

**Corporation of the City of Oshawa**  
**2025 Budget**  
**External Agency – The Robert McLaughlin Gallery**

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# 2025 Business Plan

## 1. Introduction

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Since its inception as a gallery in the mid-1960s as an idea rooted in Oshawa and its community, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (the RMG) has continued to grow and evolve alongside the City. Our work is grounded in our commitment to the City of Oshawa, its residents, artists, businesses, and visitors. Our actions directly support the priority areas in the City's new strategic plan, demonstrating alignment, shared values, and supporting the increased investment the City has made in the RMG.

We believe in the power of art to contribute to positive well-being, revitalize our downtown, and support the economic recovery by partnering with those investing in Oshawa's growth. There is an increasing need for galleries to reflect art and structures that represent diverse histories, experiences, and perspectives as agents for social change. In this context, the RMG's current strategic plan focuses on building connected, caring, and creative communities through art. We are currently finalizing our 2025-2027 strategic plan and will share it with City leadership upon completion.

However, the RMG, like many of our non-profit and charitable partners is facing unprecedented challenges in addressing our financial realities.

We are facing:

- The costs of maintaining aging infrastructure in our building
- The highest inflation rate in over forty years
- Slow recovery of earned revenue streams following the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continuing to increase employee compensation to retain the best talent

We believe the RMG staff team and Board of Directors have demonstrated our commitment to revitalizing the downtown and to helping Oshawa's entire community thrive. Understanding the very tight fiscal restraints for the City, we also believe in asking for what is needed to operate as the world-class public art gallery that Oshawa deserves.

The briefing note presented to the City's Leadership Team and Mayor Carter in 2023 is included in the Resource Requirement section and the requested three-year trajectory of increases.

## *Vision and Mission*

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### **Vision**

Art cultivates connected and caring communities.

As an artist-centered and community-oriented public art gallery in Durham Region, we bring people from diverse backgrounds together to engage with art that inspires new perspectives, generates meaningful conversations, and creates a sense of belonging.

### **Mission**

We build relationships with diverse artists and communities through art.

The RMG works in collaboration with artists, partners, and audiences to present dynamic and inspiring collections, exhibitions, and programs in an inclusive and equitable environment.

## *2. Service Description and Client Identification*

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### **Organization**

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery is in the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. This land has been the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg since 1700; before that time, it was stewarded by various communities belonging to the Haudenosaunee and Wendat confederacies. It is covered under the Williams Treaties and the Dish with One Spoon Wampum. This area continues to be home to many Indigenous people from across Mishiike Minisi. We recognize the sovereignty of all Indigenous nations and are grateful for the opportunity to learn, live, and work on this land.

We acknowledge that the RMG is in treaty land, and respect our collective responsibility to protect and nurture the land. We also recognize the continuing impacts of colonialism and our responsibilities to redress the ways this has helped shape our organization. We are committed to working to address structural inequities and to centering Indigenous voices in the gallery.

The RMG is an External Agency of the City of Oshawa, serving as a cultural and community asset. The building is owned by the City but leased nominally (\$1) and managed by the RMG. The Robert McLaughlin Gallery is incorporated in the Province of Ontario as a not-for-profit public art gallery, governed by a Board of Directors. The Directors broadly represent the community of Oshawa and the Region of Durham.

The overall responsibility for artistic objectives and management of the RMG is that of the Chief Executive Officer, supported by a professional staff team.

## Our Values

**Culture of Care:** We are committed to fostering a culture of care that places the health and wellbeing of our staff, artists, partners, and audiences above all else. Kindness and respect are central to all of our relationships.

**Artist-Centered and Creative:** We are dedicated to supporting artists in their work and creating an environment for them to flourish. We provide opportunities for the community to imagine and create.

**Equity and Justice:** We are dedicated to integrating anti-oppressive and anti-racist processes throughout all facets of the organization. This includes prioritizing work with staff and artists from institutionally excluded groups. We further understand our role in shaping Indigenous and Canadian art history. We are therefore committed to creating just, inclusive, and accurate stories of our past and present, and to providing a platform for diverse voices to engage with contemporary issues we face today and into the future.

**Relationship-based and Collaborative:** We prioritize long-term and sustainable relationships with artists and community members. We bring together multiple perspectives and people and invite unique opportunities for collaborations.

**Accessible and Inclusive:** We provide welcoming and accessible experiences to art for a diversity of people, both inside and outside of the gallery.

**Accountable and Open:** We are both an accountable and transparent organization. We take responsibility for our actions, including our mistakes, and promote a safe and open gallery for all.

## Our Strategic Priorities

Annually, the RMG team sets operational goals and tasks to achieve the priorities as set out in our strategic plan. Staff performance plans link directly to these goals.

1. Centre artistic and community voices
2. Nurture and deepen relationships
3. A Welcoming Space for Community
4. Visibility and Awareness
5. Sustainability and Responsiveness

## **We Are Community Centric**

Shaped by our deep commitment to work with our communities and to create a space for meaningful connections, our curatorial programming seeks to be nimble and responsive to local issues and the conditions of the present moment. Knowing that none of our work would be possible without artists, we actively support artistic practice and work collaboratively to build robust and thoughtful exhibitions, public programs, and community engagement.

Our Permanent Collection is a core pillar of our programming and research. As we continue to grow our Collections with intention, addressing gaps and historical omissions, we also strive to contextualize the artworks through the lens of both the historical period in which they were created and the present socio-political moment.

