

McMichael

CANADIAN ART COLLECTION D'ART CANADIEN

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

BUSINESSPLAN

For the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024

FISCAL 2024 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

- **Covid has not gone away; far from it. We will in all probability, even in Fiscal 24, still have to navigate the uncertainty of the pandemic and its impact on visitation.** However, by the start of Fiscal 2024, it should be clearer what the pattern of visitation is likely to be going forward, and hopefully this will enable us to plan for reaching pre-pandemic numbers.
- **Two experiments with opening for free** – Free Tuesdays and Family Sundays – demonstrated that the offer of free access brought a strong response. Family Sundays in particular, with programs designed for children and families, saw the Gallery consistently packed, and attracted a much younger and more diverse demographic. Lessons from these experiments will feed into Fiscal 2024 planning.
- Marketing and Communications will need to be focused not only in adapting creatively to whatever ‘new world’ the pandemic leaves in its (hopefully) wake, but the deferred **Brand and Website Refresh** will certainly need to be a priority for Fiscal 2024.
- Obviously, 2023’s key economic driver and brand definer, the Exhibition Program, is already in place and committed, with diversity being a crucial factor, headed by key BIPOC women artists Meryl McMaster and Rajni Perera. Dominating our hopes for revenue generation and admissions, however, will be **Dempsey Bob** and especially **Tom Thomson**, running from end June to end December 2023. These shows will be crucial fund-raising focuses for the year.
- Creative Learning will consolidate their program, foregrounding Indigenous-led projects and relationships and building on collaborations wherever possible to extend their reach and establish themselves as a unique Canadian educational resource.
- Meanwhile, the touring exhibition program will continue to be a major new source of revenue, with *Uninvited*, Meryl McMaster, Margaux Williamson, Maud Lewis, Dempsey Bob, Gathie Falk, the Sobey Collection, Jon Sasaki, Louie Palu and Early Days all touring in this Fiscal Year. *Tom Thomson* is also planned as a touring exhibition, with two Canadian venues already committed, and UK venues being explored for an international showing. The program has simultaneously demonstrated that there is a strong demand for excellent exhibitions with outstanding Canadian content, which the McMichael is uniquely able to provide.
- Digitization of the Cape Dorset archive of nearly 100,000 drawings is scheduled to be restarted in Fiscal 2023 and completed in Fiscal 2024. This unique resource will be promoted on our website portal **iningat ilagiiit: a place for family** ᐃᐅᐅᐅ ᐃᐅᐅᐅ in Fiscal 2024.
- Recent meetings with federal government have reinforced one key policy that will need to be delivered in Fiscal 24, if not before – a ‘**Sustainability Policy**’ covering both the building, the landscape and our operations. This will need to be developed alongside detailed ‘Net Zero’ planning and will have implications for implementation in Fiscal 2024 and beyond, and those implications, both in terms of cost and professional practice, could be considerable.
- The Capital Campaign will continue in its ‘quiet phase’ in Fiscal 2024. We continue to work with the Ministry to define the capital renewal project and its need for support. Much of the

remainder of Fiscal 2023 will be spent digging down into the detail of the architectural plans with HPA, in order to upgrade those plans from the current Class D to Class B level. But there will also have to be a detailed exercise in planning the phases of the Landscape Management Plan as it relates to the proposed capital plan.

- Our focus on Vaughan will continue, as we seek to embrace our role for that growing community. In collaboration with Vaughan's Department of Economic Development and Kleinburg BIA, it is planned to achieve a transit option from Vaughan Metropolitan Centre in the Spring and Summer of 2023. This will involve a cost.
- In Fiscal 2024 we will continue to work closely with Vaughan's Department of Economic Development to maximize our status as 'centre of excellence' for culture in Vaughan and play a crucial and active role in their plans for a cultural corridor along Islington.
- Staffing – there is a staffing gap at administrative level, that, with increasing activity in governance (e.g., committee/ Board meetings), development (particularly events), and with the Capital Campaign, needs to be reviewed and planned for. Fiscal 2024 must also see the appointment of an Indigenous Curator to meet our growing presentation of Indigenous content and commitment to the tenets of Truth and Reconciliation.
- BUT, over and above all this, the demands of a Capital Campaign will loom ever larger, with increasing amounts of time dedicated by key personnel – the entire Leadership Team, and especially the Development team – dedicated to a four-pronged approach (municipality, Province, Federal and Private) to raise the necessary support and funding. Serious attention will need to be given to how to resource this crucial activity if our current Development Team is not to be overwhelmed.

Fiscal 2023, unlike the two preceding fiscal years, contained no gallery closures due to Covid-19, but the global pandemic has still not disappeared from our lives. Its impact, despite the disappearance of mask mandates and vaccination ‘passports,’ was still felt across the sector in the slow and tentative return of visitors. Those comparatively low visitor numbers, the challenging post-pandemic economic climate, and the fallout from the war in Ukraine in the form of rising gas prices – particularly damaging for a Gallery not yet served by public transit - all contributed to an inevitable deficit.

However, there were many successes to record. Along with the gradual relaxation of Covid public health measures, the Gallery emerged into a renewed era of celebratory events, albeit carefully managed. The Moonlight Gala in June 2022 returned for the first time in two years and was enthusiastically received as partygoers flocked back to enjoy each other’s company in person with music, dancing, and excellent food and drink under a smiling sky. In fact, the Gala welcomed a record turnout and raised a record total of funds to support the art of Canada, including a surprise donation of \$100,000 from the Hon Maurizio Bevilacqua, the Mayor of Vaughan.

Exhibition *Private Views* and celebratory dinners, too, were back on the menu; and again, were embraced with joyful enthusiasm by participants. Free Tuesdays followed by Free Family Sundays have demonstrated the appetite of attendees for the gallery experience when it is made accessible to all.

Historic events in the outside world were felt in the Gallery. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine coincided, with particularly sombre timing, with the Gallery’s acquisition of a set of sixteen remarkable paintings of *Jewish Immigrant Life in Canada* by Ukrainian Canadian artist William Kurelek. This was the single greatest acquisition made by the Gallery in many decades, requiring an intensive fundraising campaign to raise the \$2.5 million required. The works are remarkable for many reasons, not least the fact that they all retain their original frames, constructed by Kurelek himself – once a professional frame-maker; but perhaps most impressive was the cross-denominational nature of the gesture the artist, a devout Catholic, made towards an immigrant community of a different faith, in honour of his employer and gallerist Avrom Isaacs. The Gallery is committed to sending the Kureleks out on tour across Canada, while also producing a publication to accompany them.

The coincidental Ukrainian theme continued, with the opening of Wanda Koop’s *Light Works* exhibition. Koop, a Winnipeg-based artist of Ukrainian heritage, produced a body of work, including (for the first time) a sculptural installation of ‘Light Sticks’, which seemed to glow – a dazzling counterpoint to the grim news cycle. Meanwhile, the Creative Learning Department organized art classes for displaced Ukrainian refugee children.

2022 will long be remembered as the year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee, a major celebration of the monarch’s remarkable 70 years of service. However, that joyous event was followed by the devastating news of the Queen’s death in September. The Gallery was lit blue, like

other buildings across Ontario, on the eve of the State Funeral as a mark of respect. In October, a Royal Oak tree grown from an acorn ultimately originating from one of the ancient oaks of Windsor Great Park was planted at the McMichael by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Her Honour Elizabeth Dowdeswell, to mark the Queen's Jubilee and passing.

Also, in September were held two events of great significance to the Gallery in relation to National Truth and Reconciliation Day. On the eve of the day itself, Bonnie Devine acted as a moderator to a panel of Elders and Faith Keepers from the Anishinaabe, Wyandot and Huron Wendat First Nations in a discussion around the creation of her mural *From Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees*, and the lessons learned from the process, which shed vivid light on the history of the land on which the McMichael is located, and on the Carrying Place Trail, which is the subject of the mural. This moving event was followed, the next morning on the Day itself, by a ceremony held at the Minokamik garden, led by Elder Shelley Charles, aided by schoolchildren from Kleinburg Public School (who had helped with the planting of the garden), and two other local schools, Emily Carr and Tommy Douglas.

The banner exhibition of the summer and Fall was *Gathie Falk: Revelations*. Gathie Falk, now 94 and still going strong, has had a career of astonishing variety and versatility, encompassing painting, ceramics, sculpture and performance art. She has been a trailblazing and uniquely individual voice in Canadian art, based on the West Coast. This was her first major show in Ontario since a National Gallery retrospective a couple of decades ago, and long overdue.

Meanwhile, the Gallery's centenary celebratory exhibition of works by the Group of Seven from the permanent collection, *A Like Vision*, was finally taken down after an extended run due to Covid closures. Its place was taken by *Conversations*, a display again put together entirely from the permanent collection, an entertaining and thought-provoking series of juxtapositions demonstrating the breadth, depth and beauty of the McMichael collection, ranging from Group of Seven favourites to contemporary Indigenous artists like Nadia Myre and Rebecca Belmore, placing David Milne in conversation with Bruno Bobak and Helen McNicholl, and Lawren Harris with Laurence Paul Yuxweluptun. The first room also contained a dazzling display of works by Kenojuak Ashevak, a tiny sample of the 2,500 works by this famous Inuit artist held in the Cape Dorset Collection, against a backdrop of huge paintings by Paterson Ewen and cases of Inuit sculpture in stone and bone. This exhibit, like its predecessor, was curated by the Executive Director, and is proving popular with public, staff and educators alike.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The backbone of the McMichael's activities in Fiscal 2024 will be, as always, the excellence of our exhibition program, designed to attract visitors and champion the art of Canada at home and abroad. Exceptional exhibitions devoted to Northwest Coast carver Dempsey Bob, Indigenous artist Meryl McMaster and Sri Lankan Canadian artist Rajni Perera reflect the dazzling diversity of the art of Canada, while the second half of 2023 will be dominated by a more traditionally crowd-pleasing figure, the legendary precursor of the Group of Seven, Tom Thomson, in the first major show in two decades, *Tom Thomson: North Star*. As is now almost invariably the case, all of these exhibitions are planned with touring in mind.

