

ASSEMBLY PARK OUTDOOR GALLERY PROGRAM: PUBLIC ART PLAN

Review Timeline:

Vaughan DRP Meeting 01.27.2022

Vaughan Council Meeting 03.08.2022

Prepared for:

QuadReal Property Group

Prepared by:

ART + PUBLIC UnLtd

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Introduction



The Studios at Assembly Park. Futura (2021) mural by André Kan

In October 2021, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd was engaged by QuadReal Property Group to develop a Public Art Plan for Assembly Park - a temporary park with garden beds, plantings, and shipping containers which define the space and create opportunities for inspiring public art in Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

Through our conversations with the QuadReal Property Group, Menkes, IBI Group team members and the City of Vaughan, we learned that the unique opportunity for this site lies in its aim to create a space for communities to **assemble, gather** and **connect**. This site is a 'seed' for the future growth of a community in an area that is experiencing tremendous growth and transformation. It is a temporal, transitional site; The Gardens at Assembly Park will thrive with community connection for 8-10 years and then will be transformed into future homes for a new community. In a group interview, one participant noted *"Assembly Park is a taste of what is to come."*

Created with thirteen strategically placed shipping containers with plantings and garden beds, Assembly Park is a platform for community connection. With a harvest table area, benches and picnic tables, this space will be animated by community members getting together for communal meals, meetings and perhaps impromptu performances.

The Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program aims to inspire and facilitate this sense of community connection.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, Rebecca Carbin (Principal, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd) was engaged to write a Public Art Program Strategy, for this development now called Assembly Park. It identified the overall goal for an Art and Culture-led Placemaking program as being *“to curate an intimacy that feels human-scaled and organic, optimistic and accessible, by creating connectivity between people and sites”*.

The Public Art Program Strategy stated *“there is a strong desire from QuadReal to make this area feel home-grown, and to balance local inclusion with international standards, purposefully creating opportunities that allow for local artists, but are part of an overall vision that includes larger landmark gestures, suitable to experienced artists from further afield.”* The objectives of the strategy articulated a need to support the creation, presentation and commission of high-calibre, meaningful, contemporary public art within the site.

To ensure the continued good relationship between developer and City, we want to make sure we are aligned with the stated Objectives for Culture in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), which are as follows:

1) Attract and retain human capital in the creative sector

2) Enrich neighbourhoods through expanded cultural assets

3) Foster creativity and innovation

4) Address physical space needs for artists and creative professionals

5) Identify a funding model to develop and sustain cultural facilities and programming

The Vaughan Public Art Framework states: *“Culture and art are a valued and vital part of urban life. The VMC is envisioned as having a sensory rich environment with beautiful and stimulating places for people to live, work and play. With ongoing development in the VMC, a framework of culture and public art will be an important catalyst for placemaking, economic development and investment”*.

The Public Art Program at Assembly Park will live in this spirit - creating temporary programming that has the capacity to draw the public on a recurring basis and can serve to animate a site in transition, as well as create a platform for community outreach and engagement.

At this site we see the art programming going great lengths towards fostering a sense of place that is growing and becoming, organically and genuinely.

The Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program is a discretionary public realm enhancement and not tied to a condition of site plan approval.

