Downtown Hamilton is the commercial, civic and cultural centre of the City and major regional destination. Its rich heritage is the result of multi-faceted development and multi-cultural occupation, each of which has left its mark. Located on unceded territories of the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabeg Nations, the once-village was settled in the early 1800’s at the intersection of King and James Streets, the former of which was an important indigenous travel route.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the village grew into one of Canada’s most important industrial cities, experiencing waves of immigration first from the United States, then England, Scotland and Ireland. These migrants left a rich legacy of heritage architecture, streetscapes and public spaces that define the Downtown to this day. Post-World War II, the area north of King Street became home to an influx of immigrants from Italy, then Portugal, who brought a vibrant culture of street life, cafés and micro-grocers that remain a vital part of James Street North’s character.

In the 1980’s and 90’s, with suburban expansion, the downtown saw little development, suffering an economic decline. In recent years however, the area has experienced a return of investment. Moreover, a new generation has embraced its heritage architecture and public space. Playing host to several festivals including the monthly Artcrawl, annual Supercrawl and Hamilton Fringe Festival, the Downtown Hamilton has earned a reputation for welcoming the arts, performance and an evolving street culture. A number of successful adaptive re-use developments have also been undertaken and completed in the area, housing new residents, businesses, cafes and restaurants.

The Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area (DHCIPA) that defines the site area for the purpose of this public art project is comprised of eight historic neighbourhoods and five Business Improvement Areas. It is classified as a walk’s paradise, very bikeable and having excellent transit connectivity. Local landmarks include City Hall, First Ontario Centre, Jackson Square, the Hamilton Farmer’s Market, Gore Park, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Liuna Station, Theatre Aquarius, and both Hamilton and West Harbour GO Stations.

As Downtown Hamilton continues to evolve, it is poised to witness a substantial amount of development in the next few years: high-density housing, new parks and a proposed LRT along King Street, to name a few. By way of this Call, the City invites artists to reflect on the stories of the area, its rich history and its communities for proposals of artwork that will continue to contribute to its vibrant public spaces.

For more local history and Hamilton Stories, please see the links below:
TRAFFIC SIGNAL BOX WRAPS PUBLIC ART PROJECT

City of Hamilton Tourism and Culture Division

APPENDIX B
SITE AND CONTEXT

THEATRE AQUARIUS

Image: theinletonline.com

KING WILLIAM CLOSED FOR SUPERCRAWL (2016)

GORE PARK

WEST HARBOUR GO STATION AND BEAD MAZE BY LAURA MAROTTA

City of Hamilton Tourism and Culture Division
TRAFFIC SIGNAL BOX WRAPS PUBLIC ART PROJECT

City of Hamilton Tourism and Culture Division

LIUNA TOWERS AT KING ST E AND HUGHSON ST N

Image: theinletonline.com

JOHN AND REBECCA PARK

Image: metrolinx.com

THE WILLIAM THOMAS STUDENT RENTALS

Image: thewilliamthomas.com

John and Rebecca Park

Image: metrolinx.com

HAMPTON LRT ON KING STE

Traffic Signal Box Wraps Public Art / Call for Artists / APPENDIX B Site & Context 3 OF 5