We are open to taking risks with challenging programming, prioritizing process and progress over outcomes and perfection. Acknowledging the continuing legacies of colonialism and its impacts on the gallery, we work to address these inequities and build relationships with our local IBPOC communities. As we progressively redefine the role of a public art gallery in a regional context, we see the gallery as a unique place for civic engagement and instigate collaboration, tending to the relationship between our institution and the many different publics we serve.

The Gallery functions as a welcoming cultural gathering place and tourist destination in the region, contributing to the community's growth in jobs and economic development. Our programming responds to our diverse communities including seniors, youth, families, new Canadians, Indigenous, Black, people of colour, and people of all abilities.

We are also responsive to the growth of the student population and see this as an important demographic to engage. We collaborate regularly with TeachingCity Oshawa and Durham College. We host annual student exhibitions with the Durham College, Durham District School Board, and the Durham Catholic District School Board that give young emerging artists their first opportunity to present work in a professional gallery setting.

As public arts engagement has shifted and transformed, the RMG maintains relevance to the public by continuing to support professional local arts communities. This is demonstrated through hosting yearly exhibitions by arts organizations, such as the Oshawa Art Association, Oshawa Seniors' Association, and a new exhibition in 2023 with Cultural Art Expressions focusing on IBPOC artists in the Region.

These opportunities situate the RMG as an arts leader and mentor in the region, and increases visual literacy across communities, particularly at a time when schools are cutting enrichment and arts programs, and professional development programs are scarce.

## Our Programming

### *Exhibitions and Permanent Collection*

The Permanent collection includes nationally significant modern Canadian abstraction, the largest holding of works by Painters Eleven in the world, an expanding collection of contemporary art, and public art. Though this is the founding core of our collection, the RMG is also dedicated to collecting with intention to reflect the diverse voices and contemporary issues that make up the continuing story of Canadian art, including that of our local community. We work to build public pride in the collections.

The collection is a distinct legacy of the McLaughlin Family and history of Oshawa, a history that we honour and uphold. The RMG also holds works by internationally recognized artists like Emily Carr, Lawren Harris, David Hockney, and Andy Warhol.

Our collecting priorities are to acquire:

- Significant Canadian art that is undeveloped or under-developed in the collection
- Painters Eleven
- Significant artists from Durham Region
- Historical/Contemporary work by equity deserving artists

All acquisitions go through a rigorous process and evaluation. The Acquisitions and Collections Committee and Board of Directors approve all works of art before formal accession into the collection. As we diversify our collection, we are also in the process of deaccessioning artworks that meet the rigorous criteria outlined by our advocacy and membership organizations. Deaccessioning is an important part of maintaining and caring for a collection.

The Thomas Bouckley Collection, which represents an archival photographic record of Oshawa and the region, is a vital link in connecting the community with stories of our past. This collection is built annually through community partnerships. Partnerships with the Abilities Centre, Community Development Council of Durham, Abilities Centre, and AIDS Committee of Durham Region result in capturing diverse experiences within the Region, which are now part of this archival photography collection.

We collaborate with Canadian public galleries in producing travelling exhibitions and publications that circulate throughout Canada. This type of collaboration generates revenue and assists us in reducing costs while accessing artists and programs that would typically not be available to our audiences. Similarly, we can support the touring of local artists to other regions in Canada.

The RMG is committed to the creativity and contributions of local and regional artists. We create opportunities for the artistic community through curating exhibitions of their work or engage in projects that highlight collaborations with local artists and curators.

### *Learning and Engagement*

The RMG community is an inclusive, warm, and friendly space that supports creative learning in a multitude of ways. 21st Century Learning practices are holistic throughout the RMG, where celebrating different voices, contributing to well-being, and co-creating are at the heart of what we do. We are back to operating all programs post-pandemic. We welcomed more participants than ever to summer camp, introduced a teen after school art program, and continued with PA day camps, school visits, adult tours, and workshops.

Our Homeschool Program has grown significantly over the past three years offering art classes to families who fulfill the art curriculum expectations at home, a service expanding with the onset of the pandemic. Conducted three times a year for an 8-10 week duration, this highly sought after program has consistently had full class enrollment.

## **We Are Accessible To All**

We remain steadfast in our commitment to free admission and programming opportunities. This continues to include both in-person and digital experiences:

- Tours
- Ontario Power Generation (OPG) Sundays for families
- RMG Fridays
- Exhibition openings
- Artists talks and panel discussions
- Partnered engagement series with the Gap Committee and Back Door Mission
- Support hosting community events like Empty Bowls for Feed the Need Durham

We want to build connections, and offer meaningful experiences through art. Together, we can do more to support those who need it most.

## **Volunteer Impact**

Volunteers are a vital asset and generally support all areas of gallery operations. Volunteering provides an opportunity for socialization, particularly for seniors or others who may feel isolated. We are still rebuilding our volunteer program post-pandemic, with most volunteers coming from high school and senior populations. The RMG also hosts a number of internships supported by Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works to help grow knowledge and skills in emerging arts professionals.

### 3. 2024 Accomplishments

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Our 2024 Accomplishments are categorized by the Agency Objectives stated in our Business Plan presented to Council. These initiatives aligned with the City of Oshawa’s five strategic goals as stated in more detail in the 2024 Business Plan. They also support the RMG’s strategic and enabling priorities.

