

Public Art Plan for the Woodbine Casino Lands – Block 10 - 555 Rexdale Boulevard

Date: January 15, 2020
To: Etobicoke York Community Council
From: Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District
Ward: 1 - Etobicoke North

Planning Application Number: 18 119828 WET 02 SA and 17 158705 WET 02 SB

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek City Council approval of the Public Art Plan for the Woodbine Casino lands located on Block 10 at 555 Rexdale Boulevard. The Plan, which is included as Attachment 1 of this report, outlines the method by which the owner would commission public art within publicly-accessible areas of the development site.

The Public Art Plan provides a framework and description of the commissioning of public art for this site, including: introduction; public art requirement reference; public art objectives; site in context; site plan with POPS areas; site plan with public art locations; public art locations; budget; selection process; jury composition; schedule; art location views; and future signage information.

The attached plan meets the objectives of City Planning's Percent for Public Art Guidelines and is supported by the Toronto Public Art Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the Public Art Plan for the Woodbine Casino lands located on Block 10 at 555 Rexdale Boulevard attached as Attachment 1 to the report dated January 15, 2020 from the Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendation in this report has no financial impact.

PROPOSAL

The development site is comprised of Block 10 at 555 Rexdale Boulevard, fronting onto Street C as identified in the approved Draft Plan of Subdivision for the Woodbine Racetrack lands (Application No. 17 158705 WET 02 SB). This development is part of Phase 1 of the Draft Plan of Subdivision, and identified as a component of the Gaming District within the Woodbine Concept Master Plan. The development includes an integrated gaming facility with a casino, a performance venue, two 11 storey hotels, a parking structure, as well as retail and office space.

The site plan review process for the Block10 lands requires a commitment to provide public art, resulting in the Public Art Plan (Attachment 1).

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

In 2017, Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG) submitted two applications to amend the former City of Etobicoke Zoning Code to permit expanded gaming on the Woodbine Racetrack lands: one for the existing grandstand building; and one for a new Gaming District to be located to the northeast of the existing grandstand (Block 10). These applications proposed amendments to existing site specific Zoning By-law 864-2007 to add live table gaming as a permitted use at 555 Rexdale Boulevard. City Council on April 24, 2018 adopted the staff report entitled 555 Rexdale Boulevard – Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications - Final Report and enacted Zoning By-law Nos.1260-2018 and 1261-2018. City Council's decision can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.EY29.2>

The Draft Plan of Subdivision established a framework for public roads and services and created development blocks for the Phase 1 lands to facilitate the development of Block 10 within the Gaming District. The approval of the Draft Plan of Subdivision application was appealed by a local resident. On May 8, 2019 the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) issued an Order which dismissed the appeal of the Draft Plan of Subdivision application (File No. 17 158705 WET 02 SB) and subsequently approved the Draft Plan of Subdivision subject to the fulfillment of conditions. WEG is currently working to fulfill the conditions required to be satisfied prior to the registration of the Phase 1 of the Draft Plan of Subdivision which would create the necessary development blocks, parks and roads.

On February 21, 2018, Woodbine Entertainment Group submitted a Site Plan Control application (Application No. 18 119828 WET 02 SA) to permit the construction of a casino and performance venue, two hotels, retail uses and a parking structure on Block 10 of the future Plan of Subdivision. Ontario Gaming GTA L.P. (OGG) was selected as the gaming service provider by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG), and is responsible for constructing and operating the facilities on the Block 10 lands,

including the delivery of expanded gaming. Notice of Approval Conditions for the Site Plan Control application was issued November 20, 2019. One of the conditions required to be fulfilled prior to the issuance of Site Plan Approval is the submission of a financial security in the amount of \$5,000,000 to guarantee the provision and installation of all Public Art contemplated by the approved Public Art Plan. This public art contribution represents 1% of the value of the project gross construction cost.

Toronto Building staff have issued a Conditional below grade permit and OGG has begun construction of the casino facility and on-site services in advance of the requirements/conditions set out in the Subdivision Agreement. OGG has advised that under their agreement with OLG, the casino is to be open and operational by the end of March, 2021.