Site Context

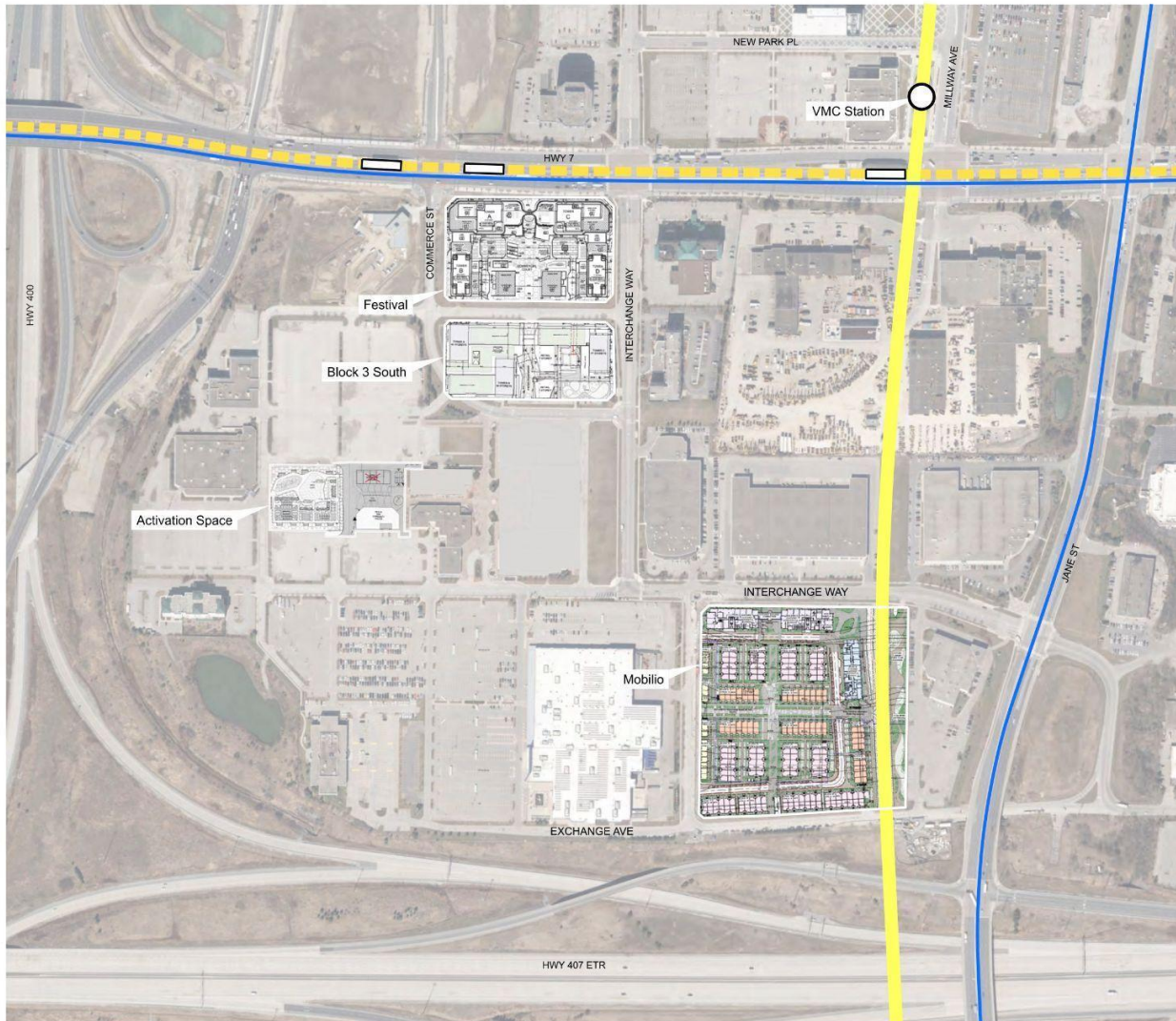
This site sits adjacent to the north-south/commercial movement along Commerce Street and the east-west recreational/leisure movement along the future Doughton Avenue extension. Assembly Park will have a dynamic program with a focus on creating a place to gather, engaging and fostering intergenerational interest between people and the site context.

In consultation with QuadReal's design team, and in keeping with the Public Art Program Strategy, consideration was given to the following criteria in identifying locations for art:

- High visibility
- Publicly accessible
- Supports broader public realm initiatives and QuadReal's Placemaking principles
- Afford opportunities for art that will be unique and create a distinctive neighbourhood feel



Aerial photograph of The Gardens at Assembly Park and immediate surrounding context, 2021



Context Aerial

York Region Transit

- VIVA Orange BRT Route
- VIVA Rapidway Station
- Bus Route

Toronto Transit Commission

- Line 1 Subway
- VMC Station

Notes:

- Aerial photograph from First Base Solutions (2020).

Location

Jane St & Hwy 7, Vaughan

Date

January 5, 2022

Drafted By

SD

Scale

0 150m

North



BROADER CONTEXT

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is a central business district in Vaughan, Ontario, Canada. Measuring 179 hectares (442 acres), the district is located at the intersection of Highway 7 and Jane Street, northeast of the Highway 400 and Highway 407 interchange, at the site of the historic farming community of Edgeley within the larger district of Concord. The district is served by the TTC subway station of the same name, which is the northwestern terminus of Line 1 Yonge–University of the Toronto subway system. It is also a major transit hub for York Region Transit (YRT), as well as Viva and Züm bus rapid transit services.

