

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: February 27, 2008

SUBJECT: UNION SUBWAY STATION NEW PLATFORM PROJECT –
APPROVAL OF PROPOSED ARTWORK

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission approve the artwork proposed by Stuart M. Reid, for the Union Subway Station New Platform Project.

FUNDING

This project is fully funded by the TWRC through funds provided by all three levels of government (Transport Canada, Ontario Superbuild and City of Toronto).

Funds in the amount of \$93M are included in Waterfront Initiatives, under Union Station New Platform - as set out on pages 1673 - 1680, presented below the line and subject to other funding in the TTC 2008-2012 Capital Program, which was approved by City Council on December 11, 2007.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of November 17, 2004, the Commission approved the conceptual design for Union Station, which was the culmination of design work that began in late 2000. Designs were developed in consultation with the City, GO Transit, VIA, the Union Station Public Advisory Group, Advisory Committee for Accessible Transit (ACAT) and adjacent property owners.

At its meeting of August 30, 2006, the Commission authorized the award of the design contract in the amount of \$7,000,000.00, to Earth Tech Canada Inc.

DISCUSSION

The station design calls for a glass wall that will run the length of the station, on the south side of the north platform (See Appendix A). The wall will provide safety to those on the platform, while also being transparent, which will lend to the security of the station. The wall was considered to be a good opportunity to incorporate art into the station design.

A Request for Proposal was publicly advertised on the Commission's Web site as of June 7, 2007. One hundred and ten (110) proponents were issued copies of the proposal documents

out of which forty-eight submitted a proposal.

In conjunction with the City of Toronto’s Art Committee for Public Places, a two stage process was followed to select an artist. Stage 1 was an evaluation of all 48 proposals by a three member jury, to determine compliance with the proposal document requirements and to shortlist the compliant proposals to the five highest rated. These five proponents were then invited to develop and present proposals for Stage 2 of the evaluation.

The criteria for selection of the art was based on public safety, that it be constructed of materials that are appropriate to continuous public display, are durable and resistant to vandalism and repetitive cleaning, as well as the artistic excellence, relationship of the artwork to the public and the suitability for development. The Stage 2 proposals were evaluated by a five member jury and the proposal presented by Stuart M. Reid called “Zones of Immersion”, was judged by the panel to best meet the selection criteria. The art will reside in between the panes of glass that will run the length of the station. Appendix B provides a description of the work, as written by Mr. Reid. Appendix C provides an illustration of the work. Presentation panels will be available at the Commission meeting.

The proposal submitted by Mr. Reid is conceptual and it is intended that it be developed further during the detailed design phase, which began in January, in consultation with the project’s architects. Staff will report back to the Commission if the design requirements for the station result in significant changes to the art work.

Staff intend to submit a report in the spring with the station designs.

JUSTIFICATION

The approval of the proposed artwork for Union Station Second Platform Project will enable the artist to participate in the detailed design phase.

February 6, 2008
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Attachments

APPENDIX B

“Zones of Immersion”
Stuart M. Reid

This work is an “immersive” subway journal composed of collected thoughts.

I want to do a work that reflects the human condition of subway travel – that speaks to the idea of collective shared experiences even within a culture of many cultures, where we may feel somewhat distanced from each other.

I am interested in art that sees its world with both empathy and a kind of internal freedom, and I’m interested in making a place for the human hand in an image culture of digital interface. I see this as equivalent to the idea of making a place for the body in a world where we are increasingly living in virtual environments.

The shared experiences highlighted in this work transcend cultural pluralities, and are important to reflect back to ourselves – the art becomes a witness to that connectedness between people.

As this proposal evolved, the physical aspects of the transit experience, noticed in long and short rides within the city, became a kind of “found” material to work with...the sounds, the vibrations, the patterns of darkness and light, the changing rhythms or speeds....everything from rush hour crush to sports event crowds to the way kids gaggle together and fool around.

I believe these personal/private experiences of public travel are/will be recognizable as “universal” by thousands of individuals, all of whom are connected by this common domain of transit space and time. This work honours that collective experience.

I approach this work as an experienced architectural glass artist, as discussed in my first writings for this competition. My work with glass and architecture challenges pre-conceived notions while maintaining a deep respect for historical tradition.

Among the first stained glass windows remaining with us today are the medallion windows of the 12th and 13th centuries – essentially vertical film strips – windows into the world of that time – where we see bakers’, butchers’, carpenters’, cobblers’ and blacksmiths’ guilds.

The Union Station project is a long linear “window” into our own time – a horizontal film strip...

The north elevation is a shifting, immersive panorama occupying the entire 500 foot length of the subway platform, reminiscent of a train in the station – both interior and exterior.

Using the entire panoramic length of the station platform has a generosity that seems apropos to the historical and contemporary power of this space/building as the most significant urban entry point for the city.

The south elevation is a series of captured stills from the full-length piece, framed by the architectural structures/openings along the platform....so that we reference looking into or out of the subway train windows themselves.

Four key aspects:

1. Shifting zones of colour (or non-colour)....the physical location of specific single colour areas create either an “enveloping” environment (to stand beside) or a specific feature (noticeable at strategic locations where one comes through to the platform from somewhere else).
2. Drawing – capturing an emerging figure or group of figures as if out of the air, in a fleeting moment.

The drawings of people on the subway are of all different scales – from huge to small – while drawings of silhouettes (standing platform figures) are specific one-to-one scale – that is, life size.

3. Semi-legible fragments of cursive journal writing and their legible counterpoints, typeset text pieces (the same texts).
4. The ideas of hand-drawing/marking/w/physicality – mixed with the digital production media possibilities – of contemporary architectural glass practices.