#### Agency Objective 1 - Engage diverse audiences in new and familiar ways

Strategy	Result
Ensure an equity-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lens within our team, collection, curation, programs, and exhibitions	Coordinated national tour of Inuk, Bowmanville-based artist Couzyn Van Heuvelen following his solo-exhibition at the RMG exploring themes of Indigenous food sovereignty
	Presented exhibition of beaded works inspired by the Painters 11 by artist Raechel Wastesicoot, born and raised in Oshawa and now based in Toronto
	Curated solo exhibition of Pickering-based photography Christina Leslie on themes of immigration, marginalization, and her West-Indian heritage
Expand memberships, visitorship, and volunteer opportunities	Memberships increased by 12% for 2023 YE, on track to increase an additional 14% by 2024 YE
	Engaged youth volunteers to support studio programs, particularly March Break and Summer Camps

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Strategy	Result
	Visitor figures increased by 57% for 2023 YE, on track to increase by an additional 5% for 2024 YE
Enhance storytelling and communications to reach broad audiences	Broad survey completed as part of current strategic planning process for 2025-2027. Responses informing our priorities for the future.
	Instagram followers increased by 16% for 2023 YE, on track to increase by an additional 10% for 2024 YE
	Introduced more video content through our social media channels to engage a broader audience
Integrate a hybrid and digital physical future	Learning and engagement team developed instructional videos in short-form and long-form to increase digital arts engagement
	RBC Artists in Residence hosted IG lives for studio visits to promote this initiative and to drive traffic to exhibitions once open

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### Agency Objective 2 - Foster community connections and partnerships

Strategy	Result
Deepen connections and supports for artists	Supported solo exhibition with Northumberland County based artist Tony Romano with expansive installation design. Received review on CBC Arts.
	Implemented award through support from RBC for graduating students exhibiting in the Durham College Thesis Show
	Extended residency periods and exhibitions for RBC Artists in Residence

Strategy	Result
<p>Strengthen existing and establish new community partnerships both on and offsite</p>	<p>Created The Neighbour’s Project in collaboration with the Back Door Mission, Gap Committee, and LivingRoom Community Arts Studio engaging with those with lived experience of homelessness or housing precarity to engage in arts workshops at the RMG</p>
	<p>Deepened partnerships with Oshawa Tourism and City Culture Team through collaboration on Convergence Music &amp; Arts Festival</p>
	<p>Sustained active community partnerships</p>
	<p>Supported Oshawa’s centennial celebrations through special exhibitions and events, including a Thomas Bouckley exhibition focusing on 1924, collaborative OPG Family Sunday with the Oshawa Museum, and dedicated RMG Fridays</p>
<p>Collaborate with the arts and culture sector in Oshawa, Durham Region, and beyond</p>	<p>Led on the completion of the mapping study of the cultural sector in Durham Region; CEO presented findings on behalf of the group to the Planning &amp; Economic Development Committee at the Region in June 2024</p>

**Agency Objective 3 - Reimagine the gallery, making space for all**

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Strategy	Result
<p>Allocate gallery and building space for community gathering</p>	<p>Increased availability of the Lookout, Arthur’s (daytime), and the Backyard for use by community partners and for rentals</p>
	<p>Hosted a BBQ for Community Development Council of Durham, the Gap Committee, and LivingRoom Community Arts Studio for unsheltered folks and asylum seekers</p>
	<p>Held family party to open Contemporary Kids exhibition, focusing our summer programming on providing accessible, free arts engagement opportunities for families in addition to our OPG Family Sundays</p>
	<p>Expanded our youth arts after school program to include additional weeks</p>
<p>Thoughtfully consider and promote the RMG’s role and presence in Downtown Oshawa</p>	<p>Participated in Convergence, Canada Day, Peony Festival, and support Oshawa Tourism events</p>
	<p>Short-listed for Oshawa Chamber of Commerce Tourist Attraction and Non-Profit Awards for 2024</p>
	<p>Continue to secure and apply for tourism growth funding to support to collective goals of the City and Oshawa Tourism in expanding visitors to Downtown Oshawa</p>
<p>Transform the gallery’s outdoor space through creative and welcoming placekeeping opportunities</p>	<p>Secured funding through the Legacy Fund from the Department of Canadian Heritage for phase 2 of the Backyard development to be completed in 2025</p>
	<p>Introduced new access through hearing assistive devices with funding support from Oshawa’s Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>

**Agency Objective 4 - Continue to foster a culture of care**

Strategy	Result
Maintain a culture of care at the workplace	With increased funding from the City of Oshawa, implemented salary increases to bring the RMG in-line with industry standards
	Implemented longer planning cycles to identify busier periods and help manage stress and overwhelm to avoid burnout amongst the staff team
	90% staff retention rate achieved, a key indicator that the steps to increase salary, provide benefits such as 4-day workweeks in the summer, and a positive environment retain talent
	Collaborated to revised workplace values to accountability, belonging, and care
	Continued quarterly anonymous staff survey to gain understanding of team dynamics and areas for improvement
Extend our culture of care within our broader community of artists, partners, and audiences	Included a care clause within our artist contracts and partnership agreements
Commit to supporting equitable and just initiatives	Staff equity discussions continued with a focus on race-based caucusing to avoid inflicting harm on our BIPOC colleagues
	Continued to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with a day of staff learning and a closure of the RMG
	Shared an annual update on our website with progress on equity actions and continued areas of improvement/action

**Agency Objective 5 - Achieve Organizational resiliency and sustainability**

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Strategy	Result
Further develop strategic funding opportunities and diverse revenue streams	Continued efforts to build new corporate relationships, which is a continued challenge. The Board’s Fundraising Committee has supported prospect research and setting up introductory meetings
	Doubled our venue rental income for fall 2023 following the reopening of the renovated Arthur’s venue rental space. Completed new building photos to showcase all of our hospitality spaces available for rent.
	Shifted to a wholesale model in the shop to reduce staff time on shop operations through the consignment model which was not generating sales or revenue.
Match organizational ambitions with financial and human resources	Continue to operate on a three-year budget plan. Excited to provide two-year budget to the City and move in this direction with all of our funders to aid in planning and sustainability.
	Shifted priorities within the front of house operations to create efficiencies in our processes and spend more time on programming and direct visitor engagement

