

Nanaimo Art Gallery Feasibility Study

UPDATE TO NANAIMO CITY COUNCIL

August 29, 2022

Presented by



With



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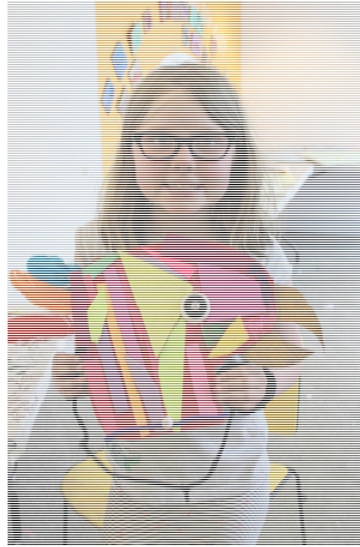
Agenda

- 1. Our Story**
Carolyn Holmes,
Nanaimo Art Gallery
- 2. Study Findings**
Louisa Plant, Nordicity
- 3. Next Steps**
Carolyn Holmes



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Our Story



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Our Story

2021/22 Visitor numbers on par with pre-Covid numbers.

2021/22 **programming numbers up 164%** over pre-pandemic numbers

2022 attendance reached 80% of total for previous years, only 4.5 months in



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Our Story

- **June 2013** - Council approved a phased development plan for Nanaimo Art Gallery
- **Phase 1 (started 2014)** - transfer of management of 150 Commercial Street to Nanaimo Art Gallery
- **Phase 2 (completed 2015)** - consolidation of Nanaimo Art Gallery at 150 Commercial Street
- **Phase 2.5 (2015-2022)** - series of renovations, including exhibition gallery, Art Lab studio, kitchen, facade, office hub



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Our Story

- **Phase 3** (as outlined in the Cultural Plan 2014-2020):
 - Expansion of Nanaimo Art Gallery
 - Creation of Class A gallery



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Project Aims

Nordicity and Iredale Architecture completed the exploratory feasibility study to answer:

- How should Nanaimo Art Gallery grow to meet the needs of the community?
- How does a future art gallery fit the wider City agenda for arts, culture, and recreation?
- What aspects of the current facility work well, and what is not working?
- What does a future art gallery need to have? Which main programming and services should it offer?
- How would a future art gallery operate?
- Can the existing building at 150 Commercial Street be redeveloped to meet the needs of the community?
- What would it cost to realize the next phase of development for Nanaimo Art Gallery?



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Comparative Review Findings

Nanaimo Art Gallery is four times smaller than the smallest comparator gallery:

GALLERY	REASON FOR COMPARISON	POPULATION SERVED	FACILITY SIZE	YEAR BUILT, COST
Kamloops Art Gallery	Similar city population size & demographics; downtown location	90,000 (City only) 133k incl. Regional District	20,800 sq. ft. (of which 4,500 exhibition space), 2 floors	\$10m (1998)
Polygon Art Gallery, North Vancouver	Urban waterfront location with indoor & outdoor space; events-focused programming	53,000 (City only) 150,000 North Shore	25,000 sq. ft. (of which c. 10,000 exhibition space), 2 floors	\$18m (2017)
Ottawa Art Gallery	Innovative mixed-use development in downtown location	c. 900,000 (City only)	52,000 sq. ft. (of which 7,000 exhibition space), 5 floors	\$38m (2018)
Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George	Similar city population size & demographics; focus on accessibility	79,000 (City only) 100k incl. Regional District	20,000 sq. ft.	\$5.5m (2000)
Nanaimo Art Gallery	N/A	90,505 (City only); 225,000 incl. regional population	5,000 sq. ft.	(1960s)

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Community Engagement

Engaged over 150 community members via:

- Open House event
- Online survey
- 11 interviews
- 2 focus groups
- 1 design charrette



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Key Engagement Findings

Almost unanimous agreement that **expanding the size of the gallery** is a key priority



