

Nanaimo Art Gallery – Future Gallery Project

Update Report to City Council

November 28th, 2023

Delivered to

Nanaimo City Council

Delivered by



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1. Background and Objectives

1.1 About this Project

This **'Future Gallery' project** directly follows the [feasibility study](#) that Nanaimo Art Gallery completed with [Nordicity](#) and [Iredale Architecture](#) in 2022.

As described to Nanaimo Mayor and City Councillors on August 29th, 2022,¹ the scope of this follow-up work has involved additional community engagement; working with City of Nanaimo's Real Estate Section on site options analysis; and exploring funding opportunities and Nanaimo Art Gallery's capacity to run a capital fundraising campaign. These activities were funded by the Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces Fund and BC Arts Council Infrastructure Program, with support from the City's Real Estate team.

This document reports on these streams of feasibility study follow up work. The fund development strategy created by [Global Philanthropic Canada](#) is included in Appendix B.

'Future Gallery' Working Group

The Working Group includes Nanaimo Art Gallery staff and Directors of the Board, City of Nanaimo staff, and members of the Nordicity consultant team.

City of Nanaimo Representatives:

- Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation, and Culture
- Darcie Osborne, Director of Recreation and Culture
- Bill Corsan, Director of Corporate and Business Development
- Adrienne Mercer Breen, Manager of Culture and Special Events
- Lynn Wark (until October 2022), Director of Recreation and Culture

Nanaimo Art Gallery Representatives:

- Carolyn Holmes, Executive Director
- Debra Jacklin, President, Nanaimo Art Gallery Board
- Chris Midgely, Board Member, Nanaimo Art Gallery Board

Nordicity Representatives:

- Louisa Plant, Manager
- Lianne McRadu, Senior Analyst

¹ 'Nanaimo Art Gallery Feasibility Study Update' presentation by Carolyn Holmes, ED of Nanaimo Art Gallery, and Louisa Plant, Manager at Nordicity.

1.2 Project Alignment with Existing Council Directions

Existing Council directions have confirmed the expansion of Nanaimo Art Gallery as a priority for the City of Nanaimo:

- In 2013, Nanaimo City Council approved a **three-phase plan for facility development** at 150 Commercial Street. This included transferring management of 150 Commercial Street to Nanaimo Art Gallery, consolidating Gallery operations at that location, and completing a series of renovations.
- The [Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo 2014-2020](#) specifically names support of the Nanaimo Art Gallery's phased development plan within its Cultural Asset Priority Plan.² Furthermore, the Plan also states that successful implementation of the Plan will "include an enhanced Nanaimo Art Gallery."³
- Additionally, the 2022 [Nanaimo Integrated Action Plan](#)⁴ – which supports the *Nanaimo Reimagined* City Plan – specifically recommends that the City "support the adopted Nanaimo Art Gallery phased development plan at 150 Commercial Street, and assist in the completion of a new feasibility study for the Gallery that explores options of expansion and establishing a "Class A" public art gallery."⁵ Refer to the [Nanaimo Art Gallery Feasibility study](#)."

² Section 5.5: Cultural Asset Priority Plan: "Support the Nanaimo Art Gallery phased development plan that starts with consolidation of their operations to 150 Commercial Street and ends with an expansion, including a "Class A" public art gallery". Source: A Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo 2014-2020, p. 46. <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/plan-culturalplanforacreativenanaimo.pdf>



³ A Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo 2014-2020, p. 66. <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/plan-culturalplanforacreativenanaimo.pdf>



⁴ Reference 133 of Nanaimo Integrated Action Plan 2022, p. 26. [https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/city-plan-documents/iap---final---2023.06.27-\(web\).pdf](https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/city-plan-documents/iap---final---2023.06.27-(web).pdf)

