

George Weston Recital Hall Renovations at the Meridian Arts Centre

Date: November 21, 2025

To: General Government Committee

From: Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Services and the Chief Procurement Officer

Wards: 18 - Willowdale

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek City Council authority to negotiate and execute any necessary agreements, including non-competitive agreements exceeding \$500,000, for the provision of goods and services including professional and construction services required to deliver renovations to the George Weston Recital Hall (GWRH) at the Meridian Arts Centre (managed by TO Live, an agency of the City), utilizing funds raised for this purpose. This report outlines the procurement authorities required to support these renovations, which are solely and fully funded by private donations fundraised and held by the Toronto Live Foundation.

As part of the transition of the planning and delivery of TO Live's 2024-2033 Capital Budget and Plan from TO Live to Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM), a governance framework was developed that ensures the timely continuation of in-flight projects that were initiated by TO Live and are at various stages of implementation. The renovation of GWRH is one such in-flight project. The planning and scope-setting phase for the GWRH renovations are underway and must continue to proceed as currently planned and scheduled, based on the confirmed project budget, in order to conclude this phase in January 2026 and allow construction to begin in July 2026.

As the renovations are funded through donations, this work was not included in the capital budget planning process and represents an unexpected addition to the project roster. Its unplanned nature requires that synergies with other necessary repair work within the GWRH must be explored as the work packages are developed and existing site conditions are assessed, enabling a coordinated "touch it once" approach. For example, one component of work to be funded through donations is the replacement of the theater seats in GWRH, which will also present an opportunity to complete any necessary flooring or electrical work beneath the seating.

To avoid impacts on already scheduled GWRH programming, all work must be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026. This compressed timeline combined with

unplanned nature of the work necessitate flexible procurement authorities to ensure the donated funds are used effectively.

The scope of work supported by the donated funds include flooring, foundation, electrical and several cosmetic updates.

The procurement approach and accompanying authorities being sought in this report, which allow staff to enter into necessary agreements, including non-competitive, and purchase order amendments that would normally require Committee and/or City Council approval, are necessary to meet the accelerated timeline to complete renovations by October 2026. Expedited project delivery is required to ensure minimal impact on ongoing programming at the GWRH.

City Council approval is required in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 195, Procurement, where the current request exceeds the Chief Procurement Officer's authority of the cumulative five-year commitment for each supplier, under Article 7, Section 195-7.3 (D) of the Procurement By-Law or exceeds the threshold of \$500,000 net of Harmonized Sales Tax allowed under staff authority as per the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 71- Financial Control, Section 71-11A.

Non-competitive procurements would proceed under the exception related to cost sharing, where another organization is funding or substantially funding the procurement, and the City has determined in good faith that both the proposed procurement and the selected supplier, along with the terms and conditions of the contract are beneficial to the City (Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 195, Procurement, Section 7.1K.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management and the Chief Procurement Officer recommend that:

1. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, in consultation with the President and Chief Executive Officer, TO Live, and the Chief Procurement Officer, to negotiate and enter into any necessary agreements, including non-competitive agreements, with a value exceeding \$500,000, and execute any necessary purchase order amendments, with a value exceeding \$500,000 or more than 10 percent of the original commitment, for which the appropriate Committee and/or City Council approval would normally be required under City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 71, Financial Control By-law, and City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 195, Procurement, for the provision of goods and services including professional and construction services required to deliver renovations for the George Weston Recital Hall, provided that:

a. the procurement or purchase order amendment is necessary to meet the timelines associated with the donated funds;

b. the costs will be fully funded by the donations raised by the Toronto Live Foundation;

c. the competitive procurement and non-competitive procurement processes are completed in accordance with the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 195, Procurement, and associated policies and procedures;

d. the terms and conditions of any such agreements and any amending agreements are acceptable to the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the President and Chief Executive Officer, TO Live, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and

2. City Council direct the City Manager to forward a copy of this report to the Board of Directors of TO Live for their information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The renovation of GWRH is fully funded through private donations fundraised by the Toronto Live Foundation. As part of the Capital Variance Report for the Four Months Ended April 30, 2025, City Council adopted an in-year budget adjustment to increase TO Live's 2025 Capital Budget and Plan by \$2.275 million gross, \$0 net, fully funded by donations received for a new capital project to refurbish the George Weston Recital Hall at the Meridian Arts Centre.

Costs for goods and services including professional and construction services required to deliver the project will be funded exclusively through donations raised by the Toronto Live Foundation.

Project costs and funding for the George Weston Recital Hall Renovation project have been transferred and included in year as part of Corporate Real Estate Management's 2025-2034 Capital Budget and Plan, as the collected funds are received.

