



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: September 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Steelcase Road West Public Art Wall
PREPARED BY: Niamh O’Laoghaire, Manager, Varley Art Gallery, ext. 3273
Hailey Miller, Senior Planner, Development Servs., ext.2945

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report entitled Steelcase Road West Public Art Wall be received; and
2. THAT staff’s recommendation that the City enter into an Art Wall agreement with Steelcase Road West be approved;
3. THAT the budget of \$80,000 for two iterations of the Steelcase Road West Public Art Wall to be funded from the Public Art Reserve Fund be approved,
4. THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an agreement (*Attachment #1*) between the City and Steelcase Road West regarding a large-scale art wall to be located on the west side of Woodbine Avenue, two blocks north of Steeles Avenue, between Idema Road to the south and Steelcase Road West to the north. The art wall will comply with the terms of the City’s *Public Art Policy – Private Sector (2012)*. It will meet the goals identified in the City’s *Gateway Master Plan (2020)*, and also in *Making Our Markham: Markham’s Public Art Master Plan 2020-24* and its recommendation of creating public art in “Key Civic Sites, Gateways, and Heritage Areas”.

The agreement between the City of Markham and Steelcase Road West Holdings will remain in effect for ten (10) years. For the term of the agreement a public art wall built by Steelcase Road West Holdings will host a series of three public art works comprising digital images printed on vinyl, each in place for up to 3.5 years. The first iteration will be commissioned, managed and funded by Steelcase Road West Holdings. The second and third iterations will be commissioned, managed and funded by Markham Public Art. After ten years, the agreement may be extended or renewed by mutual consent.

The Planning Director and staff in the Planning and Urban Design Department will be responsible for assisting Steelcase Road West Holdings with necessary amendments to its site plan agreement. Staff in the Department of Legislative Services and Communications will review the details of the agreement with Steelcase Road West Holdings ensuring the City’s rights. The Public Art Curator, reporting to the Manager of the Varley Art Gallery in the Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship, will commission and manage the second and third iterations of the art wall.

BACKGROUND:

Conversations between Steelcase Road West Holdings and staff in the Departments of Planning and Urban Design and Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship regarding the possibility of an art wall at 1 Steelcase West Road began in 2020. The Steelcase Road Site Plan Agreement completed in 2024, includes the statement that the Owner agrees:

To design and construct a screen wall, in consultation with the City's Public Art Group a decorative screen wall, approximately 33 metres x 5 metres in size, to be constructed and installed in the location shown on the Site Plan, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Urban Design. (Site Plan Agreement, item 15 (pp), page 14)

The Owner and staff of Planning and Urban Design and Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship have reached an understanding about how to manage the art wall over the course of ten years. The details are laid out in the Art Wall Agreement

Art Wall Agreement

According to the draft Art Wall Agreement, Steelcase Road West Holdings will build a wall approximately 33 x 5 metres (109 x 16.5 feet) on the west side of Woodbine Avenue between Steelcase Road North and Idema Road, at an anticipated cost of \$208,000. Steelcase Road West Holdings will install an art frame or hanger within the wall at an anticipated cost of \$25,000. The frame will be the support on which to hang a series of digital art images printed on vinyl. The Owner will then contribute up to \$40,000 toward commissioning, artist fees, printing and implementation of the first public art work to be installed, which will remain in place for up to 3.5 years. ~~The Owner will be responsible for all costs related to this iteration, should they exceed \$40,000.~~ The second and third iterations of the public art work, including commissioning, artist fees, printing and installation will be the responsibility of Markham Public Art, at a combined cost of up to \$80,000.

The City and the Owner agree to maintain an open and active relationship throughout the term of the Art Wall Agreement and while selecting the chosen Art. The initial Art project commissioned by the Owner will be reviewed by the City's Public Art Curator and the Markham Public Art Advisory Committee (MPAAC) to ensure that the Art project meets the City's Public Art Community Guidelines as outlined in the MPAAC Terms of Reference. The two projects commissioned by the Public Art Curator must also meet these standards and be acceptable to the Owner. After ten years, once the agreement has been completed, the Owner and the City will review the program and determine how to move forward. At that time the agreement may be extended or renewed by mutual consent.

Next Steps

Staff of Legislative Services have reviewed the Art Wall Agreement and are satisfied with its contents. Legislative Services indicates that the process to move forward is as follows:

1. Council approves staff recommendation to enter into an Art Wall agreement with Steelcase Road West
2. The site plan agreement is then amended by staff of Planning and Urban Design to include the terms of the Art Wall Agreement.
3. The Owner registers the amendment on title to bind them and any future holders of or successors to the title.

Staff therefore recommend that Council approve staff proceeding to enter into an Art Wall agreement with Steelcase Road West site in to move forward with the Art Wall.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

When built, the Steelcase Road West Holdings Art Wall will have a large and commanding presence. It will provide an excellent platform to create a powerful visual gateway announcing entry into the City of Markham. It will meet the first stated goal of the City's Public Art Master Plan, which is: To Inspire people to live, work, visit and invest in Markham. The Steelcase Public Art Wall and agreement may prove a very useful template for future public art projects across the City of Markham.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The two iterations of the art wall managed by the Public Art Curator will be funded from the dedicated Public Art Reserve fund which, as of May 2024, stands at \$7.597 million, accumulated through development charges. There is therefore ample funding to cover the Markham Public Art's Steelcase Public Art Wall commitments.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Once the agreement is in place, the two iterations of the art wall for which the City is responsible will be managed by the Public Art Curator, a part time contracted position funded through the operating budget of the Varley Art Gallery of Markham in the Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Approval of staff moving to enter an Art Wall Agreement with Steelcase Road West Holdings is in alignment with the City's *Making Our Markham: Public Art Master Plan 2020-24*. It is also in alignment with the *Gateway Master Plan; Integrated Leisure Master Plan; Culture Plan; Public Realm Strategy* and the City's strategic plan *Building Markham's Future Together, 2020-2023*. Goal two of which states: "Support arts, culture, recreation and sport to enrich the fabric of our communities".

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

- Development Services Commission: Department of Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship; Department of Planning and Urban Design.
- Corporate Services Commission: Department of Legislative Services and Communications

RECOMMENDED BY:

Niamh O’Laoghaire
Manager, Varley Art Gallery of Markham
Hailey Miller, Senior Planner,
Development Services

Arvin Prasad
Commissioner,
Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment #1: Art Wall Agreement between the City of Markham and Steelcase Road West Holdings.