



BUSINESS PLAN

For the Fiscal Year Ending
March 31, 2026

March 20, 2025

McMichael

CANADIAN ART COLLECTION D'ART CANADIEN

An Agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

FISCAL 2026 BUSINESS PLAN

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Note: This report was prepared in accordance with the Ontario Government Management Board Secretariat Guide to Developing Business Plans for Provincial Agencies, June 2016, revised September 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exhibitions and acquisitions:

- Two mainstage exhibitions:
 - ***Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*** will foreground the cultural continuities of life in Kinngait between 1950s and 1990, a period of dramatic societal change
 - A re-staging of ***Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael***
 - *Morrice* in Venice in summer 2025
- Three small exhibitions:
 - ***Derek Sullivan: Field Notes***, will be an exhibition of a new suite of drawings by Toronto artist Derek Sullivan
 - A selection of photographic works by **Rita Leistner** depicting tree planters in the interior of British Columbia
 - **Sandra Brewster**
- One medium size exhibition by **Stan Douglas**, a contemporary black artist based in Vancouver
- Hosting Iris Häussler as our **Artist in Residence** in the Tom Thomson shack
- Bonnie Devine book on her research for *Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees*, tentatively called **Land Acknowledgement**
- Touring exhibitions: *Early Days*, Meryl McMaster, Rajni Perera, *Ghosts of Canoe Lake*, Jon Sasaki, *People of the Watershed*
- Acquisitions: emphasis on major works by historic and contemporary women artists, and by artists of colour

Education and programming

- Focus on V.O.I.C.E.S., *Footprints for our Future*, *Leaders of Tomorrow*, and community accessible programs
- Focus on in-school and in-community outreach programs
- Consolidate existing and new partnerships with school boards and community organizations
- New Indigenous Program and Community Engagement lead will reinvigorate engagement with traditional teachers, arts and performers, bring perspective and experience to the department to support program development staff recruitment and training
- Grants received will enable development of French language programming to better engage the Francophone community

Development

- Fundraising for both potential capital renewal and annual needs:
 - Annual: shift in engagement from project and activity based to hybrid that includes broader support; multi-year, multi-event corporate support for both Art Toronto and the Moonlight Gala
 - Recruit new board members keen to engage their networks to help build a sustainable organization
 - Focus on securing minimum of \$50M in private sector support for capital renewal

Federal, provincial, and municipal government:

- Ongoing relations and confirmation of additional funding
- Leverage MOU with municipality for in kind opportunities, e.g., free space at the Pierre Berton Centre for meetings and/or gift shop, assistance with public consultation for the capital renewal

Capital renewal planning and infrastructure:

- Planning continues for potential capital renewal
- Ongoing repairs to essential equipment when necessary

Marketing and Communication

- Continue to produce marketing campaigns that specifically target local, national and international audiences; for local, focus on free Family Sundays, children's art classes, week-long camps
- With the full-service design agency, Bruce Mau Designs, the McMichael will undergo a comprehensive rebranding and website redevelopment

Human Resources

- Succession planning will be a significant focus, as senior staff members with long tenures are gradually retiring
- Our flexibility of working a combination of on-site and remote helps retain and recruit in areas that were previously a challenge
- Continued training in IDEA for all staff

Visitorship

- Continue to be open six days/week, allowing us to engage school tours and host corporate events on Mondays
- Visits to the gallery and grounds are enhanced by a wide range of programs such as free public tours, concerts, events and shopping and dining options to serve as many

audience segments as possible

- Removing barriers to entry through monthly free Family Sunday and programs specifically designed for seniors, those living with memory loss and children and youth with exceptionalities.

Finance

- Fiscal 2025's anticipated budget shortfall and cashflow issues did not occur thanks to robust fundraising, particularly the addition of a new end of year campaign that raised approximately \$500,000
- In addition, the McMichael was given permission to repurpose old unexpended capital funds of approximately \$630,000 to operations
- The result was a net surplus of \$345,000.

The McMichael bases its Fiscal 2026 planning on the following assumptions:

- Fundraising events will continue to be anchored by the Moonlight Gala in the spring and Art Toronto Opening Night in the fall, with a moderate increase in the amount expected to be raised coming off a robust amount in Fiscal 2025.
- Fundraising will focus on major gifts for capital renewal and ongoing operations.
- Liquidity would be maintained by timely cash inflows of both public and private funding, ensuring cash expenditures are fully funded.
- Tight management of expenses will still result in an anticipated budget shortfall of approximately \$1.2M.
- The addition of an end of year fundraising campaign will help to offset the shortfall, but there will need to be other measures taken to ensure we maintain positive cashflow.

FISCAL 2025: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Capital Renewal

Capital plans continue to progress, with advancement in design through consultation with staff by HPA. A series of essential analyses and consultations have taken place, including an Economic Impact Analysis, Indigenous consultation, site survey and Geotech/ hydrogeotech/ slope stability analysis, all of which are also integral to our ongoing building and landscape management.

We are working with the federal and provincial governments, along with donors to secure the necessary funding for the proposed capital renewal project. Approximately \$30 million has been committed towards the Capital Campaign in private fundraising.

Exhibitions

The representation of the diversity of Canadian art continues to be a hallmark of the Exhibition Program. From *Cobalt*, to *Moridge Kitenge Banza: Topographies*, to *From the Watershed: The Photographs of John MacFie*, *River of Dreams: Impressionism on the St. Lawrence*, and *Ghosts of Canoe Lake: New Work by Marcel Dzama*, our exhibitions reflect on and speak to one another about our various Canadian and Indigenous identities. Our main curatorial offering, *River of Dreams*, has been particularly enthusiastically received, though *Cobalt* was a surprise hit.

Touring exhibitions continue to be a major source of new revenue. They contributed approximately \$1.4M to the bottom line in Fiscal 2025. *Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael*, highlighting historic and contemporary works from our collection, toured to three different museums in the US and to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ), garnering the lion's share of fees at \$450,000. Along with *Early Days*, we toured *Meryl McMaster, Generations: the Sobey Family and Canadian Art; Rajni Perera; Tom Thomson; Ghosts of Canoe Lake: New Works by Marcel Dzama; Cobalt; and Jon Sasaki*. The McMichael produces more travelling exhibitions than other major galleries combined. Our tours bring art to galleries not only in major centres, but also to more remote communities in the north, serving all Ontarians. The publications accompanying the exhibitions are extremely well received by the galleries and visitors. Moreover, our touring in the US helps to promote Ontario broadly.

Finally, with the completion of the digitization of the Cape Dorset Archive, plans are underway for a significant exhibition based on the archive called *Worlds on Paper*.

Creative Learning and Programming

Free programming such as curatorial talks, exhibition tours and our particularly popular Family Sundays led the way for attendance. This trend is not surprising taking into consideration the rising cost of living in the post-pandemic world and the heightened interest in meaningful activities that can be attended with family and friends.

Creative Learning delivered on a wide variety of educational opportunities, from children's art classes and camps, to ticketed adult classes such as *Sip & Create*. The diversity of its offerings is matched only by its effort to ensure that the needs of the diversity of students are met through programs such as *Living with Art* offered to vulnerable youth and young adults living with various physical and cognitive exceptionalities.

The department works closely with the Toronto and York District School Boards; one such significant program is the Visual Outreach Initiative Creating Empowered Students, which has grown from six schools to eight at the TDSB.

In Fiscal 2025, wellness and mental health continued to strongly feature in our public programming. While we offer several children and adult classes directly addressing well-being, we strongly believe that our free access programming provides a unique opportunity for affordable yet meaningful social interactions, which relieve anxiety and isolation. The themes of these programs, which include Family Sundays, public tours and curatorial/artists' talks, actively address the environmental and social issues challenging our society, such as climate change, cultural exclusion etc.

Marketing and Presence

In Fiscal 2025, the McMichael's marketing and communications team continued to produce marketing campaigns that specifically target local, national and international audiences. At the local level, marketing campaigns focused on growing our base of local families who love programs like free Family Sundays, children's art classes, and week-long camps and encouraging them to invest in family memberships. Nationally, our campaigns highlighted our many traveling exhibitions that can be seen from coast to coast to coast, and international travelers will be cultivated through the unique selling proposition (USP) of our beautiful all-Canadian landscape and venue where visitors can see world-class exhibitions such as *River of Dreams: Impressionism on the St Lawrence*.

In Fiscal 2025, marketing campaigns continued to be primarily driven by the exhibition schedule. These exhibition-focused campaigns account for the majority of the marketing budget and are executed on a rolling basis. In addition, the marketing team also activated smaller campaigns and special projects in support of various initiatives or themes throughout

the year, including the Moonlight Gala in June, Art Toronto and fall colours in October, Canada's Bridal Show in June, and in March, an Education Programs Advertising Campaign – a targeted digital advertising campaign to remind teachers and educators about the McMichael's educational programs to push sales through the last few months of the school year

Financial and Organizational Sustainability

The Development department established a firm footing in Fiscal 2025, with a new Executive Director for the McMichael Canadian Art Foundation in charge and a renewed team. A fully staffed department, with clearly defined roles and increased strategic administrative support is ensuring senior front facing staff, board members, and volunteers are supported in cultivating and securing donations. The second year of hosting the VIP Opening Night at Art Toronto has been another success, while solid results for exhibition and education support have been achieved.

We have achieved solid results in all areas: visitation, retail sales, uptake in Creative Learning programs, and weddings and corporate events. However, we are still confronting a significant shortfall due to our inability to capitalize on larger events and other opportunities due to a lack of dedicated space.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: Response to Letter of Direction

In response to the Letter of Direction from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, here are highlighted some of our key strategic directions from the Fiscal 2026 business plan.

Please note that all performance measurements can be found in their own section of the Plan. Highlighted below are some specific relevant measures.

Innovative

1. *Simplify client/customer interactions*
3. *Improve client/customer satisfaction*

In Fiscal 2026 the McMichael will undergo a comprehensive website update funded by an external grant. This project will follow on a rebranding exercise and will lead to a functional, modern and fully accessible website that delivers an exceptional visitor experience, drives attendance, generates revenue from admissions and retail, and highlight and promote the art of Canada. The current website is outdated, difficult to navigate – particularly on a mobile device – and insufficient for our current needs. In Fiscal 2026 the backend will be overhauled to industry standard, and the front end will receive a refreshed design and user experience to help visitors find the information they’re looking for and be able to engage with the museum and collection. This website will deliver an exceptional online experience– one that will make it easy to discover and explore the art of Canada from anywhere in the world, as well as find information about visiting the gallery, register for events, view talks and videos, become a member and make a donation. The agency for this project will be acclaimed Canadian design firm Bruce Mau Designs, as awarded through a competitive procurement process with Supply Ontario

Performance Measure	2027-28 Projection	2026-27 Projection	2025 -26 Projection	2024-25 YTD	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result
Visitor Satisfaction (FY25 to date)	3400 Comments 98% positive	3400 Comments 98% positive	3,462 Comments 98.7% positive	612 comments 95.1% positive	3,300 Comments 98.5% positive	1,057 comments 97.6% positive

2. *Expand and optimize digital service offerings*

Through virtual webinars and tours, online curatorial and artist talks, and other digital experiences, we continue to make our permanent collection and special exhibitions accessible

to audiences around the world. Access to these online resources will be further enhanced with a new website. The recent upgrade to fiberoptic cable is also helping to ensure that our collection is more accessible through the e- museum to students, researchers and the general public. The completion of the digitization of the full Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Archive of 89,000 works on paper by Inuit artists, and the upload of the final images to the Iningait Ilagiit website (iningatilagiit.ca) is another an example of our investment in making vast swaths of our collection, which in this case is held in trust for the West Baffin Eskimo Co- operative (WBEC), accessible. That website, which is linked to from mcmichael.com, can be accessed in French, English and Inuktitut, and in a low-bandwidth format better suited to users in northern communities. The Creative Learning department continues to partner with Connected North, in partnership with Sysco, to bring virtual learning in-class for students in the far north. As the timeline for the capital build develops, these resources will be further enhanced and promoted to allow for a seamless transition to online and virtual offices.

Insights from the various digital programs and offerings developed over the last few years demonstrate that audiences across the country and around the world are interested in virtual offerings from the McMichael. In the year ahead, the first half of the year will be focused on bringing audiences on site.

The McMichael’s digital offerings beyond school programs include professionally taught art classes, virtual exhibition tours in English and French, and short videos about works of art and exhibitions with artists, guest curators, McMichael curators and the Executive Director and Chief Curator. Webinars with and about Canadian art with scholars, artists, writers and thinkers from many disciplines round out our long-form offerings. The popularity of and engagement with these programs has indicated that audiences are eager for this type of experience and find it a fulfilling and educational way to connect with the McMichael. The McMichael continues to post digital content including short and longform videos, interviews, webinars, programs, activities and events on the website and social media. Success will be measured by online views, engagement, attendance and registration for virtual classes and events and related revenue generation.

Performance Measure	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Projection	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
Numbers of followers across social media platforms (FY25 to date)	Facebook:	YTD Facebook:	Facebook:	Facebook:	Facebook:	Facebook:
	41,000	37,171	36,500	36,214	31,723	30,617
	Instagram:	Instagram:	Instagram:	Instagram:	Instagram:	Instagram:
	44,000	32,421	30,000	30,285	26,049	23,780
		Twitter:	Twitter:	Twitter:	Twitter:	Twitter:
		26,108	26,000	26,099	26,144	25,897

	Twitter: 27,000					
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4. Share data with Supply Ontario, when requested, regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making

We will continue to work closely with Supply Ontario; in particular, our marketing and communications procurement has been brought into line with Supply Ontario regulations. Our most recent and significant procurement of a marketing firm for the brand refresh was coordinated through Supply Ontario.