50% see the **Downtown location** as one of the Gallery's key strengths



Creating access to **outdoor space** was a frequent theme in focus groups and interviews



Increased programming space will increase individual & community wellbeing



1/4 participants want to be able to see into the Gallery from outside



The Gallery must honour **Snuneymuxw** people, territory & culture through its building, operations and programming

1/3 participants want more opportunities for **local arts & culture**



Increasing accessibility is critical – the current building is not accessible for people with mobility issues

Required Spaces (Functional Program)

SIZE: 18-25,000 sq. ft.
including 2-3 changing exhibitions spaces

Café run by 3rd party – creating new revenue stream

Atrium providing flex space, views into the Gallery, and rental income

Indigenizing the Gallery – exploring potential partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation / PDG

Downtown, or greenfield location close to Downtown core

Outdoor spaces providing connections to the land, with space for outdoor programming

2+ large program studios to further expand programming



Regional Gallery and larger gift shop to provide more space for local/regional artists

Fully accessible for visitors and staff with disabilities and mobility issues



Key Architectural Findings



Route 1: Renovation

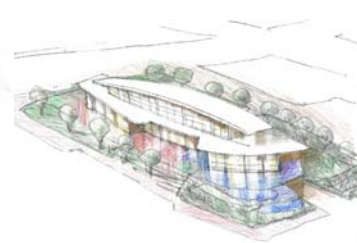
Deemed technically unfeasible:

- Would be more costly than replacement building.
- More complicated, less functional floor plan.
- Seismic loading: would need new system of foundations, posts, and shear walls to carry new floor.
- Likely contains hazardous asbestos-containing materials.
- Problems meeting climate control requirements for Class A status.



Route 2: New Build at 150 Commercial St

- **Pros:** Central downtown location in existing cultural district; community association with Gallery; Convention Centre parking lot could be leveraged.
- **Cons:** Gallery would have to relocate during the demolition and construction; building size restricted to max. 18,000 sq ft; poor accessibility for trucks and buses.
- **Estimated cost: \$21m**








Route 3: Greenfield site

Currently non-site specific; park/waterfront location close to downtown core.

- **Pros:** Existing Gallery could operate during construction; more indoor/outdoor areas; possible to realize all programming goals.
- **Cons:** Few greenfield sites meet all criteria; could be seen as taking up 'new' space.
- **Estimated cost \$19.5m** (lower as no demolition involved)

Links with *Nanaimo Reimagined* City Plan

CITY GOAL	CONTRIBUTION
 A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS	The future Gallery could be a green, energy-efficient building, opening the project up to new funding sources.
 A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY	The new facility would be fully accessible, ensuring equitable mobility for all persons (Goal 2.4) – contributing to social inclusion.
 A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY	Increasing community and individual wellness through expanded programming and impact (Goal 3.6, Recreation, Culture, and Wellness).
 AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: RECONCILIATION, REPRESENTATION & INCLUSION	Equity & Inclusivity (Goal 4.2): A welcoming public space following universal design principles; celebrating Nanaimo's identity and honouring Indigenous culture with a focus on Snuneymuxw.
 A PROSPEROUS NANAIMO: THRIVING & RESILIENT ECONOMY	Place Making & Investment Attraction (Goal 5.5) + Tourism (Goal 5.6): contributing to Downtown revitalization, driving visitation and spending. Increasing Human, Social & Economic Capital (Goal 5.2) providing new revenue-generating activities, including income for local artists.

Next Steps: Phase 2

With support from the **Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces Fund** (\$61,750) and **BC Arts Council Infrastructure Program** (\$25,000), Nanaimo Art Gallery is working with Nordicity to continue the Feasibility Study Work. This work includes:

- Continued community engagement
- Exploring capacity for a capital campaign
- Analysis of other funding opportunities
- Working with City Real Estate Section on Site Options Analysis and development of Class D estimates



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Thank you!
Questions?

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