

# Forging Change through Connection and Creativity

A *Strategic Plan* for The Robert McLaughlin Gallery



The  
Robert  
McLaughlin  
Gallery

# INTRODUCTION

In November 2017, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (RMG) partnered with Openly to complete a strategic planning process. Strategic planning had been initiated earlier in the year with OCADU and SLab, involving a collaborative, strategic foresight exercise through which a number of insights and ideas were generated. Openly was asked to synthesize the outputs from that process to articulate a cohesive 3-year strategic plan.

The most effective way to connect the dots between ideas and strategy is through a theory of change, which articulates how and why an organization will use its resources and influence to achieve its mission and intended impact. It is focused on outcomes and impact, against which activities are designed and resources, partnerships, processes and structures aligned.

This document summarizes the RMG's 3-year intended impact, theory of change and the strategic priorities that will be required to activate the intended outcomes. These new directions reflect the aspirations and wisdom of our community partners, artists, Board and staff, who were engaged throughout the process.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

The RMG has set an exciting and transformational intention for 2021, which will leverage its strengths and amplify its community-facing role, making art and artists more accessible, connected and central to the minds and hearts of residents, and to important social change efforts. **This new direction will elevate The RMG's role and contribution to a thriving community.**



## Vision

Oshawa and Durham Region flourish through arts, culture and community connection and resilience.

## Mission

We work together with our communities to create conversations through the arts that encourage people to experience the world differently.

## Guiding Principles

### **We put people first.**

- We empower artists as essential communicators and navigators of our complex times.
- We respect and cultivate personal agency.
- Our growing collection reflects changing Canadian identities and perspectives.

### **We contribute to a vibrant community.**

- We serve as a welcoming community hub and gathering place, cultivating civic roots and reach.
- We are aware of events that impact our communities and take a firm stance in our response.
- We share learning, authority and expertise with our communities.
- We are agile and responsive, making space for diverse stories, experiences and perspectives.

### **We embrace sustainable innovation.**

- We foster experimentation and risk taking.
- We balance artistic objectives with fiscal responsibility.

**We believe none of this is achievable without diversity, equity and inclusive practice.**





# THEORY OF CHANGE

How do we support and connect artists, communities and the broader arts and culture ecosystem to create the conditions for Oshawa and Durham Region to become a flourishing community for arts and culture?

## IF WE...

Commit to working responsively with our communities to create inclusive and accessible experiences that empower artists and participants to create, share and connect

## WE EXPECT...

To spark new perspectives, ideas and connections that deepen and expand relationships, artistic practice and community pride