Sustainable

5. Strengthen public service delivery by optimizing organizational capacity and directing existing resources to priority areas.

Overall, the organization operates very tightly in terms of staff resources. There are no redundancies, which can make coverage quite challenging even for vacation time. There is limited ability, therefore, to direct existing resources to priority areas in the sense that we cannot afford to reallocate anyone. As such, each department carefully plans to ensure they are optimizing within the constraints of the current staffing available.

For example, each year the Creative Learning and Programs department continues to successfully process thousands of visitations within our school programs, children and youth art classes and camps (Summer, Winter and March Break), adult art and wellness classes and workshops. Another important number of visitors attend our curatorial talks, concerts, community events, including Family Sundays and participate in various community art competitions. This impressive programming repertoire is scrupulously evaluated and reviewed each year through the detailed Creative Learning and Programs reports.

In Fiscal 2026, we plan to continue these successful initiatives and work hard on making them yet more relevant to our various audiences, financially viable and supported by community partnerships, and out-of-box collaborations.

*6. Use public resources efficiently and a) Operate within agency's financial allocations.
b) Prudently and responsibly manage workforce size. Where an agency requires a material increase in workforce size, the agency must provide the Minister with an HR plan for approval that provides the rationale based on government priorities and/or agency mandate.*

As the budget demonstrates, we seek to optimize revenue from all sources in order to ensure we have sufficient staffing and resources to fulfill our mandate. While we have shifted a few roles from part-time to full-time, we have ensured that the number of FTEs remains close to the same (83.8 in FY 2025, and 85 in FY 2026). There will be no material increase in workforce size.

Accountable

7. Develop and report on outcome-focused performance measures to effectively monitor and measure performance

Outcome-focused performance measures are embedded in our annual Business Plan and reported on annually.

Performance Measure	2027-28 Target	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Projection	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result
Total Attendance (includes virtual programs attendance)	100,000	100,000	100,000	130,000	122,600	129,823
Virtual Programs Attendance	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	3,000	2,096

8. Protect individual, business or organization data by actively managing data and cybersecurity and reporting Artificial Intelligence uses

We have both improved cybersecurity training and enhanced cybersecurity built into our network. AI is not yet an issue for the organization, but will be a focus for training and the development of best practices in Fiscal 2026.

9. Report all high risks including effective mitigation plans

We continue to use the risk register tool provided to us by the Ministry, which is updated quarterly. We also proactively identify risks that need to be added to the register; in particular, for capital expansion, we have conducted a slope stability assessment and consulted with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority about the need for retaining walls.

10. Align hybrid work policies with the OPS and identify and assess office optimization opportunities to reduce office realty footprint and find cost reductions. a) Collaborate with MOI to identify office space opportunities b) Align with the MBC Realty Directive and the OPS

Modern Office Space (OMOS) Standards

We maintain a hybrid work policy that is working effectively for the McMichael, particularly in light of our difficult location and the lack of public transit. Reduction of office reality footprint or office space opportunities is not relevant to us as a stand-alone gallery that could not be relocated; nor are we an office space per se.

11. Develop and encourage diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace

Our IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) Committee continues to engage with the different teams at the gallery to look for opportunities for improvements in these areas and ensure all voices are heard.

In Fiscal 2026 it will be mandated that all staff and volunteers be retrained on IDEA procedures for reporting any area where the above was not evident. In addition, the well-received Snippets on-line training program will launch again with a focus on Leadership EQ Learning Snippets that will be shared with all members of management. A new focus for HR in Fiscal 2026 will be in the recruitment of young adults who were participants in the McMichael accessible programs.

12. Increase non-government, non-fare, non-fee revenue by a percentage which will be determined by the Minister in consultation with the Chair

We have worked diligently to increase our earned revenue through increased gift shop sales, wedding and corporate rentals, and most particularly, our touring exhibition program. In Fiscal 2026, we will be challenged by the saturation of markets in Canada, and will be seeking new touring opportunities internationally.

Specific to the McMichael

1. Continue to implement the outstanding recommendations of the 2020 Value-for- Money Audit: Museums and Galleries, conducted by the Auditor General of Ontario

We continue to make progress on the recommendations of the 2020 Value-For-Money Audit, and report quarterly to the Ministry. Another progress report will be due to the Office of the Auditor General in fall of 2025.

2. *Continue to showcase Canadian and Indigenous art and create more accessible ways to experience the museum's collection in the gallery and through touring exhibitions*

Our curatorial plans for the coming year and beyond rely on the same recipe for success that has guided us over the past half-decade: staying true to our roots with projects like our present exhibitions *Jackson's Wars* and *River of Dreams*, honouring the Group of Seven and their contemporaries – while also presenting Indigenous artists and contemporary artists, particularly women and artists of colour, as we strive to diversify the story we tell about Canada, and about Canadian art.

The following goals reflect this direction:

- Welcome around 16,000 students to the McMichael's site or engage them in virtual or Art2Go in-school outreach to discover curricular connection with the Art of Canada
 - 760 children benefiting from children public art classes and camps
 - Over 9000 participants in free Family Sundays
 - Two mainstage exhibitions: *Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*, and a remounting of *Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael*
 - One co-production with the National Gallery and Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, *Morrice in Venice*
 - Three small single-artist exhibitions
 - One artist in residence
 - Two major publications for *Worlds on Paper* and Bonnie Devine's mural project *Water to Water*, and one smaller publication for *Derek Sullivan: Field Notes*.
 - Six touring exhibitions
 - 15 virtual curatorial and artist talks and #McMichael at Home videos on Canadian art featuring artists, writers, curators, and scholars
 - 15 in-person curatorial, artist talks and knowledge sharing events
 - A selection of relevant acquisitions made to the permanent collection of works of art with significance to all Canadians
 - Continue to promote Iningit Ilagiit broadly to Canadians to provide them with the opportunity to become immersed in the artistic legacy of Cape Dorset
 - More than 250 attendees of online webinars
 - More than 5000 participants in virtual and in-person public gallery tours
 - More than 800 participants in virtual and in-person adult art and wellness classes
3. *Continue to prioritize financial sustainability including alternative and innovative strategies that increase self-generated revenue.*

As we plan and mount our exhibitions at McMichael, we are also hard at work exporting our content to venues across Canada, and internationally, resourcing our exceptional exhibitions

and publications through strategic fundraising, and by sharing them widely with new audiences. The impact of our institution across Canada and beyond has reached new heights, as we find audiences far from our home base in Kleinburg. But touring also allows us to resource these projects and publications to be their best.

Our goal is to support the McMichael in becoming an increasingly self-sufficient organization, one with long-term financial stability to ensure public access to Canadian art and education for future generations. A healthy operating budget will position the McMichael as a cultural and community hub in Vaughan, contributing significantly to the annual visitor spend in the region and a haven for all Ontarians seeking a respite on our beautiful woodland site.

4. *Proposals with a financial impact should demonstrate cost-benefit considerations and alignment with desired performance goals.*

An analysis was conducted for our participation as the organizer and beneficiary of the opening night of Art Toronto. The results demonstrated that the investment was warranted; moreover, our presence at Art Toronto was of great importance to our ongoing engagement with the Toronto philanthropic community. Any new initiatives will be subjected to similar analysis and scrutiny by the Board of Trustees.

5. *Collaborate with the ministry to prioritize and address critical capital infrastructure needs focusing on risk mitigation and long-term sustainability*

We continue to be truly appreciative of the Ministry's support for capital repair and rehabilitation. This support has ensured that the gallery can continue to operate, despite the aging infrastructure. Projects such as the building envelope repair, boiler replacement, HVAC upgrades, IT network renewal, and security camera systems renewal have been critical to our ability to continue to welcome the public in an environment that protects both the art and the visitors.

6. *Evaluate all current and projected revenue sources, including grants and gifts, to ensure agency operations, capital projects and philanthropic decisions achieve a viable and sustainable balance of capital and operating funding*

In preparation for a potential capital campaign, the department will continue to focus on developing staff in their current roles with a focus on deliverables; streamlining processes; exploring new and innovative ideas; and, improving collaboration both internal and external to the department. Prospect cultivation and engagement will be a key priority to ensure we are building towards sufficient funding to not only support a capital expansion, but increased

support for programing and curatorial activities going forward.

Development activity needs to be strategic, with long-term thinking and investment. For that reason, much of the key activity remains consistent year over year with a few key adjustments as needed. This year, a priority focus will be the shift in engagement from project and activity based to a more hybrid model of the former along with encouraging support for the broader McMichael gallery. This will be accomplished through targeted approaches in the annual fund and aligned to key events, like Art Toronto. Also, we will be working diligently to increase the size of the Foundation board with key appointments of individuals interested in engaging their personal networks to support the McMichael at levels consistent with undertaking a comprehensive campaign.

MANDATE, MISSION AND VISION

McMichael Legislative Mandate

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is an agency of the Province of Ontario, an operational enterprise agency of the Government of Ontario. The governing legislation is the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act, R.S.O. 1990, C.M. 4 as amended from time to time. The most recent amendment of the Act received Royal Assent in 2023.

In the language of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011, the acquisition and exhibition mandate of the McMichael is to:

- Acquire and preserve art works, objects and related documentary materials for the collection, by or about artists who have made or are contributing to the development of Canadian art, with a focus on the Group of Seven and their contemporaries and on the Indigenous peoples of Canada; and,
- Exhibit art works, objects and documentary materials, including but not limited to the collection.

The objectives of the McMichael are to:

- Acquire works of art, objects and documentary material for the collection
- Preserve and exhibit the collection
- Conduct research on and provide documentation for the collection
- Stimulate interest in the collection
- Conduct activities to enhance and complement the collection
- Hold, maintain and use the land described in the Schedule to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act

A Board of Trustees, appointed according to the Act, oversees the affairs of the corporation. The Board reports to the Legislature through the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Culture and Tourism Industries.

Mission

To interpret and promote Canadian and Indigenous art to attract local, national and international audiences.

Vision

To be recognized as an extraordinary place to visit and explore Canadian culture and identity.

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is Canada's only museum devoted to the art of

Canada, in all its manifestations. Founded by Robert and Signe McMichael in 1966, we house the premier collection of the Group of Seven and their contemporaries, with rich holdings by great Canadian artists up to the present day. From the outset, the McMichael has held a leading collection of First Nations and Inuit art, and is also the repository of approximately 90,000 Inuit drawings from the collections of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The McMichael continues to be guided by the Strategic Plan of 2012 and the Artistic Vision of 2016. The strategic objectives from the 2012 Strategic Plan and the Artistic Vision of 2016 are:

1. Promote the art of Canada
2. Consistently deliver an engaging and exceptional visitor experience
3. Become a centre for knowledge creation and sharing
4. Build a sustainable organization delivering outstanding performance
5. Improve organizational capacity and performance

Plans in response to these objectives for Fiscal 2026 are described below.

Six key themes continue to animate our plans for Fiscal 2026 and beyond, which are highlighted in callouts throughout the main body of the plan:

Sustainability

IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility)

Indigeneity

Retention and Succession Planning

Capital Renewal

Partnerships

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT & FUTURE PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

1. Promote our brand as the home to the art of Canada

Our curatorial plans for the coming year and beyond rely on the same recipe for success that has guided us over the past half-decade: staying true to our roots with projects like our present exhibitions *Jackson's Wars* and *River of Dreams*, honouring the Group of Seven and their contemporaries – while also presenting Indigenous artists and contemporary artists, particularly women and artists of colour, as we strive to diversify the story we tell about Canada, and about Canadian art.

INDIGENEITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Our two 'main stage' offerings for Fiscal 2026 are celebrations of the McMichael's Indigenous art collections.

The first, led by Associate Curator, Indigenous Art and Culture Emily Henderson, will be devoted to the drawings from the Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Archive, which McMichael has held in trust for the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op for more than thirty years. Until now, our knowledge of Inuit graphic art in Kinngait (Cape Dorset) has depended on the testimony of the famous prints made at the Kinngait Studio, long sold across Canada and around the world. With the recent digitization and online publication of this collection of unique drawings, we can see a half century of Inuit inspiration unmediated. Opening in March 2025, ***Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*** will foreground the cultural continuities of life in Kinngait between 1950s and 1990, a period of dramatic societal change. The exhibition is divided into distinct thematic groupings, including early works on paper, artists at work, portraits, family traditions, community life, encounters with outsiders, life on the land, and buildings and infrastructure. New careers will be discovered, and the oeuvres of legendary artists, including Kenojuak Ashevak, can be understood in greater depth. We will be publishing a major catalogue with this show, with 15 Inuit writers and reproducing all works in the show. Accompanying *Worlds on Paper* will be an exhibition in Gallery 9 of contemporary masterworks by Kinngait luminaries, borrowed from private collections.

Our second 'main stage' offering for Fiscal 2026, running from late September through to January 2025, is a re-staging of ***Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael***. This exhibition's first showing was during COVID (November 2020 – August 2021), and due to capacity limits and mandated gallery closures, was seen by very few. Putting this beautiful show back on at McMichael generates significant cost savings, eases pressure on our registration and conservation teams, and offers flexibility in terms of end-date. It will no doubt spur sales of the award-winning book that accompanies this project, which was completed in November 2023.

