

Loan of Durham Cathedral's Magna Carta and Forest Charter to Fort York National Historic Site

Date:	June 13, 2014
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	Ward 19 – Trinity Spadina
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The Magna Carta and the Forest Charter are foundational documents for rights, justice and governance in the Western world. To mark the 800th anniversary of the first signing of these documents, Magna Carta Canada has organized a travelling exhibition to bring Durham Cathedral's copies of the Magna Carta and the Forest Charter (dating from 1225) to Canada.

In Toronto, it is proposed that the exhibition be mounted in the new Visitor Centre at Fort York National Historic Site. The display of such significant documents – never seen before in this city – will highlight Fort York's new facility and its capability for hosting major exhibitions. It will also build new audiences there and throughout the City's museum system.

This report recommends that City Council approve entering into a loan agreement with Durham Cathedral to exhibit its copies of the Magna Carta and the Forest Charter at Fort York National Historic Site in 2015.

Council's approval of this loan is required because the insured value of the documents (about \$36.5 million) exceeds the authority delegated to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture for approving cultural matters (\$100,000).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council approve entering into a loan agreement with Durham Cathedral to bring its copies of the Magna Carta and the Forest Charter to Toronto to be exhibited at Fort York National Historic Site in fall 2015.
2. City Council delegate signing authority to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture for all matters relating to this loan.
3. City Council approve Economic Development and Culture staff undertaking initial planning work in 2014 for the Magna Carta exhibition.
4. City Council direct the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture to include a funding strategy for the 2015 components of the Magna Carta exhibition, with a net zero impact on the tax base, as part of the 2015 operating budget submission for the Economic Development and Culture Division.

Financial Impact

The overall 2014-15 budget for the Magna Carta exhibition includes expenditures of \$620,000 (including a venue fee of \$150,000 charged by Durham Cathedral) and revenues (including ticket sales, grants and sponsorships) of \$650,000.

In 2014, Durham Cathedral requires payment of the venue fee first installment of \$22,500. An additional \$27,500 is also required to begin planning for the exhibition in 2014. These expenditures, totalling \$50,000, can be accommodated within the 2014 Operating Budget for the Economic Development and Culture Division.

In 2015, expenditures of \$570,000 are projected, to be offset by revenues of \$650,000. A funding strategy business case, fully supported by ticket sales, grants, and sponsorships for the 2015 exhibition costs, will be included in the 2015 Operating Budget submission for Council consideration.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

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. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED3.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 1215, Britain's barons met with the King to negotiate a new relationship. The Magna Carta (<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/magnacarta/index.html>) set limits on the King's power, establishing the principle that no one is above the law of the land and that individuals possess rights which the authorities must respect. A companion document, the Forest Charter (1217), established additional rights for ordinary people.

To mark the 800th anniversary of this event in 2015, a non-profit organization, Magna Carta Canada (<http://www.magnacartacanada.ca/>), has organized a national tour of Durham Cathedral's copies of the 1225 Magna Charter and the 1225 Forest Charter. The 1225 issue of the Magna Carta is very important as it is the first version to be issued voluntarily under the seal of a reigning monarch (King Henry III), the text of which was confirmed in 1297 by King Edward I and subsequently enshrined by Parliament in statute law.

The travelling exhibition coordinated by Magna Carta Canada will visit the Library of Parliament, the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Alberta Legislative Assembly Visitor Centre. In Toronto, the documents will be exhibited in the new Fort York Visitor Centre for four weeks in October/November 2015.

The exhibition will use compelling graphics and interactive technology to examine the genesis of the Magna Carta, its legacy for Canadians and others around the world, and the enduring struggle for rights and justice. Additional content will be created for Fort York examining the contributions of Torontonians to the pursuit of human rights and good governance in Canada over the past 200 years.

COMMENTS

The Magna Carta is a foundational document for democracy and human rights in Canada. While the Bodleian Library's version of the Magna Carta was on display for a short time in Winnipeg in 2010 as part of a Royal Tour, the Magna Carta and the Forest Charter have never been exhibited together before in Canada. The major travelling exhibition in 2015 will be the first opportunity for Canadians to experience the documents as part of a blockbuster display.

In Toronto, the exhibition at Fort York National Historic Site is expected to attract a large number of visitors. Significant visitation by American tourists is expected, as the Magna Carta is often regarded as a cornerstone for the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/magna_carta/).

This major exhibition will draw significant media and public attention. It will highlight the new Fort York Visitor Centre and the revitalized Fort York National Historic Site, and create new audiences for the site. Associated programs to be offered during the four-week exhibition period should further increase site attendance and revenue generation.

Additional related programs will be developed for other sites to further build audiences in the City's museum system.

The Magna Carta project will be the first major exhibition mounted at the Fort York Visitor Centre. Museums staff have, however, already demonstrated their ability to deliver projects of this magnitude. Recent successes include the events associated with the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Downton Abbey costume exhibition at Spadina Museum.

The proposed 2014-15 budget for the Toronto project is:

Expenditures

Durham Cathedral fee	\$150,000	(incl. \$22,500 spent in 2014)
Durham Cathedral staff travel/accommodation	\$7,000	
Transportation	\$15,000	
Transportation insurance	\$35,000	
Venue liability insurance	\$5,000	
Exhibit customization for Toronto	\$157,500	(incl. \$27,500 spent in 2014)
Security	\$40,500	
Extra staffing costs	\$25,000	
Timed ticketing system	\$35,000	
Paid marketing	\$100,000	
Contingency	\$50,000	
	<u>\$620,000</u>	

Revenues

Ticket sales	\$350,000
Grants	\$200,000
Sponsorships	<u>\$100,000</u>
	\$650,000

Staff has already secured \$200,000 in in-kind marketing support for the exhibition. The project should produce a modest positive cash return to the City (\$30,000).

Entering into a loan agreement with Durham Cathedral requires City Council's approval, as the insured value of the documents is about \$36.5 million and is beyond the delegated approval authority of the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture.

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SIGNATURE

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