⁵ While the Plan does not define "Class A", this classification refers to a level of relative humidity (RH) and temperature within a museum/gallery. RH fluctuation is linked to measurable damage in artifacts. Following the Canadian Conservation Institute's definition, a Class A facility has "Good [RH and temperature] control, some gradients or seasonal changes." There are five Classes of Control: AA to D, where AA is the highest. Source: Grattan, D., and Michalski, S. (N.D). Environmental guidelines for museums, Canadian Conservation Institute, Government of Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/environmental-guidelines-museums.html>

1.2.1 Contributions to *Nanaimo Reimagined*

With a new, expanded facility, the Gallery can increase its positive impact within Nanaimo and contribute to many goals of ***City Plan - Nanaimo Reimagined***:

City Goal	Contribution
 <p>AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: RECONCILIATION, REPRESENTATION & INCLUSION</p>	<p>As described above, Reference 133 of the Nanaimo Integrated Action Plan (Empower - Culture, p. 26) specifically mentions Nanaimo Art Gallery, recommending that the City supports Nanaimo Art Gallery with its phased development plan, exploring options of expansion and establishing a “Class A” public art gallery.</p> <p>The action is supported by the following City Plan policies:</p> <p>C4.5.2 Establish flexible and innovative cultural facilities that anticipate and enable a wide range of cultural programs and can accommodate a variety of production, exhibition, and performance experiences.</p> <p>C4.5.3 Make arts and culture visible and accessible throughout the city and especially in each of the designated Urban Centres with a special focus on Downtown.</p> <p>C4.5.4 Continue to facilitate the growth of the Downtown as a cultural area by locating new facilities or redeveloping facilities suited for cultural purposes in this area.</p> <p>C4.5.6 Work to increase cultural investment through regular capital and operating budgeting processes.</p> <p>A new facility would also support:</p> <p>Goal 4.2 Equity & Inclusivity: The facility would be inclusive and welcoming and would provide equitable access to services, programs, and facilities for all residents.</p> <p>Goal 4.4 Access for All: A new gallery will provide opportunities for all through a range of inclusive, accessible, and affordable cultural facilities and programs.</p> <p>The project also aligns with Goal 4.5 Experiences and Collaboration.</p>
 <p>A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY</p>	<p>A larger facility would increase community and individual wellness through expanded programming and impact (contributing to Goal 3.6, Recreation, Culture, and Wellness).</p>

 <p>A PROSPEROUS NANAIMO: THRIVING & RESILIENT ECONOMY</p>	<p>Place Making & Investment Attraction (Goal 5.5) and Tourism (Goal 5.6): The facility would contribute to Downtown revitalization, driving visitation and spending.</p> <p>It would also increase Human, Social & Economic Capital (Goal 5.2), providing new revenue-generating activities, including income for local artists, helping to attract and retain talent.</p>
 <p>A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS</p>	<p>The future facility could be a green, energy-efficient building, built to be climate change resilient. A green building opens the project up to new funding sources, such as Infrastructure Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program.</p>
 <p>A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY</p>	<p>The future facility would be fully accessible, ensuring equitable mobility for all persons (Goal 2.4) – contributing to social inclusion.</p>

1.3 Future Gallery Project Timeline

This timeline summarizes work to date in relation to Nanaimo Art Gallery's facility:

- **1976 – 2015** – The Gallery operates a purpose-built space on Vancouver Island University campus.
- **1999** – Satellite location opens in a City-owned downtown building at 150 Commercial Street.
- **2008** – With community input, the Gallery develops a vision for a new Nanaimo Art Gallery.
- **2013** – In 2013, Nanaimo City Council approves a **three-phase plan for facility development** at 150 Commercial Street:
 - Phase 1: Renovations of the exhibition space and expansion to create Art Lab
 - Phase 2: Further renovations to the exhibition space,
 - Phase 3: Expansion of Nanaimo Art Gallery and creation of a Class A Gallery. Notably, the Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo 2014-2020 spoke to this phased development.
 - December 2013: The City of Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Art Gallery Society enter a 10-year Co-Management Agreement for the entire building at 150 Commercial Street, including increased financial investment in the Gallery by the City.
- **2014** – Phase 1 renovations to improve the Gallery's exhibition space (which was built as a bank in the 1960s) and expanding the footprint in the building to create the programming space Art Lab (with support from BC Creative Spaces funding), and a community studio space.
 - The Gallery enters into multi-year agreements with tenants on the lower floor of the building including other professional arts organizations: Vancouver Island Symphony, Nanaimo Archives, Crimson Coast Dance, and TheatreOne.
 - May, the 2014 – 2020 Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo is adopted by City Council. The Plan specifically names support of the Nanaimo Art Gallery's phased development plan within its Cultural Asset Priority Plan. Furthermore, the Plan also states that successful implementation of the Plan will "include an enhanced Nanaimo Art Gallery."⁶
- **2015-2017** – In May, the Gallery leaves Vancouver Island University to amalgamate services and staff downtown and establishes the first, full-time curatorial position.
 - The Gallery moved for three reasons: first, capacity, as it was no longer feasible to manage two locations. Second, it moved to bring cultural organizations and

