



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 19-234**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer  
**Resource Staff:** Same  
**Date of Meeting:** September 3, 2019  
**Subject:** Kingston Penitentiary Tours 2020

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**Executive Summary:**

In November 2018, Council endorsed the renewal of agreements between Correctional Service Canada (CSC), St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) and the City of Kingston to enable the provision of public tours at the Kingston Penitentiary for a fourth year in a row.

The first year of operations, in 2016, was very successful with about 60,000 visitors and a net profit of approximately \$640,000 which was allocated to the United Way of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (United Way of KFL&A) and destination marketing. The 2017 public tours at the Kingston Penitentiary were even more successful attracting about 105,000 visitors and generating a net profit of approximately \$2.4M which was allocated 50/50 between the United Way of KFL&A and destination marketing. The 2018 season attracted 67,500 visitors with a net profit of \$1.47M which was allocated 50/50 between the United Way of KFL&A and destination marketing. It is anticipated that the 2019 Kingston Pen Tours will attract more visitors and generate higher revenues than numbers in 2018.

SLPC and City staff recognize that 2017 was an outstanding year for the Kingston Penitentiary tours as it benefited from increased tourism within Canada with sesquicentennial programs and still some pent up demand to access the property. It will be important to continue to increase marketing efforts. The 2020 Kingston Pen Tours agreement between the City and CSC would continue to include filming as a permitted use on the property. Continuing to support the Kingston Penitentiary Tours and additional uses on the property is critical for the tourism sector. Both Tourism Kingston and the Kingston Accommodation Partners have identified Kingston Penitentiary as a key tourism asset.

In July 2017, Council approved a vision concept plan for the future development of the Portsmouth Olympic Harbour and Kingston Penitentiary properties. Although the vision has

September 3, 2019

Page 2 of 7

been endorsed, it has been acknowledged that the implementation process, including any change in ownership, will be a long term endeavour. In the interim, CSC has agreed to continue public tours and filming. It is beneficial to establish the 2020 agreement as soon as possible so that marketing can be initiated for the 2020 tours. It is important to note that City staff are still discussing the possibility of implementing a multi-year agreement with CSC for the use of the Kingston Penitentiary property for tourism purposes as the implementation of the vision concept plan will be a long term initiative.

**Recommendation:**

**That** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute an agreement with Correctional Service Canada for the City of Kingston to have access to the Kingston Penitentiary property to provide public tours and year round filming access in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services; and

**That** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute an agreement with St. Lawrence Parks Commission for the delivery of public tours at the Kingston Penitentiary site in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services; and

**That** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute any required agreement with Tourism Kingston for year round filming on the Kingston Penitentiary property.

September 3, 2019

Page 3 of 7

**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required
Deanne Roberge, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Enterprise Services	Not required

September 3, 2019

Page 4 of 7

**Options/Discussion:****2016 Kingston Penitentiary Public Tours**

In May 2016, Council approved partnerships with Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) to operate public tours at the Kingston Penitentiary property. The SLPC operated public tours out of the Kingston Penitentiary from June to October.

During this period of time, 60,000 visitors came to see what was behind the historic walls of the Kingston Penitentiary. Kingston Penitentiary Tours added a one-of-a kind tourism asset to Kingston's tourism portfolio. The estimated economic impact to the region was \$4.7 million as calculated through the Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM). This model estimates the induced economic impact of tourism related activities in areas such as overnight accommodations, food and beverage, transportation, retail and entertainment. These tours provided full time employment for 40 college and university students as well as record visitation to partner museums including Canada's Penitentiary Museum.

The net profit generated the first year was approximately \$640,000. Half of this amount was allocated to destination marketing for Kingston and the other half to the United Way of KFL&A for re-investment in youth programming.

The quick pace with which the Kingston Penitentiary Tours sold in 2016 demonstrated that demand far exceeded capacity (300,000 concurrent website users when 60,000 available tickets went on sale).

**2017 Kingston Penitentiary Public Tours**

Tours ran from May until the end of October 2017. Tours were conducted in both of Canada's official languages, with as many bilingual tour guides as possible to cater to the needs of visitors. Ticket prices increased from \$25 in 2016 to \$35 in 2017. Tuesday continued to be dedicated as "Kingston Days" with a discount on tours.

With most of the groundwork completed from the 2016 season, the 2017 season followed a similar operational plan with a continued heavy focus on visitor and staff safety as well as strong customer service components to ensure a high quality experience. Due to the extended length of time and number of tours, a more formal management structure was implemented to support a longer season.

In 2017, the public tours attracted 105,000 visitors and generated close to \$4.3M in revenues and \$2.4M in net revenue which was split 50/50 between the United Way of KFL&A and destination marketing which is managed by Tourism Kingston and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. The economic impact as calculated by TREIM was \$8.4 million. Significant marketing investments were made in 2017 and 2018 in the international "Where am I" campaign and the "Onroute" campaign.