## SWOT Analysis

### *Strengths*

- Recognized as a community gathering space for all to engage in art
- A track record of achieving our goals and acting on our objectives to support our values and mission
- Collaborates regularly for greater impact, building opportunities across Durham Region arts and culture sector by taking a leadership role
- Strong governance and leadership from our Board of Directors and Senior Leadership
- Integral support from the City of Oshawa, in particular Facility Management Services, on capital and development of the community arts greenspace
- An outdoor programming space in The Backyard providing opportunities for new events and partnerships
- Dedicated, empathetic, skilled, and diverse staff team
- A team culture that focuses on and embodies accountability, care, and belonging
- Expansive purpose-built facility supports programming and holds an important and expanding collection of modern and contemporary art
- Sharing and offering that space to others for use
- Community partnerships and socially engaged exhibitions increase awareness of contemporary art and the RMG, and explore urgent issues facing our communities
- Collaborations and partnerships with UOIT, Trent University and Durham College to raise awareness of the RMG, increasing visitation, and enhance student life experience and reputation of “university town”
- Commitment to equitable access by breaking down barriers to the arts for all
- Capacity management ensure the RMG team can jump on opportunities that arise to support our community partners

### *Challenges (Weaknesses)*

- Continued challenges with agency generated revenues rebounding post COVID-19
- Market fluctuations can have a significant impact on our invested funds that include our endowments and other donor restricted funds
- Slower return of and program participants in some areas is resulting in slower growth of agency generated revenues
- Ensuring the building and space does not intimidate or create barriers to access.
- Need to raise awareness across the broader community that the RMG is here, free, and accessible
- Need to build stronger evaluative tools, data and understanding of our audience in order to facilitate organizational learning and guiding growth

### *Opportunities*

- Continuing to support the revitalization of Downtown Oshawa
- Phase 2 of The Backyard as a legacy project for the City's Centennial
- Continuing to build on our fundraising capacity and strategy
- Working with new community partners and strengthening and deepening relationships
- Raising awareness of the RMG locally, regionally, and nationally to build pride in our City, as well as our future as a hub for contemporary and community-engaged arts practice
- Becoming more active and known as a 'third space' in Oshawa
- Providing space to community groups who may otherwise may not have it, including groups like the GAP Committee and arts/culture groups with no bricks and mortar
- Providing more support for local and regional artists
- Expanding popular programming like our youth after school art workshops, RMG Fridays, and community art exhibitions with additional resources
- To become a workplace that embodies care and does not subscribe to urgency culture
- To build a reputation as the leading regional public art gallery in all of Canada

### *Threats*

- Slow return of revenue from venue rentals and the gift shop
- Lack of awareness about the RMG, free admission, free programming
- Perception that art is not for everyone
- Perception of downtown Oshawa continues to be a barrier to visitors coming downtown, particularly after dark
- Continued operating budget pressure from repairs and facility maintenance of a building with systems and functions that are nearing the end of their lifecycle.
- Staff turnover at such a small institution is challenging and often stalls or delays our programs and initiatives. Even one person leaving can impact achieving our strategic priorities

Within each of the challenges, we see opportunity. Within each of the threats, we see resilience. Our strengths and opportunities give us the adaptive capacity to adjust our operating model and reimagine how we best serve our local community.

This means letting go of some assumptions of what an art gallery does and focusing not just on the preservation and presentation of collections, but on the programming and connections that provide relevance to our audiences.

## 4. Objectives

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### Strategic Priority Mapping

The goals articulated in the City’s plans are essential markers in all planning at the RMG. We’ve highlighted the two primary City plans we follow, and also support the Diversity and Inclusion Plan, Public Art Master Plan, and Oshawa Accessibility Plan.

RMG Priorities	Oshawa Strategic Goals	Culture Counts
Centre Community and Artistic Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attract and promote a vibrant artistic and cultural economy.</li> <li>- Reduce systemic barriers and deliver engaging, equitable and culturally inclusive programs and services for all participants.</li> <li>- Commit to meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broaden and Evolve the City’s Role in Arts, Culture and Heritage</li> <li>- Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</li> <li>- Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</li> </ul>
Nurture and Deepen Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to foster strong partnerships with education institutions, community partners and employers.</li> <li>- Collaborate and advocate for effective services, programs, and community safety and well-being support.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Art, Culture and Heritage Sector</li> <li>- Strengthen Communication in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</li> </ul>
A Welcoming Space for Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advance downtown as an urban core.</li> <li>- Invest in infrastructure and assets that meet the needs for sustainable growth.</li> <li>- Provide and maintain recreational outdoor spaces, parks, and trails.</li> <li>- Expand and embed equity, inclusion,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create Vibrant Spaces and Places</li> <li>- Grow Culture-led Economic Development</li> <li>- Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</li> </ul>



	accessibility, anti-racism and reconciliation across policies, practices, and procedures within the organization.	
Visibility and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance effective communication and encourage all community members to actively participate and learn about City services, programs, and spaces.</li> <li>- Activate passive spaces with arts and events programming.</li> <li>- Advocate for increased regional, provincial, and federal support for programs, services, and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</li> <li>- Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Art, Culture and Heritage Sector</li> </ul>
Sustainability and Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide transparent, efficient, and responsible fiscal stewardship and use of resources.</li> <li>- Embrace innovation and advance continuous improvement initiatives and actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grow Culture-led Economic Development</li> <li>- Create Vibrant Spaces and Places</li> </ul>

## 2025 Overview

The RMG has a leading role in Oshawa and Durham as an agent of social change working towards an equitable future. We want to have an important civic impact and provide the citizens of Oshawa with fun, meaningful, arts-inspired opportunities. In 2025, we will begin enacting our new strategic plan and evolve into a stronger, more relevant organization for our shared community.