COMMENTS

The local area is home to the North Campus of Humber College, Etobicoke General Hospital, the Humber River and within close proximity to Toronto Pearson International Airport. Block 10 of the Gaming District would be part of the Phase 1 development of the Woodbine Concept Master Plan, and is the first component of the major overall expansion and redevelopment of the Woodbine Racetrack lands. Block 10 is bounded by Street C (Lexie Lou Loop) to the north and east, Queens Plate Boulevard to the west and the existing Woodbine Racetrack to the south. In addition to the uses noted previously, the development of Block 10 would include three (3) Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) and other highly visible and publicly accessible open spaces, to ensure the accessibility and visibility of all proposed public art locations.

The Public Art Plan identifies five (5) public art locations as follows:

- Location 1 is proposed within the casino arrival court. Considered the “front door” to the overall development, this location will be a significant feature for the site as it will be the main arrival location for both the new casino facility as well as the existing Woodbine Racetrack Grandstand building;
- Location 2 is within a parkette space to be situated on the southeast corner of Lexie Lou Loop and Queens Plate Boulevard. This space would represent an entry feature at the west end of Block 10, welcoming visitors to the facilities as they arrive from the north or west;
- Location 3 is proposed in front, and within the arrival area, of the two hotel entrances. It is intended to welcome hotel guests upon their arrival and would provide way-finding for the site;

- Location 4 is proposed to be a large-scale opportunity for an artistic façade screen system that would wrap an above-grade parking structure. The artists would be provided an opportunity to work closely with a team of experts to create a large-scale artistic intervention for the parking structure; and
- Location 5 presents the potential for multiple art locations on Block 10 to complement the primary art locations and would be dedicated to providing public art opportunities for emerging artists within indigenous and equity-seeking groups.

All artists would be selected through a two-stage competition process. Stage 1 would involve an open and invitational call for credentials. Artists applying to the open call would be applying for the overall project, and based on the applications received, would be designated for specific sites based on a review by the public art consultant, the site operator (OGG) and the jury members. This team would review these applications and determine a short list of up to 30 artist candidates to be considered for the project. An artist/artist team may be considered for multiple locations if appropriate.

Stage 2 would involve a finalist brief that would be sent to the short list of artists selected. The artists would then prepare detailed concepts for which they would be paid an honorarium. Submissions would then be reviewed by the jury to determine a preferred concept for each location. The winning artists would be contracted by OGG to develop the public art and to work with the project consulting team.

The jury would be comprised of five (5) members, which would include at least two OGG representatives. These candidates are to be chosen based on a number of factors, including their knowledge of the surrounding area, their artistic practice and their experience in working on public art projects. In addition, artists with limited public art experience would also be included to introduce them to the public art jurying process and educate the next generation. This jury would preside over all art location selection panels to maintain consistency and understanding of the overall development.

In accordance with City policy, City Planning continues to encourage OGG to seek artistic excellence and expertise with broad representation from the art community in the selection of artists and jury members.

This Public Art Plan is supported by City Planning staff and was presented to the Toronto Public Art Commission on two occasions. The first presentation was delivered on October 30, 2019 with the second presentation following on December 4, 2019. The Toronto Public Art Commission recommended approval of the proposed Public Art Plan.

Conclusion

The Public Art Plan for the Woodbine Casino lands located on Block 10 at 555 Rexdale Boulevard complies with the City's objectives for the provision of public art associated with significant private sector developments across the City. This on-site public art

program is also in accordance with City Planning's Percent for Public Art Program, and is supported by the Toronto Public Art Commission. Upon City Council's approval, OGG would commence the artist selection process as outlined in the attached plan.

CONTACT

Jack Krubnik, Senior Planner, Urban Design, Tel. No.416-395-7188, E-mail:
jack.krubnik@toronto.ca.

SIGNATURE

Neil Cresswell, MCIP, RPP
Director of Community Planning
Etobicoke York District

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Public Art Plan: Woodbine Casino Expansion Project - Block 10