



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 26-134**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services
Date of Meeting: June 16, 2026
Subject: Update: The Tragically Hip Programming

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 5. Drive Inclusive Economic Growth

Goal: 5.7 Foster culture, history, education, arts and recreation (CHEAR).

Executive Summary:

Staff are bringing a final report to Council, for information only on planned community celebrations for the 10-year anniversary of The Tragically Hip's final concert. All events and programming are now publicly announced and will provide engaging opportunities for residents and visitors to come together to celebrate the legacy of the band, its music and the music community in Kingston today.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	
Jenna Morley, City Solicitor	Not required
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

The City, together with Tourism Kingston, the Kingston Music Office and the Downtown Kingston BIA, officially unveiled a series of Forever Hip events to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of The Tragically Hip's final concert that took place in Kingston on August 20, 2016. Formed in Kingston in 1984, The Tragically Hip is an essential part of the City's cultural identity, and their final concert became a defining cultural event for Kingston and for the country.

In addition to year-long installations and events, a multi-day celebration will take place August 20-22, 2026, and will bring residents and visitors together to honour the band's enduring legacy through music, arts and shared experiences. This is the final update report to Council on these plans, and additional information has been shared previously through [Report Number 26-046](#) and [Report Number 26-090](#).

All free to the public, the events and programming include:

- Thursday, August 20, 7 p.m. – 10 p.m. The City led annual, [Rockin' the Square live concert](#) sponsored by Empire Life, will lead into the weekend with a headline performance by Choir! Choir! Choir!, inviting everyone to participate in the ultimate Forever Hip singalong community event. Rockin' the Square will also feature a very special set of live performances by notable Kingston musicians including Miss Emily, The Abrams, and Kasador's Cam Wyatt and Thom Draper with more to be announced, as they pay tribute to the music of The Tragically Hip.
- Friday, August 21, 12 p.m. – 10 p.m. –The City invites fans and music enthusiasts alike to watch videos and clips up on the big screen that reflect on The Tragically Hip's ongoing legacy in Kingston, highlighting the lasting relationship between the band, the City and the local music community today. The Kingston Music Office will also be offering Music Walking Tours and hosting a Merch Market in the Square, showcasing the talents of Kingston's very own local musicians and makers, with every dollar going directly to local musicians. Later in the evening, starting at 8 p.m., there will be a free screening of *Long Time Running* (2017), the feature documentary film that follows The Tragically Hip's 2016 Man Machine Poem cross-Canada tour and final concert in Kingston, after the band's announcement that lead singer Gord Downie was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer.
- Saturday, August 22, 7 p.m. – City teams with community supports are ready and excited to host a [special event and concert viewing party](#) on August 22 where the CBC rebroadcast will be back up on the big screen in Springer Market Square, in the place where thousands gathered a decade ago to experience this incredible moment.

Other ongoing summer activations, events and programs include:

- A new, [City-curated, year-long exhibition](#), *Music from Miles Around* developed by the City's Heritage Services Department and sponsored by Empire Life, celebrates Kingston's

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music history, from early roots to The Tragically Hip and today's local scene. Visitors will learn about the people and places that helped write Kingston's music story, including Indigenous musical traditions, church choirs, military bands, early instrument makers, foundational institutions, radio stations, record shops, dance halls, live venues, local bands, educators, festivals and today's creative music community. The exhibition also features never-before-seen artifacts, personal stories and behind-the-scenes pieces connected to Kingston's most iconic band, The Tragically Hip. The exhibition is free and opens June 20.

- A new, temporary public art installation titled [Play Me Kingston](#), commissioned by Downtown Kingston BIA, that will feature 10 large-scale guitar sculptures designed by local and regional artists.
- Vinyl installations throughout downtown featuring the imagery of The Tragically Hip, and a new mural created by a local artist to be unveiled in July, coordinated and commissioned by Tourism Kingston.
- A three-week run from October 22 – November 8, 2026, at the Kingston Grand Theatre of a brand-new Canadian musical, *It's a Good Life if You Don't Weaken*, featuring songs from the iconic catalogue of The Tragically Hip. The show is presented and produced by the Thousand Islands Playhouse in partnership with David and Hannah Mirvish, and Michael Rubinoff, the originating producer of the most successful Canadian musical in history, *Come from Away*. Tickets are now [on sale](#).

All information on events, programming, activations, stories and more can be found on the Visit Kingston [Forever Hip webpage](#).

The planned programming and events have come together through strategic partnerships and shared planning between the City, Tourism Kingston, the Kingston Music Office and Downtown Kingston BIA, as well as many City departments. Kingston is a City with a strong and engaged arts and culture scene and community, and this anniversary and planned events are expected to result in a positive impact to Kingston's economy and tourism sectors through increased visitation and local spending, while also supporting broader community engagement and development goals, support for music, cultural heritage and the arts as a vital part of civic life.

Financial Considerations

There are no funding requests to the City in this report, and all funding to support the programming and events have come from existing, approved budgets. Staff work plans intentionally aligned existing programming and budget (for example, Rockin' the Square as an annual free concert series and the music exhibition) with the Forever Hip anniversary. Tourism Kingston is also supporting events and celebrations and the special event and live viewing party, in response to the CBC rebroadcast of The Tragically Hip's final concert on August 22, has received \$100,000 in support through the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). Other events and programming led by partner organizations has been funded through their respective budgets.

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Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Kevin Gibbs, Director, Heritage Services

Exhibits Attached:

None