The exhibition schedule thus provides a high proportion of the inspiring material that is a basis of teaching for the Creative Learning department on site (the other key inspiration being the land itself), and Fiscal 2024 will see the development, in partnership with schools and teachers and reflecting the priorities of the curatorial department through acquisitions and exhibition planning, programs that better reflect Ontario's rapidly-changing and diverse demographic. ¹

Meanwhile the ongoing Touring Exhibition program promotes collaboration with our partner institutions across Ontario and Canada, raises the McMichael's profile internationally, and brings much-needed additional income as we look to ways and means of diversifying revenue streams and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of our Gallery. Fiscal 2024's touring exhibitions will raise some \$1 million additional revenue while reaching hundreds of thousands of new audiences across the country with excellent Canadian art content. ²

As a corollary to that program, the McMichael continues to produce best quality publications to accompany those exhibitions, asserting our pre-eminence as intellectual thought-leaders on the art of Canada. Both catalogue for *Uninvited* (currently touring) and the book produced for *A Like Vision* are double prize-winners – a recognition that we aim to replicate as often as possible. The banner publication for Fiscal 2024 will no doubt be the major catalogue being produced to accompany *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael*, which embarks on its ground-breaking tour of the United States. With an expected 70 Indigenous authors, and edited by Bonnie Devine, Anishinaabe artist, author, curator and professor, this touring exhibition reasserts the Gallery's commitment to foregrounding Indigenous and BIPOC artists and serves as a reminder that a full third of the McMichael's collection is Indigenous. The other major publication will accompany *Tom Thomson: North Star* as it embarks on its major tour.

Truth and Reconciliation will be a guiding factor in Fiscal 2024. This year will see the appointment of an

¹ Mandate letter: "Deepen efforts to reflect our diverse artistic landscape by increasing the representation of Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists within the McMichael's collection and exhibitions"

² "Demonstrate excellence in program and service delivery by increasing access to the McMichael's holdings through gallery attendance, virtual programming, and touring exhibitions"

Indigenous Curator to oversee the presentation of Indigenous content within the Gallery, while outside in the landscape, an Indigenous council will engage with our Landscape Management Plan to ensure that the growing awareness of the archaeological and historical significance of the McMichael's location uniquely situated along the Carrying Place Trail is reflected in the plans for developing the grounds, which must also reflect awareness and response to the effects of climate change. Indigenous ways of knowing will be fundamental in achieving those aims. Included in that council will be Elder Shelley Charles, who continues to advise our Creative Learning department on their many programs involving Indigenous content.

Meanwhile Iningat Ilagiit (ᐃᓂᓴᓴ ᐃᓴᓴᓴ, A Place for Family), our website for engaging with the Cape Dorset (Kinngait) archive of Inuit drawings, which we hold on behalf of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, will be strengthened by the re-ignition of the massive digitization project that will allow access to this astonishing resource of 90,000+ works, a resource that can inform and enhance our collaboration with organizations such as Connected North, reaching out to remote and isolated Northern communities. Completing the digitization and promoting this amazing resource, which has the potential to transform understanding of the significance of Kinngait's contribution to the history of the art of Canada, will be a priority for Fiscal 2024.

All of the above demonstrates how far the McMichael has already come in its aspirations and achievements. Vivid and relevant, its galleries, exhibitions, acquisitions, publications, marketing materials and creative learning programs paint a very different and more vibrant contemporary picture to that implied by the institution's current brand image and website, both of which are overdue for a refresh – a project that will be a priority to achieve, if funding can be raised, in Fiscal 2024.

Collaboration and sustainability will also be watchwords for the coming Fiscal. We will continue to collaborate closely with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority around our plans for creating greater resiliency in the face of climate change. We have an ongoing collaboration with the City of Vaughan's department of Economic Development, as we fully embrace our role as cultural centre of excellence in the Municipality's plans towards creating a cultural corridor with the McMichael at its heart. Working also with the Kleinburg BIA, we will launch a long-awaited transit solution linking Kleinburg and the McMichael with the subway at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre by early Summer of 2023. This initiative is crucial for the Gallery, as it recognizes the importance of providing alternative access for those who, for whatever reason, choose not to visit by car. Being able to advertise that the Gallery is accessible by public transit will be a transformative moment for the McMichael.³

In the interests of transparency and accountability, the McMichael will continue to collaborate with the Auditor General's team in reporting our progress towards fully delivering against the nineteen recommendations of the Auditor General's Value-for-money audit, nearly 50% of which has been

³ "Collaborate with other agencies, ministry partners, stakeholders and communities to drive efficient innovation across all lines of business, with particular attention given to sharing your success stories with Ontarians"

achieved in Fiscal 2023.⁴

Work has already begun towards the creation of a major new Sustainability Policy, which will be delivered in Fiscal 2024 to provide a blueprint for the Gallery's response to climate change and environmental concerns generally, both within the Gallery and outside in its grounds.

With long-term sustainability in mind, the Gallery has long recognized that achieving many of its goals, while maintaining its Category A status, and not least the unleashing of the McMichael's enormous potential for revenue generation, will depend on serious investment in the near future. Fiscal 2023 has still been overshadowed by the lingering pandemic, which has not only limited visitor numbers, as Canadians only gradually developed the confidence to re-engage with the sector, but also saw rising energy prices and increased costs generally. One area of the Gallery's revenue-generating activity, i.e., event sales for weddings and conferences, has bounced back strongly, however; the only limitations being those inherent in the 1970s building we inhabit, which faces serious challenges in its decaying infrastructure and out-of-date mechanical systems. If the Gallery is to plug the widening gap between its operating grant and its fund-raising potential, it is clear that it is in precisely those areas of revenue generation that the greatest potential for future growth lies.

The McMichael has developed strategic plans to address those limitations of the current Gallery that prevent us reaching our full potential. These involve a major capital investment in the building, and much of Fiscal 2024 will be dedicated to persuading our provincial, federal, municipal and philanthropic stakeholders of the urgency of making these plans happen, while drilling down into the architectural detail of those plans to provide a Class B estimate of costs and providing a concrete path to Net Zero.⁵

This is no vanity project; rather, it is a realistic, if ambitious, plan to enable the future McMichael to truly step up to its unique mandate, playing a leading role in enabling the tourism and culture sectors to return to and exceed pre-pandemic levels of activity by championing the art of Canada at home and abroad, becoming a must-see destination in itself and representing a resurgent Canada to Canadians and the world through the country's world-class art.

⁴ "Continue to focus on implementing the recommendations of the value-for-money audit conducted by the Auditor General of Ontario"

⁵ "Diversifying revenue streams, increasing self-generated revenue and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of your operations and facilities"

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 on June 1, 2011.

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; and
- 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 more than 100,000 Inuit drawings from the collections of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The McMichael is currently 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 2024 are described below.

Six key themes also animate our plans for Fiscal 2024 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 Exhibition Program

The McMichael is looking forward to a year of vibrant audience re-engagement, as we emerge from COVID with cycles of dynamic exhibitions to bring audiences back to the site, starting with a solo show of Toronto artist Rajni Perera. Born in Sri Lanka in 1985, Perera came to Toronto in her early years, and has established herself as one of Ontario's most dynamic and compelling artists. Her paintings and sculptures draw on the traditions of South Asian art, miniature painting, Sri Lankan art and textiles, environmentalism, medieval art and, perhaps most importantly, Science Fiction, as she imagines future worlds. **Rajni Perera: Futures** will be the artist's first solo museum exhibition, opening on November 18, 2022, and running through until May 2023.

Indigeneity

Also opening in late 2022 and on view into 2023 is the solo exhibition **Wolves: The Art of Dempsey Bob** (December 10 – April 17, 2023), celebrating the art of one of the greatest senior carvers of the Northwest Coast. The exhibition gathers works from all periods of Bob's production, speaking eloquently of his Tahltan and Tlingit heritage, expressed through the remarkable refinement of his carving, and his dynamic imagining of his themes.

This landmark show of Indigenous art is joined by **Meryl McMaster: Bloodline** (February 4 – May 28, 2023), a full career survey of another extraordinary Indigenous Canadian artist. Now in mid-career, McMaster has developed an international reputation for her photographic self-portraits in which she appears in elaborate costumes of her own devising and fabrication. These performative works are staged on the land and evoke her heritage as a woman of Cree and settler heritage. This exhibition highlights her most recent production – a suite of new large-scale photographs and two short films exploring her family's history on the Red Pheasant Reserve in southern Saskatchewan and highlighting the three generations of women who came before her.⁶

Late spring and summer 2023 bring a fresh rotation of exhibitions, and new audiences to our doors. Our main event for summer 2023 is **Tom Thomson: North Star** (June 24, 2023 – January 14, 2024), which focuses on Thomson's oil sketches, the small and incendiary works that have made him a fixture in the Canadian imagination. The accompanying major publication will gather scholarship from a variety of fresh vantage points, featuring lead essays by our executive director Ian A.C. DeJardin and Algonquin historian Christine McRae Luckasavitch, who will explore the deep Indigenous history of the region that we now know as Algonquin Park.

⁶ "Deepen efforts to reflect our diverse artistic landscape by increasing the representation of Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists within the McMichael's collection and exhibitions"

Alongside Thomson, we will be mounting a site-specific installation by senior Canadian artist **Sandra Meigs** (b. 1953), who has explored the landscapes beloved of Thomson to make her own vibrant and large-scale works. Concurrently, our group show ***Uses of Enchantment*** (May 6 – October 2023) will gather works made over the past thirty years that respond to climate change and the environmental threats we face, featuring Indigenous and settler artists Shary Boyle, Bill Burns, Qavavau Manumee, Winnie Truong, Sara Angelucci, and Carrie Allison. Like Meigs, these artists from across Canada are exploring the human relationship to the natural world a century on from Thomson, as we face new climate realities.

The winter of 2023-4 sees a new slate of exhibitions, led by ***Bertram Brooker: When We Awake*** (January 27 – June 2, 2024), a fascinating deep dive into the story of one of Canada's most intriguing artistic figures. Born in England and spending his formative early life in Winnipeg, Brooker came to be a close colleague of the Group of Seven artists in Toronto, adept at painting, novel writing, art criticism, playwrighting and a host of other creative pursuits – all while working in Toronto's advertising industry. Deeply compelled by the alternate philosophies and spiritual pursuits of the day, Brooker was particularly attuned to the synergies between music and painting. The show is curated by noted Canadian art scholar Michael Parke-Taylor and will be the first in-depth exhibition and publication on the artist.