To honour the groundbreaking research of Sandra Paikowsky in her recent publication ***James Wilson Morrice: Paintings and Drawings of Venice***, in summer 2025 the McMichael will present an exhibition of Morrice's canvases, pochades, and drawings of Venice, the place that provoked some of his most sensuous and consummate creations. This exhibition will be a co-production with the National Gallery of Canada and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, both of whom are contributing major loans. Under the direction of revered scholar Paikowsky, the exhibition will chronicle Morrice's devoted engagement with Venice as a site for artistic experimentation. The exhibition will be organized as a tour through the locations that Morrice painted, offering viewers the chance to see the city through his eyes and experience how he made an ancient city a modern subject. Furthermore, the exhibition will situate Morrice's Venetian paintings and sketches within the context of his international circle of artist friends who visited the city, including James McNeill Whistler. The opening of the exhibition will coincide with an Italian-themed Moonlight Gala. *chef's kiss*

We will be presenting a medium sized exhibition of work by Stan Douglas, a black artist currently based in Vancouver. This exhibition will gather two bodies of work, including his most recent suite of large scale photographs titled *The Enemy of All Mankind*: nine scenes from John Gay's *Polly*. John Gay (1685-1732) was an English poet and dramatist whose play explored the adventures and misadventures of his British heroine in the Caribbean. Alongside this, the gallery will be showing *Klatsassin*, a suite of photographs, which immortalized the disturbing tale of the Chilcotin 1864 uprising of Indigenous people in the British Columbian interior. These tales of colonialism will resonate together in a timely and provocative display.

In Gallery 14, we are preparing three small single-artist exhibitions for Fiscal 2026. The first, ***Derek Sullivan: Field Notes***, will be an exhibition of a new suite of drawings by Toronto artist Derek Sullivan who, over the course of twelve months, made regular pilgrimages to the site of a land work by Richard Serra called *Shift* (1970) located in a farmer's field in nearby King City. Sullivan's notes and photographs from these visits resulted in a series of drawings called Field Publications. Two of these drawings were acquired by the McMichael; six were acquired by the AGO and will be loaned to the McMichael show, along with the balance of the suite. In the two McMichael drawings, Sullivan's own shadow is visible, holding a phone to capture the snapshots that informed the drawings. Keeping company with the silhouetted figures are rocks, plant specimens, twigs, and a feather. We are making a small publication to accompany this exhibition and have secured an interview with the legendary American artist Joan Jonas, who took part in the installation of *Shift* with Serra.

The second exhibition scheduled for Gallery 14 in Fiscal 2026 is a selection of photographic works by **Rita Leistner** depicting tree planters in the interior of British Columbia. Leistner captured these portraits by spending months alongside the tree planters in remote locations,

under physically gruelling circumstances, with the help of an athletic lighting assistant. The tree planters appear like mythical giants in otherworldly landscape. The precision of each tableau's composition is at odds with the active and unpredictable subjects and rough terrain, giving the works a surreal quality. These images of young tree planters trying to repair landscapes devastated by clear-cutting will be a poignant prelude to *Early Days*, with which it will coincide.

We have invited **Sandra Brewster** to take over Gallery 2 in April of 2025. Brewster is a Toronto-based artist whose work employs a range of media to engage concepts of movement that express an internal relationship with identity. In her work for the McMichael, she will use the river as a metaphor for movement and the uncertainties inherent to displacement. Over the course of several weeks and with the assistance of a mentee, Brewster will use drawing and gel transfer techniques to fill the gallery with imagery depicting Essequibo River in Guyana and the fish that are native to it. Moving in one direction along each wall, the piece will immerse viewers in what feels like a calm rush from one place to another place. This project is a continuation of an installation piece called DENSE, first made for the Power Plant in 2022.

In summer 2025 we are planning to host Iris Häussler as our **Artist in Residence** in the Tom Thomson shack. Häussler is a Toronto-based artist best known for her unsettling, immersive installations that revolve around fictitious personae and their artistic legacies. Detailed, historically researched biographies of invented characters build the basis from which she creates the material evidence of their obsessive lives and works. Her recent work, *Seventeen Grams of Longing*, investigates the human fascination with bird migration, using installation, collage, and glass engravings to tell the story of German twins who grew up unaware of the other's existence, an ocean between them, yet enacted their fixation on birds in similar ways. We are excited to see what Häussler will make of the setting at the McMichael and the unique legacy of the Tom Thomson shack.

INDIGENEITY

In Fiscal 2026, Anishinaabe artist, writer and scholar Bonnie Devine will begin working with the Toronto photographer Robert Burley on a book capturing much of the research that underpinned her mural project *Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees*. The working title of the publication is **Land Acknowledgment**. It will explore the history of the Carrying Place Trail, and the region's prior inhabitation by the Wendat people, and include a photo essay by Burley on the contemporary reality of this storied waterway as it wends its way north from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay, right below the wooded bluff on which the McMichael stands. This project reflects the deep history of the land beneath our feet and signals our institution's respect for its original stewards.

We will also be continuing our project of bringing diverse Indigenous stakeholders to visit the McMichael collections and deepen our understanding of the Indigenous belongings that we

hold. This initiative began last year with a visit with William Wasden Jr, a Kwakwaka'wakw knowledge keeper who came from his home in Alert Bay, BC, to advise us on a totem pole and a house post that we hold at the gallery, as well as the host of masks and other cultural belongings that have been in our collection since the days of our founders. This work will be undertaken with the help of the Appleton Initiative, which has made a three-year commitment to funding Reconciliation projects at the McMichael.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

As we plan and mount our exhibitions at McMichael, we are also hard at work exporting our content to venues across Canada, and internationally, resourcing our exceptional exhibitions and publications through strategic fundraising, and by sharing them widely with new audiences. The impact of our institution across Canada and beyond has reached new heights, as we find audiences far from our home base in Kleinburg. But touring also allows us to resource these projects and publications to be their best. The financial impact of this is worth a closer look.

Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael, highlighting historic and contemporary works from our collection, will reach its final touring presentation at the Musee national des beaux-arts du Quebec this fall, with an extended run through to April 2025. This tour, which began at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona in fall 2023 is expected to yield profits in excess of \$500,000.

Meryl McMaster: Bloodline, co-organized with ReMai Modern in Saskatoon, has just opened at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. In F2026 it is booked in Victoria, BC and Hamilton, ON; we are in discussions with the Vancouver Museum and the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa for further touring presentations. A conservative estimate of the revenue generated by this tour is \$215,000.

In Fiscal 2025, *Generations: the Sobey Family and Canadian Art* will be closing its final touring presentation at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Six presentations over the course of the tour have yielded \$360,000 in rental fees. Sobeys' support for crating and shipping the show has amounted to approximately \$560,000. Sobeys' shipping and insurance support has served as an excellent value proposition for presenting venues. As well, the Sobey Art Foundation provided free admission for all Nova Scotians while the show is at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia this fall and winter, which dramatically increased attendance, and therefore our institution's reach in this region.

Rajni Perera: Futures continues will be opening its fifth presentation at the end of F2025 at the Surrey Art Gallery in British Columbia from January to April 2025. From there, it will carry on to two more venues in Ontario in F2026 – the JNAAG in Sarnia and the Doris McCarthy Art Gallery

at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. There have been seven presentations in total; each venue pays a rental fee of \$15,000.

After two presentations in F2025, we are in discussions to place *Ghosts of Canoe Lake: New Work by Marcel Dzama* at a third stop in F2026, the Confederation Art Centre in Charlottetown. The cost-share with Contemporary Calgary yielded approximately \$40,000, and each rental venue pays a rental fee of \$15,000.

The seventh touring presentations of *Jon Sasaki: Homage* will take place in Fiscal 2026; it will be presented at Sasaki's alma mater, Mount Allison University, at the Owens Art Gallery in Sackville, NB. Each presentation yields \$5,000.

The response to a tour of *People of the Watershed* from small museums in the near and far north of Ontario was extraordinary. We have six venues currently booked to present that show, three of which will occur in F2026. While the revenue generated is small, given the scale of presentation venues, we expect that the impact on audiences for whom the material is most meaningful will be great.

We will be seeking to tour *Worlds on Paper* and are exploring potential venues in Canada, the USA and Europe. As well, we are in discussion with the American exhibition brokerage firm that struck the 2023-2024 US tour about sending a smaller version of *Early Days* to Europe in 2026. We are in discussion with the same firm about touring a Group of Seven masterworks show. This show will be flexible in size to be deployed in presenting venues of differing scales.

IDEA

Finally, we will be continuing to fund and acquire work for the collection that allow us to tell a more diverse story of Canadian art. Emphasis is being placed on acquiring major works by historic contemporary women artists, and by artists of colour. Our core holdings reflect the mores of the Canadian art world a half century ago, but we must keep step with the present. Recent acquisitions of artists like Camille Turner, Native Art Department International, Sandra Brewster, Shuvina Ashoona, Annie Pootoogook, Barry Ace, and others have done just that, but we must go further. With our teeming school groups and our very popular Family Sundays we attract our most diverse audiences, and these works have a critical role to play in making the McMichael a welcoming space that represents all Canadians.

Outcomes

We continue to represent historic Canadian artists who are core to our collection at the McMichael, such as the members of the Group of Seven, but we provide an expanded context for those legacies by contextualizing them in meaningful dialogue with historical and contemporary art by women, and by artists of colour, in order to better reflect the diversity of Canadian art and culture.

The now robust touring program is fulfilling our plan to bring new audiences to appreciate the McMichael's collection across the country and abroad.

Acquisition of major works by historic and contemporary women artists, and by artists of colour, enables us to tell a more diverse story of Canadian art and ensure the McMichael is a welcoming space that represents all Canadians.

2. [Visitor Experience](#)

DIGITAL DELIVERY & CUSTOMER SERVICE In Fiscal 2026 the McMichael will undergo a comprehensive website update funded by an external grant. This project will follow on a rebranding exercise and will lead to a functional, modern and fully accessible website that delivers an exceptional visitor experience, drives attendance, generates revenue from admissions and retail, and highlight and promote the art of Canada. The current website is outdated, difficult to navigate – particularly on a mobile device – and insufficient for our current needs. In Fiscal 2026 the backend will be overhauled to industry standard, and the front end will receive a refreshed design and user experience to help visitors find the information they're looking for and be able to engage with the museum and collection. This website will deliver an exceptional online experience– one that will make it easy to discover and explore the art of Canada from anywhere in the world, as well as find information about visiting the gallery, register for events, view talks and videos, become a member and make a donation. The agency for this project will be acclaimed Canadian design firm Bruce Mau Designs, as awarded through a competitive procurement process with Supply Ontario.

IDEA

Through virtual webinars and tours, online curatorial and artist talks, and other digital experiences, we continue to make our permanent collection and special exhibitions accessible to audiences around the world. Access to these online resources will be further enhanced with a new website. The recent upgrade to fiberoptic cable is also helping to ensure that our collection is more accessible through the e- museum to students, researchers and the general public. The completion of the digitization of the full Kinngait

(Cape Dorset) Archive of 89,000 works on paper by Inuit artists, and the upload of the final images to the Iningait Ilagiit website (iningaitilagiit.ca) is another an example of our investment in making vast swaths of our collection, which in this case is held in trust for the West Baffin Eskimo Co- operative (WBEC), accessible. That website, which is linked to from mcmichael.com, can be accessed in French, English and Inuktitut, and in a low-bandwidth format better suited to users in northern communities. The Creative Learning department continues to partner with Connected North, in partnership with Sysco, to bring virtual learning in-class for students in the far north. As the timeline for the capital build develops, these resources will be further enhanced and promoted to allow for a seamless transition to online and virtual offices

Transportation

FINANCIAL & NATURAL SUSTAINABILITY

If the McMichael is to achieve sustained growth in visitorship, including broadening our core demographic, we need to remain focused on keeping the site accessible by offering a range of transportation options. With the pressure of inflation on gas prices, our net zero goals, and the increasing numbers of younger people and seniors who do not drive, the gallery must find a convenient, low-cost mass transportation solution to bring visitors to the McMichael, which is effectively inaccessible by subway and bus. We continue to collaborate with other attractions in the region to address the issue through participation in various forums and partnerships and through advocacy. If we are to achieve a path towards net zero, the issue of transportation must be addressed, particularly following a capital build. In Fiscal 2024 the McMichael received private support to run an Art Bus from downtown Toronto (St George Station) with a stop in Vaughan (VMC Station) on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from June through October. In Fiscal 2026 we will again seek support for this offering and will continue to work with the Vaughan Department of Economic Development and the Kleinburg BIA to explore and advocate for additional public and private transportation options.

3. Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Sustainability, Transparency & Accountability

Each year, the Creative Learning & Programs department continues to successfully process thousands of visitations within our school programs, children and youth art classes and camps (Summer, Winter & March Break), adult art and wellness classes and workshops. Another important number of visitors attend our curatorial talks, concerts, community events, including Family Sundays and participate in various community art competitions. This impressive programming repertoire is scrupulously evaluated and reviewed each year through the detailed Creative Learning and Programs reports.

In Fiscal 2026, we plan to continue these successful initiatives and work hard on making them yet more relevant to our various audiences, financially viable and supported by community partnerships, and out-of-box collaborations.

Connect, Create and Collaborate

PARTNERSHIPS

During Fiscal 2025, Creative Learning & Programs department had an opportunity to consolidate some of the existing partnerships with local school boards (York Region District School Board & Toronto District School Board) and various community organizations (Autism Ontario, Alzheimer's Society of York, Vaughan Libraries, Toronto Region Conservation Authorities). We also successfully forged several new partnerships and programming collaborations (Toronto District Catholic School Board, Toronto's Museum of Contemporary Art). The further development of these partnerships and collaborations is an essential goal of our department's activities in Fiscal 2026.

