



City of Kingston
Report to Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee
Report Number ARCP-20-003

To: Chair and Members of the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee

From: Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects

Resource Staff: Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services

Date of Meeting: October 22, 2020

Subject: Report on the Pilot Project to Promote Local Music and Musicians and Terms of Reference for the Next Iteration of YGK Music in Support of Sector Development

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Strengthen economic development opportunities

Goal: 4.2 Foster Innovative arts, culture and social enterprises

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the members of the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies (ARCP) Committee with an update regarding YGK Music, a local music pilot project designed to showcase and promote local music and musicians and to seek the support of the Committee and Council regarding the next iteration of YGK Music as an annual City of Kingston music program. The report also provides information about next steps, including plans that build upon the success of the initial pilot project to support the music sector more broadly.

The YGK Music pilot project was created in response to two Council motions passed in 2015 that expressed a desire to see the City of Kingston promote the local music scene more actively. The Terms of Reference for the pilot project were developed by the Local Music on City Properties Working Group affiliated with the Arts Advisory Committee (AAC) and were subsequently approved by the ARCP Committee in July 2018.

October 22, 2020

Page 2 of 10

The YGK Music pilot project launched in March 2019 with an open call to artists seeking submissions to be featured in the playlists, which included two streams: (1) contemporary (including rock, pop, dance, electronic, hip-hop, country and indie music); and (2) traditional (including classical, jazz, blues, folk and world music). The call generated wide-spread community response and artist engagement and a total of 92 submissions were received. The submissions were reviewed by a Local Music Working Group (LMWG) and 45 musicians were selected to be featured. All artists signed a licensing agreement with the City and received an honorarium for their track to be featured.

In September 2019, the City launched the two curated playlists using SoundCloud and the playlists were made available through the [City of Kingston website](#) and call waiting system, and the [Visit Kingston Music landing page](#). More recently, the playlists were also featured as part of the Love Kingston Marketplace initiative and were broadcast in Springer Market Square. Over the past 12 months, there have been 3,503 plays of the playlists through SoundCloud and over 12,800 pageviews connected to the City of Kingston and Visit Kingston websites that housed the playlists. The City also tracked 145,149 calls through its main contact number between September 2019 and September 2020, which was the duration of the pilot project. It is also known that the average wait time was 54 seconds, so it is estimated that almost 150,000 people experienced an initial exposure to YGK Music for almost one minute. Exposure to the playlists was also significantly amplified through streaming in Springer Market Square.

Building on the success of the pilot project, YGK Music is scheduled to be re-launched in 2021 in an expanded way as an annual City-led music program. It is proposed that the next iteration of YGK Music will introduce two new local playlists annually, including (1) “Kingston Sounds” that will feature 20 tracks by Kingston musicians that will showcase the strength and diversity of Kingston’s music scene and (2) “Music on Hold”, a program that brings local music to the City of Kingston’s phone system. Based on what has been learned, each playlist will have their own distinct goals as well as separate application processes and selection criteria, and the Terms of Reference have been updated for review and approval by the members of the ARCP Committee as well as Council.

In addition to developing playlists, staff will also be pursuing strategic work under the umbrella of YGK Music that will support the music sector more broadly. This is in response to Council’s Strategic Priorities related to economic development that includes fostering arts, culture and social enterprises with a particular focus on economic recovery, creative industries and animating the public realm through live music and the arts.

Recommendation:

That the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee recommend to Council the following:

That the Terms of Reference for YGK Music as described in Exhibit A attached to Report Number ARCP-20-003 be approved; and

October 22, 2020

Page 3 of 10

That Council direct staff to implement YGK Music in collaboration with the Arts Advisory Committee based on the Terms of Reference in Exhibit A attached to Report Number ARCP-20-003; and

That the Commissioner of Business, Environment & Projects, or the Cultural Director as his designate, under delegated authority, be authorized to execute any legal agreements as needed, to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services, to enable the City of Kingston to work with local artists to support YGK Music as proposed in Report Number ARCP-20-003.

