



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II

<b>Date:</b>	October 22, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Robert Freedman, Director, Urban Design
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 27 –Toronto Centre - Rosedale
<b>Reference Number:</b>	te090043

#### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this staff report is to seek City Council approval of the 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II. The plan has been prepared by the Owner and the Public Art Consultant in compliance with the development approval provisions. The plan, which is included as Attachment 1 of this report, outlines the method by which the Owner will commission public art in the publicly accessible area of the development.

The 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II provides a framework for the commissioning of art at the south east corner of University Avenue and College Street. The attached plan meets the objectives of the City Planning Percent for the Public Art Program and is supported by the Toronto Public Art Commission.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. City Council approve the attached 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

As part of the development approval process, the Section 37 provisions included a clause for public art that is both reflected in the original Section 37 agreement dated May 30th 2001, adopted by City Council at its meeting on May 30, 31, and June 1, 2001, and the amended September 30, 2008 Section 37 agreement which was approved by City Council on June 23 and 24, 2008. The approved revised agreement outlined that the owner shall provide a letter of credit for its full public art commitment before the issuance of the first Building Permit. (This letter of credit is being held by the City and will be released when the attached plan has been approved by City Council).

For on-site public art, the owner is required to produce a public art plan for review by City Planning Staff and its advisory panel, the Toronto Public Art Commission. Initial meetings were held with the owner team and Urban Design Staff to discuss public art site potentials. A preliminary presentation was made to the Toronto Public Art Commission for feedback at its May 13, 2009 meeting. The owner's representative returned with a final draft on October 6, 2009 at which time the Toronto Public Art Commission recommended approval of the 661 University Ave MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II Public Art Plan.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The owner and City Planning Staff met to discuss the public art process and to identify the public art site potentials. Applying City Planning's comments and input, the owner prepared a public art plan. As part of the revised development agreement under Section 37 the developer agreed to provide the City with a letter of credit for the said amount of 1% percent buildings gross construction cost that amounts to \$1,803,000.00. (This amount was determined by the current building permit. If the project changes in the future, the gross construction cost will change accordingly). The art budget and its component breakdown are included in the plan, along with a description of the art selection methodology.

## **COMMENTS**

The 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II provides a project overview, introduction and objectives for the Public Art Program. The plan proposes to locate the public art at the intersection of College Street and University Avenue (on privately-owned, publicly-accessible land) at the visually prominent south-east corner of the site. The art will be prominently located for optimum public viewing inside and outside of the building. The location reinforces Urban Design's objectives to maximize public accessibility and visibility of artwork through the Public Art Plan.

The owner proposes an invitational competition process for four artist both international and local/ Canadian artists to develop proposals. The proposals will be reviewed by an advisory committee who will include owner representatives and members of the arts community which includes a ward representative. The owner concurred with City Planning Staff, to include a mentorship program, where by a local artist will work with the winning artist to gain experience in their field.

The 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II Public Art Plan meets the City's objectives for the provision of public art in private development, is in accordance with the City Planning Percent for the Public Art Program, and is supported by the Toronto Public Art Commission.

We look forward to the results of this art commission.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Robert Freedman

Director, Urban Design

City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: 661 University Avenue Public Art Plan MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II

**Attachment 1**  
**Public Art Plan - MaRS Discovery Centre Phase II**  
**661 University Avenue, Toronto, ON**

Submitted: September 21, 2009

Prepared by art consultants Rina Greer & Catherine Williams

**1. Introduction**

The MaRS Discovery Centre connects and fosters communication among the communities of science, business and capital. The aim is to stimulate innovation and accelerate the creation and growth of successful Canadian enterprises. This happens physically through the location of research labs, companies of all sizes, business advisors, investors and professional services within the MaRS Discovery Centre. Phase I opened in late 2005.

Located on the prominent intersection of College Street and University Avenue, the MaRS Discovery Centre is at the gateway to Queen's Park, the seat of the provincial government to the north and the University of Toronto. To the south are located The Hospital for Sick Children, University Health Network, Mount Sinai Hospital, The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research and nearby cultural and financial districts. With its high concentration of medical and science institutions, this area of Toronto is called The Discovery District.

Long before MaRS acquired it, the Heritage Building at 101 College Street was famously associated with some of the last century's most significant medical breakthroughs: insulin, the artificial kidney and the pacemaker, among many others.

In 2007, plans for MaRS Phase II began with the addition of a development partner, ARE-BJ Number One, Inc. (ARE), North America's pre-eminent life science property specialist. MaRS Phase II will serve as the gateway to The Discovery District and to the specialized medical corridor along University Avenue. Designed by Bregman + Hamann Architects, the building will be 750,000 square feet of space, doubling the size of the MaRS Centre.

**Podium Design and Jewel Box**

The current design for Phase II reflects the horizontal and vertical expression of the Heritage Building in establishing the rhythm of the podium via glazing patterns, spacing of glazed openings, and texture of terracotta surfaces prescribed by the massing of the Heritage Building. A lattice of terracotta links it to the Heritage Building of MaRS Phase I. The three storey 17m high glass "Jewel Box" is a unique architectural element that provides a focal point at University Avenue and College Street. It is designed to

incorporate interplay between private and public spaces and is a major component of the building's design.

