



## VMC Sub-committee Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, March 05, 2019

**WARD(S):** 4

**TITLE: VMC TRANSIT CITY TOWER 3 PUBLIC ART PLAN UPDATE**

**FROM:**

Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

To provide an update on the status of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan following Council approval of the project on May 23, 2018.

## **Report Highlights**

- On June 7, 2016, Council approved the Vaughan City-Wide Public Art Program and the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.
- The VMC Culture and Public Art Framework identified the installation of a large scale public art project at heart of the Mobility Hub as an important quick win placemaking opportunity for the City's downtown.
- On May 23, 2018, Council approved the Transit City Tower 3 development with a condition for the Owner to provide a \$3.5 million contribution towards an on-site public art budget for the creation of a public art piece that is integrated with the architecture of the building, subject to the City of Vaughan's Public Art Program, as a community benefit in exchange for increased height and density pursuant to Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.
- On October 25, 2018, the Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan was presented to the Vaughan Design Review Panel, which currently serves as the City's interim Public Art Advisory Committee providing input on site and artist selection processes.
- The Public Art Plan has evolved into a "light wall" that will enable a rotation of contemporary digital art media as a curated gallery.

## **Report Highlights Continued**

- This project represents the first public art work implemented through the City's Public Art Program and will serve as a key landmark for the downtown.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT this report BE RECEIVED

## **Background**

On June 7, 2016, Item 6, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), was adopted without amendment by Council which included recommendations that staff work with the development community on advancing the integration of public art into development proposals where possible or appropriate, and that staff pursue and seek partnerships for a public art installation within the Mobility Hub as a quick win placemaking opportunity that considered the potential use of any secured VMC Section 37 funds.

Since Council approval, staff have been working with the development community to identify opportunities for the inclusion of public art as part of urban development projects in the downtown, and throughout other areas of the City. Through the review of Site Development File DA.17.062 VMC Residences III GP INC, staff were able to propose the inclusion of an integrated public art project as an on-site community benefit, in exchange for an increase in the height and density of the development, pursuant to Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.

Following Council approval of OPA File OP.17.003, Zoning By-Law Amendment File Z.17.028 and Site Development File DA.17.062 VMC Residences III GP INC (Attachment 1), the Owner procured Studio F Minus Curatorial (SFM) to develop the Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan (Attachment 2) to further detail the commissioning process for the publicly-accessible privately-owned public art project.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[City-Wide and VMC Public Art Program Council extract June 7, 2016](#)

[Vaughan City-Wide Program Document](#)

[VMC Public Art Framework Document](#)

[Extract from Council Meeting Minutes of May 23, 2018 for OP.17.003, Z.17.028 and DA.17.062](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

### **Realizing the vision of the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework**

The realization of the VMC's vision as a vibrant downtown with exciting activities, social capital and cultural events is predicated on collective efforts in creating a sense of 'place'. Culture and public art initiatives contribute to that sense of place, by creating memories and experiences that draw people to use and frequent the VMC on a 24/7 basis versus just passing through.

Public art plays many roles in the urban context. As outlined in the City-Wide Public Art Program, some of its key roles include:

- **Placemaking** - creating and enhancing public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being
- **Gateway Marker** - an entrance feature that signifies a boundary and assists with wayfinding
- **Landmark** - an easily recognized feature in the cityscape that contributes to placemaking and orientation
- **Wayfinding** - visuals used to convey location and directions
- **Interpretation** - a work of art that illuminates the character or history of its context
- **Activation and Animation** - a work of art that energizes a space, can be interacted with and/or can move independently

The development of a large scale integrated public art installation occupy the majority of the six storey south façade of the Transit City Tower 3 podium will serve as a gateway and landmark at the heart of the VMC Mobility Hub. The context of the site, located adjacent to the SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal, mixed use building with PwC, YMCA,

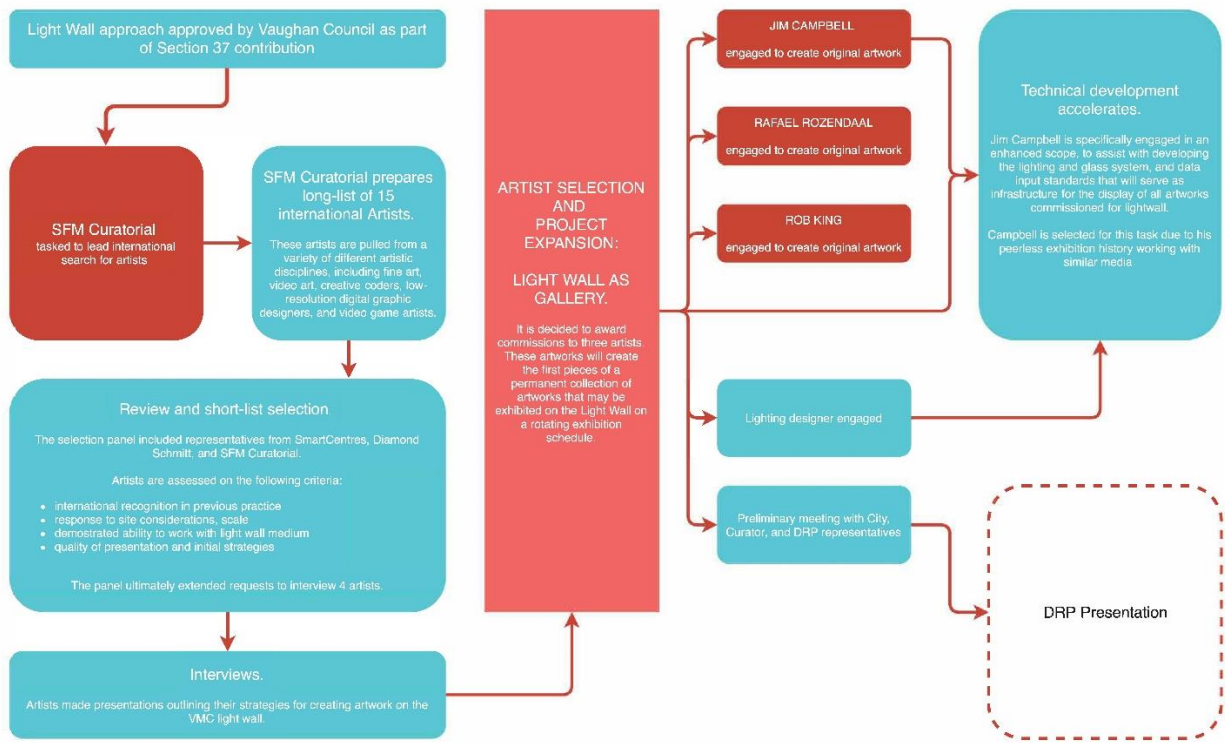
and public library and publicly accessible pedestrian mews, provides an exceptional opportunity to help define a contemporary identity wayfinder and activation catalyst for the downtown. Given the prominence and scale of the installation, it will also be visible from Transit Square and the TTC Subway Station and areas beyond (see perspectives provided in Attachment 2). This project achieves one of the quick win placemaking opportunities endorsed by Council in June 2016, represents the first public art project implemented through the City-Wide Public Art Program and follows the design considerations outlined for private developments outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