Our organizational focus for 2025 will be delivering upon our new strategic priorities. The plan for 2025 reflects these new priorities and aligns with those in the City's new strategic plan. While our plan is being finalized and will be approved by our Board of Directors in November 2024, our draft strategic priorities include:

- Centre Community and Artistic Voices
- Nurture and Deepen Relationships
- A Welcoming Space for Community
- Sustainability and Responsiveness
- Visibility and Awareness

We instill a sense of civic pride and can leverage this to help shift perceptions of Oshawa. We will focus on our local and regional artists and community first and working with the City and partners to drive tourism and regeneration. While our primary community is local, the RMG is a cultural attraction and destination.

Increasing our agency generated revenue from venue rentals, shop, and learning programs will be key to our recovery as we annually reduce the amount drawn from our Board restricted reserve.

The RMG's team culture focuses on care, accountability, and belonging. These values are the basis of everything we do. We believe the RMG has played, and will continue to play, an essential role for its community and for the artists we work with and support.

*The CEO holds ultimate accountability for the achievement of our strategies and supporting actions. Each department who holds responsibility is identified in the action plan that follows.*

Agency Objective	Strategic Priority 1	<i>Centre Community and Artistic Voices</i>
<b>Relevant City Strategic Goals</b>	<p><b>Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024-2027</b></p> <p><i>INNOVATE: Vibrant Culture and Economy</i> I4. Attract and promote a vibrant artistic and cultural economy.</p> <p><i>BELONG: Inclusive and Healthy Community</i> B1. Commit to meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Communities</p> <p>B2. Reduce systemic barriers and deliver engaging, equitable and culturally inclusive programs and services for all participants.</p>	<p><b>Culture Counts Plan</b></p> <p><i>2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Leverage Cultural Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization</li> <li>3. Expand Cultural Tourism Locally and Regionally</li> <li>4. Work Collaboratively with Oshawa’s Educational Institutions</li> </ul> <p><i>3. Increase and Strengthen Community within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Strengthen Communication</li> <li>6. Increase Community Awareness</li> </ul> <p><i>4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase Opportunities for Cultural Programming of all ages</li> </ul> <p><i>6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to cultural needs of all ages</li> <li>- Address the Cultural Aspirations of Diverse Communities</li> </ul>

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target				
Create opportunities to centre and amplify equity deserving voices in planning, programs, and operations	Curatorial	Kenderdeen Gallery Kitchener-Waterloo Art Galleries, Art Gallery of Peterborough	Support national tour of RMG exhibition by artist Couzyn can Heuvelen	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	# of visitors and # of venues	1 x national exhibition tour at 4 venues				
	Learning + Engagement						Overall, 10% increase in visitor figures				
	Visitor Engagement	South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC)	Present exhibition focused on South Asian artists to build community connections	Q2-Q3	Confirmed	# of visitors and community partners	3 x partner relationships				
	Marketing + Communications						Durham College and Ontario Tech	Q4	Confirmed	# of visitors and # of partners	3 x partner relationships
							Curve Lake First Nation, Bawaajigewin ACC	Q4	Under development	# of visitors and # of partners	2 x partner relationships
		Engage participants in learning programs (schools, camps, workshops) in exhibition themes	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	# of participants and qualitative feedback	5,000 participants and positive evaluations					

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Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Deepen connections and supports for artists	Curatorial		Curate first solo exhibition by local Black artist Georgia Fullerton and support commissioning of new works	Q3-Q4	Under development	# of new artworks supported	5 new artworks
		Oshawa Art Association and Cultural Expressions	Continue community partner exhibitions of practicing artists	Q2 & Q4	Confirmed	Increased recognition of local and regional artists	Overall, 10% increase in visitor figures
		RBC Foundation, Durham College	Expand artist in residence program with new funding cycle to include further support for DC students and a Backyard residency	Q3-Q4	Under development	Increased support for emerging and young artists	4 x artists in residence and 2 x DC graduating awards

Agency Objective	Strategic Priority 2	<i>Nurture and Deepen Relationships</i>	
<b>Relevant City Strategic Goals</b>	<p><b>Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024-2027</b></p> <p><i>INNOVATE: Vibrant Culture and Economy</i> I3. Continue to foster strong partnerships with education institutions, community partners and employers.</p> <p><i>CARE: Safe and Sustainable Environment</i> C1. Collaborate and advocate for effective services, programs, and community safety and well-being support.</p> <p><i>BELONG: Inclusive and Healthy Community</i> B1. Commit to meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous communities.</p>	<p><b>Culture Counts Plan</b></p> <p><i>2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Leverage Cultural Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization</li> <li>8. Work Collaboratively with Oshawa’s Educational Institutions</li> </ul> <p><i>3. Increase and Strengthen Community within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Strengthen Communication</li> <li>10. Increase Community Awareness</li> </ul> <p><i>4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build and Sustain Partnerships</li> </ul> <p><i>5. Create Vibrant Places and Spaces</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build on Current Strengths to Support</li> <li>- Increase spaces and facilities for activities</li> </ul> <p><i>6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to cultural needs of all ages</li> <li>- Address the Cultural Aspirations of Diverse Communities</li> </ul>	