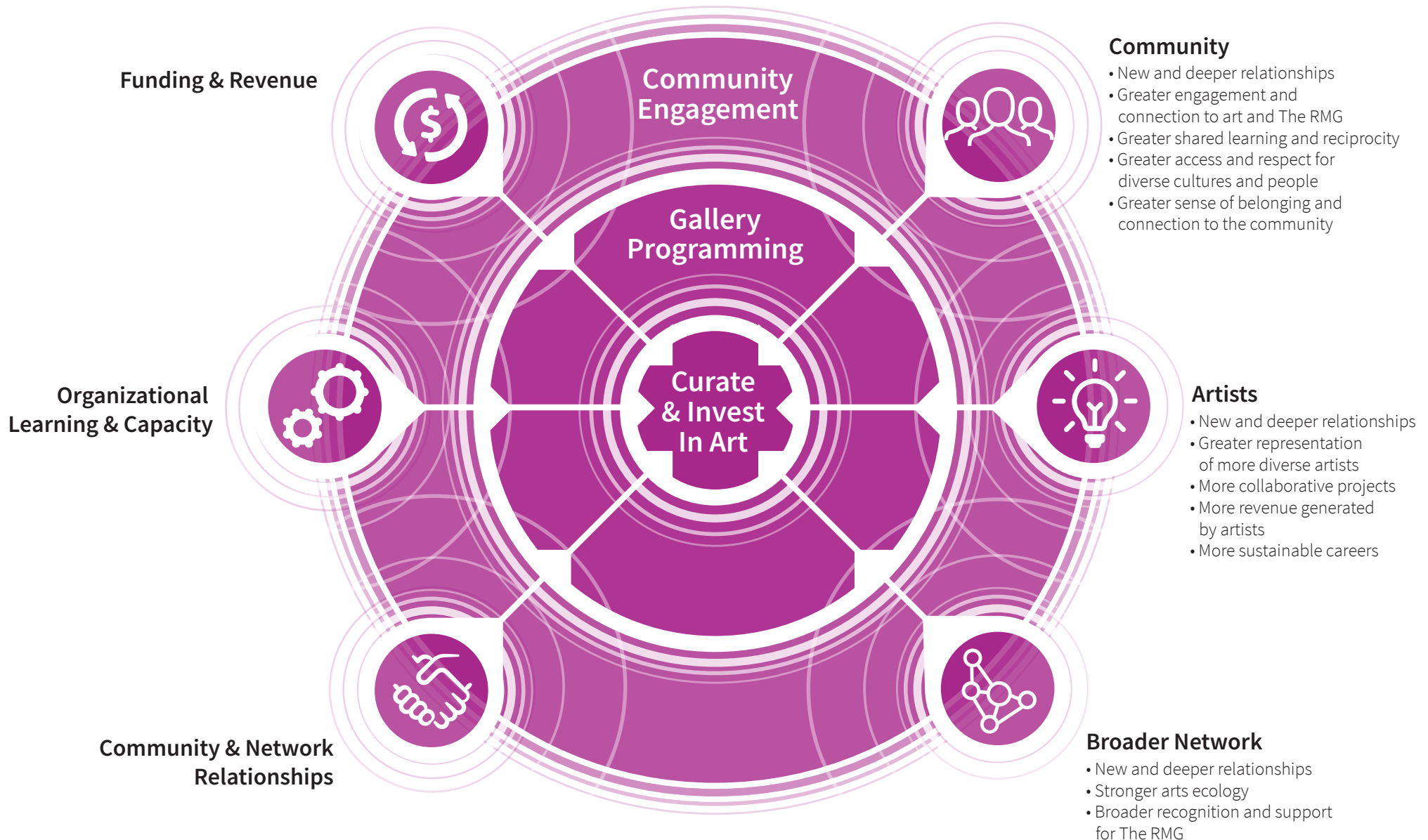
## SO THAT...

Oshawa and Durham Region flourish through arts, culture and greater community connection and resiliency

## WHAT DO WE NEED?

## WHAT WILL WE DO?

## WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To activate the theory of change, RMG will focus on **3 strategic priorities**:

## Empower Artists

*How might we support artists to drive their practices and engage with their communities and rapidly changing audiences in new ways in order to thrive? How might we provide a platform for artists to explore provocative and unconventional ideas?*

- Invest in the arts ecology by supporting and empowering artists, especially those from under-represented communities
- Support the next generation of artists to work differently and build sustainable careers
- Seek opportunities to provide a forum for artists' voices in local, national and global conversations
- Strengthen the regional arts ecology and contribute to community vitality

## Contribute to a Flourishing Cultural and Civic Landscape

*How might we work together to curate and catalyze new work and artistic models throughout our communities? How might we transform our community by working beyond the gallery?*

- Be a super connector of artists, people, assets and opportunities
- Develop multi-dimensional partnerships that contribute to the social and economic value of our community. i.e., collective impact
- Establish the RMG's presence at key tables and conversations
- Boost accessibility, diversity and inclusion to our collection, resources and programming
- Cultivate innovation and sector development

## Deepen a Holistic, Integrated and Purposeful Approach to the RMG's Work

*How might we engage our diverse communities with openness and support?*

- Foster deeper collaboration between curatorial, community engagement and learning programs
- Identify the needs and aspirations of our communities to design and deliver relevant, impactful programming
- Amplify under-represented voices and remove barriers to the arts experience
- Create a more connected, fulfilling gallery experience, inside and out



# ENABLING PRIORITIES

RMG will also strengthen its organizational health through **2 enabling priorities**.

*How might we unlock new flows of attention, reputation and revenue to sustain the RMG?*

## Build Resilience and Adaptive Capacity

- Develop the structure and roles to drive impact
- Develop people, mindsets and skillsets
- Build digital intelligence and capacity
- Diversify and solidify our financial base of support

## Build Affinity

- Develop enduring relationships with donors, supporters and influencers
- Motivate others to invest resources in the RMG
- Serve as a relevant and compelling partner
- Communicate in the ways that our audiences consume information

We are excited about the transformative journey we have embarked upon. We are eager to deepen and expand our relationships with - and facilitate connections between - artists, community members and the broader arts and culture ecosystem.

It will be through these connections and our collective contributions that Oshawa and Durham Region will flourish through arts, culture and greater community connection and resiliency.







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rmg



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