

Date: May 13, 2021	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of General Committee	
From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Community Services	Meeting date: May 26, 2021

## Subject

**Light Up The Square 2022 – Public Art Commission Partnership Proposal**

## Recommendation

1. That the Commissioner of Community Services or designate be authorized to negotiate and enter into a public art agreement with the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP) in Montreal, to invest in commissioning a large-format, interactive artwork that will have its world premiere at Celebration Square, and to collect revenue from future third-party rentals of this artwork in the form of royalty fees, including all necessary documents ancillary thereto, in a form satisfactory to Legal Services.
2. That all necessary by-laws be enacted.

## Executive Summary

- Culture is bringing forward a proposal for Council endorsement that the City enter into an agreement with the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP) in Montreal to invest in co-commissioning a large-format interactive public art that will have its world premiere at Celebration Square in 2022 as part of a five-week winter lighting festival, kicking off with *Light Up The Square*. Following its initial presentation, the artwork will tour internationally.
- Mississauga will be one of three investors in this newly commissioned artwork, alongside the QDSP and one other Canadian municipality (Ontario excluded); the City will invest one-quarter of the value of the commission.
- The City's investment in this commission will come from Culture's existing operating and capital budget, which is well-supported through grants and sponsorship; no new money is being requested.

- As an investor, the City will receive revenue from future touring of this artwork in the form of royalty fees. This investment/revenue model demonstrates a new way for the City to sustain its investment in free cultural programming to benefit residents, without impacting the tax base.
- This strategically aligned proposal supports Mississauga's long-term COVID recovery plans, demonstrates tourism appeal, responds to public appetite for outdoor interactive winter programming, and builds on Mississauga's commitment to supporting both artists and emerging technologies.

## Background

For the past ten years, Celebration Square has had a lighter programming calendar in winter. The City has hosted two major events; *Light Up the Square* and New Year's Eve.

With the cancellation of public events due to COVID in 2020, Celebration Square pivoted winter programming to focus on long-term, light-based installations. To this end, the Square hosted *Chimes*, a large format, interactive artwork that was featured at the Square from November 21 through to January 4 (see reference image 1 in the Appendix). Public response to this programming was uniformly positive.

Based on the success of this model, this programming approach will continue in 2021 and beyond.

## Present Status

In 2021, *Light Up The Square* will transition from a one-day event to become a five-week festival of light in the downtown core. This new initiative is a collaboration between the City's Public Art Program and Celebration Square. The five-week festival will include an internationally celebrated, large-format, interactive artwork. Additional installations – both new and existing – will be selected through an open call for public art to showcase emerging artists, technologies, and digital artwork from local and Ontario-based artists. This year's large-format artwork, *Prismatica* (see reference image 2 in the Appendix), is available to the City as a rental through the touring program of the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership (QDSP). *Light Up the Square*, the annual tree lighting event, will serve to kick off the five-week festival.

This new format for *Light Up the Square* is supported by the Culture Master Plan, Cultural Districts Implementation Plan, Celebration Square Strategic Plan, and Public Art Master Plan (PAMP).

Public Art and Celebration Square staff have identified an opportunity to partner with the QDSP to co-commission a new large-format interactive artwork for *Light Up The Square* in 2022.

## Comments

Culture is proposing a Direct Commission with QDSP to lead the co-production of this public art project, in compliance with Corporate Policy and Procedure 05-02-07 City Acquired Art and Bylaw 0074-2013 Authority to Execute Agreements. QDSP is the only Canadian organization facilitating this model for commissioning artwork, including a revenue opportunity. The Council-endorsed Public Art Master Plan recommends direct commissions for public art projects over \$10,000 that are highly specialized.

Culture does not have authority to receive revenue from public art projects in the form of royalty fees and as such, Culture is requesting Council authority to enter into an Art Services Agreement with QDSP.

The QDSP is a well-established not-for-profit corporation that oversees large-scale commissions of digital public art and manages the programming of the Quartier des Spectacles and surrounding cultural assets in Montreal, Quebec. The QDSP is a separate entity from the City of Montreal, but is governed by the City's policies and bylaws.