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Strengthen existing and establish new community partnerships	Curatorial	Ongoing Active partnerships – 37	Nurture existing relationships by ensuring regular communications on activities and opportunities; invitations to community events	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	# of new partnerships deepened	37 x partnerships deepened and maintained
	Learning + Engagement						
	Visitor Engagement						
	Marketing + Communications	Back Door Mission, The Gap Committee, The LivingRoom Community Art Studio	Continued collaborative initiative “The Neighbour’s Project” to engage people with lived experience of homeless and housing precarity in arts activities	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	# of new visitors, # of events and positive experiences	60 x new visitors, 3 x events, and evaluation complete
			Explore ongoing, formal partnerships with The LivingRoom Community Art Studio for outreach to the community	Q1-Q2	Under development	Development of formal partnership established	1 x formal partnership
			New partnerships developed				4 x new partnerships

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Gain a better understanding of the community we serve, and the communities not engaged with the RMG	Visitor Engagement  Marketing + Communications  Curatorial  Learning + Engagement	Oshawa Tourism  Region of Durham	Ongoing visitor feedback for general visits and events building on evaluation from learning programs  Integrate feedback into planning for future exhibitions and events	Q1-Q4	Under development	General, quick survey for visitors  Specific, quick survey for event attendees  Established feedback loop	2 x surveys developed  1 x mechanism for results to inform staff plans
Build relationships with new donors/supporters and increase support from existing donor base	CEO  Fractional Fundraiser	Fractional Fundraising  Corporate supporters  Foundation donors  Individual donors	Working with a fractional fundraiser, increase support from lapsed and current individual donors  Continue to build relationships with local business owners	Q1-Q4	Under development	Embedded system for staff to work with fractional fundraiser	Meet donation goals  3 x new relationships with local businesses



Agency Objective	Strategic Priority 3	A Welcoming Space for Community
<b>Relevant City Strategic Goals</b>	<p><b>Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024-2027</b></p> <p><i>INNOVATE: Vibrant Culture and Economy</i> I5. Advance downtown as an urban core.</p> <p><i>BELONG: Inclusive and Healthy Community</i> B3. Invest in infrastructure and assets that meet the needs for sustainable growth.</p> <p><i>CARE: Safe and Sustainable Environment</i> C2. Provide and maintain recreational outdoor spaces, parks, and trails.</p> <p><i>LEAD: Governance and Service Excellence</i> L2. Expand and embed equity, inclusion, accessibility, anti-racism and reconciliation across policies, practices, and procedures within the organization.</p>	<p><b>Culture Counts Plan</b></p> <p><i>2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Leverage Cultural Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization</li> <li>12. Work Collaboratively with Oshawa’s Educational Institutions</li> </ul> <p><i>3. Increase and Strengthen Community within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Strengthen Communication</li> <li>14. Increase Community Awareness</li> </ul> <p><i>4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build and Sustain Partnerships</li> <li>- Increase opportunities for cultural programming</li> </ul> <p><i>5. Create Vibrant Places and Spaces</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build on Current Strengths to Support</li> <li>- Increase spaces and facilities for activities</li> </ul> <p><i>6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to cultural needs of all ages</li> <li>- Address the Cultural Aspirations of Diverse Communities</li> </ul>

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Allocate gallery and building space for community gathering	Curatorial	The Gap Committee, The LivingRoom Community Arts Studio  Region of Durham  City of Oshawa  OPG	Make spaces in the building available and accessible for meetings, workshops, and gatherings for community groups from across the City and Region	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Use of space and lack of empty space  People feeling a sense of belonging and welcome	5 x new partners using the space
	Visitor Engagement		Continue accessible arts making events and learning programs including OPG Sundays and youth program	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Drop-in programs with no barriers	15% increase in drop-in program attendance
	Learning + Engagement		Reimagine RMG Fridays, potentially shifting resources to exhibition openings and community gatherings (OAA, CE, Indigenous Creative Showcase) that engage a larger audience	Q1-Q4	Under development	Resources reallocated for greater impact	4 x events enhanced
Take active role in promotion of Downtown Oshawa	Visitor Engagement  Marketing + Communications	City of Oshawa  Oshawa Tourism	Participate in city-wide initiatives and events downtown, including those delivered by	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Number of events participating in	3 x city-wide initiatives

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
		Oshawa Chamber of Commerce	partner groups such as Oshawa Tourism Partner on presentation of Convergence Festival to lead on visual arts component and secure more funding  Represent the RMG in committees and working groups focused on Downtown development	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Community exhibition attendance  Participation and ownership of arts-related initiatives	Contribution to wayfinding and creative placemaking
Further enhance the gallery's outdoor space	CEO  Facilities  Visitor Engagement	LeuWebb Projects  Brook McIlroy Architects  Department of Canadian Heritage	Complete phase 2 of the backyard project that includes components to commemorate Oshawa's centennial and slide  Add new elements to the front entrance including artist-designed signage and bike racks	Q3-Q4  Q3	Under development  Under development	Advisory Council feedback integrated into design  Project achieved on time, to budget, and attracting new investment	Completed project by October 2025
Continued focus on equity and inclusion initiatives in	CEO	n/a	Annual review of all policies with considerations of equity	Q3	Confirmed	Completed policy review	Completed by September 2025

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
policies and operations			Continued staff discussions with a focus on equity deserving artists, full-day reflection/training for National Day for Truth & Reconciliation	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Discussions on a range of topics held throughout the year	8 x staff or facilitator led discussions
			Race-based caucusing of staff continues as needed to support BIPOC colleagues	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	BIPOC staff feel supported	Internal support for BIPOC staff
			Share an update on our commitments and actions on our website	Q3	Confirmed	Public awareness	Public and community awareness of our plans and policies
Continue to make our spaces approachable and accessible	Visitor Engagement Facilities Curatorial Learning + Engagement	Accessibility advisors	Continue to achieve goals within our Access Plan including physically accessible front desk	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Continued additions of accommodation to programs and exhibitions	1 x action plan delivered