The city is made up of many historic communities, including: Woodbridge, Maple, Thornhill, Concord, and Kleinburg. Most residents identify more with these smaller communities than with the city as a whole. Creating a true 'downtown' has been the vision for the City of Vaughan since the rapid growth in the 1980s and 1990s changed the city from a quiet collection of communities into a thriving urban centre. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is the city's downtown core. The vision for this downtown is that it continues to grow as a vibrant, modern urban centre for residents and businesses that encompasses all amenities of urban lifestyle: multi-use office towers, residences, subway access, open green space, urban squares, pedestrian shopping areas and restaurants, and walking and cycling paths. Vaughan projects that by 2031, the new downtown will have 25,000 residents and employment for more than 11,000 people.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The township was named after Benjamin Vaughan, a British commissioner who signed a peace treaty with the United States in 1783. In 1846, the Township of Vaughan was primarily agricultural but had a population of 4,300. There were six grist mills and 25 sawmills. By 1935, there were 4,873 residents. World War II sparked an influx of immigration, and by 1960, the population stood at 15,957. The ethnocultural composition of the area began to change with the arrival of different groups such as Italians, Eastern Europeans and Jewish people.

INDIGENOUS PRESENCE

In the late pre-contact period, the Haudenosaunee and Huron-Wendat people populated what is today Vaughan. The Skandatut ancestral Wendat village overlooked the east branch of the Humber River (Pine Valley Drive) and was once home to approximately 2000 Huron in the sixteenth century. The site is close to a Huron ossuary (mass grave) uncovered in Kleinburg in 1970, and one kilometre north of the Seed-Barker Huron archeological site. The Seed-Barker site was a 16th-century Iroquois village on the Humber River in Vaughan. It was located on the Carrying Place Trail, an important ancient travel and trade route connecting Lake Ontario with Lake Simcoe. In 1895, a local farmer began finding Iroquoian artifacts in the area. The Iroquois used the floodplains to plant maize, beans and squash, known as the three sisters. Since 1975, more than a million artifacts have been discovered and nineteen longhouses were excavated revealing that the

village was occupied by the Iroquois from circa 1500 - 1550 AD.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Statistics Canada, the population of Vaughan grew 6.2 percent from 2011 to 2016. Median age as of 2016 was 40.2, lower than the Ontario median age of 41.3. Vaughan is known as having some of the highest concentrations of Southern European Canadians (notably Italians), Eastern Europeans (chiefly Russians) and Jewish people in Ontario, while those who are of British and/or Irish origin form a much smaller proportion than in many other Southern Ontario cities. Visible minorities make up 35.4% of the population. Vaughan has small but growing Chinese, Hispanic, Jamaican, Indian and Vietnamese populations. According to the 2016 Census, English is the mother tongue of 45.2% of the residents of Vaughan. Italian is the mother tongue for 12.3% of the population, followed by Russian (6.8%) and Spanish (2.4%). Each of Punjabi, Tagalog (Filipino), Hebrew, Persian, Mandarin, Urdu, Cantonese, and Vietnamese has a percentage ranging from 1.5% to 2.9%, signifying Vaughan's high linguistic diversity.

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

The Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program fits into a broader Placemaking Strategy for Assembly Park, which comprises events at three activations sites: **The Gardens, The Plaza and The Studios**. QuadReal Property Group manages the planning and implementation of events at these activation sites.

The Gardens are 1.47 acres of open space, walkways, planting beds, community gardens, and home to the

Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program. The Gardens are the serene, romantic and green backyard of Assembly Park. A natural gathering space replete with multi-purpose space for communal dining, herb, flower and vegetable gardens, gardening classes, picnics and aimless afternoons.

The Plaza is Assembly Park's central public space that spans approximately one (1) acre. It is a blank canvas for a multitude of diverse potential uses such as farmers markets, food trucks, exhibitions, cultural events, film screenings, games and community gatherings.

The Studios at Assembly Park is a 10,700 sq.ft multi-use art studio, gallery, event and residency space, classroom, destination and celebration of creativity in all its many forms, disciplines and mediums. This hub of creativity serves as an inspiration point and tool in continuing the many diverse creative pursuits of the Assembly Park community. This programmable indoor community space supports local artists and talent in the Vaughan and York region community.