Future operating impacts to maintain the George Weston Recital Hall will be included for consideration along with other priorities in future budget processes.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as contained in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its October 8 and 10, 2025 meeting, City Council approved an amendment to increase TO Live's 2025 Capital Budget and Plan (Appendix 3) by \$2.275 million gross, \$0 debt, with cash flow commitments of \$1.138 million in 2025, and \$1.138 million in 2026, fully funded by donations received for a new capital project to refurbish the George Weston Recital Hall at the Meridian Arts Centre.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX25.9>

At its February 11, 2025 meeting, City Council approved TO Live's 2025 Capital Budget for TO Live (agenda item 116) with cash flows and future year commitments totaling

\$77.513 million as detailed by project in Appendix 5a to the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget Notes for TO Live.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MPB27.1>

At its December 17 and 18, 2024 meeting, City Council rescinded the delegation to the Board of Directors of TO Live for the capital budget planning, approval and implementation for TO Live and amended City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 23, Civic Theatres accordingly, and directed the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to oversee the implementation of the 2024-2033 Capital Budget and Plan as well as future capital plans in alignment with the Capital Prioritization Framework on behalf of TO Live, which included the planning, design, procurement, and execution of state of good repair projects, capital improvements, net zero, accessibility and other facility-related projects for the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Meridian Hall, and Meridian Arts Centre, in consultation with the President and Chief Executive Officer, TO Live, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX19.20>

At its November 25, 2024, meeting, the Board of Directors of TO Live approved TO Live's updated 10-year capital plan and budget, approved all 2025 projects, including those with multi-year components and all related purchase orders and/or tender awards over \$100,000 up to each individual project budget, adjusted budget or new project budget, not to exceed the available State of Good Repair (SOGR) Council approved funding.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.CT12.6>

COMMENTS

Background

In line with City Council's direction via item EX19.20 St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts - Enhanced State of Good Repair Strategy, City staff representing CREM, PMMD, and Legal Services have worked collaboratively with TO Live on a transition process to transfer the oversight of the implementation of TO Live's 2025–2034 Capital Budget and Plan, as well as future capital plans, from TO Live to CREM.

As part of this transition process, a governance framework has been developed to ensure the continuation of in-flight projects that have been initiated by TO Live and are at various stages of implementation. The framework clarifies roles and responsibilities between TO Live and CREM through the transitional period in alignment with EX19.20, to ensure the continuation of in-flight projects that must be carried out in a timely manner.

One of the in-flight projects is the renovation of the George Weston Recital Hall at the Meridian Arts Centre - initiated by TO Live in 2024, funded solely through donations. This project will include renovations throughout the hall including replacing specialized theatrical seating, upgrading acoustic drapery, painting and auditorium floor upgrades.

Rationale for Procurement Authorities

The planning and scope-setting phase for the GWRC renovations are underway and must continue to proceed as currently planned and scheduled, based on the confirmed project budget, in order to conclude this phase in January 2026 and allow construction to begin in July 2026. As the renovations are funded through donations, this work was not included in the capital budget planning process and represents an unexpected addition to the project roster. Its unplanned nature requires that synergies with other necessary repair work within the GWRH must be explored as the work packages are developed and existing site conditions are assessed, enabling a coordinated “touch it once” approach. For example, one component of work to be funded through donations is the replacement of the theater seats in GWRH, which will also present an opportunity to complete any necessary flooring or electrical work beneath the seating.

To avoid impacts on already scheduled GWRC programming, all work must be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026. This compressed timeline combined with unplanned nature of the work necessitate a flexible procurement process to ensure the donated funds are used effectively.

To date, the Toronto Live Foundation has raised \$2.275 million fully funded by donations received for a new capital project to refurbish the George Weston Recital Hall at the Meridian Arts Centre. The scope of work supported by the donated funds include flooring, foundation, electrical and several cosmetic updates.

The authorities being sought in this report enable staff to enter into any necessary agreements, including non-competitive, with a value exceeding \$500,000, and execute any necessary purchase order amendments, with a value exceeding \$500,000 or more than 10 percent of the original commitment, for which the appropriate Committee and/or City Council approval would normally be required under City of Toronto Municipal Code, for the provision of goods and services, including professional and construction, required to deliver renovations for the GWRH. These procurement authorities can only be utilized provided that the procurement and/or amendment is necessary in order to meet the accelerated timeline to complete renovations by the fourth quarter of 2026, compliant with Chapter 195 (Procurement) as well as associated policies, and also fully funded by the donations raised by the Toronto Live Foundation. Expedited project delivery is required to ensure minimal impact on already scheduled programming at the GWRH.

City Council approval is required in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 195, Procurement, where the current request exceeds the Chief Procurement Officer's authority of the cumulative five-year commitment for each supplier, under Article 7, Section 195-7.3 (D) of the Procurement By-Law or exceeds the threshold of \$500,000 net of Harmonized Sales Tax allowed under staff authority as per the Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 71- Financial Control, Section 71-11A. Non-competitive procurements would proceed under the exception related to cost sharing, where another organization is funding or substantially funding the procurement, and the City has determined in good faith that both the proposed procurement and the selected supplier, along with the terms and conditions of the contract are beneficial to the City (Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 195, Procurement, Section 7.1K.).=

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SIGNATURE

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