Agency Objective	Strategic Priority 4	<i>Visibility and Awareness</i>	
<b>Relevant City Strategic Goals</b>	<b>Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024-2027</b>  <i>INNOVATE: Vibrant Culture and Economy</i> I5. Advance downtown as an urban core.  <i>LEAD: Governance and Service Excellence</i> L6. Advocate for increased regional, provincial, and federal support for programs, services, and infrastructure.  <i>LEAD: Governance and Service Excellence</i> L4. Enhance effective communication and encourage all community members to actively participate and learn about City services, programs, and spaces.	<b>Culture Counts Plan</b>  <i>3. Increase and Strengthen Community within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen Communication</li> <li>2. Increase Community Awareness</li> </ol> <i>4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build and Sustain Partnerships</li> <li>- Expand Financial Resources</li> </ul> <i>6. Provide Access and Promote Inclusion in Oshawa’s Cultural Life</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to cultural needs of all ages</li> <li>- Address the Cultural Aspirations of Diverse Communities</li> </ul>	

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Collaborate with the arts and culture sector in Oshawa, Durham Region, and beyond	CEO  Visitor Engagement	City of Oshawa  Oshawa Tourism	Support city-wide events in Oshawa including Peony Festival, Bright & Merry, and Convergence,	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Oshawa event participation	4 x city events

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
		Region of Durham  Numerous arts and culture organizations/ individuals across Durham	Take leadership role in Durham Region Arts & Culture Collaborative	Q1-Q4	Under development	Action the recommendations in consultant report	4 x actions completed
Enhance storytelling and communications to reach broad audiences	Marketing + Communications  Visitor Engagement	Adler Consultants	Invest in digital ads and search engine optimization (SEO) to reach broader audiences	Q1	Under development	# of ads and engagement	15% increase in social media followers on Instagram (largest platform for the RMG)
			Invest in video creation for increased engagement via social media	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	# of followers	
			Engage influencers to reach new audiences	Q3-Q4	Under development	# of new audiences reached	
Outreach to lapsed, active, and new organizational community partners	Visitor Engagement  Marketing + Communications	n/a	Email campaign to all partners engaged with the RMG over the past five years  Add all previous partners to Mailchimp email listing	Q1-Q2	Under development	# of contacts added to email distribution	10% increase to email list as a result of outreach initiative

XXX

Agency Objective	Strategic Priority 5	<i>Sustainability and Responsiveness</i>
<b>Relevant City Strategic Goals</b>	<b>Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024-2027</b>  <i>LEAD: Governance and Service Excellence</i> L1. Provide transparent, efficient, and responsible fiscal stewardship and use of resources.  L5. Embrace innovation and advance continuous improvement initiatives and actions.	<b>Culture Counts Plan</b>  <i>1. Broaden and Evolve the City’s Role in Arts, Culture and Heritage</i> 3. Increase and Communicate the City’s Financial Support  <i>2. Grow Culture-Led Economic Development</i> 4. Leverage Cultural Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization  <i>3. Increase and Strengthen Community within and about the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i> 5. Strengthen Communication 6. Increase Community Awareness  <i>4. Build a Strong, Vital and Connected Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector</i> - Expand Financial Resources

Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
Develop a resilient operational model and programming schedule that supports and prioritizes well-being of staff and artists	CEO	Board of Directors	Continue to work with three-year budget plan	Q3-Q4	Confirmed	Rolling three-year budget	Net zero three-year plan, no deficit at end of FY25  Realistic budget and programming plans
	Curatorial		Develop operational plans for 80% capacity to enable responsiveness to societal issues and engagement opportunities	Q1-Q2	Confirmed	Staff working to capacity, not beyond	
	Learning & Engagement		Develop a collective decision-making framework to assist staff in considering individual and team implications	Q1-Q2	Under development	Empower staff to make decisions	
Maintain a culture of care at the workplace	CEO	Indigenous Curatorial Collective	Maintain membership with ICC to provide support to IBPOC identified staff	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Positive outcomes from semi-annual staff surveys	90% staff retention
	Director, Finance + Operations	Equitable Life	Continue 4-day workweek in the summer	Q3	Confirmed	Staff retention and ease of recruitment	
	Senior Curator	City of Oshawa	Continue increasing salaries and staff benefits	Q1-Q4	Under development	Salary increases for staff	
Extend our culture of care within our broader	Curatorial	Ongoing partners	Continued evaluation/survey for partners and artists	Q1-Q2	Confirmed	Surveys completed by partners and artists	60% of surveys completed to inform change



Strategy	Responsibility	Supporting Partners	Actions/Outcome	Timing	Status	KPI	Target
community of artists, partners, and audiences	Visitor Engagement		Training for Front of House staff, including contract guards, to establish standard welcome	Q1	Confirmed	Increased sense of welcome for visitors	
			Practice our workplace values of accountability, belonging, and care with everyone	Q1-Q4	Confirmed		
Increased funding in earned revenue streams	CEO	Fundraising Committee	Develop marketing and communications plan to promote venue rentals	Q1-Q2	Under development	Completed plan and increased bookings	25% increase in number of bookings
	Event and Venue Coordinator Marketing + Communications Visitor Engagement	Vendors Contract caterers	Continue wholesale in the Shop to increase sales margins	Q1-Q4	Confirmed	Increase revenues	10% increase in sales revenues

## 5. Resource Requirements

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The increase received from the City of Oshawa in 2024 was transformational for the RMG. We were able to increase staff salaries to industry standards and have greater support for our facilities maintenance. At the request of Mayor Carter, we included a three-year projection with last year's submission and have included it again this year. As operating and programming costs continue to increase and with inflation at its highest rate in over thirty years, we are respectfully requesting an increase at a higher rate over the next three years.