These three elements are cohesive and mutually supporting. Programming for the entire space, led by QuadReal Property Group, creates a dynamic hub in the heart of the VMC of cross-disciplinary activations with the potential to inspire repeat visits from the public locally and regionally. Programming is scheduled year round through a combination of direct and community partnering events. Events are initiated on a seasonal rotation calendar. Community activations and events are made publicly accessible to accompany the

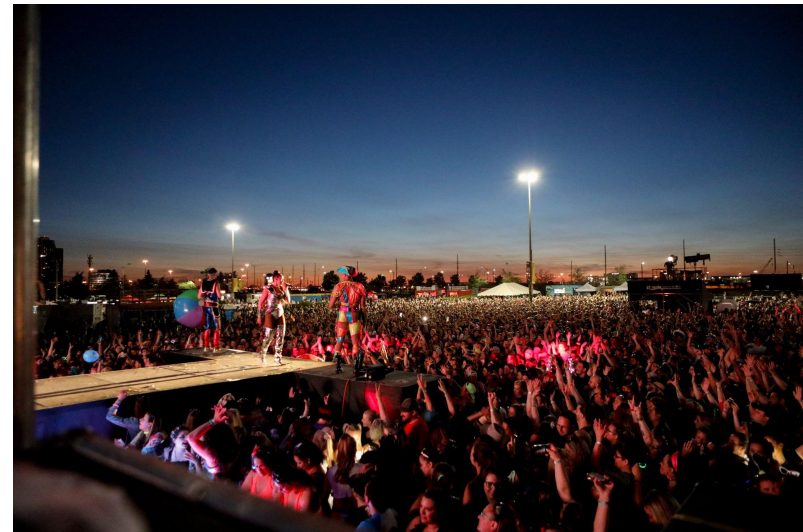
Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program. Programming to date includes: Vaughan Film Festival, the Inaugural Studio Art Show, Screeners haunted house, and Holiday of Lights.

There is potential for exploring additional on-going cross-disciplinary programming partnership activations on-site.



Pictured above: The Plaza space (pink area) is approximately 1 ac. The Assembly Park Studios (beige building bottom right) is about 10,700 sq.ft. The grassed area (eastside in the place of the demolished building) is about 0.37 ac. The Gardens (left) is about 1.5 ac.

Right: Inside The Studios at Assembly Park, 2021; 90s Nostalgia, in The Plaza 2019



Public Art Opportunity



After a research period including client consultation, discussion with active local artists, a group interview with the project team, and a site visit we established goals and parameters for the art opportunities.

Across these stages of discovery and development, it became clear that there was an exciting opportunity to create distinct moments within Assembly Park that explore narratives of gathering and connection, with an invitational and celebratory spirit.

We have defined four main art sites which together comprise the Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program. In the following section, we have articulated parameters for each of these art sites including type of commission, number of artists engaged, and other considerations.

Across these four sites we have identified a need for some consistencies in terms of materiality, aesthetic considerations and approaches in order to deliver a public art experience that is harmonious and of quality. We are also aware of the existing visual identity of Assembly Park and mural at Assembly Studios by André Kan and want to ensure this program fits within this sensibility. The commissions will be curated to encourage interpretive storytelling, sharing a narrative of place from an artist's perspective. Without being over prescriptive, we have defined a set of requirements for the Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program as follows:

Materials/Medium

- Paint applied directly to the corrugated container facade (exterior paint with proper foundation prep).
- Art reproduced on panelling (preferred vendor to be identified) that is affixed to the container structure. Mediums for this production could include: painting, photography, collage, digital art.
- Panels produced as custom 2D cut outs affixed to container structure (preferred vendor to be identified).

Aesthetic/Thematic

- Contemporary, modern.
- Open, but in keeping with the sensibility seen in the Assembly Park branding and adjacent mural by André Kan.
- Artists may explore the thematic connections of the urban, built environment and its connection to nature as well as concepts around gathering, community connection and transition.
- Inclusive and welcoming. No hate speech or content that would offend a diverse group of community members.

Material examples shown for reference only.



Top Right Image: Maggie Groat's *Deep Times > Portals > Particles > Pulls* (2019). **Bottom Right Image:** *Cobalt Connects* installation at the Royal Botanical Gardens Canada (2017); printed cut outs by Reprodux. **Above Image:** Vivian Rosas *James St South Mural Public Art Project*, Hamilton, ON; In collaboration with Vesna Asanovic (2018)