Concurrently, the gallery will mount an exhibition on contemporary artist Marcel Dzama (b. 1974), a Winnipeg artist of international reputation who is now resident in New York. Dzama shares Brooker's remarkable ability to work across multiple media – in his case painting, drawing, film, stage design and performance. Wildly creative, Dzama makes works that reflect on history and the repeating patterns of violence, authoritarianism and resistance. ***Marcel Dzama: Pageant of History*** (December 2023 – June 2024) brings together a choice selection of his production in all media at a time when his vision is more relevant than ever. This will be the first exhibition of Dzama's art in Canada in more than 20 years, since his move from Winnipeg to New York, and is likely to drive a younger cohort to our museum.

In this same period, we are presenting ***Cobalt: A Mining Town and The Canadian Imagination*** (November 2023 – April 2024), guest curated by noted Canadian art scholar Dr Catharine Mastin. The exhibition will be the first to gather paintings by a range of Canadian artists who frequented this remote mining town in the interwar period – among them A.Y. Jackson, Isabel McLaughlin, Yvonne McKague Housser, Franklin Carmichael and Bess Larkin Housser Harris – works that explore the imagery of industrial resource extraction in the north at a time when themes of 'wilderness' prevailed. The show will be accompanied by a small exhibition organized by Indigenous author and activist **Paul Seesequasis**, presenting the career of **John MacFie**, a settler photographer who documented the rich and resilient life of Indigenous communities in northern Ontario in the decades following.

Our Touring Program

As well, the McMichael is taking Canadian art abroad, with our touring exhibition ***Early Days:***

Indigenous Art From the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, showcasing the gallery’s remarkable collection of Indigenous art from all regions, which will tour to three US venues over fourteen months beginning in September 2023: The Heard Museum (Phoenix, AZ), The Albuquerque Museum (New Mexico) and the Chrysler Museum (Norfolk, VA). As well, we are working at achieving a European tour for *Tom Thomson: North Star*, and an American tour for *Meryl McMaster: Bloodline* as part of our ongoing efforts to win Canadian art its rightful place on the international scene.

Sustainability Many of these exhibitions, bolstered by their accompanying publications, are planned for travel, with the attendant revenue helping to fund our high standards of research and production. In this way, McMichael is creating content not just for Ontarians but for the entire country. In Fiscal 2024, we will have ten exhibitions on the road; their sixteen presentations across Canada and the USA will yield over \$1M in touring fees.⁷

Outcomes

With these plans, the McMichael continues its efforts to cement our role as the Home of the Art of Canada. Smaller projects continue to refresh the McMichael brand and reflect new demographics.

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

Outcomes: now that contemporary Indigenous work has been added to the collection, we will secure further gifts of contemporary art related to the theme of landscape and relationship to the natural world. We will continue to fill significant gaps in the collection.

⁷ “Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, through partnerships where appropriate”

2. [Visitor Experience](#)

Ongoing Response to Pandemic Recovery

While we have not experienced restrictions thus far in Fiscal 2023, there remains caution about crowds and some uncertainty among visitors. We endeavour to ensure that visitors are welcomed in a friendly and respectful manner, and that they are made to feel comfortable in their choice to wear a mask or not.

There seems to remain some hesitancy on the part of visitors to attend galleries in general in person; by making their experience comfortable, we hope that we will draw repeat visitation and word of mouth positive impact. As the major impact of the pandemic recedes, it is expected in Fiscal 2024 that visitors will return in greater numbers in the museums and attractions sector.

One successful tactic to enhance visitor experience has been the Free Family Sundays, with programming geared to parents and children. We are exploring its continuation in Fiscal 2024.

The McMichael Café (now called CABIN) continues to be challenged by recruiting and retaining service staff, as have others in hospitality. They have seen greater numbers of guests in Fiscal 2023, which is expected to continue in Fiscal 2024, and it is also hoped that the hospitality sector's staff retention will improve with increases in minimum wage.

Investing in Digital Improvements⁸

Sustainability

The McMichael urgently requires a functional, modern website if it is to continue to deliver an exceptional visitor experience, drive attendance, generate revenue from admissions and retails, and highlight and promote the art of Canada. The current website is outdated, difficult to navigate and insufficient for our current needs. The existing backend requires a complete overhaul to be brought up to functionality, and the front end requires significant investment in design and user experience to help visitors find the information they're looking for. In Fiscal 2024 the McMichael intends to undertake a complete website overhaul, in tandem with a brand refresh outlined elsewhere in this document, in order to improve functionality and deliver an exceptional online experience – one that will make it easy to discover and explore the art of Canada, find information about visiting the Gallery, register for events, view talks and videos, become a member and make a donation.

Through virtual webinars and tours, curatorial and artist talks, and other digital experience, we continue to make our permanent collection and special exhibitions accessible to audiences around the world. Access to these online resources will only be 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-

⁸ "Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met"

museum to students, researchers and the general public alike. Ongoing digitization of the Cape Dorset (Kinngait) Archive and additions to the *Iningait Ilagait* website 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 from mcmichael.com, can be accessed in French, English and Inuktitut and in low-bandwidth formats.

Outcome: investments in digital technology will continue to enhance revenue and visitor experience.

Transportation

Sustainability

Partnerships

If the McMichael is to achieve real growth in visitorship, including broadening the Gallery’s 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, as well as seniors, for whom the Gallery must find a convenient, low-cost mass transportation solution to bring visitors to the McMichael, which is largely 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. If we are to achieve a path towards net zero, the issue of transportation must be addressed. In Fiscal 2024 the McMichael will work with the Vaughan Department of Economic Development and the Kleinburg BIA to explore the potential of a pilot project summer shuttle to run on weekends between VMC and the McMichael.⁹

Outcome: by working in partnership and collaboration, the problem of access to public transportation will be tackled.

⁹ “Supporting our collective recovery from the global pandemic, and enabling the tourism and culture sectors to return to and exceed pre-pandemic levels of activity”

3. [Knowledge Creation and Sharing](#)

Creative Learning

Building Strength through Challenge

While the results of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to linger throughout the last year, we have also observed signs of the return to more stabilised operations, primarily within the school and children’s programming. Both parents and teachers enthusiastically embraced what the McMichael has to offer, and we are expecting that this trend will continue to grow within the next fiscal.

However, we are acutely aware how strongly the recent years affected the social and economic fabric of Ontario. To respond to these changes, the department will continue to review the programs from two essential perspectives:

- programs relevancy, focusing on social and cultural diversity engagement
- programs accessibility, examining how make our offerings widely available to communities struggling with the effects of pandemics.

Programs Relevancy

IDEA Already during the last year, we have entered a conversation with teachers regarding diversity within their student population. It appears very clear that with changing Ontario demographics, students’ identities are not always properly reflected through our permanent collections. While we know that the curatorial department is furiously working on filling these voids through new acquisitions and temporary exhibitions, we decided to engage directly with educators and artists from the marginalized communities to produce the programming content nurturing social and cultural inclusivity.

Here are a few examples of this approach implemented in Fiscal 2023:

- implementation of the pilot session of the *Leaders of Tomorrow* program based on an intercultural exchange
- development of the Signature Studio with Rajni Perera
- developing a series of free *Family Sundays* featuring BIPOC performers and artists

In Fiscal 2024, we plan to continue this approach in the future by involving BIPOC artists and relevant communities in the development process.¹⁰

Indigeneity On the other hand, one of the McMichael’s art collection strengths is our significant collection of Indigenous art. Within the climate of the Truth & Reconciliation conversations, the McMichael has an important role to play in bringing the voices of Indigenous communities to Ontarians. By working with elders, traditional teachers, and storytellers from diverse

¹⁰ “Deepen efforts to reflect our diverse artistic landscape by increasing the representation of Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists within the McMichael’s collection and exhibitions”

Indigenous communities across the country, the McMichael offers an ideal forum for knowledge sharing and ideas exchange. Close collaboration will also enrich the knowledge of our team and ensure that we properly interpret presented concepts and the works on view.

An excellent example of this sort of collaboration in Fiscal 2023 was educational engagement around Bonnie Devine’s project. The mural produced by the Anishinaabe artist from the Serpent River First Nation became an important starting point for a conversation between Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat and Wyandot elders and faith keepers regarding the Carrying Place history. While we continue to work with Elder Shelley Charles from the Chippewas of the Georgina Island, we plan to build a stronger relationship with Huron-Wendat people who traditionally occupied the land on which the McMichael is located.

Partnerships

Close collaborations with school boards to activate the call of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission is certainly essential. A perfect example of this sort of activation is our *Leaders of Tomorrow* project. Empowered by the success of various partnership ventures with York Region District School Board and Toronto District School Board, such as *Footprints for our Future* and V.O.I.C.E.S. programs, in Fiscal 2023 we implemented the first *Leaders of Tomorrow* program, which allowed an intercultural exchange of students from Georgina Island Chippewas community and one of the northern YRDSB schools. Learning from each other and discovering common values was one of the most important outcomes of this program for the participating students.¹¹

In Fiscal 2024 we plan to further develop this program and offer it to other school boards and communities. This enrichment program focuses on sharing various cultural traditions, development of leadership skills and environmental advocacy. Offered similarly to our V.O.I.C.E.S. students at no cost, delivery of this program requires our department to work closely with the Development Department to secure a sponsorship funding. We have just completed several applications to support this goal.

Reinvigorating our team with proper recruitment is another strategy to create an inclusive workplace and keep the program content relevant to our school audiences and beyond. Informed by the previous experience of working with local colleges such as Humber College and Georgian College, we are currently working on establishing a stronger relationship with other student services. We have just developed a communication strategy with the OCAD University Student Outreach Services and their Alumni Circle. We hope that this relationship will allow us to attract students from marginalized backgrounds to apply to various departmental positions and development contracts. We feel that in the current situation, younger generations have a particular need to engage professionally in provincial organizations.

¹¹ “Collaborate with other agencies, ministry partners, stakeholders and communities to drive efficient innovation across all lines of business, with particular attention given to sharing your success stories with Ontarians”

In Fiscal 2024 we plan to develop a similar strategy with York University and Toronto Metropolitan University. Including young professionals from various ethnic backgrounds within our department would allow us not only to build the awareness of these communities need, but also to offer a platform for these young people to directly shape our programs.

