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Items for the Information of the Partners in Project Green Executive Management Committee

TO: Chair and Members of the Partners in Project Green Executive Management Committee
Tuesday, September 21, 2021 Meeting

FROM: Darryl Gray, Director, Education and Training

RE: **PARTNERS IN PROJECT GREEN 2021 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS**

KEY ISSUE

Identification of key areas of opportunities for PPG related to Membership benefits, engagement, and communications.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the following information report and presentation on the results and opportunities identified through the 2021 Membership Survey be received.

BACKGROUND

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), with support from municipalities including Peel, York, the City of Toronto, and lower tier municipalities including Mississauga and Brampton, and from the nearby business community has been working to transform the employment lands surrounding Toronto Pearson and located within TRCA's Etobicoke-Mimico Creeks Watershed into an internationally recognized community of eco-friendly businesses.

In order to ensure Partners in Project Green is meeting the needs of its members and to further clarify benefits and communications strategies to be employed in the upcoming Membership Program relaunch (Q1 2022), a survey was sent to all PPG members and completed between May 3 and May 21, 2021. The survey was sent to a total of 67 organizations and had a 57% response rate.

The goal of the survey was to identify:

- Why organizations sign up for Membership;
- What value they receive after signing up;
- What benefits they value now and want in the future;
- What their sustainability focus areas will be over the next 1-3 years.

In order to remain both responsive to member and community needs and support ongoing program adaptation the survey will be repeated in Q2/Q3 2022. The survey further provides an additional benefit of measuring performance and value of the overall PPG membership program.

RATIONALE

The Committee will be updated on the results of the 2021 Membership Survey and provided with an overview of next steps in implementing recommendations resulting from the survey.

Key findings include:

- Networking opportunities are a high motivator for joining and considered highly valuable by current members. Additional networking opportunities are desired.

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- Knowledge & Resources are a high motivator for joining and are the top ranked benefit.
- Many organizations rely on us for technical expertise and skill. When asked "What is the most valuable thing you have gotten out of your membership?", this was the second most mentioned feature (after access to programs).
- Many respondents indicated the desire for more opportunities to share their stories and promote offerings (events, services, publications).
- Key areas of sustainability focus over the next 1-3 years include (top five, in order of ranking): waste reduction, employee engagement, carbon neutrality and emissions, social sustainability (impact on people and communities), and water efficiency. This demonstrates our performance areas are in line with Member needs, with the opportunity to enhance our social sustainability offerings.
- PPG can strengthen its role as a broker or hub of knowledge, resources, technical expertise and networking connections to better meet member needs.

Please see below for a list of key recommendations and potential actions based on the survey results. In cases where action status is noted as “not started”, additional review and evaluation is, or may be, required, including staff and resource planning. Further updates will be provided, as appropriate, to the PPG EMC at future meetings on both “in progress” and “not started” potential actions.

Recommendation #1: Build out networking opportunities

Potential Action	Status
Expand the Green Economy Networking events	In progress: Pilot a paid non-member, free member model in September 2021. Determine 2022 event schedule based on interest.
Reintroduce In Person Networking	Not started: Reintroduce in person networking in 2022, consider a spring or fall large networking event with a paid non-member, free Member model.
Expanded consortium networks & collective projects	In progress: Two self-funded consortium streams currently in development (GreenBiz Caledon and Zero Waste Leaders) Two more consortiums to be developed for launch in Q1 2022.
Explore the development of a mentorship program	Not started: Have had initial conversations with internal TRCA groups who have run mentorship programs. Initial research suggests that the model may be resource intensive. Potential to be explored in future.

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Recommendation #2: Communicate PPG Benefits to Members and their employees

Potential Action	Status
Create short videos on different benefits available by grouping or Member category to live on the website and be shared out through social media	Not started: will be developed as marketing materials for the Membership launch
Include a Member Benefit feature in every newsletter	Not started: will commence with Membership launch
Member Benefits package included in Onboarding Package	Not started: to be developed in October 2021
Create email templates and/or other products for Members to send to their staff outlining the benefits they can utilize	Not started: to be developed in October 2021

Recommendation #3: Build out additional resources

Potential Action	Status
Leverage member resources where appropriate	In progress: have created an affiliate partnership with GreenWill Toronto and have a list of potential opportunities
Leverage TRCA resources where appropriate	In progress: working with STEP and Ecosystem and Climate Services to determine how to share knowledge resources
Develop Case Studies regularly	In progress: see Share Member Stories and Service Offerings)
Create additional Business Guides	Not started: to be explored. These are valuable but resource intensive.
Create Member Only newsletter	In progress: list is created and has been utilized for one-offs. Strategy to be developed.
Create vendor lists for University/College list for students along with lists of funding opportunities	Not started: to be explored
Create Green Vendor list; consider member only features	In progress: research being undertaken with City of Toronto
Create incentive database	Not started: to be explored
Create a jobs board, or job listings in newsletter	Not started: to be explored
Create a podcast, showcasing the people behind the projects	Not started: to be explored

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Recommendation #4: Share member stories & services offerings

Potential Action	Status
Make the system for Members to submit 'Member Spotlights' more visible and ensure high visibility on the site, newsletter and social media	In progress: reviewing process.
Create a system for Members to apply to share their expertise and experience at events	Not started: develop a PPG Standards guide for event presentations and create an application and evaluation process.
Create a system for developing case studies (video and digital) on Members & Collective Projects	In progress: reviewing process
Green Business of the Month feature for TRCA's social media – a PPG project, member or collective project	Not started: to be explored

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 1 – Green the Toronto region's economy

Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship

Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

At upcoming PPG Executive Management Committee meetings, staff will provide detailed reports and updates related to the evolution of PPG's membership programming and communications, ensuring delivery of program outcomes while acting in accordance with public health directives related to pandemic spread.

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: 2021 PPG Member Survey Results Presentation