Public Art Sites

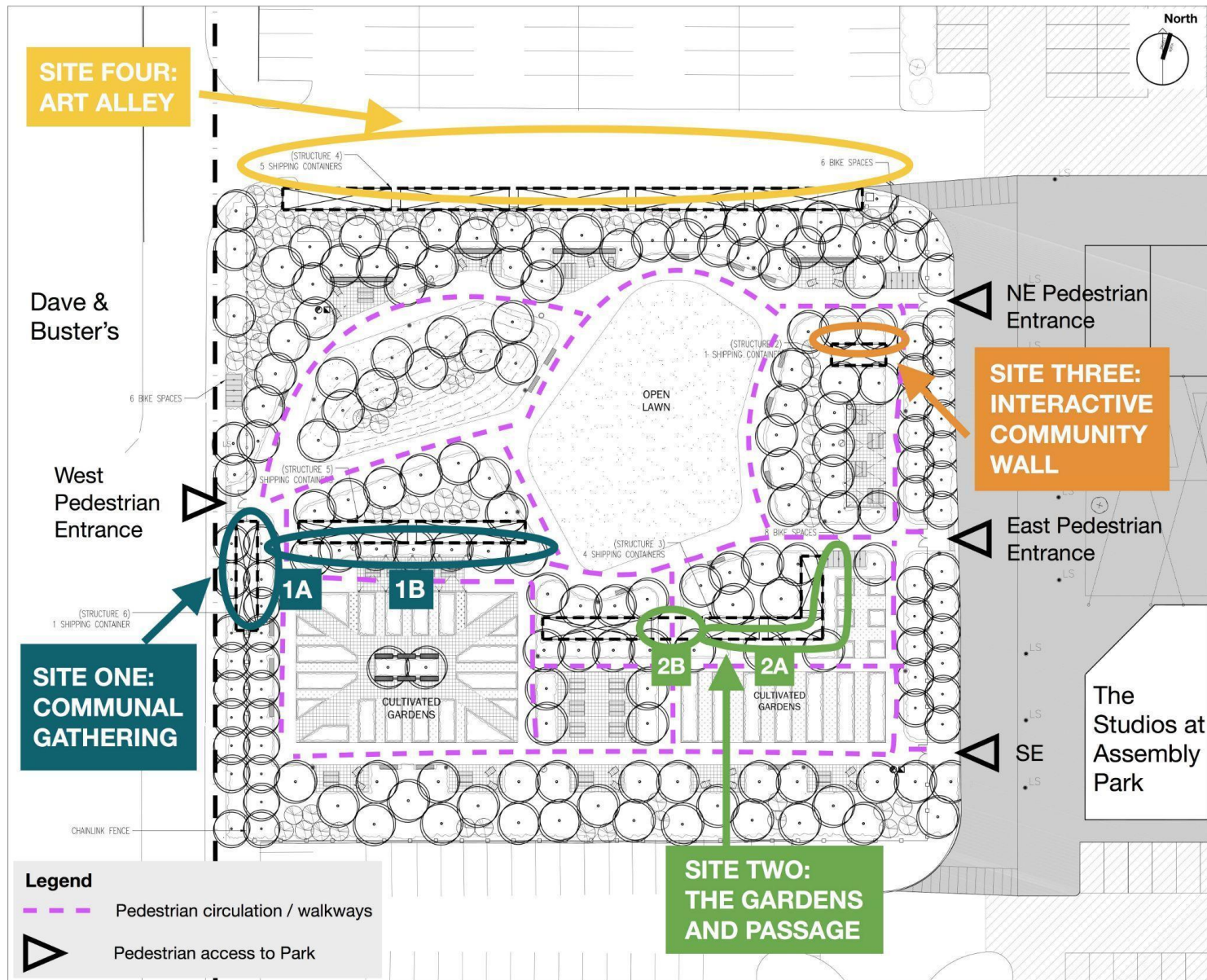


Aerial photograph of The Gardens at Assembly Park and placemaking initiatives including signage and cultural hub space, The Studios at Assembly Park, 2021

The following section defines the 4 main sites and commission opportunities for the Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program:

1. Entry and Communal Gathering
2. The Gardens and Passage
3. Interactive Community Wall
4. Art Alley

During the artist selection process, part of the curatorial role will be to consider these thematic outlined above, and how these are best expressed across the site as a whole and articulated more specifically through the work at each of the following public art sites.



Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program. Public Art commission sites.

SITE ONE: ENTRY and COMMUNAL GATHERING

1A



1B



TYPE OF
COMMISSION

One regional artist (or artist team); painted mural or mounted panels. The commission will remain fixed for 8-10 years.

SIZE OF
COMMISSION

Three 40' x 8' containers, 2 sides of one container = 4 facades, 40' x 8' each (total, 1280 sq ft). Two of these, along the harvest table area, are interrupted by trees and the artist will be encouraged to think of a concept that can incorporate a non-continuous surface.

SELECTION
PROCESS

Curated direct commission

CONTEXT

This site acts as the main entrance to Assembly Park, opposite Dave & Buster's. This is a key entry point to the site and the artwork will have a presence outside the site that wraps around the entrance and runs the full length of the harvest table area.

