



Vancouver
Artgallery

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations
in Advance of the 2021 Federal Budget**

RECOMMENDATION

The Vancouver Art Gallery requests that the federal government invest **\$100 million** in direct capital funding to the organization to build a new 300,000 square foot, purpose-built art museum in Vancouver, B.C.

INTRODUCTION

About: Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is a non-profit charitable organization and the largest art museum in Western Canada. Each year, over 525,000 people experience ideas expressed in art through the Gallery's multifaceted exhibitions, education programs and public art installations. More than 100,000 of those visitors are welcomed to the Gallery with complimentary or donated admissions.

The Vancouver Art Gallery's Permanent Collection of over 12,000 artworks documents more than two centuries of art making in Canada. The permanent collection is featured in exhibitions, tours freely across B.C., and artworks are frequently loaned to museums across Canada and around the world.

The Vancouver Art Gallery currently operates in a renovated Provincial Courthouse, built in 1911. Pre-pandemic, the Gallery was in the middle of a major capital infrastructure project. Plans for a new, 300,000 square foot building for the Gallery would be located in the heart of Vancouver, unifying the crossroads of diverse neighbourhoods including Downtown, Yaletown, Gastown, Chinatown, East Vancouver—and fuelling a lively hub of activity.

With all of the planning completed before COVID-19, **this major transformation project is shovel-ready**. Building a new space for the Vancouver Art Gallery project will help restart the Canadian economy during and post COVID by creating jobs and tax revenue throughout the facility's development and construction. Upon opening, the Gallery will continue to generate jobs and tourism revenue, increase its contribution to GDP, stimulate a positive social outlook and will further connect local, national and international communities with arts and culture well beyond the pandemic and for many generations to come.

While this budget request is a direct capital ask for the Vancouver Art Gallery project, the request also underscores the ability of this project to support the broader COVID-19 relief and recovery measures necessary for the health and well-being of our community and peers in the arts and culture sector.

COVID RECOVERY: RESTARTING ARTS ENGAGEMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Economic Impact

Over a six-year period, the new facility's development, construction and operations will contribute \$29.8 million to the economy in federal tax, \$19.1 million in provincial tax, and \$4.7 million in municipal tax. The project will create 2,973 direct and indirect jobs (FTEs). By the time the new Gallery opens in its second year, it is estimated to contribute \$28.4 million to Canada's GDP, an increase of over 41% from 2015¹. In addition to these figures is the impact of spending by out-of-town visitors to Vancouver as described in the following paragraphs.

Welcoming Visitors into the New Space

Over the past decade, Gallery attendance has increased from 180,000 to over 525,000 visitors per year, with an increasing demand for educational and community programming. The permanent art collection also grew by 60%. The Gallery aims to continue this momentum as our Canadian economy recovers from the pandemic. The new space is projected to welcome over 1,000,000 Canadian and international visitors annually including outreach and educational programming throughout the province and nation, invigorating the local community and boosting tourism.

The tourism impact is projected to create 1,002 direct and indirect jobs (FTEs), contribute \$9.7 million in provincial tax; \$8.9 million federal tax; and \$2.9 million municipal tax annually. It is estimated that the new gallery will generate more than \$78.6 million total gross output from out-of-town visitors annually to the Vancouver economy, including \$38 Million in GDP. Out-of-town visitors will contribute \$23.1 million in direct spending, \$14.9 million in indirect and induced spending, to Canada's GDP².

A GALLERY FOR THE PEOPLE

The new Gallery will meet growing community needs as a cultural gathering place for the local community and out-of-town visitors, and will enhance its programs, exhibitions and events with artists, presenters and collaborators. Bringing people back into cultural spaces safely, and in a way that they feel welcomed, will be critical during the restart and recovery stages of COVID-19. Cultural spaces can be constructed in safe and accessible ways that allow visitors to fully participate in multiple Gallery experiences.

This new building will be able to fully meet growing community needs for more student and adult programs, through purpose built facilities including dedicated educational facilities, expanded library space, a 350-seat theatre, and additional exhibition space to take the permanent collection out of storage and display British Columbia's artistic history.

¹ MNP, CPA, Report, October 2015

² MNP, CPA, Report, December 2016

Three Pillars of the New Vancouver Art Gallery

Throughout COVID, as a society, we have witnessed, first-hand what a positive and supportive force art has been. It allows citizens to connect, reflect and imagine. Art makes us. Art will continue to be a guiding force in the transformation through the pandemic and into recovery. This new building will truly be a Gallery for the people by supporting the broader community. This new Gallery for the people, is based on three pillars – Social Cohesion, Truth and Reconciliation and Environmental Sustainability (in no particular order):

1) Social Cohesion: During these challenging times, exhibiting art and organizing discussions that feature a truly broad range of perspectives, allows people to see themselves reflected in art as well as to learn about others. Art and the discourses around it have the power to bridge the gaps between our differences and bring our society closer together, something that is so essential to overcome increasing societal fragmentation and divisiveness.

Accessibility: The Gallery is working with the Rick Hansen Foundation to ensure the new building's design is accessible to all communities.