⁶ A Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo 2014-2020, p. 66. <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/plan-culturalplanforacreativenanaimo.pdf>

infrastructure together in the heart of the downtown as part of the arts district. The third reason was to connect with the wider community in space that was removed from the university.

- Phase 2 renovations take place. Renovations include further improvements to exhibition space (funded by Canadian Heritage), construction of storage for the collection, and renewal of a flexible kitchen space.(funded by the BC Collaborative Spaces program).
- **2018** – Renovation of the façade of 150 Commercial Street.
 - Installation of a commissioned artwork for the façade by Snuneymuxw artists, Joel and William Good, with support from Canadian Heritage, the City of Nanaimo and funded in part by a crowdfunding campaign.
- **2020** – the Gallery requests City support for research and capacity building while working towards implementation of Phase 3 (expansion of Nanaimo Art Gallery and creation of a Class A gallery). In response, City Council approves the following as budget items:
 - Allocation of \$10,000 per year in funding to the Nanaimo Art Gallery in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for capital expenditures at the Arts Centre at 150 Commercial Street;
 - An amendment of the 2014-2023 Co-Management Agreement (with an execution date after the Provisional 2021-2025 Financial Plan has been adopted by Council); and
 - Allocation of \$25,000 in the 2021 budget for the development of a feasibility report on the concept of an Arts Centre and Nanaimo Art Gallery’s Phase 3 facility project.
- **2021** – Nanaimo Art Gallery works with City of Nanaimo staff to develop the research questions and RFP to conduct a feasibility study.
 - In October 2021, **Nanaimo Art Gallery launches the feasibility study** project working with the selected consultants, Nordicity.
 - The Gallery establishes a Working Group for the project, including Gallery staff and directors, City of Nanaimo staff, and the consultant team.
- **2022-2023** – Renovations are made to expand Art Lab programming space and renovate shared creative office hub in the Art Centre. (funded by Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces fund and COVID Resiliency funding)
 - August 2022 – the feasibility study is completed, marking the **beginning of Phase 3 – the Expansion of the Gallery.**
 - August 29th, 2022 – Carolyn Holmes (ED of Nanaimo Art Gallery) and Louisa Plant (Manager at Nordicity) present the feasibility study findings and next steps to Mayor and Council.

- September 2022 – the team launches the next phase of feasibility work to realize a new Nanaimo Art Gallery. The findings of this project are detailed in this report.

1.4 Current Facility Challenges and Needs

Today, numerous and persistent challenges with the current facility at 150 Commercial Street prevent Nanaimo Art Gallery from achieving its full potential. These challenges continue despite the renovations described in the timeline above. The current facility is a 1960s building that was initially designed as a bank, and not a public gallery.

As the table below outlines, primary challenges with the current facility include a lack of indoor and outdoor space, accessibility – as the current building does not meet standards for a public facility – and insufficient climate controls. Climate and humidity controls are of critical importance when storing and presenting artwork. The building’s existing structure poses various barriers to more extensive renovations. The ongoing challenges posed by the building make it difficult for Nanaimo Art Gallery to realize its full potential.