SITE TWO: THE GARDENS and PASSAGE

2A



2B



TYPE OF COMMISSION

Two artists (regional or GTAH).
Medium specified: painted mural or artwork reproduced on panelling and secured to the facade. The commission will remain fixed for 8-10 years.

SIZE OF COMMISSION

One artist will be commissioned to address one side of three 20' x 8' containers (60' x 8', total 480 sq ft); the second will create a work across the two facing short ends of containers (8' x 8', total 128 sq ft).

SELECTION PROCESS

Direct commission

CONTEXT

Nestled along the garden beds of perennials and other plantings, The Gardens area offers two commission opportunities. The first larger commission opportunity is a L-shape wrapping across three 20' containers. The other is for two small ends of containers that speak to each other - creating a gateway opportunity from the garden area into the heart of Assembly Park.

This particular site will be a direct commission, curated by ART+PUBLIC UnLtd in consultation with the client, in order to ensure the two artists' practices fit well together and are in harmony with each other.

SITE THREE: INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY WALL



TYPE OF COMMISSION

One artist, rotating commission every 2 years (open to artists from anywhere).
Medium specified: Panelling secured to the container structure. The commission will change every 2 years until 2030/2032.

SIZE OF COMMISSION

One 20' x 8' facade, total 160 sq ft.

SELECTION PROCESS

Open Call commission (see selection process, below)

CONTEXT

The temporal nature of the site, and the opportunity to create community connections before a neighbourhood is built is a unique opportunity. Public art can support this invitational spirit and ambition through providing an interactive moment within the site. The Interactive Community Wall is an ever-changing and responsive element to the art program. One artist per 2 years (across 8-10 years) will design an artwork with an interactive element - this could be through digital tools like a QR code that directs audiences to a question prompt or survey, or instructions for a social media campaign engagement e.g. photo challenge with a hashtag.

SITE FOUR: ART ALLEY



TYPE OF COMMISSION	Five artists, one per shipping container (local, regional or GTAH). Medium specified: painted murals. The commission will remain fixed for 8-10 years.
SIZE OF COMMISSION	One 40' x 8' side of a shipping container per artist, total 1600 sq ft.
SELECTION PROCESS	Open Call commission (see selection process, below)
CONTEXT	<p>The Art Alley, visible from Highway 7, offers a long line of five 40' shipping containers. Visitors to the site will be able to walk the length of the containers (with a curb separating the walkway from the parking lot).</p> <p>The curatorial team will select 5 artists for this opportunity - one artist per container based on an open call process. It will be critical to the success of the execution of this that the artist grouping is curated with material and thematic considerations to ensure aesthetic harmony across containers.</p>

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Youth Engagement

While this plan does not include a formal mentorship component, we do see it including networking and career ladder opportunities, with more and less experienced artists working alongside each other. Further, as part of the commission scope, each artist will be asked to do an artist talk at a neighbouring high school (for example, Hodan Nalayeh, Father Bressani, or St. Elizabeth). ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will form preliminary connections with principal/teachers and e-introduce the artists. It will be the artists' responsibility to schedule and execute this community engagement touchpoint.

Illumination

Each shipping container in the 'Art Alley' will be lit from the top. The pathways throughout the site will have standard pole lights throughout. Additional lighting from below may be necessary for the other containers throughout the site. The site has existing electrical hook-ups and QuadReal will manage any additional lighting features. All proposed lighting will comply with environmental requirements, such as night sky pollution, bird-friendly, etc.