### **A comprehensive Public Art Plan for the downtown's first public art project has been developed**

The Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan (Attachment 2) outlines the comprehensive developer-led commissioning process managed by SFM Curatorial, in collaboration with Diamond Schmitt Architects, to determine the artist selection process for the project. The Plan also details the framework for refinement of the public art vision for the development as approved by Council in May 2018 (Attachment 1), with consideration of context, precedents, site selection, scale and structural design. The evaluation and selection processes outlined in the Plan have been conducted in accordance with the guidelines established in the City of Vaughan's Public Art Program.

The result of this process is the creation of a 920 m<sup>2</sup> (nearly 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) light wall which acts as an exhibition venue for a permanent collection of original digital work. This public art initiative will result in the production of not just a single artwork, but an infrastructure vehicle that can be used to exhibit a variety of digital works to be commissioned in the future. At this point in the curatorial process, three artists have been selected to create artworks for the light wall in its initial phase as shown in the diagram below. Curation of these artworks, and any future commissions, will follow the City's Public Art Program, with involvement of City Staff leading the Public Art Program.

# ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS



The Transit City Public Art Plan meets the objectives of the City’s Public Art Program, is supported by Staff and was well-received by the Vaughan Design Review Panel on October 25, 2018, which is acting as the City’s interim Public Art Advisory Committee in the initial phase of the Public Art Program’s implementation and administration.

## Development of the Public Art Agreement is underway

The Owner and City will enter into the required Public Art Agreement which includes information related to: public art contribution options; public art contributor triggers/timing; public art program requirements; the Owner and City responsibilities, including curated content; accounting requirements; and copyright and maintenance. Given the scale and digital nature of the art, the Agreement will also outline operating hours and performance measures for the works to ensure that light pollution and nuisance for adjacent properties is minimized. The Owner will own and maintain the public art piece.

## Financial Impact

The development of the City-Wide Public Art Program provides the framework for acquiring public art from development projects through Section 37 policies, deriving community benefits for the City which would otherwise be unachievable through property taxation. There are no economic impacts resulting from this report, as this project is fully offset by

Section 37 funding and owned and maintained by the Owner. A \$3.5 million-dollar Letter of Credit has been posted to secure the works.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

The Region's policy for Economic Vitality recognizes culture as an important element in making the Region a place to work, live and play. Vibrant and healthy communities will attract and retain a skilled labour force.

The policies for An Urbanizing Region direct Regional Centres to recognize the importance of creating a sense of place and high quality open spaces "that include meeting places and urban squares that incorporate art, culture and heritage" (s. 5.3.7).

The Region also sets the requirements for Regional Centre secondary plans to include policies addressing the need for public art to be incorporated into major Regional and City buildings and to encourage the inclusion of public art in significant private sector developments.

### **Conclusion**

The Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan builds on the requirement for an integrated public art project for the Transit City development as approved by Council in May 2018 and meets the objectives of the City's Public Art Program. As a contemporary piece of public art, the Plan is supported by Staff and the Vaughan Design Review Panel.

The result of this process is the creation of a 920 m<sup>2</sup> (nearly 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) light wall which acts as an exhibition venue for a permanent collection of original digital works. This public art initiative will result in the production of not just a single artwork, but an infrastructure that can be used to exhibit a variety of curated artworks to be commissioned in the future.

As a progressive piece of contemporary art for the downtown and the City's first piece of public art secured through the Public Art Program, this progressive project helps realize the vision for placemaking as a gateway feature and activator in the Mobility Hub, as defined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework.

**For more information**, please contact: Amy Roots, VMC Senior Manager, extension 8035

### **Attachments**

1. Attachments 12 and 13 Extracts from Council Meeting Minutes of May 23, 2018 for OP.17.003, Z.17.028 and DA.17.062

## 2. Transit City Tower 3 Public Art Plan

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