Subsiding impact of COVID-19 allowed us to slowly reintroduce robust senior programming, which was developed through the Fiscal 2023 such as *Outdoor Discovery Tour* and *Art & Nature Meditations* and added to previous senior tours offerings, along with a special programming series for people living with Aphasia. We are also currently offering a free *Family Art Accessible Workshops*, designed to engage children living with exceptionalities.

IDEA However, through the consultations with the community, we came to realise an acute need for the art programming for young adults living with Spectrum Autism Disorder and other cognitive disabilities. The development and implementation of this program, known as *Living with Art*, was made possible thanks to a CIBC grant. This new program will allow various support organizations to register to one or a series of studio-based three-hour long classes that will provide an opportunity to view and create art, practice various life skills in a public setting and socially interact in a safe and inclusive gallery environment. We are currently working with Autism Ontario and Kerry's Place to develop the program implementation strategy.

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.

Programs Accessibility

IDEA Analysis of Fiscal 2023 made us very aware of the current organizational, as well as financial struggle of schools, community organizations and the general audience.

To ensure easy access to our program offerings, we greatly diversified our delivery platforms. Currently, our programs can be accessed through in-person interaction, as an outreach engagement, virtually or as a hybrid combination of a delivery.¹²

Fiscal 2023 allowed us to fine-tune our digital delivery, and while serving a local audience to also reach beyond the GTA area in both schools, as well as in public programming. In Fiscal 2024, we plan to further make these virtual programs available.

¹² "Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since Covid-19"

Partnerships

Although we observed growth in registrations to in-person programs within the local school districts, a need for art programming in distant communities of Northern Ontario and across Canada is still there. By partnering with Connected North, we continue to successfully reach northern students. At the same time, through constant communication and use of the provided resources, this partnership allows to make the programming offer relevant to the audience they serve. This past summer, we were one of the sites visited by the national conference of the Connected North managers and teachers. Several bookings resulted from this encounter. In Fiscal 2024 we plan to tighten this partnership even further.

Digital delivery is also dominating our adult programming for both gallery talks and art classes. Adults, and older adults in particular, seem reluctant to return to larger organized events. We hope that this trend will change through Fiscal 2024, and we plan to offer a series of art appreciation events available to this audience.

However, through our *Free Tuesdays* initiative we came to a realization that the financial factor could be an additional barrier to many of our visitors. Our free *Family Sundays*, which follows the first initiative, were launched in June, and quickly proved that this financial factor is even more important to family audiences.

These events continue to set high visitation records, which in relation to poorly attended other Sundays prove that there is an acute need for this sort of offerings. In Fiscal 2024 we hope to continue this initiative.

To offset the costs of this free events, we are working with the Development department to secure sponsorship funding, while also trying to engage art organizations and groups to contribute at least partially. Unfortunately, after two years of COVID-19 these groups are also financially extremely vulnerable. In Fiscal 2024 we plan to work on a strategy to make the free access a permanent feature of our public programming.

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

Programs Sustainability

Sustainability

The importance of offering affordable high-quality programs and balancing the budget is a very challenging exercise, particularly at the time when Ontarians are financially recovering from the hardship of COVID-19.

To be able to deliver a previously listed free access programming, the department plan to solidify the delivery of these ticketed programs appears particularly successful in these difficult times and to diversify the offer by including programs focusing on well-being and socialising.

IDEA

In summer 2022, Artventure Summer Camp enjoyed particular popularity after frequent COVID-19 school lockdowns. In Fiscal 2024, we expect this success to continue and with changing Public Health guidelines, we plan to increase classrooms' density to make the camps more profitable. At the same time, we also plan to continue to offer some free camp spaces to children from refugee communities. The initiative of the last summer, which in August 2022 allowed 30 Ukrainian children to participate at no cost in our ArtVenture Summer camp operations, became a great inspiration to repeat this success in collaboration with various other newcomers' communities. We plan to work on the sustainability of this program with the relevant community organizations and potential sponsors.

Sustainability

To grow revenue, we also plan to boost adult classes and further diversify the offerings. While the return of the in-person classes, and the fatigue of the virtual programming strongly affected our adult art classes performance in Fiscal 2023, we hope that with the improving COVID-19 situation, we will see the return of this audience. In addition to the traditional art studio offer, we are also looking into including various well-being and general interest classes such as Artful Yoga. Introduced over the last summer as a free event, this program returned in the Fall as a ticketed class.

Tightening operations, more aggressively pursuing individual and corporate sponsoring, and prioritising resources is essential to ensure the proper budgetary balance.

However, we also realise the importance of ensuring a pleasant and stable work environment, which will lead to the retention of valuable staff and the current challenging philanthropic landscape.

Guided by the Auditor General, in Fiscal 2023 the department implemented a program specific digital survey for all school and public programming. We are currently working on ensuring visitors' participation in this survey. Moreover, during our interaction with the auditors, we came to realise the importance of reporting and clear departmental guidelines for the staff.¹³

Delivering the first comprehensive annual Creative Learning Report in Fiscal 2023, we plan to continue with this approach and work in Fiscal 2024 on a comprehensive Creative Learning Manual, which will clarify the departmental structure and list the policies and resources. We believe that this document will improve communication within the department, make our processes and operations transparent and nurture a sense of stability among the current and new staff. It will also allow us to review which approaches are outdated within a new post-COVID reality and what structural enhancements can be made to ensure a more efficient use of time and departmental resources.

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

¹³ "Continue to focus on implementing the recommendations of the value-for-money audit conducted by the Auditor General of Ontario"

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Funding has been secured from the federal government’s Digital Access to Heritage to complete the digitization of the Cape Dorset archive of nearly 100,000 works on paper, and to make them accessible online. In Fiscal 2023, we will restart this digitization using the innovative digitizer created by artist Ed Burtynsky, and work with communities in Kinngait to write image descriptors in order to upload the entire archive onto our existing trilingual, low-bandwidth-enabled, accessible website. In Fiscal 2024, digitization will be completed, and the focus will be on promotion and sharing of this incredibly important digital resource.¹⁴

Research

Research in the Registrar’s department continues to be increasingly important with the pace of art acquisitions as well as to meet the requirement of the Auditor General of Ontario’s Value for Money audit. Two assistant Registrars are in place to continue this work.

Publications

In Fiscal 2023, we continued our contemporary book series, which pairs a living artist with a leading Canadian author, through publications on Wanda Koop and Rajni Perera. Development work is continuing at present toward a major publication documenting our deep Indigenous holdings, *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael*, gathering the voices of knowledgeable settler and Indigenous knowledge-keepers into a multi-authored publication.

The major publication of Fiscal 2024 will be the catalogue for the Tom Thomson exhibition, which we anticipate will be very popular. However, we also continue our efforts to highlight the other artists we exhibit, such as Bertram Brooker, with the first in-depth exhibition and publication of his work.

Publications are a critical means of promoting the McMichael’s work across the country. The catalogues accompany our touring exhibitions, bringing an additional presence in other galleries; moreover, we increasingly see our publications in other galleries’ retail shops whether or not there are touring exhibitions on location.

¹⁴ “Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met”

4. Sustainable Organization

Fundraising

Sustainability

Philanthropy and Corporate Sponsorship remain key components to ensuring financial stability for the McMichael, allowing for the continued growth of our collection, important art education programming, and public access to an exceptional collection of Canadian contemporary art.

saw significant turnover in the Development Department staffing complement. The early part of the fiscal year was dominated, in large part, by the organization and hosting of the Moonlight Gala, a major community and fundraising event (primarily in support of our education program) at McMichael. Over 700 guests enjoyed the evening – an attendance record for this annual event.

Post-Gala, the Development Department held an internal retreat to determine strengths within the team, brainstorm regarding what the future might hold, consider new approaches, and ultimately to set priorities for the coming year. This is consistent with the plan that was submitted in 2022-23 as **internal capacity building and operations** were a key pillar.

The Development Department priorities for 2023-24 are outlined below. While the Development Department, and the McMichael as a whole, remains ambitious in our aspirations and plans, a reminder of the current situation regarding the not-for-profit environment is worthy of mention. There are over 170,000 not for profit organizations in Canada, so the competition for philanthropic and sponsorship support remains challenging. Add to that the economic hardship many are feeling as we exit, hopefully, COVID-19, and the growing concern about a recession and rising cost of living...the not-for-profit environment has not faced these challenges since post-2008. Our Development Team, however, remains confident in the exceptional story we must share about the McMichael, and the passion so many in this province (and beyond) have for the art of Canada.

1. Focus on membership experience & continued growth

Membership at McMichael, at approximately 5000 members annual, is an important financial driver for the gallery, but also (and obviously) impacts visitors at the gallery. As we emerge from COVID we are committed to ensuring a special experience for our members. This includes streamlining the process to buy/renew memberships, refreshed marketing materials and membership packages, regular communication with members regarding special events or offerings for members, and continuing the “concierge” type service that larger organizations may not be able to offer members.

We will work to actively re-engage lapsed members in particular through targeted actions, and work collaboratively with Marketing and Communications to develop marketing efforts to reach, in particular, new members in the York Region.

2. Build the donor pipeline and be more deliberate in seeking philanthropic support¹⁵

During the onboarding of new staff members, one of whom came from an educational institution fundraising background, it became clear that a major focus for the Development Department would be to grow not only the size of gifts, but to grow the number of donors to the McMichael. Some areas of focus will include:

- Regularly communicating the importance and impact of philanthropy to members; it is not an “either or” but a “both” are important.
- Grow the donor pool through active solicitation, both by mail but primarily through e-communications, around key dates and end of year (for tax purposes)
- Assign donors over a certain level (likely \$1,000) to a Relationship Manager who will build a connection with the donor, working to increase their philanthropic support
- Engage in the important, yet time consuming work of effective stewardship, to ensure donors feel valued, they understand how their support has been used, and that the McMichael is a worthy recipient of their support.

3. Personalized experience for donors

As we look to grow both the number of donors to McMichael (both personal and corporate sponsorship) we also realize one of our great institutional strengths is our size and the personal connection visitors feel at the McMichael. We will move away from the traditional chart of benefits for donors, instead building a personal relationship with our donors as providing a bespoke experience to those (\$5,000 and above) who exhibit a desire to support, at their highest possible level, the McMichael.