October 22, 2020

Page 4 of 10

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Peter Huigenbos,
Commissioner, Business,
Environment & Projects**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Corporate Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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

October 22, 2020

Page 5 of 10

Options/Discussion:

The YGK Music pilot project was created in response to two Council motions passed in 2015 that expressed a desire to see the City of Kingston promote the local music scene more actively, similar to the City of Ottawa's initiative [#ottmusic](#). Staff worked with the AAC to establish a Local Music on City Properties Working Group tasked with researching the City of Ottawa project and other similar initiatives and bringing back their findings. The Working Group reported back to the AAC in September 2016 at which time the Committee approved the Working Group's findings in principle. Staff subsequently developed a Terms of Reference for the pilot project based on the Working Group's findings that were extended to include a partnership with Tourism Kingston and the Visit Kingston website. Plans for the YGK Music pilot project were then approved by the ARCP Committee through [Report Number ARCP-18-004](#).

Following Council approval, staff began to prepare the various project elements that included establishing selection criteria and creating and embedding an application form on the City of Kingston website to facilitate the submission process. Work also included developing a call for submissions and creating an artist licensing agreement that was reviewed and approved by the City's Legal Services Department. A communications plan was also developed to build awareness and promote the pilot project that included the creation of a [YGK Music project page](#).

A second working group was subsequently established through the AAC tasked with facilitating the selection of the artists to be featured as part of the playlist based on the Terms of Reference for the pilot project as approved. The LMWG included Ann Clifford, Kirsi Hunnako and Councillor Jim Neill on behalf of the AAC, along with community members Virginia Clark, Chantal Prud'Homme and Greg Runions who represented the music sector. Council approved the appointments to the LMWG at its regularly scheduled meeting held on [March 19, 2019](#).

The YGK Music pilot project was then launched, promoting the call for submissions through a news release, across social media channels and through community partnerships and resulted in 92 submissions being received. The LMWG then met to review the submissions and, due to the number of high-quality submissions, decided to increase how many artists would be featured on the playlists. A total of 45 artists were selected to be featured as part of two playlists: (1) contemporary (including rock, pop, dance, electronic, hip-hop, country and indie music), and (2) traditional (including classical, jazz, blues, folk and world music). The artists selected each signed a licensing agreement and received an honorarium of \$100 for their track to be featured as part of the playlists.

The City launched the YGK Music playlists in September 2019 and, over the following 12 months, there have been 3,503 plays of the playlists through SoundCloud along with over 12,800 pageviews connected to the City of Kingston and Visit Kingston websites that house the playlists. The City also tracked the call waiting system that received 145,149 calls through its main contact number between September 2019 and September 20, which was the duration of the pilot project. It is also known the during this period with the average wait time was 54

October 22, 2020

Page 6 of 10

seconds, so it is estimated that approximately 150,000 people experienced an initial exposure to YGK Music for almost one minute.

Additionally, the YGK Music playlists found new audiences because of the Love Kingston Marketplace that was set up in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Love Kingston Marketplace project was being developed, an opportunity was identified to 'master' the YGK Music playlists for streaming in Springer Market Square. The playlists were subsequently broadcast during set times over the summer months. That opportunity allowed for greater exposure for the musicians featured as part of the playlists by leveraging Springer Market Square as a City-owned property to promote local music, which aligns with the original intent of the pilot project. Many of the artists featured as part of the YGK Music playlist were also contracted to play live in Springer Market Square over the summer that provided them with additional exposure.

