



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 21, 2019
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Meeting Date: April 2, 2019

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Arts Culture and Community Services
SUBJECT: Public Art Programming Partnership at "Offsite"

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council authorize Cultural Services to draw annual payments of \$160,000 for the next five years from the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve to fund 2019-2023 operations of "Offsite," a program of temporary artworks at a dedicated public art site on the 1100 block of West Georgia Street, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services and the Managing Director of Cultural Services.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's authorization to draw annual payments of \$160,000 for the next five years from the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve to fund the provision of curatorial and related services for 2019-2023 operations of Offsite, a program of temporary artworks at a dedicated public art site on the 1100 block of West Georgia Street. The agreement is funded from the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve, which was established for that purpose.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

In 2003, in connection with the rezoning for the Shangri-La Hotel and Residences development in the 1100 block of West Georgia and Alberni Streets, City Council approved arrangements for the establishment of a public space and passageway at the proposed site and for the provision of programming for displays of temporary public artworks within that space, with initial funding from the development (\$2.4M, initiating the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve (the "Reserve"). Those arrangements were subsequently put in place by way of a statutory right of way and encroachment agreement between the owner and the city, and registered on title to development lands.

In 2008, Council approved funding, and the City subsequently entered into an agreement with Vancouver Art Gallery Association for the provision of curatorial and related services for displays of temporary public artworks within that public space, with funding for payment for those services to be provided by the Reserve. In 2014, Council approved a five-year extension of the funding for the program, to run through the end of 2018.

Allocations from City reserves require Council approval.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

“Offsite”: A Program for Temporary Public Art

Since 2009, the City of Vancouver, the Shangri-La Hotel and Residences, and the Vancouver Art Gallery have partnered on the Offsite program, which addresses a long-standing need for a site in Vancouver in which to program temporary exhibitions of public art. Over the decade since its inauguration, Offsite has presented 18 temporary public art projects in a plaza on West Georgia Street. These projects are typically created specifically for the site by significant artists from Vancouver and around the world, with a particular focus on artists from Asia. The projects range widely in medium and approach to site, but maintain a consistently high level of conceptual ambition and technical realization.

The project began to take shape in 2003, when City Council approved a rezoning for the Shangri-La at 1100 West Georgia Street. In lieu of providing permanent public artwork on site, the developer agreed to provide for rotating displays of temporary public artworks within a public right-of-way connecting Alberni and Georgia Streets, with a main exhibition space fronting onto Georgia. For that purpose, the developer provided \$2.4M for the establishment of the Reserve.

In 2008, Council authorized funding for a five-year agreement with the Vancouver Art Gallery Association, to program public artworks at the Offsite space. The Vancouver Art Gallery Association's knowledge of artists, its expertise in public art, and its input into the design and setup of the site made them an ideal contractor to launch Offsite. Between 2008 and 2013, the Vancouver Art Gallery Association commissioned eight public artworks by four local and four international artists. The artists were selected on the basis of artistic quality, innovation, response to the site, and diversity of ideas.

In 2014, Council approved funding for five more years. During this period, the Vancouver Art Gallery Association has programmed 10 projects by artists, evenly divided between local artists and artists from across Asia:

- **Babak Golkar** (Vancouver) *Time to Let Go ...*, 2014, a grouping of ceramic “scream vessels”
- **Robert Youds** (Victoria, B.C.) *For Everyone a Sunset*, 2014, an architectonic glass, aluminum and neon light sculpture
- **Reena Saini Kallat** (Mumbai) *Woven Chronicle*, 2015, an intricate map made of handwoven electrical wires
- **Elizabeth Zvonar** (Vancouver) *The Experience*, 2015, a 54-foot-long mural depicting a sunbleached, science-fiction landscape
- **Marina Roy** (Vancouver) *Your Kingdom to Command*, 2016, a mural and tree-stump fountain
- **Khan Lee** (Vancouver) *Red, Green and Blue*, 2016, sculptural light projections
- **Tsang Kin-Wah** (Hong Kong) *EITHER / OR*, 2017, large-scale text compositions
- **Asim Waqif** (New Delhi) *Salvage*, 2017, a massive, explorable structure composed of salvaged materials
- **Shigeru Ban** (Tokyo) *Paper Log House*, 2018, temporary relief shelter built largely of cardboard tubes
- **Polit-Sheer-Form Office** (Beijing) *Fitness for All (Vancouver)* 2018-19, Outdoor exercise equipment appropriated as social sculptures

Pamphlets documenting Offsite installations are on file with the City Clerk.

In addition to the original \$2.4M payment from the development, the Reserve is sustained by encroachment fees, paid annually to the City pursuant to the statutory right of way. The City’s goal in managing the Reserve is to ensure the original investment is preserved, taking inflation into account, while providing sufficient funding for public art programming at Offsite. Public art programming for Offsite is currently funded from interest earned on the funds in the Reserve and from the annual encroachment fees.

Strategic Analysis

The Offsite program continues to offer the residents and visitors of Vancouver access to a wide range of contemporary public art projects by significant artists from here and around the world.

The Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve (320098) held \$3,500,860 as of February 28, 2019. The reserve has been managed with the goal of maintaining fund level and keeping pace with inflation to ensure the long-term viability of public art programming at Offsite.

The Reserve generates growth through interest and encroachment payments. Annual interest over the past five years has hovered around \$50,000 annually, less than half of the level earned in the early years of the program. Encroachment fees have varied by plus or minus \$15,000 from the level of the current year payment, \$134,000. Long-term low rates of interest have kept growth of the Reserve at modest levels, but it has kept pace with inflation since the time of the last Council Report on Offsite in June 2014, when the balance was \$3,118,900.

To continue maintaining the value of the Reserve, City staff recommend maintaining the budget for the provision of the next five years of the Offsite program. Accordingly, staff recommend a maximum \$800,000 for the 2019-2023 period, paid through regularized

payments on an annual schedule, at \$160,000 per year. Regularized annual payments will allow the program operator to pay project costs as they are incurred. The program operator may extend some installations to allow ambitious projects to be realized within the allocated funding; the next five years will see a minimum of eight new projects.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

Financial

If the recommendation in this report is approved by Council, funding from the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve will be used to provide funding for curatorial and installation services, artist fees and related expenses for the display of temporary public art at a dedicated public art site on the 1100 block of West Georgia Street.

The total annual cost for curatorial and installation services, artist fees, and related expenses for the display of temporary public art works is \$160,000 per year, for a total of \$800,000 over the five-year term of the agreement. Source of funds will be the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve.

The Reserve had a balance of \$3,500,860 as of February 28, 2019, and has generated approximately \$185,000 per year through interest and encroachment fees. The annual income is sufficient to fund the proposed annual operating budget of \$160,000, while retaining some gains in the Reserve to maintain purchasing power against inflation.

Legal

If the recommendation in this report is approved by Council, Cultural Services will complete a procurement process for a legal agreement under which a qualified organization will provide public art programming for 2019-2023.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends authorization to draw annual payments of \$160,000 for the next five years from the Georgia Street (Shangri-La) Public Art Reserve to fund 2019-2023 curatorial and installation services for displays of temporary public artworks under the program name Offsite at a public space on the 1100 block of West Georgia Street.

The funding recommendation maintains the balance of the Reserve, enabling the City to use innovative partnerships to deliver rich and varied experiences of public art.

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