4. Corporate sector support and engagement

Our focus for corporate approaches is to appreciate the rhythm of corporate sponsorship, and fine-tune the process to ensure important support is secured:

- Develop a clear picture of the funding gaps, and the opportunities for corporate support and sponsorship
- Build a database of corporate sponsors, including interests and priorities and inclination to support the gallery
- Strengthen relationships with those that have provided support in 2022-23, and re-engage those who supported the McMichael pre-COVID
- Explore possibilities for multi-year or multi-event support to make the sponsorship offering more attractive

5. Improved use of database¹⁶

Like many not-for-profit institutions, the McMichael uses Blackbaud Raiser’s Edge as the backbone of our membership and fundraising program. As a result of a long-term absence in 2022-23, the entire

¹⁵ “Diversifying revenue streams, increasing self-generated revenue and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of your operations and facilities”

¹⁶ “Continue to enhance your agency’s approach to data collection, performance measurement and reporting”

Development Department has become both more sensitive and adept at use of the database and understanding strengths and weaknesses of the system.

An audit was conducted of our Raiser's Edge/NXT use, which will result in efficiencies and best in class improvements in the way we both use the database daily, but also in the ability to maximize its use for data, projections, and to better track our actions as a team, but also understand the interests of our members and donors.

6. Campaign preparation and readiness

Capital Renewal

As the McMichael looks to future, we are fully aware that a significant increase in philanthropic support will be essential along with support from the government for the important structural work required at the gallery. Philanthropy has been an essential part of the McMichael for many years; a major campaign is not something that has been part of past approaches. Important work will continue to ready the McMichael to embark on the early phase of a major fundraising campaign, including:

- Building a strong case for support to share with donors
- Recruiting and training key volunteer leaders to form a campaign cabinet
- Ensure 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 major campaign
- Continue with identification and cultivation of potential donors

The Development Department will continue to better understand the programs and excitement of the McMichael, and to share that passion with those outside the gallery, giving them an important opportunity to positively impact the world through the art of Canada.

Visitorship

The McMichael continues to offer 6-day visitorship. As noted above, in the early part of Fiscal 2023 there remained some hesitancy on the part of visitors to return to the gallery. This is not unique to the McMichael. Extremely important data* has emerged to demonstrate that pent up and deferred demand has been met in Fiscal 2023; indeed, our visitorship is approaching pre-pandemic levels. However, to increase visitorship, this same data shows that the pandemic has altered the visitation behaviors. For example, there is now a longer time between visits for individuals, and the competition for leisure time has greatly increased. We will need to be conscious of these changes in patterns and work hard to retain our visitors and grow attendance.

* <https://www.colleendilen.com/2022/10/12/post-pandemic-attendance-projections-for-museums-do-not-rely-on-pent-up-demand-data/>

Exhibitions and Creative Learning

The Creative Learning and Programs department continues to build on the audiences gained through their virtual offerings for schools, public art classes and tours. In addition, they have developed

speciality programming designed for vulnerable and marginalized communities, partly in response to the recognition of need through the pandemic. They are particularly intent on ensuring that members of BIPOC communities are represented and welcome.

Touring continues to be an important new source of revenue; in Fiscal 2024 we anticipate that the Tom Thomson exhibition will be a particular driver of revenue from visitation and sponsorship.

Initiatives for Fiscal 2023 and beyond include:

- Continue to focus on innovative in-person and online education and programming while also focusing programming for vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Focus marketing and fundraising efforts on *Tom Thomson: North Star, Sandra Meigs, Uses of Enchantment: Art and Environmentalism* and other smaller exhibitions for specialty audiences
- Work with the Board of Trustees, Foundation Directors and art philanthropists to broaden our network of diverse individual supporters and volunteers, targeting in particular a capital campaign
- Continue to focus marketing efforts on continuing to build the Gallery's mobile, digital and experiential channels, maintaining a multi-platform, integrated marketing and communications plan that includes traditional media, digital and social media, and broadcast.
- Continue to deepen engagement with cultural landscape and Indigenous artists and community leaders

5. [Organizational Capacity](#)

Quality of Life and Economic Development

Partnerships	We continue to work closely with 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 also an active member of the Toronto Attractions Council, Central Counties Tourism and York Region Arts Council. These forums were extremely important during the pandemic and will continue to help position in different markets.
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During Fiscal 2023, local tourism and engagement of the immediate local community remained important; with restrictions eased, we expanded our marketing reach provincially and nationally.

An important development in Fiscal 2023 was the establishment of a formal partnership with the City of Vaughan. Through the Economic Development department, an MOU was created between the City, the McMichael, and the Vaughan Film Festival as part of Vaughan's efforts to establish a creative industries centre of excellence. The creative and cultural industries have been identified by the Vaughan City Council as an opportunity to develop the local business community and attract talent in successive Economic Development strategies. The McMichael will play a key role in the development of a cultural corridor that includes Kleinburg.

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 Programs in achieving their strategic goals.

The McMichael also ensures 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 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 tranquil place to get outdoors for relaxation and physical activity in a forested, natural landscape.

Sustainability

In Fiscal 2024, the McMichael’s marketing and communications team will be working on marketing campaigns that specifically target local, national and international audiences.¹⁷ At the local level, marketing campaigns will focus on growing our base of local families who love programs like 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 bold face exhibitions such as Tom Thomson. Our videos running on Air Canada provide another significant channel for national and international presence. With the hire in 2022 of a full-time Social Media Manager the department is also able to fully execute 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. The Social Media Manager is also able to analyze and act on insights from analytics more effectively.

The McMichael’s marketing campaigns will continue to draw audiences to the unique selling proposition of the extensive grounds and trails and the corresponding physical and mental benefits of getting outdoors. In Fiscal 2024, marketing campaigns will continue to be primarily driven by the exhibition schedule (outlined elsewhere in this document). These campaigns encompass most 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:

- May: Moonlight Gala (Major Annual Fundraising Event)
- October: “Fall Colours” campaign to highlight the grounds and trails during our most popular

¹⁷ “Supporting our collective recovery from the global pandemic, and enabling the tourism and culture sectors to return to and exceed pre-pandemic levels of activity”

season

- October: Art Toronto. The marketing team works in collaboration with the Curatorial and Development departments to curate an exceptional in-person and online presence at the annual Art Toronto fair including a large booth, book table, and on-site and virtual talks making it an excellent opportunity for brand building, networking, and revenue generation.
- Fall: Autumn Art Sale
- October/November: Membership Drive Campaign
- November/December: Membership Double Discount Days Campaign & Giving Tuesday
- December: “Holiday” campaign during the winter season
- January: Canada’s Bridal Show
- March (folds into the following fiscal): Education Programs Advertising Campaign – a targeted bilingual 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

The effectiveness of these campaigns is evaluated according to 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 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. Additionally, millennial audiences are more environmentally and budget conscious and must be provided with a compelling reason and low-cost travel options if they are to visit. 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 more.¹⁸

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

¹⁸ “Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information-sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery”

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 market and arts audiences including those specifically interested in contemporary art, the McMichael will leverage social media tools, including stories and reels, 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.¹⁹

- 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 Chief Curator and Executive Director.
- Build long-lead stories to pitch to media for exhibitions throughout the year, strengthening relationships with key media.
- Enhance the navigation of the website to enhance the visitor experience by undertaking a UX (user experience) review to inform of any necessary website upgrades.
- Emphasize the McMichael’s remarkable slate of touring exhibitions to build awareness of the McMichael as a national destination for and incubator of the best Canadian art exhibitions.

Partnerships

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 thought leaders and area experts 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.

¹⁹ “Collaborate with other provincial agencies and attractions operating within the Greater Toronto Area to encourage visitors to extend their stays and to explore all the region has to offer”

The Gallery communicates directly with the public through monthly e-newsletters (one to members and one to a general audience), social media posts and the website. The public may communicate with the McMichael at any time through our general email address, social media channels, telephone or mail. Additionally, all visitors who purchase a timed 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.

In Fiscal 2024 the Communications team will continue to monitor news trends, coverage and competitive activity both in print and online, including on social channels, using trade and media monitoring services such as Meltwater. In-person media cultivation is also essential to building lasting media relationships in an overburdened editorial 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 and the Gallery is actively collaborating with other Agencies and Toronto-based museums including the ROM, AGO, Power Plant and Gardiner on joint international press trips.

Brand Identity & Website

Capital Renewal

Sustainability

With a capital campaign underway and a need to drive audiences, revenue, attention and donations the McMichael brand must be aligned with a reimagined Home to the art of Canada. Working closely with a creative agency, the McMichael plans to undergo a comprehensive rebrand including a new logo and brand identity.

The overall look and feel of the new branding will need to represent the McMichael's new direction, honouring the mix of art and nature that is at the core of the McMichael experience while pointing towards the future. The brand must embrace the Gallery's warm and earthy atmosphere, but in a contemporary way that reflect the McMichael's unique position as the only major museum devoted exclusively to the Art of Canada, both historical and contemporary. The McMichael requires an adaptable, easily recognizable and aspirational brand identity that can translate onto the website and into digital, print and large-scale. The brand must be able to see the Gallery through the building campaign and position the McMichael in the future to:

- Foster excitement and awareness with audiences
- Enhance the visitor experience
- Generate engagement and support from members, donors, partners and sponsors, and
- Be recognized as a "must-see" destination for Canadian culture locally, nationally and internationally

The brand guidelines will be updated to reflect the brand identity. An extension of these guidelines will also be developed for the purpose of travelling exhibitions, allowing for effective promotion of the McMichael in order to help establish a brand presence nationally and internationally.