Key Pilot Project Learnings

Throughout the pilot project, feedback has been collected and staff have gained insight into the impact of the program, including its successes and challenges. High-level feedback includes the following:

- Increase honorariums to provide higher fees to local artists, which is even more critical now due to COVID-19 and the loss of gigs and performance opportunities;
- Improve sound quality of playlists through the use of different streaming platforms that could include embedding the music player as part of the City of Kingston website;
- Enhance listening experience by mastering the tracks as one cohesive playlist, particularly when the playlists are being streamed on City-owned properties such as Springer Market Square;
- Differentiate goals and selection criteria for playlists online (active listening) and playlists for the call waiting system (passive listening); and
- Continue to prioritize the promotion of local music and musicians but consider additional, more substantive support for the local music sector to provide greater opportunities for artist development and promotion.

Annual YGK Music Program

It is important that the City of Kingston not only continue but expand its commitment to promoting local music and musicians based on the success of the YGK Music pilot project as well as the lessons learned and the feedback received. Through YGK Music, there is the potential for the City to help local musicians reach a broader audience and to demonstrate appreciation for music made in Kingston. In 2021, staff will re-launch YGK Music as an annual City-led music program that features and promotes local music and musicians through two playlists.

The first playlist is "Kingston Sounds" that will feature 20 tracks by Kingston musicians and help residents and visitors alike discover the strength and diversity of Kingston's music scene. This playlist will once again be housed on the City of Kingston website and on the Visit Kingston

October 22, 2020

Page 7 of 10

Music landing page. This playlist will also be mastered to ensure a seamless transition between tracks and staff will also be exploring other streaming platforms, in addition to SoundCloud, to ensure a high-quality listening experience. As before, the selected musicians will be required to sign a licensing agreement with the City for the use of their track and will be compensated at a higher rate than what was paid as part of the pilot project.

The City will also continue to partner with Tourism Kingston and to leverage the Kingston Sounds playlist as part of tourism experiences and product development, including the continued animation of Springer Market Square throughout the year.

The second playlist launching in 2021 is “Music on Hold”, a program that brings local music to the City of Kingston’s phone system. This playlist will feature instrumental music, including jazz and classical, that better aligns with the needs of the call waiting system. Information about the artists featured in this playlist will be included, and promoted, through the City of Kingston website. As with the Kingston Sounds playlists, the selected musicians will be required to sign a licensing agreement with the City for the use of their track and will be provided with an honorarium.

Staff have amended the Terms of Reference (Exhibit A) to support the continuation of the YGK Music program. The updated Terms of Reference identifies the project’s purpose, administration, selection and distribution process, and an implementation schedule. The intent is this next iteration of YGK Music would launch in early 2021, pending Council’s approval of the Cultural Services Department’s 2021 operating budget.

Annual Implementation Schedule

Quarter	Action
January	LMWG is nominated by the AAC and appointed through Council. Staff distribute public call for submissions.
March	Submissions are reviewed by the LMWG, artists are selected, Licensing Agreements are signed, artist payments are issued, and playlists are curated and compiled.
May-June	Playlists are launched and supported by strategic communications campaigns; playlists are made available for distribution online and through various City-owned properties and partners sites, where appropriate.

October 22, 2020

Page 8 of 10

Quarter	Action
July-December	Playlists are live and promoted by the City and its partners.

Music Sector Development

In tandem with YGK Music, the Cultural Services Department has also initiated more focused, strategic work that is intended to support the growth of the local music sector as well as to foster Kingston’s vibrant and diverse music communities and to develop the city’s music ecosystem overall. This work aligns with Council’s Strategic Priorities that include economic development related to arts, culture and social enterprises.

The work being pursued includes completing an inventory of creative industries in Kingston to determine how they can be better supported and expanded to develop specific subsectors and enhance economic development opportunities. This work is currently underway and will result in the development of a Creative Industries Sector Profile Report that is scheduled to be submitted to Council in Q4 2020. Music has been identified as a specific subsector and will be included as part of the Profile Sector Report that will provide a foundation to develop subsequent strategies, plans and programs to support the creative economy in Kingston. In addition to the Sector Profile Report, creative industries will also be embedded as part of the Kingston Economic Development Corporation Integrated Strategic Plan, also being presented to Council at the end of 2020.