- *Indigenous Community*

INDIGENEITY

While the McMichael is actively presenting historical and contemporary Indigenous artists, we feel that a comprehensive strategy is needed to secure more Indigenous members on our educational team and further engage local Indigenous communities as partners and visitors. Working closely with Elder Shelley Charles, our Education Advisor, Emily Laurent Henderson, Associate Curator of Indigenous Art & Culture and new Indigenous Program and Community Engagement Lead, we feel that we have a strong team to strategize and achieve this objective.

The new Indigenous Program and Community Engagement Lead, made possible thanks to a TD Bank grant, is an excellent addition to our team.

The position's main tasks will be to revigorated the department's engagement with traditional teachers, artists and performers within local Indigenous organizations and communities and identify possible collaboration and partnership opportunities (Mississauga of the Credit, Six Nations of the Grand River Haudenosaunee community, various Chippewas nations such as Rama, Georgina Island etc. and Indigenous urban organizations).

Moreover, an Indigenous voice within the department will bring an Indigenous perspective and experience to the decision-making table. This voice will offer an important support to the program development, staff recruitment and training. We also hope that the Lead will contribute to the development and implementation of the cultural sensitivity training for all the McMicheal' staff.

The departmental efforts to reach Indigenous communities will be greatly supported by the upcoming exhibition schedule.

In Fiscal 2026, *Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*, a major exhibition curated by Emily Laurent Henderson, will offer a perfect opportunity to connect with West Baffin, the community already deeply invested in the McMichael. Taking advantage of our partnership with *Connected North* program, we plan to offer live streaming curatorial tours from the exhibition to Kinngait community members.

Similarly, we have high expectations from the returning *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael* show that will allow us to target several Indigenous local communities. Under the guidance of the Lead, in Fiscal 2026 will also plan to revitalize the *Leaders of Tomorrow* program, which offers an intercultural engagement to Indigenous and no-Indigenous students from local school boards and students living on the reserves.

- *School Community*

In Fiscal 2025, our school programs attendance was strong despite continuing bussing challenges experienced by schools. We were able to reach and accommodate more students from underserved neighborhoods and created some exciting new school programs, such as the new *Signature Studio: Place Topographies* developed in collaboration with Congolese-born artist Moidja Kitenge Banza.

Moreover, through working closely with local school boards such as York Region District School Board, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board and Canadian Independent Schools organization, in Fiscal 2025, the McMichael made a significant progress in understanding current needs and challenges faced by Ontario schools and promptly responded with strategies to make the programs more relevant and accessible to students of these boards.

Inclusion, mental health issues and equal access are some of the most acute challenges faced by students today. By working closely with school Inclusivity and Equity committees, our team developed programming engaging conversations around climate change anxiety, responsible use of natural resources and respect for the diversity of experiences and opinions. Several of these programs were created with high school audiences in mind and were offered at no cost or discounted pricing to schools within the Toronto's marginalized neighborhoods.

In Fiscal 2026, we plan to continue these endeavors and collaborate with the regional school boards on specific programming initiatives.

The upcoming exhibition programming includes two major exhibitions: *Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait* and *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael*, which will strongly support Indigenous and Inuit content programming, always of high interest to schools. It will also provide an opportunity to work closely with the TDSB Urban Indigenous Education Centre and Indigenous Education, Equity and Community Relations Committee of the TDCSB, as well as regional schools with a high ratio of Indigenous students. Offering another session of the *Leaders of Tomorrow*, our intercultural programming targeting grade 7 & 8 students will greatly support these efforts.

- *Francophone Community*

IDEA

In Fiscal 2025, the McMichael successfully applied to three French-Language grants: CAN-On One Time, CAN-ON Multi-year grants and a Community Cultural Action Fund grant to revitalize our French-Language programming, recruit new staff including French Program & Community Engagement Coordinator and further engage francophone community. This new coordination position will play an important part in strategizing French Language services within the McMichael and coordination of the gallery efforts in bringing new francophone visitations.

Thanks to this additional funding, during the previous fiscal, we have already successfully delivered five Bilingual Family Sundays and several adult curatorial lecture, public tours and popular *Matinées francophones* in French.

While our admission-free Family Sundays continue to be one of our most successful community initiatives, we feel that this opportunity should be more accessible for the French Language community. Several newcomers attending these events, come from the Middle East or African countries, in which French Language is well-established. The programming that we offered with the artists from the African Diaspora was very popular with our audience.

The French Program and Community Engagement Coordinator position will provide a great support in coordination of these bilingual family programs and other francophone community programming.

The position will also allow us to consolidate the French Language training across the gallery by offering a consistent French-Language training across the organization and help with establishing of programming collaborations with francophone community groups and organizations in Ontario.

- *Accessible Community*

IDEA In Fiscal 2026, the department plan to continue to deliver current accessible programming such as newly developed ARTWELL program for people leaving with dementia and our successful *Living with Art* and *Connect, Create, collaborate* for young adults and children living with exceptionalities.

Thanks to a CIBC grant and subsidy from partnering organizations, all the accessible programs are available to our visitors at no cost. Therefore, in Fiscal 2026 it will be essential to work very closely with our partners to develop a sustainable funding strategy engaging provincial and/or corporate grants. We also will continue to build our ticketed wellness classes such as yoga and meditation, art and nature programming and slow art looking sessions, to offset the cost of these free access offerings.

Fiscal 2026 Conclusions

With two new managerial and coordination positions within the department and with the strong support of community partnerships within the community, Creative Learning & Programs department is optimistically looking forward to the new fiscal and the potential capital transformation of the McMichael.

Outcome: collaboration with Indigenous artists and elders will create deeper engagement with Indigenous communities and integration of Indigenous ways of knowing into our education and programming.

Outcome: targeted programs will increase access for marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Outcome: digital and hybrid delivery of programming will continue to attract audiences to the McMichael's creative learning.

Outcomes: our diversified offerings in education and programming will create new revenue opportunities; evaluation and reporting will be strengthened; program delivery will be improved

4. [Sustainable Organization](#)

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fundraising

Our goal is to support the McMichael in becoming an increasingly self-sufficient organization, one with long-term financial stability to ensure public access to Canadian art and education for future generations. A healthy operating budget will position the McMichael as a cultural and community hub in Vaughan, contributing significantly to the annual visitor spend in the region and a haven for all Ontarians seeking a respite on our beautiful woodland site.

For the year ahead, the development department will be ambitious and focused on maximizing generated revenue. We will do this by aligning our team strategically to take advantage of the best opportunities while embracing an unwavering level of service and stewardship to reflect a best-in-class donor experience. We will explore and implement new ways to meaningfully engage volunteers, committees, etc. to build increased engagement and more recurring revenue streams. It is these principles and activities that will drive fundraising strategy.

The department will continue to focus on developing staff in their current roles with a focus on deliverables; streamlining processes; exploring new and innovative ideas; and, improving collaboration both internal and external to the department. Prospect cultivation and engagement will be a key priority to ensure we are building towards sufficient funding to not only support a potential capital expansion, but increased support for programming and curatorial activities going forward.

We will build on the success of years past continuing to build a ‘culture of philanthropy’ that will permeate the entire organization while we explore and implement new ways to meaningfully engage volunteers, committees, etc. to build increased engagement and more recurring revenue streams.

Highlights

Development activity needs to be strategic, with long-term thinking and investment. For that reason, much of the key activity remains consistent year over year with a few key adjustments as needed. This year, a priority focus will be the shift in engagement from project and activity based to a more hybrid model of the former along with encouraging support for the broader

McMichael gallery. This will be accomplished through targeted approaches in the annual fund and aligned to key events, like Art Toronto. Also, we will be working diligently to increase the size of the Foundation board with key appointments of individuals interested in engaging their personal networks to support the McMichael at levels consistent with undertaking a comprehensive campaign.

As in the past, we will work to engage all board members and volunteers with an opportunity to participate in raising funds, staying focused on our purpose. We will raise funds in support of:

- General operations of the organization – support for McMichael overall
- Acquisitions
- Exhibitions (onsite, touring, and related publications)
- Education and outreach
- New opportunities / partnerships, etc.

At a high level, funds will be raised by:

- Continue defining staff roles to ensure alignment with the needs of the organization. A fully staffed department with strategic administrative support will ensure senior front facing staff, board members, and volunteers are supported in cultivating and securing support for the McMichael.
- Identifying and recruiting new board members keen to engage their networks to help build a sustainable operation.
- Identifying and recruiting new volunteers to serve on our boards, committees and in other capacities who are keen on embracing, celebrating, and promoting the new leadership and new vision.
- Building sustainable annual revenues by activating and engaging those closest to us through strategic activities related to events and an elevated annual appeal.
- Reimagining McMichael committees to meaningfully connect members by providing them with compelling and interesting ways to engage.
- Leveraging the gala's success, begin recruiting and engaging new volunteers to help secure new sources of gross revenue while more strategically aligning the organization for improved efficiency and net results.
- Developing multi-year, multi event, corporate support opportunities for both Art Toronto and the Moonlight Gala as our best sources of undesignated revenue.
- Engagement of the Vaughan community and broader York region at all levels. Strategically embrace and promote the McMichael as a cultural and community hub.
- Work with private philanthropists to secure funding for potential capital renewal. Initial work as a robust, major gift program focused on identifying and cultivating our top prospects, with support conditional on government funding being secured. In addition, major gift donations will be sought to support the ongoing annual activities and priorities of the renewed McMichael.
- Creating a 'culture of philanthropy' by providing every McMichael volunteer the

opportunity to support our events, exhibitions, acquisitions, publications, and educational programs in personally meaningful ways. Directly through financial contributions and/or using their network to raise funds for McMichael projects.

Detailed Activity

1. Membership experience and growth

Membership at McMichael, at approximately 5000 annually, is an important financial driver for the gallery and impacts visitors to the gallery. With a focus on renewal rates at various stages, benchmarked against our colleagues, we will renew and upsell existing members. We will revisit the potential use of 'digital' cards along with the use of more sophisticated technological solutions for our membership recruitment. Results from the member survey will be analyzed and implemented where appropriate.

The membership buy/renewal process will continue to be refined along with marketing materials and membership packages. Members will receive increased regular communication regarding special events or offers and the McMichael will continue to build on the "concierge" type services that larger organizations may not be able to offer members. There will be continued focus on the member experience including refining the member tours delivered in collaboration with our education partners. Lapsed members will be targeted through focused outreach, and we will work collaboratively with Marketing and Communications to develop marketing efforts to reach new members in the York Region.

2. Increase individual giving, donor numbers, and prospect pipeline

McMichael needs to grow the annual sustainably generated revenue and to do this, focus on increasing; the size of gifts, the number of donors to the McMichael, and the number of prospects in the pipeline. Key areas of focus will include:

- Increasing the members of the Foundation Development Committee and renewing the committee's focus on securing operating dollars for the collection
- Ensuring members understand we operate as a non-profit and rely on support over and above membership and exhibition revenues
- Growing the donor pool through active solicitation, both by mail but primarily through e-communications, around key dates, and end of year (for tax purposes)
- Creating more personal connections with larger annual donors by assigning a Relationship Manager to build rapport and working to increase their engagement and philanthropic support
- Work with Creative Learning, Curatorial, and Marketing to elaborate inventory of properties (projects, programs, and exhibitions) fully developed and ready to offer to cultivated prospects
- Engaging in effective stewardship to ensure donors feel valued, understand the impact of their gift, and believe the McMichael is a worthy recipient of their support

- Utilize existing events (curatorial talks, openings, artist visits, etc.) to engage with new potential prospects
- Develop and refine targeted 'invite list' identifying and acting on specific interests
- Develop additional prospect lists utilizing strategic research methods
- Conduct prospect review with Foundation Board members and Collection Trustees
- Provide opportunities for Foundation Board members and Collection Trustees to invite / engage with new prospects – in home events, openings, tours, etc.
- Conduct multi-tiered year-end appeal to support the McMichael; include monthly giving option
 - Personalized engagement of Foundation Board Members and Collection Trustees by Collection Chair to raise initial tranche of annual appeal funding. Those individuals then set personal goals by appealing to their own networks for 4 and 5 figure gifts.
 - Specialized appeal to all potential year end supporters of the McMichael highlighting past giving and suggesting an increased amount
 - Potential matching campaign supported by video testimonial
- Identify board champion for a reimagined giving club with Foundation Board Development Committee and Executive Director assisting with prospect review, identifying new prospects, and soliciting new members. Communicate new strategy and build plan for event engagement – invite to all events and plan special event for members, including openings, VIP activities such as private tours at the Gallery, tours of significant sites, private collections, and other galleries
- Investigate piloting one trip for Patrons to a gallery within driving range of GTA (e.g., Buffalo)

3. Corporate sector, Foundations, and events

Main opportunities remain the Moonlight Gala and Art Toronto, both of which offer the greatest chance to secure significant, undesignated funding.