Children and Youth: The new building will have the capacity to serve 90,000 students per year through new classroom and workshop space. In our current space, the Gallery offers school programs and study guides, a bi-weekly Teen Art Group, and Youth Think Tanks, which will be greatly expanded.

Families: The Gallery will continue to serve families through free Sundays for Children, Family FUSE Celebratory Weekends and other specialized programs where families can learn together.

Asian Heritage: The Gallery is committed to cultural connections with Asia and the rest of the world in addition to celebrating the heritage of many Canadians. For example, the Institute of Asian Art is an initiative to formally recognize the extraordinary artistic achievements of artists with links to Asian countries, with a focus on China, Japan, Korea and India.

Vulnerable Populations: The Gallery currently provides access to space for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and other social service organizations.

Community Programming: The new Gallery infrastructure will also allow for the continued and enhanced support of many community programs including Seniors Mondays, Accessibility Tours, hosting of Citizenship Ceremonies for new Canadians, and welcome programs for refugees, in addition to The Emily Carr Children's Learning Collection at the BC Children's Hospital.

2) Truth and Reconciliation: The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on traditional ancestral and unceded Coast Salish territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) nations. Respect for this land inspires the Gallery to celebrate the richness of Coast Salish history, knowledge and culture, and informs the work of the Gallery. Beginning in 1941, important exhibitions of First Nations artists have contributed significantly to the development of Indigenous art history. The Gallery's First Nations art collections and related educational programs strengthen Canada's ability to tell the story of Indigenous peoples' history. These are organized in close collaboration with Indigenous curators and artists together with our Curatorial Fellow for Indigenous Art. The new gallery will support:

Language: Acknowledge the new location on traditional ancestral and unceded Coast Salish territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) nations with an Indigenous name that is visible and will solidify relations with host nations.

Art: Feature Indigenous art throughout the building from the wealth of our collection to newly commissioned projects and launch an Institute of Indigenous Art in 2020 for greater visibility and co-ordination of all our efforts to deepen our relationships with First Nations.

Staff: Utilize the knowledge of Indigenous staff.

Board: Ensure Indigeneity is a significant part of the Gallery's institutional fabric and continue to expand Indigenous presence on our Board.

The new Gallery building will contribute significantly to honouring Indigenous art and culture advancing awareness and knowledge supporting Canada's truth & reconciliation objectives.

3) Environmental Sustainability: As a social institution, the Gallery has a responsibility to preserve and protect environmentally sustainable practices. The building will serve generation upon generation and it is imperative that its environmental footprint be minimal. The new gallery will use innovative and sustainable technologies and made-in-Canada materials, including natural materials such as wood and living plants. The Gallery will be the most environmentally sustainable museum in Canada.

Construction

The Gallery intends to be certified as LEED Gold and will use Passive House to result in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling, reducing its ecological footprint. Passive house is most widely recognised as the most rigorous energy standard in the world. There are only three museums or art galleries listed on the Passive House International website, and none of these are in North America.

Operations

To further achieve the building's carbon reductions, the Vancouver Art Gallery will use heat pump clean technologies to provide heating and cooling avoiding the use of carbon-based fuels. Waste heat recovery will also be used, where appropriate, to further reduce the need for fuel. Compared to a conventional gallery building using carbon-based fuels for heating and humidification, the new Vancouver Art Gallery will save approximately 350,000 to 500,000 kg of CO₂e per year. When compared to the existing Vancouver Art Gallery, the new Gallery will only emit 20% of the carbon that the existing Gallery is emitting despite the fact that it is twice the size.

The Gallery will also consider how it operates in order to shift to more sustainable methods of installing exhibitions and will feature art from the region in order to limit the carbon footprint in all that we do.

TIMELINE AND COSTS

With immediate investment from the federal government, the project is scheduled to start construction in Fall 2021, which will contribute to mid-term jobs and revenue as Canada restarts from COVID-19. The entire project is set to be completed in 2024/2025.

The total project costs are \$380 million including a \$50 million operational endowment. The project has confirmed investment from the province of B.C. for \$50 million and \$85 million in confirmed private funding for a total raised funding to date of \$135 million. We are asking the federal government to contribute \$100 million, or 26% of total project costs, to bring this project to life. This federal contribution will help leverage additional funds from the Province of B.C. and additional private donors who wish to contribute. The Province has been asked for a further \$50 million and several private funders will contribute the additional \$95 million. **The federal contribution is the final and most essential contribution required to make this project a reality.**

CONCLUSION

We are grateful for the economic measures that the federal government has provided to the arts and culture sector to-date, including CEWS and the Emergency Support Fund for Culture, Heritage and Sport Organizations. As we move toward recovery for the organization and our communities, direct investments in infrastructure will be necessary to move into a new era.

We are confident that a \$100 million investment in the new building will generate a significant boost to the Canadian economy, to culture, and to advancements toward social cohesion, reconciliation and environmental sustainability during COVID-19 and beyond. The Vancouver Art Gallery looks forward to breaking ground on this shovel-ready project, and thanks the federal government for considering this capital request.

CONTACT

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