September 3, 2019

Page 5 of 7

**2018 Kingston Penitentiary Public Tours**

Tours ran from May until the end of October 2018. 67,500 visitors generated a net profit of \$1.47M. Both SLPC and City staff recognize that the decrease from 2017 to 2018 was related to reduction in pent up demand to access the site as well as increased tourism in Canada during the sesquicentennial celebrations in 2017. Kingston Penitentiary still remains one of the most significant tourism assets in Kingston and was identified as a priority in the Destination Strategy endorsed by Council in 2019.

The City of Kingston continues to play an important role in facilitating this initiative. As per the previous agreements, the City continues to license portions of the Kingston Penitentiary from CSC for \$1 for the provision of public tours and, in turn, the City extended its agreement with the SLPC for the delivery of public tours.

**2019 Kingston Penitentiary Public Tours**

As part of the review of the 2019 partnership for the Kingston Penitentiary, access during civic holidays and for filming was added to the agreement. There have been filming production activities at the Kingston Penitentiary in 2019, including filming for a Netflix series. It is anticipated that the total number of visitors and total net profit generated will increase in 2019. Final numbers will be known later in the fall of 2019.

The 2019 proposal introduced ticket pricing to make tours more affordable for families as well as to be more attractive to group tour operators and continue to provide accommodations for individuals with specific needs on all tours. The net profits from operations will continue to be allocated 50/50 between the United Way of KFL&A and destination marketing. As per the previous agreements, the City continued to license portions of the Kingston Penitentiary from CSC for \$1 for the provision of public tours and, in turn, the City extended its agreement with the SLPC for the delivery of public tours.

**2020 Kingston Penitentiary Public Tours**

It is anticipated that the 2020 Kingston Penitentiary Tours will be very similar to the tours that are currently being offered by SLPC. The final details in regards to start and end dates for tours will be finalized by SLPC and CSC. It is proposed that the profit sharing formula also remains the same for 2020. The only change anticipated is a year round access for filming only. This means that filming would continue after tours are completed in 2019. The Film Office managed by Tourism Kingston oversees the filming requests and logistics on the Kingston Penitentiary property. The City of Kingston works directly with Tourism Kingston to provide permits that enable filming production companies to access the property. It is critical that the City maintains ongoing access to the Kingston Penitentiary property as it is now starting to be known to the filming industry.

**The Kingston Penitentiary Vision and Long Term Implications**

The visioning exercise for Kingston Penitentiary and the Portsmouth Olympic Harbour site started in the spring of 2016 and was approved by Council in July 2017. It is expected that the implementation of this concept plan will be a long term endeavour. The first element of the Kingston Penitentiary and Portsmouth Olympic Harbour plan to be implemented is the relocation

September 3, 2019

Page 6 of 7

of the Coast Guard Search and Rescue Station just outside of the Kingston Penitentiary walls. The construction of the new station started in 2019 and is still underway.

As for the Kingston Penitentiary property itself, it is anticipated that the implementation of the community vision will be a long term process. Therefore, the City has been working with CSC to review the possibility of establishing a multi-year partnership to access Kingston Penitentiary for tourism purposes in the interim. Having a multi-year partnership would enable more proactive and early marketing which would help to maintain or increase the number of visitors. Options for access and use during those years are also being discussed and City staff will report back when more information on a multi-year agreement is available.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

By-Law Number 2000-134      A By-Law to Establish Purchasing Policies and Procedures

**Notice Provisions:**

Not applicable

**Accessibility Considerations:**

Prior to the commencement of the tour, staff will describe the tour plan (patrons will receive a copy of the aerial site plan map) and describe the prescribed route of buildings, communications, emergency procedures, washroom locations, potential hazards and safety precautions. The Kingston Penitentiary is partially accessible and reasonable steps will be taken to ensure full accessibility along the tour route; however, visitors with mobility challenges may still require special tour staff assistance.

**Financial Considerations:**

These agreements and partnerships are anticipated to be cost neutral to the City. Net profit from public tours will be equally distributed between the United Way of KFL&A and marketing efforts of Tourism Kingston in partnership with St. Lawrence Parks Commission.

**Contacts:**

Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer 613-546-4291 extension 1231

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Not applicable

**Others Consulted:**

Hollee Kew, General Manager/CEO, St. Lawrence Parks Commission

Geoff Waycik, Director, Historic Sites, St. Lawrence Parks Commission

September 3, 2019

Page 7 of 7

Megan Knott, Executive Director, Tourism Kingston

**Exhibits Attached:**

Not applicable