



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Loan of "Downton Abbey" Costumes to Spadina Museum

Date:	September 30, 2013
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	Ward 22 – St. Paul's
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve entering into a loan agreement with Cosprop Ltd. to exhibit up to 21 period costumes created for the UK television series "Downton Abbey" in Toronto. If approved, the costumes will be exhibited at Spadina Museum in spring 2014 as an extension of that site's programming related to "Downton Abbey."

Council approval is required because the insured value of the proposed loan (\$140,000.00) is in excess of the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture's delegated approval authority for cultural transactions of up to a value of \$100,000.00.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council approve entering into a loan agreement with Cosprop Ltd. to bring up to 21 "Downton Abbey" costumes to Toronto to be exhibited at Spadina Museum in spring 2014.
2. City Council delegate signing authority to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture for all matters relating to this loan.

Financial Impact

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

DECISION HISTORY

On May 11, 2011, Council amended the conditions under which City Council approval is required for cultural matters otherwise delegated to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture or his designate. The General Manager was given the authority to sign matters in which the net value of the contract or object does not exceed \$100,000.00. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED3.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

First aired in 2010, "Downton Abbey" is a very popular historical drama television show telling the stories of a fictional upper-class English family, their servants and their neighbours. This UK-produced show is televised locally on Buffalo's PBS station and in Ontario by VisionTV.

Spadina Museum has been dubbed by the media as being "Toronto's Downton Abbey." Capitalizing on the similarities between the two sites, Spadina Museum began offering public tours in 2013 which connected the fictional stories of the Crawley family of "Downton Abbey" with the real stories of the Austin family of Spadina. Thanks to the media sponsorship of VisionTV, these tours attracted new audiences to Spadina, providing a novel and engaging way of using popular culture to promote Toronto's history.

In early 2014, Season 4 of "Downton Abbey" will be aired by PBS and VisionTV. At that time, Spadina Museum intends to relaunch its Downton-themed tours and proposes to exhibit up to 21 period costumes from Cosprop Ltd., the UK-based costumer that designs and makes the "Downton Abbey" costumes.

COMMENTS

Because authentic costumes from "Downton Abbey" have never been exhibited before in Canada, their display at Spadina Museum is expected to attract a large number of visitors. Associated programs to be offered during the five-week exhibit period should further increase site attendance and revenue generation.

Entering into a loan agreement with Cosprop requires City Council's approval, as the insured value of the costumes is about \$140,000.00 and is beyond the delegated approval authority of the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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