Focus on:

- Building a database of corporate sponsors and foundations highlighting their giving priorities and alignment with McMichael initiatives
- Identify fundraising initiatives/proposals that show demonstrable social impact, corporate social responsibility, and community engagement
- Regular review of corporate and foundation executives and leadership by Foundation Board and Collection Trustees to identify contacts and potential support areas
- Working closely with curatorial, education, and programs to understand funding gaps and potential opportunities for support and sponsorship
- Utilizing board members /trustees, committee members, MCAC staff, and other volunteers to evaluate and refine the prospect lists
- Exploring possibilities for multi-year or multi-event support to make the sponsorship

offering more attractive

- Strengthening relationships with those that have provided support in 2022-23, and re-engage those who supported the McMichael in past years
- Looking to engage new communities of supporters (Vaughan, broader York region)
- Focusing early on event sponsorship to drive increased net revenue
- Adopt and refine strategies like 'Friends of McMichael @ Art Toronto' to drive increased activation and support
- Utilizing multi-faceted campaigns along with committees to drive ticket sales
- Building a strategy, process, and pipeline to secure funding from foundations and granting agencies aligned with McMichael priorities
- Developing Foundation specific support by first using online tools, annual reports, and donor lists, build a list of potential foundation and granting agencies to approach for support. Where possible, initiate outreach to engage and connect and understand giving more personally. Strategically identify possibilities for success based on areas of interest – upcoming exhibitions, educational opportunities, program support, etc.
- Explore opportunities to increase event revenue by considering new potential events like a September golf event as an exclusive, York region opportunity and investigate other potential opportunities, particularly third-party events.
- Utilizing events as opportunities to provide exceptional stewardship experience (openings, tours, exhibitions, etc) while at the same time the chance for high value, intimate cultivation opportunities

5. Campaign for Capital Renewal

CAPITAL RENEWAL

Subject to approval, the capital campaign will dominate the next several years of fundraising activity, with our objective to raise a minimum of \$50M in private support. This is in addition to the operational fundraising that must continue while the gallery is open. Much of this private support has already been secured, but we will need to dedicate significant campaign resources to robust stewardship of campaign donors.

Private philanthropy, provincial and federal support will all be critical to the success of future capital renewal. Local, regional, and national strategies are well underway to orient and deepen the McMichael's key constituent and stakeholder relationships, and actively acquire new donors to contribute at a leadership level.

We will create and implement engagement strategies for McMichael's top prospects. This will be part of an adopted, robust, replicable, major gifts program, one that will help to ensure the McMichael Canadian Art Collection is in a sustainable financial situation, with forecastable future revenue and activated and engaged volunteers/ donors.

We will adopt strategic use of a ‘moves management’ process for top prospects, ensuring the right prospects are being asked at the right time by the right people.

In general, the focus will be:

- Continued focus on \$1M+ prospects who will be actively engaged throughout the entire build
- Develop and begin cultivation of \$100K + prospects based on those closest to us for the next stage of solicitation
- Engage strategic volunteers
- Engagement of new volunteers to help identify and introduce new prospects to the McMichael
- Recruiting and training key volunteer leaders to act as ambassadors for the McMichael
- Ensure that internal campaign processes and documents (numerous) are drafted or edited, and are ready to steer and shape the process
- Build and train the internal team for the challenge of a capital campaign
- Continue the identification and cultivation of potential donors

The McMichael specific campaign will not look like traditional nonprofit capital campaigns. After significant research and evaluation of our strengths and potential challenges, our model will look more like a hub and spoke than a traditional model with cabinets and subcommittees. It will be an innovative and entrepreneurial approach. The Executive Director and Chief Curator, Sarah Milroy, is a natural, ambitious, and successful fundraiser. She has freed up a significant portion of her time to be directed specifically to fundraising for the success of the campaign.

Our model, like what was successfully employed by the Buffalo AKG, is to have our Executive Director work directly, one-on-one with individual volunteers to cultivate and solicit prospects, supported by the development team. This model eliminates significant bureaucracy needed to engage, support, and manage cabinets and committees and frees up valuable time usually occupied by planning for and executing meetings. Volunteers are engaged as needed, utilizing their time and resources strategically, and not requiring a long-term commitment. The McMichael has already seen tremendous success with this model and will fully embrace it for the duration of the campaign.

The excitement of a capital redevelopment will be attractive to many donors at the beginning, and it will be crucial for the McMichael to secure this support early. However, many potential donors will be more interested throughout the build process and as we move closer to completion. It is imperative that our major gift work to secure the initial \$50M act as the catalyst to continue robust major gift activity, engaging new potential prospects in an ongoing basis to support the new McMichael and provide for a sustainable future.

Overall, in this campaign model we will;

- Have the Executive Director set aside significant time daily specifically for campaign meetings
- Ensure the development office coordinates all activity supporting ED and volunteer activity
- Engage all members of the board and other identified volunteers in actively identifying and setting key meetings for prospect cultivation
- Work actively with the Collection Chair and Foundation Chair to support their outreach and engagement of key prospects with the Executive Director
- Continue to identify and engage new potential volunteers interested in supporting our efforts
- Explore hosting “Salons” all across the country.
 - Ask influential art lovers to host their friends, colleagues, networks
 - Introduce the McMichael and our vision to them
 - These may be small receptions, lunches, dinners, etc.
- Leverage partnerships, opportunities, and key volunteers to specifically target key regions like the Vaughan community and broader York region. Municipal support and engagement of their constituents will be a strategic priority.
- Utilize customized and personalized cultivation activities (like tours, openings, in home presentations) to broaden our prospect base and engage with new potential funders
- Be strategic and nimble ensuring prospects are cultivated and engaged at the highest level
- Develop and provide unique opportunities for support and engagement with the campaign, and entire build – not just traditional naming opportunities
- Position the campaign as both an opportunity to support the Art of Canada and/or invest in a cultural and community hub
- Eliminate the bureaucracy needed to engage and manage committees and cabinets of individuals
- Provide volunteers the opportunity to have maximum impact with limited, strategic investment in a reasonable amount of time (not a 5-10 year commitment)
- Maintain / develop relationships with donors for enhanced stewardship and ongoing engagement with the McMichael, as led by the development office
- Develop and prepare innovative stewardship strategies
- Work with marketing and communications and education and programming to identify enhanced communication opportunities and potential engagement activities related to programming and other activities

Visitorship

Visitorship has returned to and is beginning to exceed pre-pandemic levels, with the exhibition *River of Dreams: Impressionism on the St Lawrence* drawing crowds through the summer and fall months of Fiscal 2025.

The McMichael is open six days a week. This model has been cost-efficient and remunerative, as it allows us to engage school tours and host corporate events on Mondays when the gallery is closed to the public. We continually strive to grow visitorship, meet visitor expectations, respond to changing trends in visitorship and deliver superior customer service. Visits to the gallery and grounds are enhanced by a wide range of programs such as free public tours, concerts, events and shopping and dining options to serve as many audience segments as possible. We also offer a monthly free Family Sunday and programs specifically designed for seniors, those living with memory loss and children and youth with exceptionalities. These initiatives ensure that we are removing barriers to entry so that the widest possible audience can visit the McMichael.

The McMichael's brand recognition also grows as more exhibitions from the McMichael travel nationally and internationally, allowing the marketing department to capitalize on accessing a broader range of tourist segments and drive on-site visitation.

Exhibitions and Creative Learning

IDEA

The Creative Learning and Programs department's specialized programming designed for vulnerable and marginalized communities continue to be relevant and successful. The Creative Learning Department's close attention to the needs of the different school boards and communities ensures that their school courses are relevant to diverse audiences, and that their programming is well subscribed.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Touring exhibitions have proven to be a highlight of enhanced revenue particularly through touring fees and online sales of publications. Enhancing the McMichael's reputation not only onsite but throughout North America and internationally helps to attract the interest and support of prominent philanthropists across Canada. We continue to seek potential for exhibitions abroad.

5. [Organizational Capacity](#)

Quality of Life and Economic Development

PARTNERSHIPS

We continue to work closely with numerous organizations throughout York Region and the GTA, including the Kleinburg Business Association, the City of Vaughan, Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Destination Ontario to position the McMichael as a cultural attraction in the region to help market the region as a destination, drive economic growth, and encourage cultural tourism and travel to Kleinburg. The McMichael is an active member of the Toronto Attractions Council, Central Counties Tourism and York Region Arts Council.

Family Sundays continue to be extremely successful, attracting not only an audience of 50% local to Vaughan, but also a diverse, younger audience that is new to museums. Our plans for redevelopment are intended to capitalize on these opportunities. Our research has shown that there is substantial potential for growth in visitorship, corporate events, weddings, and other activities that can generate revenue with potential capital expansion. But beyond those financial opportunities, the McMichael is poised to play a central role in the City of Vaughan's plan to become a centre of excellence for creative industries. With the MOU between the McMichael, the City of Vaughan, and the Vaughan International Film Festival in place, we look forward to enhanced opportunities to work together to promote Vaughan as a place for cultural businesses, and to position the McMichael as a key part of Vaughan's quality of life.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The McMichael’s Marketing and Communications department executes effective cross-platform advertising and outreach campaigns and develops targeted media strategies that raise awareness of the gallery and its activities, drive attendance and generate sales. These strategies effectively form part of a “toolkit” that supports all areas of the McMichael including Curatorial, Development, Sales, and Creative Learning in achieving their strategic goals.

SUSTAINABILITY

The goal of the department is also to ensure that its integrated marketing of exhibitions, public and educational programs, facility rentals and the Gallery Shop enables forecasted revenues to be achieved, while establishing the Gallery as a must-see tourism destination, a great place to visit with family and friends, a place to learn something new about Canadian art in a warm and welcoming environment, and a site to get outdoors for relaxation, improved mental health and physical activity.

In Fiscal 2026, the McMichael’s marketing and communications team will continue to produce marketing campaigns that specifically target local, national and international audiences. At the local level, marketing campaigns will focus on growing our base of local families who love programs like free Family Sundays, children’s art classes, and week-long camps and encouraging them to invest in family memberships.

Nationally, our campaigns will highlight our many traveling exhibitions that can be seen from coast to coast to coast, and international travelers will be cultivated through the unique selling proposition (USP) of our beautiful all-Canadian landscape and venue where visitors can see world-class exhibitions such as *Dreaming Forward: Worlds on Paper from the Kinngait Drawings Archive*. We will continue to advertise with national airline carriers such as Porter and Air Canada to reach national and international audiences, and to partner with Destination Ontario, Destination Toronto and Central Counties Tourism (RTO 6) to host domestic and international press trips to bring journalists to the McMichael.

With the hire in 2022 of a full-time Social Media Manager the department now executes a comprehensive social media strategy that can produce and share a higher volume of digital content through stories and reels to creatively engage with and grow various audiences, including on Tik Tok. The Social Media Manager is also able to analyze and act on insights from analytics more effectively.

ACCESSIBILITY/IDEA

The McMichael will continue to actively promote programs that provide free and low-cost access to a wide range of audiences such as Free Family Sundays, free holiday Mondays and Open Doors Vaughan. Accessible programs are another marketing priority including specially designed programs for seniors living with Alzheimer's and accessible programs for adults and youth with exceptionalities.

The McMichael's marketing campaigns would continue to market to audiences the unique selling proposition of the gallery's world-class collection of Canadian art combined with the natural beauty of the site and to emphasize the correlated physical, emotional and mental health benefits of spending time outdoors and spending time with art. In Fiscal 2026, marketing campaigns will continue to be primarily driven by the exhibition schedule (outlined elsewhere in this document). These exhibition-focused campaigns account for the majority of the marketing budget and are executed on a rolling basis. In addition, the marketing team also activates smaller campaigns and special projects in support of the following initiatives or themes throughout the year:

- June: Moonlight Gala (Major Annual Fundraising Event)
- October: "Fall Colours" campaign to highlight the grounds and trails during our most popular season
- October: Art Toronto Opening Night (Fundraiser). In Fiscal 2026, the McMichael will again be the host and beneficiary of the Opening Night gala at Art Toronto, now established as the McMichael's fall fundraiser in downtown Toronto. At the fair, the marketing team works with the Curatorial and Development departments to present an exceptional booth of Canadian art highlighting current and upcoming exhibitions. The event provides an excellent opportunity for brand awareness, networking, and revenue generation.
- October/November: Membership Drive Campaign
- November/December: Membership Double Discount Days Campaign & Giving Tuesday
- December: "Holiday" campaign during the winter season / Annual Giving
- March (folds into the following fiscal): Education Programs Advertising Campaign – a targeted digital advertising campaign to remind teachers and educators about the McMichael's educational programs to push sales through the last few months of the school year (either on-line or in-person)

The effectiveness of these campaigns is evaluated by the following performance measures:

- Attendance
- Visitor Satisfaction & Feedback
- Membership Growth and Retention
- Social Media Engagement

- Media coverage and reach (including AVE, Advertising Value Equivalent)
- Exhibition-related revenue generation (retail sales etc.)

The marketing team continues to use our strong base of market research to retain audiences by understanding the media habits of visitors and marketing to them accordingly. The McMichael has a large audience base of older adults and families who are well served by a wealth of on-site program offerings. However, with the historic museum visitor being replaced at a negative rate, the McMichael also must pursue new audiences including millennials, who now have young families, and Gen Z who are almost twice as likely to express their personal commitment to an organization by engaging with it on social media, which the McMichael is actively growing through vibrant content and targeted digital advertising and the introduction of a Tik Tok account. Additionally, millennial and Gen Z audiences are more environmentally and budget conscious and must be provided with a compelling reason to visit and low-cost travel options. The institution must also be transparent and forthright in its commitment to the environment, including sustainability across our building and grounds, and in our efforts towards inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in hiring, programming exhibitions and communications.

Measurement of the results of digital advertising and social media campaigns that drive people to mcmichael.com will be critical in determining the most effective media mix. It will be important to determine if continued growth in digital marketing spending will continue to drive more traffic to the website, and to further analyze who our online visitors are and where they are coming from.