Corporate Sales and Events²⁰

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 2024 with a focus on the return of 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, including the annual Wedding Show, with a particular focus on maximum-capacity events and revenue-generating photo permits
- Position ourselves within Vaughan as a host for community and civic events through close engagement with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
- 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 on our social networks
- 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 including the Wedding Show and travel to OMCA (Ontario Motor Coach Association) and Bienvenu (French-language tours), as well as out-of-city tradeshow and networking events
- Holiday advertising for Christmas parties
- Industry memberships, such as Wedding Wire and Eventsourcing, which are important ways to market McMichael as a wedding venue

²⁰ “Collaborate with other provincial agencies and attractions operating within the Greater Toronto Area to encourage visitors to extend their stays and to explore all the region has to offer”

Sustainability

Easy, cost-effective public transportation to the McMichael continues to be a determining factor in achieving the Marketing and Communications goals set out in this document and driving attendance. Our partnerships with the region and/or other attractions have become closer through the pandemic period as we have participated in strategizing to drive attendance and create opportunities for visitors for day trips. A viable transportation link between downtown Toronto, the McMichael and ideally other Agencies is still a significant goal in our effort to offer visitors a World in One Province experience. We will continue to work with Vaughan Economic Development and other stakeholders to position transportation as a vital issue for the region's attractions.

Digital Content Strategy

Insights from the various digital programs and offerings developed during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that McMichael audiences across the country and around the world are interested in such virtual offerings. Although much of the focus in the year ahead continues to be on bringing audiences on site, continuing our virtual offerings will provide the Gallery with further opportunities to build brand awareness nationally and internationally.

The McMichael continues to program a range of digital offerings that include professionally taught art classes, virtual exhibition tours, short videos on works with the Executive Director and Chief Curator, and webinars with and about Canadian artists and exhibitions with scholars, writers and thinkers from many disciplines. The popularity of and engagement with these programs has indicated that audiences are eager for this type of engagement 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.²¹

²¹ "Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since Covid-19"

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MEET GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Fiscal 2024 budget has been prepared with the Provincial operating grant consistent with Fiscal 2023.

Operating revenues included in the planned budget consists of:

- Provincial annual operating grant: \$3,328,800 (29%);
- Other government funding based on project support: \$595,000 (5%);
- Contributed revenue (individual/corporate giving, sponsorships and fundraising events) \$3,231,000 (28%); and
- Self-generated revenue: Admissions, membership, exhibition fees, programs, retail and facility rental \$4,463,900 (38%).

A gradual and moderate return to pre-COVID-19 operations has been observed in Fiscal 2023. Lingering effects from the pandemic continue to impact the self-generating revenue capabilities of the gallery through suppressed numbers of gallery visitors, in-person art class and community program participants, and rentals of the facility for social events. While the McMichael has been resourceful and innovative in endeavoring to maximize its self-generating revenue activities by increasing admission prices, encouraging memberships, emphasizing all manner of fundraising, and developing exhibitions that will be toured to various venues across Canada, a deficit will be recorded. The Fiscal 2024 plan assumes a continued normalization of operations. Self-generated revenue is projected to return to pre-Covid levels for most revenue streams. ²²

The budget that has been developed for Fiscal 2024 continues to reflect the need to invest in the future of the McMichael. Our salaries have not kept pace with the museum sector. Staffing levels are being maintained to continue the positive momentum of our ambitious exhibitions, expanding collection, significant publications, and well-received and far-reaching touring exhibitions. While our revenue streams are projected to recover to pre-pandemic levels, we could do so much more if the physical limitations of the current space did not preclude our ability to do so. At this point in the McMichael's evolution the focus must continue to be on an investment in reach to achieve significant and necessary revenue results in future.

Our planned programming requires that staffing resources be maintained.

Classification	Number of Staff	FTEs
Senior Management	7	7
Full-time staff	44	44
Part-time staff	91	33.9
Total:	142	84.9
Security Services Outsourced	9	9.0
Volunteers	180	5

²² "Diversifying revenue streams, increasing self-generated revenue and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of your operations and facilities"

HUMAN RESOURCES

The key objectives for Human Resources in Fiscal 2023 are set out in line with the government priorities for provincial agencies as directed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and to which the McMichael Strategic goals align.

Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

Retention and Succession
Planning

The Succession planning for senior staff and key positions initiated in Fiscal 2022 were carried forward through Fiscal 2023. This initiative is tracked quarterly as a risk factor with oversight by Human Resources

Committee of the Board.

Staff retention in the post-pandemic period of the “Great Resignation” is a reality also to which the McMichael is subject. Mitigation plans include engagement initiatives, workplace wellness, work efficiencies in communications, work flexibility in continued hybrid work, and competitive compensation through benchmarking.

Workforce efficiencies are established through the sharing of objectives on an annual basis and provide a line of sight to all staff and volunteers on how they can influence and support objectives in their departments and their own roles. This line of sight is reinforced with the annual Performance review process.

Transparency and Accountability

The McMichael maintains regular training in all public sector directives and policies: the Public Service of Ontario Act, Ontario Health & Safety and Ministry of Labour guidelines, Ontario Human Rights, and Respect in the Workplace are required training courses for all new hires whereby a certificate of completion and signature are provided.

Transparency in wage and compensation will be made available on the posting of any open jobs and ranges will be shared openly with the staff so as to support compensation strategies of equity and benchmarked competitiveness.

The focus on consistent performance management process for all staff, as initiated through the Auditor General of Ontario’s 2020 Value-for-Money Audit of Museums and Galleries, continues to see benefits in staff performance and engagement. All staff and managers are required to have an annual focused performance discussion, which also supports the alignment of departmental and personal goals and the objectives of workforce wellness and efficiency.

Risk Management

The COVID-19 health and safety policies and procedures have been adapted to the current work environment to support a healthy workforce and workplace. Training and reminders on hand hygiene,

the continued cleaning procedures, and the option of hybrid work for non-front-line positions, plus the 4 paid COVID sick days for those positions that are front line, ensure that staff are healthy when working on site together.

Reports of areas related to risk management are addressed at Quarterly board meetings.

Workforce management

Retention and Succession Planning

Communication initiatives such as weekly organizational cross-department meetings led by the Executive Director continued weekly through Fiscal 2023 and will continue throughout Fiscal 2024. Monthly newsletter updates sent by Human Resources will also continue, and our quarterly All staff meetings have returned to being in-person, on site. The weekly meetings, monthly newsletters, quarterly meetings, and consistent department and volunteer meetings support the means of keeping staff informed and involved, whether they are working remotely or on site. These regular check-ins are integral to workforce management, efficiencies, and productivity.

The Social Committee activities have been resurrected in order to provide in-person opportunities for staff and volunteers to come together as groups and share in camaraderie and mental wellness.

Diversity and Inclusion

IDEA

The orientation for all McMichael staff continues to include the Ontario Human Rights “Call it Out -Racism” training. The training is a helpful tool to open the conversation and ensure an equitable workplace.

Indigeneity

All job postings are posted on the job board of Miziwe Biik, and others where it is a direct asset to identify as Indigenous, Metis or Inuit background; they are also listed in the Georgina Post. The Creative Learning team has a strong relationship with Elders and traditional teachers from diverse Indigenous communities across the country where our open job positions are shared and socialized. The staff and volunteer committee dedicated to broadening the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) conducted a second annual survey in the 3rd quarter of Fiscal 2023 and the results will impact the Fiscal 2024 IDEA action plans.

The McMichael Volunteer Committee appointed a Chair of the McMichael Indigenous Minokamik Garden to work with Elders and ensure the garden is well maintained to support the community work that celebrates traditional Anishinaabe teachings.

Data Collection

An analysis of exit interviews and annual workplace surveys conducted by the University of Montreal OSMET Health & Wellbeing at work helps to benchmark our Human Resources practices.

Digital Delivery and Customer Service

The launch of a Human Resources hub for policies, procedures, and benefits access, anticipated to launch in Q4 for Fiscal 2024 will support ease of access to consistent McMichael information relevant to staff.

In house customer service training continued to be provided in January and June for all new staff and as a team building and training initiative for departments.

Volunteer Committee

Volunteers have resumed on site placements in Fiscal 2023, although the opportunities provided for volunteers were less than pre-pandemic numbers. Fiscal 2024 will see the resurrection of the McMichael Volunteer Committee annual art sale fundraiser that has been put on hold this past year. The fundraiser, which welcomes an average of 400 visitors over its 3-days previously in October and now scheduled for November 2023, will support the McMichael operations and is a substantial outreach initiative. This will be the 30th annual fundraiser in the volunteer committee history and will be a motivational and engaging opportunity for volunteers and for the public. The McMichael Volunteer Committee provides invaluable service on multiple fronts, including visitor services for the artist in residence in the Thomson Shack, and taking over the ongoing maintenance of Minokamik Ceremonial Garden.

The McMichael Youth Team continues to engage high school students throughout Vaughan and the neighbouring regions. The 30 students gain valuable public sector volunteer experience and many follow skills learned into their post-secondary curriculum and return to McMichael as staff members.

Structure

All staff members report, directly or indirectly to the Executive Director who reports to the McMichael Board of Trustees. 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.²³

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; and
- Improve organizational capacity and performance.

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

Performance Measure	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Projection	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result	2020-21 Result	2019–20 Result
Total Attendance (includes virtual programs attendance)	122,600	104,900	118,700	71,643	49,006	121,000
Virtual Programs Attendance	10,000	8,000	15,000	10,720	22,177	N/A
Numbers of followers across social media platforms (FY23 to date)	Facebook: 38,000 Instagram: 30,000 Twitter: 26,500	Facebook: 34,883 Instagram: 24,700 Twitter: 25,900	Facebook: 34,500 Instagram: 29,000 Twitter: 26,400	Facebook: 30,617 Instagram: 23,780 Twitter: 25,897	Facebook: 29,385 Instagram: 21,128 Twitter: 25,581	Facebook: 28,000 Instagram: 13,500 Twitter: 25,250

²³ “Continue to enhance your agency’s approach to data collection, performance measurement and reporting”

Engaging and exceptional visitor experience:

Performance Measure	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Projection	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result	2020-21 Result	2019-20 Result
Visitor Satisfaction (FY23 to date)	3,000 comments 97% positive	1,452 comments 96.8% positive	2,800 Comments 96% positive	1,468 comments 98% positive	1,504 comments 99% positive	900 comments 92% positive
Membership Growth	45% retention 1% conversion	45% retention 1% conversion	50% retention 2% conversion	46% retention 0.85% conversion	34% retention 0.87% conversion	55% retention 2.0% conversion

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;
- 700 children benefiting from children public art classes and camps;
- Two ‘main stage’ exhibitions of loaned works, one permanent collection exhibition, one mid-size contemporary exhibition, one mid-size historical exhibition, one single-gallery historical exhibition, three single-gallery contemporary exhibitions, and an artist residency;
- Ten exhibitions developed by the McMichael on tour to other Canadian galleries
- Five publications on Canadian art;
- 15 virtual curatorial and artist talks and videos on Canadian art featuring artists, writers, curators, and scholars;
- 10 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, and complete the digitization
- 2000 attendees of online webinars;
- 4000 participants in virtual and in-person public gallery tours; and,
- 300 participants in virtual and in-person adult art classes.