QDSP brings together international partners to co-commission large-scale digital public art. By leveraging the partners' investments, QDSP allows each partner to commission large-scale public art at a fraction of the typical cost. Additionally, QDSP has a built-in revenue generation model that enables each partner to recover the costs of their initial investment through rental and touring fees. QDSP produces 3-5 commissions per year, with past co-production partners including Fêtes des Lumières in Lyon, France (*Chimes*), Quays Culture in Manchester, U.K. (*Spectrum*), Illuminart in Montreal (*Island of Warmth*), and the National Film Board of Canada (*The Compassion Machine*).

Benefits of this commissioning partnership include:

- **Leveraging Financial Resources and Creating Revenue**

The QDSP co-production program leverages the financial contributions from a minimum of three partners. After its initial presentation at each producing partner's venue, the artwork is made available for international touring. This investment/revenue model demonstrates a new way for the City to sustain its investment in free cultural programming to benefit residents, without affecting the tax base.

- **Demonstrated Tourism Appeal**

Mississauga will present the World Premier of a new interactive installation, establishing Mississauga as a premier cultural destination in the GTA and beyond, creating a unique lighting festival experience that has a proven tourism draw.

- **Strong and Transparent Commissioning Process**

QDSP will follow a standard juried public art model for commissioning the public art project, with the City as an active participant in the creative journey. The commissioning process for this project aligns with Corporate Policy & Procedure 05-02-07 City Acquired Art and industry best practices, and will involve:

- An open or invitational Call for Artists (local, national, or international);
- An arms-length jury that makes a final recommendation on the submissions;
- Each partner contributes to setting the project goals, selecting jury members, drafting the Call for Artists and confirming the final artist selection.

- **Limited Liability Risk to the City**

The City's contribution will be treated like an investment, with Culture participating in the commissioning process as outlined in the structure of the QDSP program. The City will be indemnified by the QDSP as an investor in the project. To protect the City from any ongoing liability risks, the City will cede ownership of the co-commissioned artwork after its initial presentation at Celebration Square. Ownership, care, and control will be the purview of the QDSP, with the City collecting future revenue as a royalty fee (rather than a co-owner rental fee).

## Financial Impact

The City's investment in this commission will come from Culture's existing operating and capital budget, which is well-supported through grants and sponsorship; no new money is being requested. Culture is proposing the following investment model:

- QDSP will leverage financial contributions from a minimum of three partners. The City's contribution will be approx. 25% of the overall artwork value (dependent on the number of partners), estimated at \$300,000.
  - The proposed City contribution is \$75,000 from Culture's existing budget:
    - \$50,000 from Celebration Square Cost Centre 24836
    - \$25,000 from Digital Public Art Program Project Number 20498
- After its initial presentation at each producing partner's venue, the artwork will be available as a rental property for international touring. Revenue is shared amongst partners based on investment. Revenue is forecasted to be greater than \$150,000 over 7 years.
- Future revenues will be deposited into Celebration Square operating account 525105 - 24836 Fees General. Revenue will be utilized for future programming at Celebration Square.

*Table 1. Forecasted Revenue from Artwork Royalty Fees*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Anticipated Revenue (approx.)</b>
2023	\$ 12,500.00
2024	\$ 25,000.00
2025	\$ 25,000.00
2026	\$ 25,000.00
2027	\$ 25,000.00
2028	\$ 25,000.00
2029	\$ 25,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 162,500.00</b>

## **Conclusion**

The City continues to raise the bar on its winter programming. This partnership opportunity with the QDSP is a unique opportunity to deliver on the City's public programming goals that offers significant and demonstrable benefits to the city.

Culture staff recommends that the City enter into an agreement with the QDSP to co-produce the design and development of a large-scale digital public art installation and to receive revenue in the form of royalty fees, in compliance with Corporate Policy and Procedure 05-02-07 City Acquired Art and Public Art Master Plan.

## **Attachments**

Appendix 1: Reference Images



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