Objective data and analysis will provide insight into strategies to achieve the following:

- Build the McMichael brand.
- Extend brand awareness and reputation through:
 - Special and traveling exhibitions
 - Special events and programs
 - Philanthropy
 - Corporate partnerships
 - New interpretations of the permanent collection
 - Educational programs
 - Scholarly publications and exhibition catalogues
 - Enhanced digital programs and content
 - Children and family programs (building the local audience and catering to a sense of community for those looking for a cultural experience, per the Culture Track Study)
 - Facility rentals including weddings (see below for Corporate Sales strategy)
- Reach the McMichael's target audience cost-efficiently and effectively
- Focus marketing efforts on peak periods, contributing to the regional tourism market.

during these times, and collaborate with local tourism partners to develop attractive campaigns for shoulder seasons

- Effectively market the use of the grounds and trails on days that the gallery is closed and during popular seasons for walkers
- Find ways to boost attendance during typically slow periods including Tuesdays and Wednesdays and slower months of January and February
- Build/maintain partnerships to extend reach and enhance brand image
- Sustainably embrace new media as audiences gravitate towards them in a way that fits with brand identity

Marketing and Communications Objectives

- Continue to build the gallery's mobile, digital and experiential channels, maintaining a multi-platform, integrated marketing and communications plan that includes traditional, digital and social media, and broadcast
- To reach the younger millennial and Gen Z market and arts audiences including those specifically interested in contemporary art, the McMichael will leverage social media tools, including stories, reels, and Tik Tok, with a focus on high-engagement video content and linking digital experience to both on-site and virtual engagement opportunities
- Deepen existing partnerships with other agencies, brands, and cultural institutions and pursue new ones that align with the gallery's mission and can help strengthen the brand image and boost retail and tourism
- Differentiate the gallery by featuring our unique selling feature of art and nature, highlighting our location on 100 acres of conservation land. This also positions the gallery as a place to de-stress from everyday life and cultivate mental and physical wellness both indoors and out
- Enhance relationships with media including CBC, Globe and Mail and major broadcasters, establishing regular interviews with the Executive Director & Chief Curator
- Build long-lead stories to pitch to media for exhibitions throughout the year, strengthening relationships with key media
- Enhance the navigation of the website through a comprehensive website overhaul
- Emphasize the McMichael's remarkable slate of touring exhibitions to build awareness of the McMichael as both a national destination and an incubator of the best Canadian art exhibitions

In addition to being served by RTO6, Central Counties Tourism, the McMichael is also an active member of the following local and provincial tourism bodies, with which we share information, resources and best practices and collaborate as appropriate on campaigns:

- Kleinburg BIA
- Tourism Vaughan Corporation
- York Region Arts Council
- Vaughan Attractions Council
- Toronto Attractions Council
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
- Destination Toronto
- Destination Ontario

Communications Plan

The Media Relations and Communications team’s strategy is to effectively generate positive media coverage of the gallery, its exhibitions, permanent collection, public programs and events, notable partnerships, key acquisitions and appointments, and other newsworthy items pertaining to the art of Canada across a wide a range of domestic and international media platforms. The team also endeavors to position the Executive Director and Chief Curator as a thought leader and area expert to print, digital and broadcast outlets.

The Communications team generates a communications rollout that is shared monthly with the Ministry. This document provides a six-month preview of planned communications, including press releases and media alerts, timelines and any stakeholder involvement. The timing of communications announcements is primarily driven by the upcoming exhibition schedule, which is outlined in detail elsewhere in this document.

The McMichael communicates with visitors, members and stakeholders through monthly e-newsletters (one to members and one to a general audience), social media posts, press releases and the website. The public may communicate with the McMichael at any time through our general email address, social media channels, telephone, mail or via feedback card at the front desk. All visitors who purchase a ticket online are sent a visitor feedback form to leave a comment and satisfaction rating after their visit. Comments or other communications that require a response or resolution are addressed expediently and flagged to the ministry as necessary according to communications protocol guidelines.

PARTNERSHIPS

In Fiscal 2026 the Communications team will continue to monitor news trends, coverage and competitive activity both in print and online, including on social channels. In-person media cultivation is also essential to building long-lasting relationships in a changing media landscape. National and international press cultivation also must be enhanced in order to support the McMichael’s upcoming traveling exhibitions and to build brand awareness worldwide. To this end, the McMichael actively collaborates with Destination Toronto and Destination Ontario and other Agencies and GTA-

based museums, including the ROM, AGO, Power Plant and Gardiner museum, on international press trips.

Rebranding & Website Redevelopment

With a potential capital campaign and a need to drive audiences, revenue, attention and donations, the McMichael brand and website is increasingly out of step with the needs and expectations of contemporary audiences and must be fully functional, easy to use and attractive. Working closely with a full-service design agency, Bruce Mau Designs, the McMichael will undergo a comprehensive rebranding and website redevelopment in Fiscal 2026. This project will involve fully reconceived brand identity leading to a redesign of the McMichael logo and wordmark, new brand guidelines and new look and feel. The website component of the project will move off of an outdated Wordpress backend to a fully functional, adaptable and up-to-date infrastructure and CMS that can provide best-in-class service delivery to all users including visitors, members, donors and other stakeholders.

The website redesign will prioritize usability, integration with other systems (POS, social media, TMS/e-museum etc.), mobile adaptability and the display of high-res video and images. The goals of the website will be to:

- Enhance the user experience and make it easy to:
 - Purchase tickets to the gallery and find visitor information
 - Register for classes, talks, events and camps
 - Make a donation, become a member or join a patrons circle
 - Find information on current, upcoming, past and traveling exhibitions
 - Find information on archives, library and other services to the public
- Foster excitement and awareness with audiences about Canadian art
- Be recognized as a “must-see” destination for Canadian culture locally, nationally and internationally

Success will be measured through the following metrics and KPIs:

- Unique visitors and total website traffic
- Time spent on pages
- Referral traffic
- Visitor comments
- Membership growth and online donations
- Newsletter signups

Corporate Sales and Events

In keeping with our mandate, the provincial government focus on financial sustainability, and

the Culture Track identified factors for engagement, the McMichael will continue to focus on the below key business drivers or unique selling propositions for Fiscal 2026 with a focus in revenue-maximizing large in-person events:

- Corporate events: proactive selling within the Vaughan community, reaching out to both businesses and prominent individuals and working closely with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
- Weddings: continue ongoing marketing and outreach initiatives, with a particular focus on maximum-capacity events and revenue-generating photo permits
- Continue to position the McMichael within Vaughan as a host for community and civic events through close engagement with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and Central Counties Tourism
- Continue to strengthen Adult Group Tours relationships with tour operators, notably in the French-speaking market
- Work with local Regional Tourism Organization (RTO6, Central Counties) to participate in marketing plans to drive local tourism to the McMichael and Kleinburg area and increase shoulder season attendance
- Host a familiarization tour for meeting planners to come and view the events space, with assistance from the Vaughan Tourism Corporation
- Continue to network with meeting planners and contacts through Meeting Professionals International (MPI)
- Further relationship building with film industry contacts and location scouts
- Diversify event offerings such as Bridal Showers, Holiday Parties and Birthday Parties
- Attend major tourism conferences including Bienvenu Canada to increase group tour business from francophone regions and OMCA (Ontario Motor Coach Association)

The key business drivers outlined above will be supported by the following tactics:

- Use website homepage to promote event packages and seasonal offerings
- Social media posts to promote us as a venue for weddings and corporate events
- Email blasts to local business, tour operators, and wedding planners
- Continued networking with the City of Vaughan, tourism stakeholders and local community
- Improved paid search advertising
- Participation in tradeshow and conferences including OMCA (Ontario Motor Coach Association) and Bienvenu (French-language tours), as well as out-of-city tradeshow and networking events
- Advertising for Holiday Season parties
- Maintaining industry memberships, such as Wedding Wire and Eventsource, which are important ways to market McMichael as a wedding venue

Digital Content Strategy

Insights from the various digital programs and offerings developed over the last few years demonstrate that audiences across the country and around the world are interested in virtual offerings from the McMichael. In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on bringing audiences on site, while also building our virtual audiences with dynamic content.

The McMichael's digital offerings beyond school programs include professionally taught art classes, virtual exhibition tours in English and French, and short videos about works of art and exhibitions with artists, guest curators, McMichael curators and the Executive Director and Chief Curator. Webinars with and about Canadian art with scholars, artists, writers and thinkers from many disciplines round out our long-form offerings. The popularity of and engagement with these programs has indicated that audiences are eager for this type of experience and find it a fulfilling and educational way to connect with the McMichael. The McMichael continues to post digital content including short and longform videos, interviews, webinars, programs, activities and events on the website and social media. Success will be measured by online views, engagement, attendance and registration for virtual classes and events and related revenue generation.

INDIGENEITY

To enhance outreach within the Indigenous community and boost engagement with the McMichael's *Iningat Ilagiit* platform, upcoming exhibitions *Words on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait* and *Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael*, the McMichael will launch an Indigenous Creator Partnership pilot project for fiscal year 2026. By partnering with Indigenous creators passionate about art, culture, and community, this initiative aims to drive awareness, increase engagement, and encourage visitation among Indigenous audiences. Creators will produce organic content that highlights exhibitions, behind-the-scenes experiences, artist interviews, and event promotions. Their unique perspectives will offer fresh insights into McMichael's collection, resonating with a diverse range of audiences. Leveraging the influence of micro and nano influencers, with their highly engaged niche communities, will expand McMichael's visibility locally and internationally.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MEET GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Key Planning Assumptions

- Fiscal 2025's anticipated budget shortfall and cashflow issues did not occur thanks to robust fundraising, particularly the addition of a new end of year campaign that raised approximately \$500,000
- In addition, the McMichael was given permission to repurpose old unexpended capital funds of approximately \$630,000 to operations
- The result was a net surplus of \$345,000.

The McMichael bases its Fiscal 2026 planning on the following assumptions:

- Fundraising events will continue to be anchored by the Moonlight Gala in the spring and Art Toronto Opening Night in the fall, with a moderate increase in the amount expected to be raised coming off a robust amount in Fiscal 2025.
- Fundraising will focus on major gifts for capital renewal and ongoing operations
- Liquidity would be maintained by timely cash inflows of both public and private funding, ensuring cash expenditures are fully funded
- Tight management of expenses will still result in an anticipated budget shortfall of approximately \$1.2M
- The addition of an end of year fundraising campaign will help to offset the shortfall, but there will need to be other measures taken to ensure we maintain positive cashflow

Classification	Number of Staff	FTEs
Senior Management	7	7
Full-time staff	48	48
Part-time staff	80	37
Total:	128	85
Security Services	9	9
Volunteers	125 *decrease due to MYT (Youth team) active volunteer count	4.5

Summary of Staffing Numbers – Actuals and Three-Year Forecast						
FTEs	2022-23 Actuals	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Interim	2025-26 Forecast	2026-27 Forecast	2027-28 Forecast
	79.5	86.2	85	86	86	86

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources objectives for Fiscal 2025-26 will build on the McMichael and the Ministry goals initiated in 2024-25.

For all goals, HR will very strongly focus on communication. Communication in its various forms and means has proved to be a uniting factor in driving the departmental goals and strategies of the organization. Monthly internal newsletters compiled by HR, quarterly in-person all-staff meetings and regular weekly departmental meetings, as well as individual sessions keep staff and management on track with their respective goals and involved in the overall organizational direction.

Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management:

RETENTION AND SUCCESSION

Succession planning is an ongoing initiative within the management group and in HR and senior Leadership.

While the turnover rate remains low at 3.4% in Fiscal 2024, McMichael does have senior staff members who have been with the gallery for long tenures, who are now gradually retiring. In Fiscal 2025, there were three staff with a cumulative 60-years' employment that retired. When looking at Succession planning in Fiscal 2026, HR, Leadership and Management are considering the staff with long tenure, as much as the key roles and key individuals.

McMichael is an attractive organization in which to work: the gallery's reputation, attendance, and exhibitions are becoming known far and wide, and this has a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of staff as a desired place to work. Keeping the flexibility of working a combination on site and remote in Fiscal 2025 helps retain and recruit in areas that were previously a challenge

The efforts put out in benchmarking and managing wages and salaries as part of overall benefits are modestly becoming a helpful tool in retention and recruitment at the McMichael. The substantial growth in market demand and wages that was seen in the post Pandemic work economy has eased off, and recruiting of staff within our compensation guidelines and philosophy is manageable. The flexibility and trust given to the staff in managing their work and time, has also added to the appeal of working at the McMichael. These latter two points of wages in line with standards and a flexible work environment are key to maintaining adequate staff and staffing levels throughout Fiscal

2026 and beyond.

Workforce management

Communication initiatives and shared strategic goals continue to be cornerstones of workforce management. Communication, as mentioned in the above introduction is a key focus of Human Resources for Fiscal 2026.

Formal communication occurs in annual performance reviews which are undertaken on a consistent basis for all staff members. Performance reviews are designed to be two-way feedback, allowing for an open conversation, and thus building on trust. The McMichael commitment to undertaking performance reviews for all staff in Fiscal 2026 will not change from the previous Fiscals.

Allowing staff to work remotely or offsite is based on the needs of the department, and what is required to carry out required duties and ensure continued, quality customer service. This flexibility supports staff retention, given our location in Kleinburg, as well as work life balance, health and wellness. It also decreases environmental impact by eliminating unnecessary driving time. The factors are valued by the diverse demographic group working at the McMichael, many of whom do not drive.

Having quarterly All staff meetings on site, where successes and updates are shared, is a wonderful means to bring all staff together in the same space. In Fiscal 2026, HR/Management will encourage updates at All staff and at team meetings to be given by members of staff from various levels, thereby supporting Succession planning and helping the growth and visibility for the respective staff and roles.