Staff are also continuing to invest in local music sector development in response to the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the arts and music sectors generally. The loss of gigs and performance opportunities has been felt by the local music sector and investment in musicians and the industry as part of economic recovery efforts is required to help support the sector’s long-term survivability and sustainability.

In response, the Cultural Services Department provided immediate support to local musicians throughout the summer as part of the Love Kingston Marketplace and the animation of Springer Market Square as previously noted. From June through September, staff partnered with the Downtown Kingston! BIA and the Musicians Union to program 65 live performances in Springer Market Square and the City paid \$13,995 to 121 artists. As the Love Kingston Marketplace carries through the fall and winter and into 2021, staff are looking at ways to continue to support the arts and music sectors by providing employment to local artists through performances, public space activations and public art interventions.

Additionally, the Cultural Services Department is currently developing plans to re-open the Grand Theatre in October 2020 as a community hub that can support the local artist community and engage Kingston audiences. The re-opening of the venue will start by making the Baby Grand available for community rentals with a reduced audience capacity. In combination with the Baby Grand, the intent at this time is to provide access to the Grand Theatre main stage to

October 22, 2020

Page 9 of 10

local artists and arts groups on a limited basis for virtual programming to help foster the recovery of the local arts sector, including the performing arts.

The development of a targeted music strategy for Kingston has also been identified as a long-term goal and will be incorporated as part of the Cultural Services Department's future workplans as a way to strengthen collaboration between government, community and industry; to engage audiences; to generate economic growth, promote music tourism and education; and to remove municipal barriers to create a dynamic, sustainable and resilient local music sector.

As this strategic work is being developed, the YGK Music program provides an opportunity for the City to continue to support the local music sector at a community-level more proactively and to showcase and promote local musicians while also encouraging increased appreciation of Kingston's vibrant and diverse music community.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

None

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

The budget allocated to support the YGK Music pilot project was \$6,000. The annual budget needed to support the implementation of the expanded YGK Music programs remains \$6,000 that will include a higher percentage of artist fees to be paid (approximately \$4,500). The necessary funds will be included as part of the Cultural Services Department's 2021 operating budget. Tourism Kingston has also committed to continuing to provide in-kind support by profiling the curated playlists, along with the local musicians being featured, across various platforms they manage.

Contacts:

Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services 613-546-4291 extension 1357

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Danika Lochhead, Manager, Arts and Sector Development, Cultural Services

Jayson Duggan, Performing Arts Manager, Cultural Services

October 22, 2020

Page **10** of **10**

Natalie Lecomte-Elwood, Manager, Customer Experience, Communications & Customer Experience

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A Terms of Reference, YGK Music

Terms of Reference

YGK Music

YGK Music is an annual program designed to promote local music and musicians through curated playlists to be made available online on the City of Kingston website and Visit Kingston website, through the City's call waiting system, and through various City-owned properties, where appropriate. YGK Music will include annual open calls for submissions for two playlists including *Kingston Sounds* that will feature 20 tracks by Kingston musicians and help residents and visitors alike discover the strength and diversity of Kingston's music scene and *Music on Hold*, a program that brings local music to the City of Kingston's phone system.

YGK Music was established following the completion of a Local Music Pilot Project to promote Local Music and Musicians that ran from September 2019 to September 2020.

Purpose

- To promote local music and musicians using different formats and platforms available to the City of Kingston and its partners.
- To define local music as well as the mechanisms needed to solicit submissions.
- To identify criteria and a selection process for soliciting content.
- To describe how artists will be compensated and their music distributed.
- To increase Kingston's profile as a city with a thriving music scene and as a place that fosters local talent through professional development opportunities.

Administration

The City of Kingston, through the Cultural Services Department, will provide administrative oversight and coordination related to YGK Music to ensure integrity, efficiency and alignment with City policies and procedures.

