

REPORT FOR ACTION



St. Lawrence Centre Redevelopment - Launch of Public Consultation

Date: October 29, 2020

To: St. Lawrence Centre Redevelopment Committee and The Board of Directors of TO Live

From: President and Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on consultant activity for the redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The President and Chief Executive Officer recommends that the Board of Directors of TO Live receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact other than what is outlined in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its September 3, 2020 meeting, the Board of Directors of TO Live received a report from the President and Chief Executive Officer of TO Live updating the Board on the consultant activity and the proposed public consultation process for the redevelopment of the St. Lawrence Centre.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CT14.3>

At its January 23, 2020 meeting, the Executive Committee recommended that City Council support the redevelopment concept for the St. Lawrence Centre. At its January 29, 2020 meeting, City Council adopted the items without amendments and without debate.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX12.6>

COMMENTS

Activities to date:

- In January 2020, Toronto City Council unanimously endorsed “the replacement of the St. Lawrence Centre (STLC) with a new re-imagined centre as a state-of-the-art cultural and civic hub”.
- In February 2020, TO Live and CreateTO established a partnership engaging in a process to deliver a project plan and schedule for “a new St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts for subsequent consideration and approval by City Council”.
- From March - October, a detailed Engagement Plan has been developed which outlines project phases, which include the following:
 - Phase 1: Visioning & Discovery; understand key stakeholders, current state and needs in sector, launch website and send survey to public
 - Phase 2: Solution Development; review insights from the Vision and Discovery Phase
 - Phase 3: Concepts and Preliminary Functional Program; develop Functional Building program, Undertake Test Fit, Evaluate Site access
 - Phase 4: Design Brief Production & Supporting Documents; Final Functional Building Program, Commence cost estimate

Progress continues, with the following items completed to date:

- Contracted Consultants KerrSmith to lead Public Consultation for the project
- Contracted DTAH Architects and Novita Techne Limited
- Created a designated Website to be the portal for all information regarding the project
- Created a Communications plan for all stakeholders, Government and Media
- Preliminary research with private sector funding program with the Offord Group
- Created a survey that will be distributed amongst Arts Workers, St. Lawrence Business Association, St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, community organizations and specifically prioritizing traditionally marginalized constituents.

- Prepared an Engagement Plan and Terms of Reference for the stakeholder engagement. One of the key components of the public consultation and plan will be a working stakeholder group (WSG) that will be comprised with representation from all arts disciplines (music, dance, theatre, visual arts), equity-seeking groups, neighbourhood and community groups to collaborate with the suite of consultants. The WSG will reflect the City of Toronto and play a key role in engaging the public.

The STLC project (STLC NEXT) remains a priority project for TO Live and the City of Toronto even during the COVID 19 pandemic and the resulting industry wide disruption. The next planned phase is the launch of a public engagement designed to give the community an opportunity to imagine STLC as a new place of belonging. This discovery phase will explore ideas of how to provide an accessible, uniquely flexible civic hub that will serve the cultural sector, the neighbourhood and the broader civic community.

In the *Covid-19: Impacts and Opportunities* report submitted from Toronto's Office of Recovery & Rebuild to the City Manager, the authors note the following:

“It was suggested in consultations that the City consider the candidacy and timing of the renewal of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, which presents an opportunity to create a hub for the arts and cultural performance in downtown Toronto. Given it’s key location, the project should apply an equity lens to the place-making opportunities; after hours access to equity seeking groups; use of state of the art technology to support the next generation of creative talent in Toronto, thereby driving economic and cultural growth.”

TO Live is pleased to have this important project recognized in this seminal report and embraces the direction as articulated. As such, TO Live recognizes that STLC NEXT is a longer-term infrastructure stimulus project that addresses specific needs of the community including but not limited to the following directions from the TORR:

- Providing equitable and inclusive access; the newly imagined centre will answer the long-term goal of providing an accessible, uniquely flexible civic cultural centre with ample public spaces that will serve the cultural sector and reflect the neighbourhood and communities of Toronto.
- Invigorating the arts and culture work force; including a digitally enhanced centre to capture live streaming, recording and broadcasting.
- Strengthening a diverse neighbourhood; The redevelopment of the STLC will create a cultural corridor east through the downtown core providing an opportunity to galvanize the cultural community as well as stimulating the local economy. STLC sits at the very epicenter of the city, surrounded by a thriving residential neighbourhood, connected to every transportation system, nestled in the heart of the country’s investment community, and overlooking one of the city’s most treasured public spaces - Berczy Park.

The STLC is located in Ward 13 and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam for this Ward has offered support for the project, including the following letter of support.

It is rare that the City and public gets to re-imagine what a brand new cultural hub can and should look like, to help continue the transformation of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood into a premier destination in Toronto. The existing St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts has served the arts and local community well for over 40 years. The facility was however built in a time before full accessibility was considered into design. As such the Bluma Appel and Jane Mallet theatres are in need of modern improvements as required by performing arts companies.

This past January, Toronto City Council unanimously endorsed “the replacement of the St. Lawrence Centre with a new re-imagined centre as a state-of-the-art cultural and civic hub.” Redevelopment will give the City the ability to re-imagine an important publicly-owned cultural asset. Not only can accessibility and flexible performance space be provided to ensure the viability of the theatre and to support performing arts companies, but this is also an opportunity to rethink the entire public realm. With the beautifully redesigned Berczy Park across the street, this is an opportunity to create a streetscape that further enhances the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.

The future of the St. Lawrence Centre of the Arts is now up to you. Staff at TO Live and CreateTO need your best ideas as to how we can ensure this project can be a fully inclusive and uniquely flexible cultural hub that will serve Toronto for years to come. “Break a leg” and let’s all get involved!

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Clyde Wagner
President and CEO

ATTACHMENTS

None