## **Exterior Skin**

The exterior skin of the high rise portion of the Phase II building combines various glass types including a slight body tint on the outer surface with a low iron glass for the inner surface which is articulated with deep recesses within the exterior surface skin. The glass fins imply movement across the glazed surface with the interplay of daylight and reflection.

## **2. Public Art Commitment**

In keeping with the Section 37 Agreement and ARE's Amending Agreement with the City of Toronto, dated September 30, 2008, the 1% budget for public art for this project has been calculated at \$1,803,000.00.

## **3. Site Selection**

ARE values the way in which public art can be bold, large scale and capable of creating a landmark identity for the building and the site.

ARE looked at several approaches and sites for integrating artwork into this project, including an interactive video wall.

The University Avenue pedestrian corridor was also considered as a potential site for artwork but was not ideal due to high traffic, extensive landscaping and little available space for a significant piece of art. However, if ultimately the commissioned work contains several pedestrian scaled component(s), then one of these smaller components might be considered for the north entrance on University Avenue.

The site selected is the very prominent, highly visible plaza area on the southeast corner of University Avenue and College Street that is flanked on its southern perimeter by the 'heart' of the new building, the "Jewel Box". This site is a portion of the property that will be the most accessible to the public since the plaza is the gateway into the building's main entrance for people approaching from all directions. A generous open space that measures 9,195 square feet (854.2 square metres), it is ideal for the urban mix of art and landscape, with areas for seating and contemplation. The landscape plan will be finalized after the artwork is chosen and the artist can work collaboratively with the landscape architect to integrate the work into the site.

The plaza site has a scale and urban presence that allows for the commissioning of a major outdoor artwork with 'wow' power that would capture the vitality of the project and imbue the streetscape with the MaRS presence. The work may consist of one or more components that are freestanding or are integrated with building or landscape

elements. Visible day and night, with excellent sightlines from Queen's Park and University Avenue and from east and west, the plaza provides an exciting opportunity for the creation of a significant work of art for the City of Toronto.

#### **4. Art Site Requirements**

The following requirements will be identified in the Terms of Reference for the competing artists:

- Create a major artwork that will become a landmark in the city and a signature for the project
- Express some aspect of the diversity of the life sciences, in order to reflect the activities housed in the new facility
- Be complementary to the architecture, the building materials and the landscape design
- Full collaboration of the artist with the Architect and Landscape Architect when integrating the art within the landscape space
- Be resistant to environmental conditions
- Be safe for a public site
- Require low maintenance; includes use of graffiti resistant materials or treatments
- Be highly visible at the pedestrian level and from afar

#### **5. Artists**

##### **5.1 Selection Process**

ARE has elected to run an invitational competition among four artists, both Canadian and international, each of whom will be paid to develop proposals for the site. They will receive a Terms of Reference and drawings showing the design of the site and relevant technical specifications. Their proposals will include concept statement, scaled schematics showing design direction, images, preliminary materials, a statement about the proposed artwork and preliminary budget projections.

##### **5.2 Artists**

Four artists will be invited from the following list to participate in the competition:

Rose-Marie Goulet – Montreal, Quebec

Wendy Ross – Bethesda, Maryland and Depoe Bay, Oregon

Ed Pien – Toronto, Ontario  
Alan Storey – Vancouver, British Columbia  
Jenny Holzer – New York, New York  
Buster Simpson – Seattle, Washington

### **5.3 Mentorship Program**

A local artist will have the opportunity to gain experience in the public art field through a mentorship program, whether the winning artist is Canadian or internationally based. The intention is to have the apprentice artist as involved as possible in the art making process; the extent of the involvement will be tailored to the winning artist’s schedule in Toronto. The involvement could include meetings with the team, suppliers and fabricators, sourcing materials, fabrication and installation supervision and/or actual involvement with fabrication and installation. The apprentice artist would be under contract administered through the art consultant with payments phased over the period of the involvement.

### **6. Jury**

The jury of five will evaluate the proposals and select one winning design. It will consist of two ARE/MaRS representatives and three from the art community, including one local representative, taken from the following list, depending on their availability at the time of the competition:

Matthew Teitelbaum – Director, Art Gallery of Ontario  
Joyce Zemans - Senior Scholar and University Professor Emerita at  
York University and former Director of the Canada Council for the Arts  
Marc Mayer – Director, National Gallery of Canada  
Micah Lexier – Artist  
Barbara Fischer – Curator and Director, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, University of  
Toronto

### **7. Budget**

The public art budget of \$1,803,000 reflects 1% of the gross construction costs and will be apportioned as follows:

Administration & expenses including competition fees; travel/accommodation for out-of-town artists; consultants’ fees:	10% of total =	\$ 180,300
Art Maintenance Fund:	10% of total =	\$ 180,300

Art, including artists' fees, materials, fabrication, footings, lighting, installation, mentorship program:	80% of total =	\$1,442,200
Total:	100% of total =	\$1,803,000

## **8. Preliminary Schedule**

Given that the build-out schedule is unknown, ARE will assure that the art competition is held in sufficient time to allow for re-design of the plaza landscaping based on the winning art proposal.

If revisions to the landscape plan are required to accommodate the public art which have not already been addressed in the previously approved landscape agreement, a new landscape plan will be required to be resubmitted to the City of Toronto for approval. The landscape plan will need to show the art and details on how the art will be integrated within the landscape.