The City of Kingston's Arts Advisory Committee (AAC) will be tasked with establishing a Local Music Working Group (LMWG) annually to support the successful delivery of YGK Music. The LMWG will be responsible for following the selection process as defined and for working with City staff to create the curated playlists for distribution.

The LMWG will also be responsible for helping to develop support material about the artists to be featured for the purposes of public education and artist promotion.

The Local Music Working Group

The LMWG will be comprised of five to seven members with a range of expertise and perspectives relevant to the local music scene, including musicians, presenters and broadcasters as well as people who play supporting roles related to the local music scene through production and promotion. The members of the LMWG will be nominated by the AAC and appointed by Council. The LMWG will be chaired by a member of the AAC and will include at least three members of the AAC, one of whom is a member of Council, and may include appointees who are not members of the AAC.

Defining "Local"

To be considered eligible for consideration as part of YGK Music, artists must maintain an official mailing address within a 50 km radius of Kingston and must already be promoting themselves as a Kingston-area/Canadian artist.

Selection Process

It is the responsibility of the LMWG to select the content to be included as part of the YGK Music playlists. The LMWG will be expected to adhere to the criteria as identified and follow the selection process as outlined.

Kingston Sounds

- Submissions will be solicited through a public call facilitated by the Cultural Services Department.
- The LMWG will be responsible for reviewing and listening to all submissions and selecting 20 musicians to be featured.
- The LMWG will be responsible for curating the Kingston Sounds playlist to be inclusive of contemporary (rock, pop, dance, electronic, hip-hop and indie music) and traditional (classical, jazz, blues, folk and world music) genres.
- The content will be representative of Kingston's cultural, musical and demographic diversity.

Music on Hold

- Submissions will be solicited through a public call facilitated by the Cultural Services Department.
- The LMWG will be responsible for reviewing and listening to all submissions and selecting 10 musicians to be featured.
- The LMWG will be responsible for curating the Music on Hold playlist to feature instrumental music, including jazz and classical.
- The content will be representative of Kingston's cultural, musical and demographic diversity.

Note: The content to be featured as part of YGK Music will not include any profanity and/or discriminatory/hateful language.

Artist Agreement and Recognition

The artists selected to be featured as part of YGK Music will be required to sign a Licensing Agreement for specific, limited use of their music for promotional purposes by the City of Kingston and its partners and will receive an honorarium. The City of Kingston and its partners will also endeavor to promote the artists and their music through appropriate channels that include, but are not limited to, websites and social media.

Distribution

YGK Music *Kingston Sounds* playlist will be made available by the City of Kingston and its partners online and/or in a form that can be shared through City-owned properties and/or other partner sites within Kingston. The *Music on Hold* playlist will be available through the City's call waiting system. The City and its partners will

promote all musicians featured on the playlists.

Implementation

Responsibility: The Cultural Services Department within the City of Kingston will provide oversight and ensure the successful delivery of YGK Music. Those responsibilities include working with the AAC and the LMWG, identifying project partners, overseeing the public call for submissions, communicating with the featured artists, managing the Licensing Agreement, supporting the distribution process and overseeing the promotion of YGK Music playlists.

Funding: Funding to support YGK Music will be provided through the Cultural Services Department’s annual operating budget, as approved by Council. The Cultural Services Department will also be responsible for seeking additional support from project partners to augment and expand the reach and impact of YGK Music.

Implementation Schedule

Month	Action
January	LMWG is nominated by the AAC and appointed through Council. Staff distribute public call for submissions.
March	Submissions are reviewed by the LMWG, artists are selected, Licensing Agreements are signed, artist payments are issued, and playlists are curated and compiled.
May-June	Playlists are launched and supported by a strategic communications campaign; playlists are made available for distribution online and through various City-owned properties and partners sites, where appropriate.
July-December	Playlists are live and promoted by the City and its partners.