Informal communication is established through social functions organized by an internal group of staff and volunteers. This internal Social Committee encourages participation in quarterly seasonal activities, where staff and volunteers attend. In Fiscal 2026, working with HR, the Social Committee will continue to support an engaging and positive work experience.

Health and wellness has now become a standard focus of Human Resources: wellness initiatives, including walks on the gallery and grounds, after-hours' yoga, EFAP support link on laptops, messages on wellness in monthly newsletters, and a continued vigilance of not spreading germs in the workplace are the norm. New in Fiscal 2026 will be the review of Health & Dental benefits via going to market of our benefit provider. McMichael put benefits to market in 2019 and will do so again in the Fall of 2025, with the possibility of gaining additional benefits at the same -or reduced, rates.

Diversity and Inclusion

IDEA

The IDEA committee, led by Human Resources, continually evolves to include new staff, new volunteers and new developments. The third annual IDEA survey carried out by committee in fiscal 2025 had a 7% increase in the number of respondents compared to the previous year. In Fiscal 2025 the Inclusivity training was well received with 65 staff and volunteers attending the speaker session on Unconscious Bias and 100 staff and volunteers completing the 10 week on-line training course on Inclusivity 101 offered by Dialectic Solutions training organization. While staff received this training and new staff are trained on hire in Diversity and Inclusion with the related policies and procedures, the 2024 survey showed that there are still instances where staff or volunteers observed situations where they could have spoken up, had they had a greater awareness of the Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion procedures and policies at the McMichael. In Fiscal 2026 it will be mandated that all staff and volunteers be retrained on IDEA procedures for reporting any area where the above was not evident. In addition, the well-received Snippets on-line training program will launch again with a focus on Leadership EQ Learning Snippets that will be shared with all members of management. A new focus for HR in Fiscal 2026 will be in the recruitment of young adults who were participants in the McMichael accessible programs. Many of the individuals who attended the Accessible programs over the years have become comfortable and confident in the art and cultural environment of McMichael. The provision of work will help give these individuals a sense of purpose and community involvement. McMichael will work with partnerships for this initiative and will also request funding for seasonal posts under the Summer Experience Program.

INDIGENEITY

Training in Indigeneity will be further expanded in Fiscal 2026 through the appointment of an Indigenous Programs & Community Engagement Lead position, who will be developing and implementing Indigenous content training for the public and will assist with cultural sensitivity training across the organization.

Digital Delivery and Customer Service

A Human Resources hub for policies, procedures, and benefits launched in Fiscal 2025 help staff see benefits available in one location and have digital access to all policies and procedures. This “BenefitSpot” hub will also serve as a platform for communication as staff begin to familiarize the usage of an intranet site. The digital retention of all HR files was successful in Fiscal 2025 and will continue as the means of records management, thereby saving physical space and related costs of printing.

McMichael Volunteer Committee (MVC)

The Human Resources department works with the MVC in the role of MCAC Liaison, keeping the MVC engaged and informed on McMichael activities, while supporting the joint direction of the Committee.

Volunteer placement opportunities continued to increase in Fiscal 2025. The volunteers organized and ran a Fundraising Art Sale of 50 regional artists in the 3rd quarter of Fiscal 2025, and in addition to welcoming over significant numbers of visitors through the 2.5 days of the fundraiser, the committee had a goal to raise a minimum of \$20,000 in net contribution to the McMichael.

The MVC Executive members stayed on for an additional year in Fiscal 2025. It is possible that going into Fiscal 2026, the structure of the Executive group will not be the same, due to the President, past President stepping down. The McMichael Leadership team will define with HR and the MVC Executive what the future direction of the MVC is to be: whether to continue as a fundraising, placement, Docent and Fundraising group or only as Docents or in Placement opportunities. Over the latter half of Fiscal 2025, McMichael transferred the accounting portion of the committee's banking to fall under the McMichael banking and not be a separate entity

The McMichael Youth Team (MYT) continues to be engaged with the McMichael primarily for ArtVenture art camp in the summer and winter months. The MYT is an excellent means of local community engagement, and many youth volunteers continue on in the Programs or Education department as many MYT members apply for paid staff positions after volunteering and gaining experience.

Human Resources has established strong working partnerships with local and regional high schools to meet students' co-op hours. In Fiscal 2025 there were 13 Co-op students placed throughout the year from five different high schools and two colleges, whereas in previous years McMichael welcomed an average of 6 students. In Fiscal 2026, HR will continue this intentional appointment of youth through their school coops, in providing work opportunities in their fields of study or major.

Structure

All staff members report, directly or indirectly, to the Executive Director who reports to the McMichael Board of Trustees. The Executive Director of the Foundation participates on the McMichael Leadership team, providing direction to the Development and Fundraising department. All Trustees are appointed by the Premier's Office Appointments Secretariat and approved by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

See McMichael Functional Organizational Chart, Attachment 3.

See McMichael Financial, Attendance, FTE, Performance Measures, Attachment 2.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The McMichael's strategic objectives are as follows and are guided by the 2012 Strategic Plan and the Artistic Vision of 2016. Below can be found the specific output-based performance measures that support each of these stated objectives. Outcomes for Exhibitions and Creative Learning have been highlighted above.

The strategic objectives from the 2012 Strategic Plan and the Artistic Vision of 2016 are:

- Promote the McMichael as the Home of the Art of Canada
- Consistently deliver an engaging and exceptional visitor experience
- Become a centre for knowledge creation and sharing
- Build a sustainable organization delivering outstanding performance
- Improve organizational capacity and performance

The following performance measures correlate to the McMichael's success in **promoting the Art of Canada:**

Performance Measure	2027-28	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Projection	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result
Total Attendance (includes virtual programs attendance)	100,000	100,000	100,000	130,000	122,600	129,823	104,900
Virtual Programs Attendance	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	3,000	2,096	8,000

Engaging and exceptional visitor experience:

Performance Measure	2027-28 Projection	2026-27 Projection	2025 -26 Projection	2024-25 YTD	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result
Visitor Satisfaction (FY25 to date)	3400 Comments 98% Positive	3400 Comments 98% positive	3,462 Comments 98.7% positive	612 comments 95.1% positive	3,300 Comments 98.5% positive	1,057 comments 97.6% positive	1,032 comments 97.5% positive

Performance Measure	2027-28 Target	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
Membership Growth*	50% retention	50% retention	50% retention	47% retention 1% conversion	45% retention 1% conversion	45% retention 1% conversion	46% retention 0.85% conversion

Social Media

Performance Measure	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Projection	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
Numbers of followers across social media platforms (FY25 to date)	Facebook: 41,000	YTD Facebook: 37,171	Facebook: 36,500	Facebook: 36,214	Facebook: 31,723	Facebook: 30,617
	Instagram: 44,000	Instagram: 37,171	Instagram: 30,000	Instagram: 30,285	Instagram: 26,049	Instagram: 23,780
	Twitter: 27,000	Twitter: 32,421	Twitter: 26,000	Twitter: 26,099	Twitter: 26,144	Twitter: 25,897
		Twitter: 26,108				

*Due to new metrics, conversion is no longer able to be tracked or relevant to the analysis.

The following anticipated exhibitions, events and goals reflect the McMichael's ability to serve as a centre for **knowledge creation and sharing** for a wide range of audiences:

- Welcome around 16,000 students to the McMichael's site or engage them in virtual or Art2Go in-school outreach to discover curricular connection with the Art of Canada
- 760 children benefiting from children public art classes and camps
- Over 9000 participants in free Family Sundays
- Two mainstage exhibitions: *Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*, and a remounting of *Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael*
- One co-production with the National Gallery and Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, *Morrice in Venice*
- Three small single-artist exhibitions
- One artist in residence
- Two major publications for *Worlds on Paper* and Bonnie Devine's mural project *Water to Water*, and one smaller publication for *Derek Sullivan: Field Notes*.
- Six touring exhibitions
- 15 virtual curatorial and artist talks and #McMichael at Home videos on Canadian art featuring artists, writers, curators, and scholars
- 15 in-person curatorial, artist talks and knowledge sharing events
- A selection of relevant acquisitions made to the permanent collection of works of art with significance to all Canadians
- Continue to promote Iningit Ilagait broadly to Canadians to provide them with the

opportunity to become immersed in the artistic legacy of Cape Dorset

- More than 250 attendees of online webinars
- More than 5000 participants in virtual and in-person public gallery tours
- More than 800 participants in virtual and in-person adult art and wellness classes

Performance Measure	2027-28 Target	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Result	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2023-24 Projection
Total # of school group visits	250	250	250	391	350	391	313
Total # of free school visits	50	50	50	107	30	107	33

During the last year we had a total of 230 schools booked, with 391 school visits*
19 schools (8% of school total), with 107 visits* (22% of visits total) were provided subsidized or free programming

*Number of visits includes repeated visits from the same school
This number includes schools participating in all programs: regular school programs, special and accessible programs

Exhibitions on tour:

Performance Measure	2027-28 Target	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Result	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
Number of McMichael produced exhibitions on tour	5	4	7	8	7	8	8	4
TBA	200,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	400,000*	254,230	231,800	47,973

*Necessarily approximate, as many galleries are not yet reporting results.

The following performance measures reflect the McMichael's ability to build **a sustainable organization delivering outstanding performance:**

Performance Measure	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Projection	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Result	2022-23 Result	2021-22 Result
Dollar-per-visitor revenue in Gallery Shop	\$11.48	\$11.33	\$11.33	\$11.04	\$10.69	\$15.82
Percentage of administrative and operational costs compared to total costs	16%	14%	14%	13%	12%	15%

The following measures reflect the McMichael's ability to **improve organizational capacity and performance:**

Performance Measure	2027-28 Target	2026-27 Target	2025-26 Target	2024-25 Target	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Result	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result
FTEs	86	86	85	83.8	84.9	81.7	78.4	69.11
Staff Turnover	5%	5%	4%	7%	6%	5.7%	6%	3.7%
Number of volunteers, docents and board members	130	130	125	190	180	187	180	155
Number of volunteer hours	8,500	8,500	8,500	9,000	8,000	7,500	10,000	5,616

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

External Factors

Tourism

The Ontario Arts Council released the *Ontario Arts and Culture Tourism Profile* in August 2023, which identifies the substantial economic impact of the arts. The report's key findings include the following:

- The average arts and culture trip has nearly triple the economic impact of non-arts and culture trips; roughly \$11.4 billion were spent on arts and culture tourism in Ontario, resulting in \$5.7 billion in direct value-added to the province
- Arts and culture tourism not only spend more, but they also stay longer and more likely to be from overseas; 40% of Canadian arts and culture visitors made trips of three days or more, while only 13% non-arts and culture visitors did the same; arts and culture visitors made of the majority (55% of all overseas visitors)
- Arts and culture activities featured on one-eighth of all tourist trips
- Attending performances and visiting galleries are key activities
- Arts and culture tourists have a diverse demographic profile
- Arts and culture tourists are much more likely to be motivated to spend

The report provides weight to our marketing plans, and impetus for our involvement in tourism bodies for Vaughan and Ontario.

Local Community

Vaughan is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, and one of the most diverse. This local community will continue to be of paramount importance to developing our visitorship, enhancing our community and organizational connections, and maintaining close relationships with the City of Vaughan Mayor and council. The MOU with the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Film Festival as part of the focus on creative industries for Vaughan is an important part of this local environment.

Diversity and the Arts

The arts have been playing a significant role in promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice. This trend is expected to continue, with artists using their platforms to address social issues, challenge stereotypes, and amplify marginalized voices. The IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) committee continues to forefront these issues throughout the organization. Creative Learning leads the way through its work with Indigenous Elders and artists as well as programming for BIPOC audiences, but the curatorial department is also deeply conscious of the need for diversity both in its programming and its acquisitions. In Fiscal 2026 we will also

continue our engagement with Indigenous arborists and traditional teachers in landscape management through the Indigenous Visioning committee. We are also working to engage Francophones through specific programming.

Demographics

The demographics are essentially unchanged in that the core audience of the McMichael is aging, and that the traditional museum visitor is being replaced at a negative rate. This presents both opportunities (as they have leisure time and disposal income available to visit galleries) and risks (accessibility challenges, programming and exhibitions choices). We strive to achieve a balance to engage both the older demographic, who are looking for more traditional art, as well as the younger demographic, who are more interested in contemporary exhibitions and a diversity of compelling events that engage in of-the-moment concerns. Additionally, younger audiences evaluate their cultural consumption through a range of factors – the exhibition offerings must not only be compelling, but the related programming must be relevant and timely, hours and transportation options must be easy to find and fit their lifestyle, and the café and giftshop must be well priced and offer a curated selection of items. This audience is budget conscious and eco-sensitive and ultimately must feel like they relate to the institution's tone of voice and values both online and on social media. If the institution is seen as being out of touch, or conversely of trying too hard or being disingenuous, this audience will see right through it and be less likely to engage or visit.

In response to these demographic shifts, we created Free Family Sundays, which attracted a much younger demographic through providing targeted experiences for children and families. That successful venture will be continued.

Transportation

The need for a viable, reliable, low-cost transportation solution from the GTA to the McMichael continues to be urgent if the McMichael is to attract new audiences and cultivate new demographics. Environmental concerns as well as the reluctance of younger generations to drive remaining limiting factors that necessitate a public transportation solution. We are continuing to advocate with York Region for a transit solution.

Digital Transformation

The increasing integration of technology and the arts is likely to continue. This includes the use of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR) in art installations and performances, as well as the exploration of digital platforms for art distribution and consumption. While we have remained cautious in the use of VR and AR, we continue to invest in and use digital platforms, both for public engagement and education.

