essential, for example, designing parking structures that could be repurposed for labs or implementing energy systems that can transition from natural gas to hydrogen. The strategy draws on lessons from other innovation districts, such as the McMaster Innovation Park, to illustrate how early development phases, often shaped by available capital and zoning, can be sequenced to support longer-term ambitions.

In Kingston's case, initial development is expected to be influenced heavily by the needs of KHSC and available funding and Ministry approvals, but the plan stresses that it would be neither equitable nor sustainable for KHSC alone to bear the costs of district-wide infrastructure. While partners retain responsibility over service delivery mandates, individual sites, and integration boundaries, shared infrastructure like parking or energy systems should be designed with scalability in mind to support future growth and broader district objectives.

Kingston Life and Health Sciences Innovation District: Overview

The Life and Health Sciences Innovation District is being established with the bold and unifying purpose of creating a healthier community and a healthier world by harnessing the power of Kingston's diverse and collaborative community. This initiative is grounded in the belief that coordinated action across academic, public, and private sectors can unlock transformative opportunities in health innovation and deliver lasting benefits both locally and globally.

The mission of the District is to activate and connect Kingston's institutional and entrepreneurial assets to form a thriving, integrated health sciences district. Central to this mission is the anchoring of leading life sciences and healthcare enterprises around academic health sciences infrastructure.

The District will drive the development, commercialization, and scaling of innovative health solutions by offering tailored supports for startups and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), facilitating access to advanced infrastructure, and creating opportunities to attract global talent, companies, and investments. It will serve as a hub for wellness, patient care, research, education, and innovation, while simultaneously fostering pathways for commercialization.

Shared infrastructure and well-designed public spaces will be incorporated to encourage both structured collaboration and serendipitous encounters, promoting a vibrant and livable environment. The District will facilitate cross-sector partnerships by integrating public and private sector activities while respecting the unique mandates of each. A key feature of this ecosystem will be Kingston's role as a "living lab," enabling the real-world piloting and evaluation of health innovations. By attracting both public and private investment, the District will generate measurable economic and social returns, including job creation, increased municipal revenues, and improved community health outcomes.

The future vision of the District positions Kingston as a provincial, national and global leader in health and life sciences innovation. This leadership is built on the strength of a highly collaborative ecosystem that excels at developing, testing, and scaling solutions to complex health challenges. By leveraging its distinctive assets, Kingston will draw world-class talent and investment, creating far-reaching economic and social value. The District will be internationally recognized for its sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive character and its ability to integrate academic excellence with real-world application.

Guided by a shared set of values, the Kingston Life and Health Sciences Innovation District will be built on principles of sustainability, ensuring that its development meets current needs without compromising the future. Collaboration will be core to its functioning, enabling inclusive partnerships across sectors and communities. Innovation will be encouraged at every level, championing bold ideas and positioning Kingston as a global thought leader in health solutions.

The District will embody a vibrant urban form, designed at a human scale to foster interaction, livability, and cultural richness. Excellence will be pursued through a commitment to global leadership in entrepreneurship, research, and implementation. Prosperity will be a key goal, measured through job creation, economic growth, and improved health outcomes. Community impact will be prioritized, ensuring that local populations experience improved health and quality of life. Equity will be embedded in all activities, ensuring fair access to opportunities and outcomes. Leadership will be cultivated by establishing Kingston as a centre of global excellence in health innovation.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Kingston, Queen’s University, Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC), and St. Lawrence College will outline a collaborative framework to develop a transformative Life and Health Sciences Innovation District in Kingston. The MOU formalizes the understanding of these founding partners to co-develop a significant cluster of public and private sector enterprises focused on advancing healthcare, research, education, and economic development through shared infrastructure and integrated programming. While non-binding, the MOU reflects a shared vision and commitment to collaboration and outlines the conditions, planning principles, and expectations that will guide the parties as they move toward definitive agreements and implementation.

At the core of the initiative is the co-location of new facilities for KHSC (a new hospital), and the potential for future Queen’s Faculty of Health Sciences, and St. Lawrence College’s health assets and programs on a single location, subject to funding availability. The partners agree that intentional spatial planning and integrated programming will foster innovation, accelerate research translation, and enhance workforce development. The MOU identifies this area as a future "living lab," where new health solutions can be tested and scaled in real-world settings.