Performance Measure	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Projection	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result	2020-21 Result	2019-20 Result
Number of McMichael produced exhibitions on tour	12	8	8	4	2	0
Number of viewers of McMichael produced exhibitions at touring venues	200,000	200,000*	231,800	47,973	81,200	0

*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	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Projection	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result	2020-21 Result	2019-20 Result
Dollar-per-visitor revenue in Gallery Shop	\$13.14	\$11.75	\$12.95	\$15.82	\$19.23	\$12.65
Percentage of administrative and operational costs compared to total costs	13%	13%	13%	15%	12%	12%

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

Performance Measure	2023-24 Target	2022-23 Projection	2022-23 Target	2021-22 Result	2020-21 Result	2019-20 Result
FTEs	84.9	81.7	78.4	69.11	56.8	67.8
Staff Turnover	6%	5.7%	6%	3.7%	1.8%	4%
Number of active volunteers,				155	164	165

docents and board members	180	187	180			
Number of volunteer hours contributed by volunteers and docents	8,000	7,500	10,000	5,616	3,732	15,000

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

External Factors

Pandemic

As anticipated, there continued to be lingering effects from the pandemic in Fiscal 2023, particularly in the first and second quarter. Government support will continue to be critical to our financial viability during this ongoing period of uncertainty. Impacts were felt in general attendance and creative learning as schools slowly returned to visitation. While we began approaching pre-pandemic levels of visitation and program registration, it is clear that these patterns have changed. Our Free Family Sundays are incredibly popular; this may in part be because people became accustomed to free offerings during the pandemic, but more research is needed. There remains of course the potential for future outbreaks due to variances, but we do not anticipate these will result in closures.

Local Community

The most important development of an MOU with the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Film Festival as part of the focus on creative industries for Vaughan. This will have a very positive impact on our relationship with the City and is a hugely welcome development. However, we continue to be embedded in numerous community and tourism organizations and are very focused on public transportation as a local issue that must be resolved. The Free Family Sundays are also attracting local audiences. In all, our relationships with the local community are greatly improving.

Diversity and the Arts

The IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) committee is a staff-led venture that forefronts these issues, not only for staff recruitment but also for planning in multiple departments. Creative Learning is leading the way through its work with Indigenous elders and artists as well as programming for BIPOC audiences. The McMichael Volunteer Committee is now taking the lead on maintaining Minokamik, the ceremonial garden. In Fiscal 2024, we are planning to deepen our engagement with Indigenous arborists and traditional teachers in landscape management. Exhibitions are also consciously representing excellent BIPOC artists such as Rajni Perera and Esma Mohammed. In other words, diversity is something that is consciously becoming imbedded in all aspects of our work.

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.

A breakthrough in demographics was witnessed in Fiscal 2023 with our Free Family Sundays, which attracted a much younger demographic through providing targeted experiences for children and families. We will be continuing this very successful venture, though hoping to identify a sponsor to help underwrite the cost of both the entertainment and admission.

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. In particular, millennial audiences, as well as those who don't drive or who are hesitant to drive because of environmental concerns, will not attend if the McMichael is perceived as inconvenient and not easy to get to. These same factors are increasingly becoming an issue for senior populations as well. The McMichael continues to closely with local transportation authorities to help expand the options for public transportation directly to the gallery and hope to see a transportation solution in place by spring/summer of 2024 at the latest.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a key concern being addressed through both the IDEA committee and particularly through Creative Learning and Programming. They continues to identify opportunities to increase accessibility where need has been identified, such as through the program Living with Arts developed for young adults living with Spectrum Autism Disorder and other cognitive disabilities. But accessibility has been more broadly embraced for marginalized or diverse groups (developing programming and activities around exhibitions by BIPOC and Indigenous artists), economic marginalization (Free Family Sundays), and others.

Changing Climate

Climate change in Canada is more and more urgent, and a central concern not only for the landscape, but for our plans for capital renewal. We are responding with a net Zero plan, and a Sustainability policy that will encompass the entire campus. It is increasingly apparent that an intentional approach to resiliency in the face of climate change will require that we integrate more southern Carolinian forest trees and shrubs.

Economic Situation

We are clearly still in the throes of recovery from the pandemic, with attendance and donations lagging. This has been reported by other organizations in our sector, as people have been slow to

return to attractions in Fiscal 2023. It is difficult to determine what impact might still be felt by the pandemic in Fiscal 2024, or whether or not the threatened recession at present will have a longer-term effect. As per our mandate, letter, we will collaborate with the Ministry and its agencies to enhance long-term infrastructure planning and participate in our collective recovery both from the pandemic and the looming recession.

National and International

Touring exhibitions have become a true triumph, with national and North American tours regularly happening. It is a key source of both presence and revenue, with approximately \$1.2 million expected in Fiscal 2024. As such, it certainly reflects two key requests of the Mandate letter to diversify “revenue streams, increasing self-generated revenue and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of your operations and facilities,” and “demonstrate excellence in program and service delivery by increasing access to the McMichael’s holdings through gallery attendance, virtual programming, and touring exhibitions.”

Internal Factors

Staffing

Like many organizations in the arts, we are being challenged by both retention and recruitment, particularly given the salaries we can afford to offer coupled with our location. Remote work has certainly eased the pressure of our location, but we cannot compete with larger institutions in the GTA. The McMichael is certainly an attractive place to work, and that has stood us in good stead for turnover. In the remainder of Fiscal 2023 and in 2024, we will be addressing both benchmarking and succession planning.

Facilities

The McMichael’s aging facility is the key driver for our plan for capital renewal. In Fiscal 2023, the cooling towers require replacement, and other upgrades are needed for the HVAC system, backflow regulators, and other elements. It is uncertain what other systems will need replacements/upgrades, but the 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 Class A 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 ultimately stymied by our lack of space and layout. As predicted, Fiscal 2023 has indeed been a year still challenged by the lingering effects of the pandemic, but we also recognized the need to invest in staffing. In Fiscal 2024, that trend will continue, exacerbated by inflation; we will continue to do our best to manage expenses but acknowledge that a balanced budget is not a reality within our current constraints.

FINANCIALS

Key Planning Assumptions

The McMichael bases its planning on the following assumptions:

- The Fiscal 2024 plan assumes a continued normalization of operations as society continues to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. The McMichael's success and recovery from the impact of the pandemic continues to be dependent on long term planning of exhibitions and programs that can be marketed strategically to targeted audiences and to potential private supporters, thereby diversifying revenue streams. As such, we continue to emphasize the creation of exhibitions that can generate increased visitation and touring revenue, as well as ensure our central role as the Home of the Art of Canada.
- The gallery is not immune to inflationary cost increases being experienced by all organizations in the current economic environment. In such an environment, the McMichael's dedication to responsible financial stewardship will continue to focus on identifying efficiencies and savings through innovative practices and improved program sustainability.
- An economic slowdown and potential recession is likely to constrain growth in revenues.
- Investment is anticipated to be required in human resources for retention and recruitment in order to simply maintain current staffing levels, especially in priority curatorial and operational areas, as well as to ensure compliance with OMERS pension changes requiring pension benefits be offered to part-time staff.
- Commencement of a capital renewal project. Initial capital costs of \$750K are expected to be incurred for a Class B estimate throughout Fiscal 2023 and Fiscal 2024. Operating costs of \$255K are also anticipated in order to finance necessary fundraising materials and resources (80K) and campaign staffing (\$175K).
- A capital investment of \$250K in security system upgrades to preserve the functionality required to protect guests and employees.
- A significant investment of \$300K to refresh the McMichael brand and update the website in order to capture the McMichael's vision and future direction, align with its values, and support the major capital fundraising campaign.
- Fundraising will focus on major gifts, both for annual needs and capital renewal. The McMichael is conscious that an economic downturn and/or recession may impact its ability to secure major sponsorships and other financial support.
- Fundraising events will continue to be anchored by the Moonlight Gala, with a moderate increase in the amount expected to be raised coming off a record amount in Fiscal 2023.

²⁴ "Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including COVID-19 impacts and any future emergency risks"

- For corporate rentals, weddings, and other in-person events, we project revenue to remain robust after what is expected to be a very robust year in Fiscal 2023 as a result of hosting events that had been backlogged by COVID-19 restrictions.

CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The McMichael utilizes the VFA asset management program, as well as our own condition reporting, to plan its capital assets repair and rehabilitation. According to the VFA asset assessment, a conservative estimate of \$30 million or more of capital assets should be replaced by end of Fiscal 2024, as assets will have reached their end-of-life expectancy.²⁵

As noted in the prior fiscal year, 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.

Expansion and capital renewal is also required in order to continue to function as a Class A gallery. Increasingly, other galleries are expressing concerns about our ability to accept loans safely due to the lack of a proper loading dock and concerns about climate management systems. Expansion will also enable growth in revenue generating operations such as educational programming, art classes, weddings and social functions. The completed landscape study also points the way to the investment necessary to renew the grounds as well as the building. In Fiscal 2024, we are continuing our conversations with a wide range of funders who will be essential to the renewal of capital, while hoping to secure private support contingent upon government funding.

In order to minimize spending on repairs that may be redundant once the renewal of the current building is undertaken, repairs of current building and systems will continue to be kept to a minimum during Fiscal 2024 and will only address imminent failing building/systems components. As before, this strategy of deferring capital rehabilitation may result in some emergency repairs funding requests being made to the Ministry.

²⁵ “Ongoing collaboration with the Ministry and its other agencies in enhancing long-term infrastructure planning across the portfolio through asset management”

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY (ESD) PLAN

During Fiscal 2023 the McMichael continued with the 2-year plan to upgrade the IT network and physical infrastructure, along with cybersecurity.

Implementation of 2-factor authentication has given staff access to the corporate files through the VPN as well as offering more security for working through Office 365.