The use of virtual and hybrid experiences in the arts, propelled by the pandemic, has slowed considerably. However, these formats continue to be relevant, allowing us to reach global audiences, experiment with new formats, and create immersive digital experience.

AI

The use of AI and machine learning algorithms in the creation, curation, and analysis of art is expected to grow. AI-generated art, AI-assisted creativity tools, and AI-powered recommendation systems for art discovery are some areas that may continue to evolve. This is an area that we are watching closely. We will develop an AI policy on its use, look for potential efficiencies, and continue to participate in opportunities for training through the Ontario government.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues

Sustainability and environmental issues continue to be an area of focus for the gallery in our education programming in particular. Artists look to increasingly incorporate eco-friendly materials and practices into their work, address climate change and ecological concerns, and explore the relationship between art and the environment. The unique location of the McMichael in a conservation area reflects the urgency of these concerns. The development of a Sustainability Plan seeks to address these concerns in a systematic way, including our work with the Indigenous Visioning committee specifically on land renewal.

Economic Situation

Currently, the Ontario economy shows positive growth, though the threat of a recession continues to loom, along with persistent inflation and higher interest rates. While there is nothing we can do to influence these factors, we remain conscious of the need to keep our admission and parking prices in check so as to not drive away visitors.

National and International

While Touring exhibitions continue to be a key source of presence our revenue expectations are reduced, with approximately \$225,000 expected in Fiscal 2026. This is due in part to the intense touring exhibition schedule of the past few years, which has saturated the North American market for our exhibitions to some extent.

Internal Factors

Staffing

Retention, recruitment and succession planning are key issues for the McMichael, and indeed for many organizations in the arts and elsewhere. Those issues are exacerbated for us by our location. The opportunity to offer remote work has been a key to our ability to navigate the issues of retention and recruitment.

Facilities

The McMichael's aging facility is the key driver for our plan for capital renewal. In Fiscal 2025, we continued to address issues such as the security cameras and security software, building envelope, backflow regulators and HVAC system repairs. The ongoing challenge is to avoid replacements that will become redundant with the new building, while ensuring that climate controls and other environmental systems are maintained to Category A museum standards.

Achieving Financial Sustainability

While we have maximized current opportunities for earned revenue from events and weddings and identified new potential revenue in the form of touring exhibitions, we are challenged by our lack of space and our layout. We will continue to do our best to manage expenses and seek additional revenue through opportunities such as increased rentals and group tours.

FINANCIALS

Key Planning Assumptions

The McMichael bases its Fiscal 2026 planning on the following assumptions:

- A similar revenue and expense profile to recent years, albeit with significantly lower exhibition costs and touring exhibition revenues based on current projections.
- Fundraising events will continue to be anchored by the Moonlight Gala in the spring and Art Toronto Opening Night in the fall, with a moderate increase in the amount expected to be raised coming off a robust amount in Fiscal 2025.
- Fundraising will focus on major gifts for capital renewal and ongoing operations.
- Liquidity would be maintained by timely cash inflows of both public and private funding, ensuring cash expenditures are fully funded.

See Fiscal 2026 Budget and 2 Year Forecast, Attachment 2

CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND RENEWAL

CAPITAL RENEWAL

We continue to note that significant capital renewal and rehabilitation of the current building is required to prevent the failure of our aging building components and to bring the current building in line with current museum standards. It is critical that we move to the next phase in planning for essential capital rehabilitation or else we run the risk of expensive repairs due to the failure of systems, which could be more costly in the long run than wholesale renewal. As a result, we are currently working to maintain systems and the building itself with only necessary fixes, including some roofing, stonework and log repair, and caulking and sealing. It is clear that the entire fascia of the building should be replaced due to extensive dry rot; however, this would involve replacing the entire gutter system as well, since it is all integrated. As before, this strategy of deferring capital rehabilitation may result in some emergency repairs funding requests being made to the Ministry.

As ever, we continue to fight for space between revenue generating operations such as weddings, conferences, classes and social functions, while continuing our core exhibition and education programs. The planned expansion would provide the opportunity to increase our revenue generation, which is at maximum capacity at present.

The landscape plan is integral to this renewal. The Indigenous Visioning circle initiated in Fiscal 2024 will continue to inform those plans in Fiscal 2026, identifying priorities and projects as part of a long-term strategy to create resiliency in the face of climate change. This includes replacing dying and aging trees with Carolinian forest species; removing invasive species to ensure that native species can flourish; and managing and mitigating erosion threats.

Other key activities contributing to potential capital renewal and asset management completed in Fiscal 2025 include: a new site survey; geotech, hydrogeotech and slope stability analysis; and, completion of Indigenous consultation with the Mississaugas of the Credit. We are waiting to learn if an environmental assessment will be required as well.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY (ESD) PLAN

The network is functioning well, with the occasional support of our IT consultants. We have reduced our backup and storage expenses by reviewing our data archive policies, while more will need to be done in Fiscal 2026 to clean up files and standardize use of software such as Sharepoint. We will continue to improve our network security and be vigilant in staff training to identify security threats.

In Fiscal 2026, a grant will enable us to build a new website and brand identity. The website is a critical entry point for visitors, students, teachers, and the general public (see Marketing Plan for further details).

RETAIL STRATEGY

The Gallery Shop is an essential part of the visitor experience and destination, attracting our audiences to enjoy the art, the shop, and café as part of the enjoyment of our site. We will continue to boost our exposure and presence online, in paid advertising, street signage and on our website, to increase public awareness of the shop.

The shop has been working with our Development Department and our Programs Department to evaluate when the shop should be open for evening events. Some evenings have proven more successful than others, so we will continue to monitor.

Although the shop's footprint cannot grow, we can still maximize floorspace in a couple of ways. The back corner bench area is very rarely used, and we will modify part of this area for revenue generating product and display. We will keep with the smart feel of the vision we had with the past renovation. Another way to increase our presence is to produce or purchase a books display cart, which can be wheeled into the lobby during opening hours. This can display some of our books, freeing up more space inside the shop. We can also consider poster displays that are neatly wall mounted.

The Gallery Shop is the place where visitors can purchase a bit of McMichael to take home. One of our biggest sellers is the exhibition catalogues, which visitors expect to purchase when they come to see an exhibition. The Gallery Shop continues to use environmentally friendly packaging. We use recycled paper for our bags, and reuse boxes and containers for our eShop and mail-order department. We do not use plastic bags. Customers also decline the use

of bags when personally preferred. Packaging is expensive and we make choices daily to reduce and reuse and recycle to keep costs down.

We will continue to seek out discounts and offers from our suppliers and cost cutting by arranging our own shipping to the gallery when feasible. Attending the Giftshows gives us opportunity to take advantage of show specials and we adjust our ordering timeline to accommodate the giftshow discounts.

We evaluate our products regularly that are popular with our visitors and maintain quantities of those items.

The stockroom in our loft needs reorganizing, focusing on clearing the clutter and storing overstock and display fixtures neatly. We will devote time to this project in the coming year.

The products we offer continue to be carefully curated, for which we receive many positive comments. Our Indigenous offerings are all credited to an artist and their community whenever possible, and our purchasing and display is done with sensitivity and is always evolving. Strategic and focused buying along with store curating strategies results in a positive customer experience; some of our customers favourably compare our offerings to other major gallery shops worldwide. We endeavor to curate the shop with products which reflect the McMichael brand and its exhibitions, are high quality and unique while hitting all price points. Visitors expect products made in Canada, and in Fiscal 2026 the shop will continue to strive to meet our customers' expectation of high standards.

INITIATIVES INVOLVING THIRD PARTIES

PARTNERSHIPS

The McMichael continues its food services and catering contract with The Food Dudes, based in Toronto, which was renewed in Fiscal 2025. As part of this contract, The Food Dudes are also granted catering exclusivity at the McMichael.

In Fiscal 2026, McMichael Creative Learning and Programs will enhance their partnership with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, and continues to broaden their work with both the York and Toronto Region school boards. They are also building on their existing partnerships with Indigenous communities and community organizations that support individuals with exceptionalities and disabilities.

The McMichael is continuing its partnership with Stratus Vineyards, which donates wine for our events.

Our partnership with Dorset Fine Arts/West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative continues through *Iningat Ilagiit*, the virtual exhibition site of Kinngait art, and the development of a new physical exhibition of works on paper from Kinngait. We continue to participate in Collective North to bring art at the McMichael to remote and northern classrooms.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed with the City of Vaughan and the Vaughan International Film Festival to focus on the promotion of Creative Industries in Vaughan and a cultural corridor on Islington represents exciting potential for our future sustainability, increased visitorship, and other partnerships with cultural organizations in Vaughan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The plan to implement the strategic goals and objectives referred to in this Business Plan over the next three years can be summarized as follows:

Promote our brand as the home of the Art of Canada

Our two ‘main stage’ offerings for Fiscal 2026 are celebrations of the McMichael’s Indigenous art collections. The first, led by Associate Curator, Indigenous Art and Culture Emily Henderson, will be devoted to the drawings from the Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Archive, which McMichael has held in trust for the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op for more than thirty years. Opening in March 2025, ***Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait*** will foreground the cultural continuities of life in Kinngait between 1950s and 1990, a period of dramatic societal change.

Our second ‘main stage’ offering for Fiscal 2026, running from late September through to January 2025, is a re-staging of ***Early Days: Indigenous Art from the McMichael***. This exhibition’s first showing was during COVID (November 2020 – August 2021), and due to capacity limits and mandated gallery closures, was seen by very few. Putting this beautiful show back on at McMichael generates significant cost savings, eases pressure on our registration and conservation teams, and offers flexibility in terms of end-date. It will no doubt spur sales of the award-winning book that accompanies this project, which was completed in November 2023.

In summer 2025 the McMichael will present an exhibition of Morrice’s canvases, pochades, and drawings of Venice as a co-production with the National Gallery of Canada and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, both of whom are contributing major loans.

Three small exhibitions will also be presented:

- ***Derek Sullivan: Field Notes***, will be an exhibition of a new suite of drawings by Toronto artist Derek Sullivan
- A selection of photographic works by **Rita Leistner** depicting tree planters in the interior of British Columbia
- **Sandra Brewster** will use the river as a metaphor for movement and the uncertainties inherent to displacement

In summer 2025 we will host Iris Häussler as our **Artist in Residence** in the Tom Thomson

shack.

A significant publication will be Bonnie Devine's book on her research for *Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees*, tentatively called **Land Acknowledgement**.

Touring exhibitions include Early Days, Meryl McMaster, Rajni Perera, Ghosts of Canoe Lake, Jon Sasaki, People of the Watershed. Of note, the response to a tour of *People of the Watershed* from small museums in the near and far north of Ontario was extraordinary. We have six venues currently booked to present that show, three of which will occur in Fiscal 2026. While the revenue generated is small, given the scale of presentation venues, we expect that the impact on audiences for whom the material is most meaningful will be great. We continue to seek opportunities for new touring locations and exhibitions. As the plans for our curatorial program demonstrate, it is anticipated that touring will contribute \$255K to revenues in Fiscal 2026

Acquisitions will emphasize major works by historic and contemporary women artists, and by artists of colour

Deliver an engaging and exceptional visitor experience

We continue to be open six days/week, allowing us to engage school tours and host corporate events on Mondays.

Visits to the gallery and grounds are enhanced by a wide range of programs such as free public tours, concerts, events and shopping and dining options to serve as many audience segments as possible. We seek to remove barriers to entry through monthly free Family Sunday and programs specifically designed for seniors, those living with memory loss and children and youth with exceptionalities.

In Fiscal 2026 the McMichael will undergo a comprehensive website update funded by an external grant. This project will follow on a rebranding exercise and will lead to a functional, modern and fully accessible website that delivers an exceptional visitor experience, drives attendance, generates revenue from admissions and retail, and highlight and promote the art of Canada.

Become a centre for knowledge creation and sharing

We will continue to reflect diversity in school programs by involving BIPOC artists and Re-examine current offerings, focusing on V.O.I.C.E.S., Footprints for our Future, Leaders of Tomorrow, and community accessible programs.

The new Indigenous Program and Community Engagement lead will reinvigorate engagement with traditional teachers, arts and performers, bring perspective and experience to the department to support program development staff recruitment and training

Grants received will enable development of French language programming to better engage the Francophone community

Build a sustainable organization

We will build on the success of hosting the VIP night for Art Toronto in the past two years. Art Toronto builds our presence in Toronto, and with the art community across Canada, while also garnering much needed revenue.

The primary focus of the next 3 years is undoubtedly fundraising to carry out the potential capital renewal. The goal of the Development department will be to raise a minimum of \$50M for capital needs, while not losing sight of the need for operational funds. The Development department has detailed their strategies in the Business Plan in order to reach both the goals for annual operating and capital funds. Some of the tactics they will employ include a shift in engagement from project and activity based to a hybrid that includes broader support for annual operational, and a focus on multi-year, multi-event corporate support for both Art Toronto and the Moonlight Gala. It will also be essential to recruit new board members keen to engage their networks to help build a sustainable organization.

Improve organizational capacity and performance

- Continue to work closely with our partners such as the Kleinburg Business Improvement Association, the City of Vaughan, Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Destination Ontario to position the McMichael as a cultural attraction in the region.

- Work with the City of Vaughan and Vaughan International Film Festival on the implementation of the MOU as part of the establishment of a Creative Industries focus in Vaughan
- Focus on diversity and inclusion through staff and volunteer committee, job postings, training, and ongoing relationships with indigenous elders and others
- Succession planning will be a significant focus, as senior staff members with long tenures are gradually retiring.