We are looking forward to the City moving to a longer range budget to provide an increased ability to plan and become more sustainable in our operations. To fulfill our programming objectives and address the real financial challenges facing our organization, we are requesting the following:

Request Year	Amount Requested	Percentage Increase
<b>2024</b>	<b>\$992,581</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>2025</b>	<b>\$1,042,210</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>2026</b>	<b>\$1,073,476</b>	<b>3%</b>

These funds will help us to:

- Continuing salary increase more aligned with inflation as we continue to address systemic, low-pay within the charitable arts sector.
- Incorporate the costs of maintaining the aging infrastructure in our building, including the additional funds for our chiller maintenance previously presented to the City's Leadership Team (appended to this document for transparency).
- Continue to compensate artists appropriately; this is a priority in our current budget.
- Meet the demand of the highest inflation rate in over thirty years when purchasing supplies for programming and building.

The RMG has actively taken steps to establish sustainable, fiscally responsible operations:

- The RMG is drawing annually on our Board restricted funds to also help address this revenue gap.
- Using Board restricted funds, the RMG financed the renovation of our venue rental/restaurant space Arthur's and the purchase of new furniture to increase venue rentals and associated revenues.
- Completed repaying our ongoing deficit at year end 2023.

The RMG consistently receives operating support from granting agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council, which only accounts for 10% of our grant revenue. Project grants continue to allow us to complete special initiatives, however, it is

core, operational funding that is most vital for our program delivery and organizational health.

Arts and culture are a key driver of economic development, a key goal of Oshawa City Council's current strategic plan. We actively collaborate with City staff and organizational partners to contribute to economic growth including the arts; education and life-long learning; moving towards social equity; and nurturing community assets like the RMG.

## 1. Conclusion

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There is true alignment between the The City of Oshawa's and the RMG's vision:

**Oshawa: A thriving, innovative and caring community where everyone belongs**

**The RMG: Art cultivates caring and connected communities**

Together, the City and the RMG can continue to build civic pride in Oshawa residents, and attract visitors and tourists to our collective art gallery worthy of regional and national recognition. We advocate regionally demonstrating Oshawa's leadership in Durham. We use art to achieve social change. While we support artists and community creativity, we are also dedicated to supporting vulnerable populations including those suffering from homelessness and serving those communities. As economic disparity widens, we believe we have an active role in providing a place to connect, where everyone can feel a sense of belonging.

The RMG is proud to be in the great City of Oshawa actively contributing to a:

- *Vibrant Culture and Economy by Centering Community and Artistic Voices*
- *Inclusive and Healthy Community as A Welcoming Space for Community*
- *Safe and Sustainable Environment by Nurturing and Deepening Relationships*
- *Governance and Service Excellence by being Sustainable and Responsive*

On behalf of all the members, volunteers, staff, visitors, participants, and Board of Directors, our sincere thanks for the continued and tremendous support from the City of Oshawa that fund our operations as well as support our facility to care for Oshawa's world class art collection.

**The Corporation of the City of Oshawa  
2025/2026 Operating Budget  
Robert McLaughlin Gallery**

Description	2024 Projected Actuals	2024 Approved Budget	2025 Proposed Budget	2025-2024 Variance \$'s	2025-2024 Variance %	2026 Proposed Forecast	2026-2025 Variance \$'s	2026-2025 Variance %
Personnel Costs	1,021,373	1,000,281	1,008,244	7,963	0.8	1,025,049	16,805	1.7
Program and Office Supplies	39,920	41,615	37,419	(4,196)	(10.1)	37,419	-	-
Professional Services	560,940	482,567	435,340	(47,227)	(9.8)	460,447	25,107	5.8
Maintenance and Repairs	169,384	179,263	154,692	(24,571)	(13.7)	157,231	2,540	1.6
Utilities	205,574	202,353	214,888	12,535	6.2	223,466	8,578	4.0
Contributions and Financial Charges	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agency Generated Revenue	(990,204)	(913,499)	(808,373)	105,127	(11.5)	(830,136)	(21,763)	2.7
City of Oshawa Grants	(992,600)	(992,600)	(1,042,210)	(49,610)	5.0	(1,073,476)	(31,266)	3.0
<b>Total Robert McLaughlin Gallery</b>	<b>14,387</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>(98.6)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(189.3)</b>

Variance Explanations:

Personnel Costs: 2024 includes wages and payroll expenses related to special project funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage Museum Assistance Program (MAP) and an Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) - Resilient Communities grant. MAP position ends March 2024 and OTF position ends October 2024. All years include funding for summer positions from Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs.

Professional Services: 2024 increased expenses related to MAP project expenses, OTF programming expenses, and an OAC Touring and Circulation grant. For all years, amortization expenses for the Backyard redevelopment and Arthur's renovations are included.

Maintenance Repairs: 2024 unexpected expenses for HVAC (chillers).

Utilities: Expected inflationary increases for all years.

Agency Generated Revenues: 2024 includes MAP and OTF project funding, and OAC Touring and Circulation grant funding. 2024 includes expected gradual increases to learning, venue rentals, shop, and membership, following pandemic recovery. There are currently no active major project grants for 2025.

City of Oshawa Grants: 2024 reflects increase to support payroll increases to industry standard. 2025 and 2026 increases align with three-year projection requested by Mayor Carter in 2023.