Seasonality and Wind

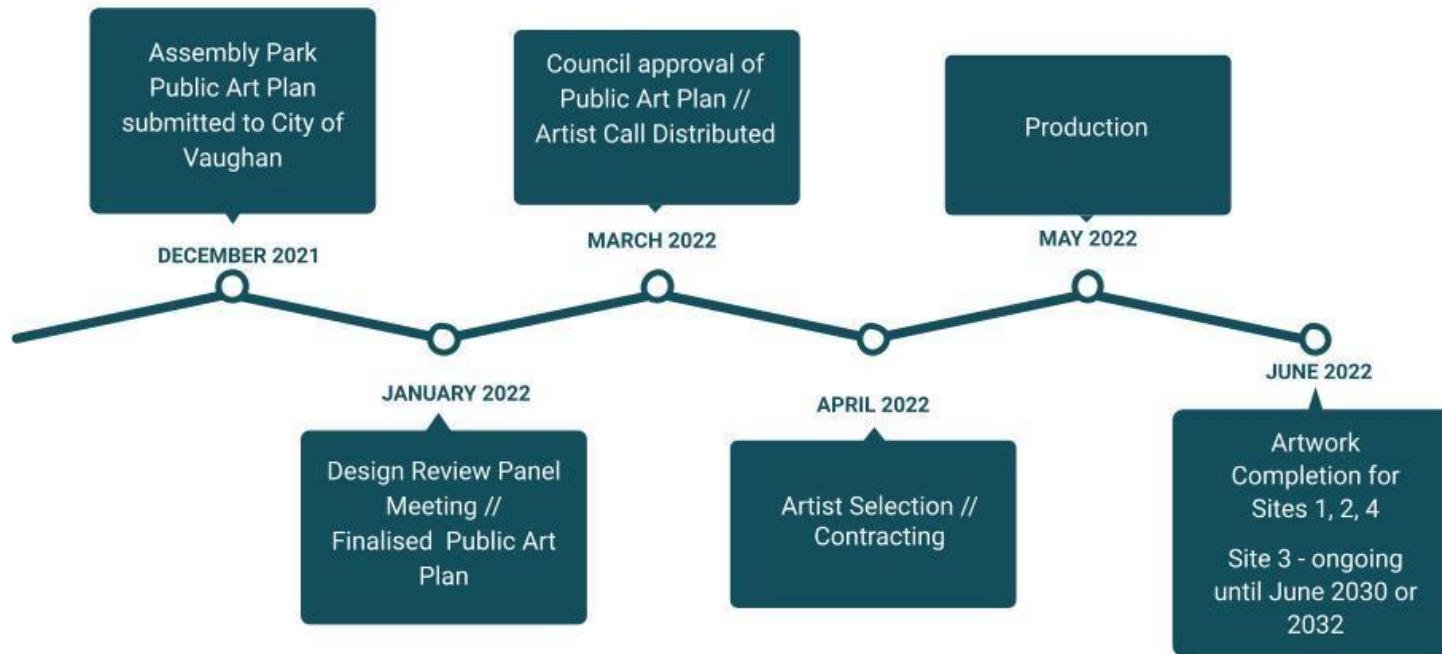
Artists will be asked to consider seasonality in their concept designs - the growth of plantings and trees as well as snow coverage. The intended use for the site is across all four seasons. Windy conditions are common to this site so artists should be strategic in material choices and methods of securing panels to the containers.

Micro-Climate

The Gardens and Plaza have been designed taking into consideration year round micro climatic conditions. As the activation spaces include indoor and outdoor space it can provide a platform for active and passive usage year round.

Accommodations for further enhancements to mitigate wind, sun, heat, noise, and maturing tree canopy will be considered on an as-needed basis.

Implementation Timeline



Note: the Art Consultants and Project Team will have all Artist Selection documents ready to go immediately upon approval by City Council in March. These include a Call to Artists and Artist Briefs for each of the unique site opportunities.

Preliminary Budget

Anticipated costs of Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program, including Project Administration

Site 1: Communal Gathering		
one artist		
4 facades @ 40 ft = 160 linear ft (1280 ft sq)	\$51,200.00	\$51,200.00
Site 2: The Gardens		
two artists		
3 facades @ 20 linearft = 60 linear ft (480 ft sq)	\$26,400.00	
2 end facades @ 8 linear ft = 16 linear ft (128 ft sq)	\$6,400.00	\$32,800.00
Site 3: Interactive Community Wall		
one artist		
1 facade @20 linear ft (160 sq ft)	\$5,160.00	
additional 4 commissions over 8 years	\$20,640.00	\$25,800.00
Site 4: Art Alley		
five artists	\$16,000.00	
five facades @40 linear ft = 200 linear ft (1600 sq ft)		\$80,000.00
Subtotal art production budget		\$189,800.00
Promotion of the artist opportunity, art networks	\$500.00	
Public Relations (includes interpretative decals, signage, other educational and promotional activities, brochures, etc.	\$4,000.00	
Public Art Program Administration (development, plan and implementation of Assembly Park Outdoor Gallery Program Public Art Plan and Program)	\$60,000.00	
Permits for installation (this is an unknown at the moment, given status of surrounding site)	TBD	
Maintenance Allocations (targeting minimal maintenance, actual numbers to be determined dependent upon selected works) 5% of total art production budget	\$9,490.00	
Production contingency (5% of total art production budget)	\$9,490.00	
Total ex HST		\$273,280.00

Artist & Artwork Selection

As a team of curators and artists, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will draw on our combined 35+ years of curatorial experience and expertise and our broad knowledge of artists' practices to guide the artist selection process. Across the program, nine artists will be selected in this initial implementation, 3 by direct commission and 6 through an open call (with the artists for subsequent interactions of the Interactive Community Wall, taking place over the next 8-10 years).