The move to cloud-based backup and storage has been a critical step to securing our data; once the IT upgrade is complete, in this Fiscal we will review our file systems and capacity with a view to archiving data and therefore reducing our backup and storage expense.

In Fiscal 2023, we completed the move to ATMS+ ticketing and reservation system; we also overhauled our retail shop website and implemented a new POS system. In Fiscal 2024, we plan to review and renew our website, which is the most important online portal for visitors, students, teachers, and others.

As the Marketing and Communications plan indicates, this infrastructure supports a wide range of digital offerings that include professionally taught art classes, virtual exhibition tours, short videos on works with the Executive Director and Chief Curator, and webinars with and about Canadian artists and exhibitions with scholars, writers and thinkers from many disciplines. The website and social media also support digital content including short and longform videos, interviews, webinars, which have been extremely popular, bringing McMichael to the world.²⁶

²⁶ “Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met”

RETAIL STRATEGY

Next year we expect high attendance due to the popularity of the artist Tom Thomson which will be exhibited the summer of 2023 to December or January 2024. The popularity of this exhibition over several key higher revenue timeframes such as summer tourist season, fall colours, and holiday shopping, while complimented by a large publication, should promise higher revenue and KPI's. The Gallery Shop also is looking forward to the highly requested William Kurelek catalogue, due in the spring 2023. The shop staff experience a high volume of requests for this publication daily.

Visitor experience excellence is important to deliver first class customer service, gallery wide. We plan to maintain the level of satisfaction that visitors expect from a world class art museum.

We encourage visitors to come into the gallery at every opportunity, and the shop to be recognized as a key component to the destination experience to view our museum, walk our trails, dine in our café, and visit the Gallery Shop. We also continue to thank customers for supporting the McMichael Collection as a reminder that the proceeds ensure quality exhibitions and maintenance of the collection.

We receive many positive comments on the quality of offerings which are due to strategic and focused buying and store curating strategies. At times we are compared to other major gallery shops worldwide. We plan to continue to curate the shop with products which identify with the McMichael, its exhibitions, with high quality and a theme of uniqueness of while hitting all price points. Visitors expect made in Canada, and the shop strives to meet that expectation of high standards. Heedful product development is also ongoing, case by case of very select items. Decisions are made with consideration of revenue and demand. Limited storage and shelf space is always a challenge and should be considered a factor for developing products and exhibition catalogues. Whether it is for exhibitions, or to support the McMichael Collection brand and curating select items that will ultimately generate revenue. Perception of revenue of an overambitious projected attendance or perceived popularity for some exhibitions can be challenging and can result in a financial loss as we look beyond the exhibition timeframe as many products unfortunately do not generate revenue once the exhibition has closed. Experience of past endeavors is key to ensure an educated decision, resulting in the success of the shop.

The shop will continue to curate with Indigenous sensitivity and respect while sourcing products that are licensed by Canadian companies with royalties paid to the Indigenous artist or their copyright holders. Acknowledgement on any indigenous designed items, showing the name of the artist and their community wherever possible (a continuing endeavor over many years that is evolving with awareness and expectations.) We do not carry ceremonial items such as masks or Wampum belts.

Staffing has been a challenge since 2019, and a more competitive wage and salaries to consider would

help to retain quality and quantity of staff in the Gallery Shop. The shop has experienced high turnover and we look forward to establishing a broader and established team for the 2023-2024 period. Knowledge and productivity of staff is important to the shop and retaining quality and experienced staff is priceless. Similar attraction venues within the Provincial sector, compete with the shop based on our current wage levels during hiring processes.

INITIATIVES INVOLVING THIRD PARTIES

The McMichael continues its food services and catering contract with The Food Dudes, based in Toronto, which is in effect through 2024. As part of this contract, The Food Dudes are also granted catering exclusivity at the McMichael.

In Fiscal 2024, McMichael Creative Learning and Programs will continue its partnerships, such as with Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Parks, Canada Parks, Indigenous communities and the community organizations.

The partnership with Diamond Estates has concluded. The McMichael is currently in negotiations for a new partner for donations of wine; it is expected to be finalized before the start of Fiscal 2024.

Our partnership with Dorset Fine Arts/West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative is continuing through Iningat Ilagiit, the virtual exhibition site of Cape Dorset art. We are working with Ed Burtynsky to digitize the entire collection. We also participate in Collective North to bring art at the McMichael to remote and northern classrooms.

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

- A dynamic exhibition program will include both established and emerging, historic and contemporary, and BIPOC and Indigenous artists, as we continue to intentionally reflect the art of all of Canada.
- Of particular note is the major Tom Thomson exhibition, the first in 20 years.
- Many of these exhibitions, bolstered by their accompanying publications, are planned for travel, with the attendant revenue helping to fund our high standards of research and production. In this way, McMichael is creating content not just for Ontarians but for the entire country. In Fiscal 2024, we will have ten exhibitions on the road; their sixteen presentations across Canada and the USA will yield over \$1M in touring fees.
- In developing our Collection, we continue to set our sights on securing gifts of contemporary art related to the theme of landscape and relationship to the natural world – building on the landscape legacy of the Group of Seven, with which we are justly identified.

Deliver an engaging and exceptional visitor experience

- Continue to focus on creating a safe and welcoming environment to encourage visitors to return to the gallery
- Continue our Free Family Sundays with family programming to encourage local visitors and a younger demographic to visit
- Through virtual webinars and tours, curatorial and artist talks, and other digital experience, we will continue to make our permanent collection and special exhibitions accessible to audiences around the world.
- Access to these online resources will be enhanced with a new website to improve the visitor experience for ticketing and reservations as well

Become a centre for knowledge creation and sharing

- Continue to reflect diversity in school programs by involving BIPOC artists and relevant communities in the development process.
- By working with elders, traditional teachers, and storytellers from diverse Indigenous communities across the country, the McMichael offers an ideal forum for knowledge sharing and ideas exchange. Close collaboration will also enrich the knowledge of our team and ensure that we properly interpret presented concepts and the works on view
- Expand V.O.I.C.E.S. program to other school boards and communities.
- Work with Autism Ontario and Kerry's Place to deliver the new program Living with Art for young adults living with Spectrum Autism Disorder and other cognitive disabilities
- By partnering with Connected North, continue to successfully reach northern students. At the

same time, through constant communication and use of the provided resources, this partnership allows to make the programming offer relevant to the audience they serve

- Digital delivery is also dominating our adult programming for both gallery talks and art classes. Adults, and older adults in particular, seem reluctant to return to larger organized events. We hope that this trend will change through Fiscal 2024, and we plan to offer a series of art appreciation events available to this audience.
- Continue to offer some free camp spaces to children from refugee communities

Build a sustainable organization

- Focus on membership and continued growth, including actively reengaging lapsed members and working with marketing to reach new members in York region in particular
- Build the donor pipeline in both size of gifts and number.
- Provide a personalized experience for donors rather than a standard chart of benefits
- Strengthen existing relationships with corporate sponsors and build new relationships through alignment of interests and priorities.
- Improve use of the database to better understand our donors and members interests
- Prepare for next phase of capital campaign by recruiting strong volunteer leaders, finalizing internal processes and documents, and cultivating/securing support
- Ensure we are responsive to the changing patterns of visitorship and work with other attractions and tourist bodies so that that we may present attractive options to increase visitorship
- The Creative Learning department continues to build on the audiences gained through their virtual offerings for schools, public art classes and tours
- Touring continues to be an important new source of revenue; in Fiscal 2024 we anticipate that the Tom Thomson exhibition will be a particular driver of revenue from visitation and sponsorship.

Improve organizational capacity and performance

- 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 Film Festival on the implementation of an MOU to as part of the establishment of a creative industries centre of excellence
- Continue to invest in staffing to meet the needs of our strategic direction and prepare for capital campaign
- Staff retention for the post-pandemic period is a concern for which mitigation plans include engagement initiatives, workplace wellness, work efficiencies in communications, work flexibility in continued hybrid work, and competitive compensation through benchmarking.
- Focus on diversity and inclusion through staff and volunteer committee, job postings, training, and ongoing relationships with indigenous elders and others
- Ensure we meet the benchmarks and performance key indicators as expressed in this Business Plan by revisiting and reviewing throughout the year

RESPONSE TO EXPECTATIONS OF AGENCY MANDATE LETTER

The Agency Mandate letter guides this Business Plan throughout; specific points that reference the expectations are indicated by footnote. Below are the expectations as outlined in the letter.

General Directives

1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, through partnerships where appropriate
- Identifying efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability.
- Operating within the agency's financial allocations.
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, including contract harmonization for planned and pending procurements, accounting practices and realty interim measures for agency office space.
- Leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives

2. Transparency and Accountability

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- Adhering to accounting standards and practices, and responding to audit findings, where applicable
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability

3. Risk Management

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including COVID-19 impacts and any future emergency risks
- developing a continuity of operations plan that identifies time critical/essential services and personnel

4. Workforce Management

- Optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed.
- Supporting the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) by identifying opportunities to relocate new or existing agencies to lower cost communities

5. Diversity and Inclusivity

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting an equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplace

- Adopting an inclusion engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making

6. Data Collection

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information-sharing and reporting, to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery
- supporting transparency and privacy requirements of data work and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since Covid-19.

Additional Directives

- Diversifying revenue streams, increasing self-generated revenue and identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of your operations and facilities.
- Collaborate with other agencies, ministry partners, stakeholders and communities to drive efficient innovation across all lines of business, with particular attention given to sharing your success stories with Ontarians.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Ministry and its other agencies in enhancing long-term infrastructure planning across the portfolio through asset management
- Supporting our collective recovery from the global pandemic, and enabling the tourism and culture sectors to return to and exceed pre-pandemic levels of activity
- Demonstrate excellence in program and service delivery by increasing access to the McMichael's holdings through gallery attendance, virtual programming, and touring exhibitions.
- Deepen efforts to reflect our diverse artistic landscape by increasing the representation of Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists within the McMichael's collection and exhibitions.
- Continue to focus on implementing the recommendations of the value-for-money audit conducted by the Auditor General of Ontario.
- Collaborate with other provincial agencies and attractions operating within the Greater Toronto Area to encourage visitors to extend their stays and to explore all the region has to offer.
- Continue to enhance your agency's approach to data collection, performance measurement and reporting