To support this vision, the parties will jointly develop a master plan for the site, a servicing plan for infrastructure, a funding plan for attracting investment, and an integrated education plan to better align clinical and academic training across institutions. Key objectives include creating

shared research and clinical training spaces, providing wrap-around supports for innovation, fostering workforce pathways between institutions, and ensuring the District supports economic development and health system transformation.

Each institution also has distinct responsibilities and retains control over all matters related to their organization. The City of Kingston will lead zoning, infrastructure planning, and housing strategy, while promoting investment and job creation. KHSC will lead the planning and construction of the new hospital and support clinical training and innovation aligned with the District's goals. Queen's University will explore Faculty of Health Sciences infrastructure and collaborate on academic programming and research, subject to funding availability. St. Lawrence College will explore the development of new health sciences education and applied research opportunities.

Public Engagement

Targeted stakeholder engagement has been foundational to the development of Kingston's Life and Health Sciences Innovation District, ensuring that the vision is aligned with community needs, stakeholder priorities, and sectoral opportunities. Early consultation focused on institutional and sectoral leaders, including representatives from Kingston Health Sciences Centre, Queen's University, St. Lawrence College, Kingston Economic Development Corporation, and various healthcare and innovation ecosystem partners. These discussions helped to define the District's purpose, confirm alignment with regional health and economic strategies, and assess Kingston's competitive position in the broader Canadian life sciences landscape.

Engagement efforts included structured stakeholder interviews, facilitated workshops, and advisory input from organizations such as SEAMO, Providence Care, and local innovation leaders including Octane Biotherapeutics. These sessions highlighted recurring themes.

Community-level engagement is planned as the project moves into more detailed planning and design stages, particularly in relation to land use, infrastructure development, and integration with surrounding neighborhoods. A comprehensive engagement strategy will guide future consultations, which will include public open houses, digital engagement platforms, and targeted outreach to ensure representation from diverse community voices—including healthcare users, students, local entrepreneurs, and underrepresented populations.

As planning advances, future consultation will continue to play a critical role in shaping the District's design, governance model, and implementation framework, ensuring the project remains transparent, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The development of the Life and Health Sciences Innovation District directly supports the City's commitment to Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IIDEA) by addressing systemic and structural barriers that have historically excluded individuals and groups from full participation in the economy, education, and healthcare.

A central objective of the District is to co-design spaces, programs, and partnerships that foster inclusive innovation—ensuring that diverse communities have equitable access to health services, learning opportunities, entrepreneurship supports, and employment. By prioritizing integration across academic, clinical, and innovation sectors, the initiative also seeks to dismantle organizational silos and barriers that limit collaboration and access for underrepresented populations.

The initiative aligns with multiple priorities identified in the City's IIDEA Work Plan. It supports efforts to create an inclusive organizational culture through its collaborative governance model and planned community engagement strategies. The District's focus on workforce development, talent retention, and inclusive training pipelines also directly contributes to the "attract, recruit and retain" priority. Furthermore, the District presents opportunities to embed inclusive design and accessibility best practices in all infrastructure planning and policy development, supporting the Work Plan's goals around inclusive policy, learning and development, and external engagement.

The initiative is also consistent with the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as the District will include publicly accessible facilities, transportation connections, public spaces, and municipal infrastructure, all future designs will be subject to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards, including those related to customer service, information and communications, employment, the design of public spaces, and procurement.

Accessibility will be integrated into the District's design guidelines, master planning, and public realm strategies to ensure barrier-free access for all residents, workers, and visitors. As the project advances, the City will ensure that accessibility requirements are embedded in it's capital planning, procurement, and community consultation processes related to the District.

Financial Considerations

Approval of this report would authorize the allocation of up to $300,000 from the City's Working Fund Reserve to support the next phase of planning for the Life and Health Sciences Innovation District. This funding is intended to cover non-capital costs related to master planning, stakeholder engagement, site servicing studies, and development of governance and funding models. This is a new operating cost not previously included in capital or operating forecasts. Staff will seek external grant funding opportunities to offset this amount where possible. The project supports an approved Council strategic priority focused on economic development and innovation. The investment is expected to leverage future infrastructure, institutional, and private sector contributions to the District.

Contacts:

Craig Desjardins, Director, Strategy, Innovation and Partnerships, 613-929-1758

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Brandon Forrest, Director, Business, Real Estate and Environment

Troy Beharry, Manager, Partnerships and Grant Development

Exhibits Attached:

None