As outlined in the previous section, the Artist Selection process will include both direct commissions and open call opportunities. An open call will support QuadReal's efforts to create a story around Assembly Park and continue to foster and grow local connections and relationships. The open call will strongly encourage artists that are Indigenous, Black, people of colour, women, 2SLGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and members of other marginalized communities to apply. The open call will be paired with direct commissions to artists for the larger and more complex sites. These will be artists whose work is seen as synergistic with the program goals, and who have the experience required to manage projects of this scale.

In order to meaningfully build on the work done to date and to ensure cohesiveness with broader programming

and engagement on site, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will confer with Quadreal's Community Engagement/Creative Director for Assembly Park throughout the Artist and Artwork Selection process. Artist Selection will be curated by ART+PUBLIC UnLtd in consultation with representatives from the project team. Project team representatives consulted in Artist Selection will be (1 from each of the following client stakeholders): QuadReal, Menkes, IBI Group, NAK Design Group and Giannone Petricone Architects. The City of Vaughan Senior Art Curator and Planner will observe this process providing context or background as needed.

STAGE 1: Artist Selection

Across both the direct commission and open call, artists will be selected through review of past work and general approach identified in an artist statement and take into consideration:

- Quality of previous work as expressed in the images submitted.
- Experience of the Artist as expressed in their resume.
- Relevance of the Artist's past work to the current project goals.
- Approach to the work as expressed in their artist's statement.

- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and budgets.
- References.

For direct commission opportunities, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will develop a list of up to 8 artists for consideration and present these to the project team in a facilitated session with the goal of selecting 3 artists for direct commission.

For open call opportunities, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will develop and distribute a call to artists, assemble responses and develop a short list of up to 12 submissions which the curators deem to best suit the goals of the project. ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will facilitate a session with the project team to review the shortlist. The 6 open call opportunities will be assigned in this session.

At the end of Stage 1, the curatorial team will have selected 9 artists; 3 direct commissions and 6 open call commissions. Of the total of 9 artists at least 2 will be from the immediate area.

STAGE 2: Artwork Selection

Stage 2 Artwork Selection will be a concept approval process, in which the selected artists are contracted and provided with a brief that will outline detailed information about the site for which they have been selected. This brief will include an outline of site

context, program goals, aesthetic, thematic and material considerations, dimensions, drawings and images. Artists will be tasked with developing concepts that respond to the parameters outlined in this document. Artists will be encouraged to visit the site during this phase.

During this phase ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will meet with each of the artists in an effort to provide feedback on concept development. Artists may be asked to develop more than one concept for client selection and subsequent refinement.

The artists will present their concepts to the project team in a session facilitated by ART+PUBLIC UnLtd. This will be the main opportunity for the project team to provide feedback on the concept and design proposal for the artists to consider and integrate into their work, before production begins.

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd then works with these artists to support concept and design development and ensure the resulting works meet client expectations.

This is a method of commissioning that allows the artists to develop their work with better responsiveness to the site context and to the client. It is a method that is appropriate for this program given the scale and time frame both of delivery and duration.

Post-Selection Procedures

The curatorial team will work with artists selected in Stage 1 to develop concepts in Stage 2. Artists will be expected to consider feedback and input from the curatorial team, in consultation with the client. This feedback will be managed with a keen eye to respecting artistic integrity.

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will guide artist agreements, executed between the client and artists, and oversee project concept and design development. The QuadReal project team will take the lead on project implementation from design development through to completion and handover.

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will consult on development of interpretive texts to be included with the presentation of the artwork (if desired by the client).

Maintenance

The resulting artist agreements will address maintenance, including efforts to be made by QuadReal to contact and engage the artist as appropriate in the event of maintenance/repairs.

Copyright

Copyright shall remain the property of the successful Proponent and the successful Proponent shall grant

QuadReal the irrevocable, paid-up, royalty-free right and license to exhibit the work in public and to reproduce the work where QuadReal sees fit including but not limited to: their respective websites, posters, brochures and other publications and for promotional and other not-for-profit purposes.

Communications & Interpretation

Communications tactics will be implemented to support community awareness of Public Art programming within the broader context of community programming that consider a number of platforms:

- Web and social media presence
- Calendar of events
- Target audience demographics
- Interactive / interpretive engagement platforms

Interpretive context will be expansive and support the artworks through:

- Extended information labels
- Digital interface
- Website presence and related social media activity