Table 1. Ongoing Challenges

Challenge Area	Challenge	Description
Lack of indoor space (building/ infrastructure related)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient exhibition and programming space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The existing exhibition space is too small. Quarterly, the exhibition space is shut down for installation, resulting in a lack of exhibitions in the Gallery for a total of 12 weeks per year. In the last three installation periods, 1070 visitors were denied access without any exhibition to view. Having more exhibition spaces would ensure that Gallery can exhibit all-year round, and ensure the Gallery always has some exhibition for the public to view. Moreover, the exhibition space frequently proves too small for travelling exhibitions, necessitating the exclusion of works. Many of the most exciting travelling exhibitions are too large for the space. Therefore, Nanaimo misses out on hosting blockbuster exhibitions – a detriment to both the local community and the tourism industry on the Island. ▪ Despite renovations, the Art Lab programming space remains too small. Space constraints have a direct impact on programming, restricting both the size and quantity of classes the Gallery can offer annually. Consequently, 75% of children’s programs have waitlists. The Gallery, constrained by a single space, is unable to concurrently run multiple programs or fulfill rental requests. Moreover, the existing space lacks the configuration and design necessary for leading programming and presentations. ▪ There is limited space to house a permanent collection. Moreover, there is no space to grow the collection, nor any dedicated workspace to prepare collection works for exhibition.

Challenge Area	Challenge	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of storage space limits the Gallery's ability to store borrowed artworks when they are not on display, and store crates and packing materials during the exhibition.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loading/unloading challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no loading dock or receiving area for artworks. Trucks are required to unload on the street or staff often are required to bring exhibitions in through the front doors. This poses a safety concern when maneuvering large crates over curbs and through narrow passageways to access the space. Consequently, the Gallery sometimes has to exclude works from exhibitions due to loading and unloading constraints.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of outdoor space/green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The current building has no outdoor space such as courtyards, patios, or terraces, and little connection to nature. Lack of outdoor space can also restrict the opportunity for programming and events.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current facility does not meet accessibility standards for a public building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The current facility does not meet accessibility standards for a public building, meaning that the Gallery cannot provide equitable access to visitors. Several spaces are inaccessible for individuals with mobility issues. For example, visitors must walk up a small flight of stairs to access Art Lab from the exhibition space and the office kitchen and the washrooms for the office area are inaccessible for individuals using wheelchairs or with mobility challenges. ▪ There is no parking or ease of access to the building for elders or people with disabilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to retrofit the building extensively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Gallery has an insufficient climate control/HVAC system which limits the types of artworks the Gallery can borrow and artwork it can exhibit at the Gallery. Therefore, the Gallery is missing out on being able to host travelling exhibitions that require 'Class A' status. Moreover, the lack of stable temperature and humidity affects the permanent collection which requires a climate-controlled storage space to preserve the Gallery's collection for future generations, as required by the organization's mandate. ▪ The existing exterior wall system cannot be completely sealed to support a Class A museum-quality humidity-control system.
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited visibility into the Gallery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In research and engagement, community members said that it is hard to tell what the current building is from outside.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceptions that the facility is still a bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The exterior still looks like a bank, and participants described passersby not realizing that there is a gallery there.

Challenge Area	Challenge	Description
Other building challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of natural lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of the building, such as the shop, lack natural lighting. Greater natural ambient lighting could contribute to a more open and inviting atmosphere while avoiding direct light which could damage artwork.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor acoustics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building has poor acoustics. Sound travels very easily around the building, which can be disruptive. The lack of sound insulation limits the type of programming that can take place, such as audio installations. Poor acoustics can also make guided tours or presentations difficult.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for pest remediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the age of the current building and its permeable envelope, regular and ongoing pest remediation efforts are necessary. Ongoing silverfish control in particular is crucial due to their detrimental effects of exposure on artworks, highlighting a significant challenge in maintaining a suitable environment for art preservation.

1.5 Recap of Key Feasibility Study Findings

The [Nanaimo Art Gallery Feasibility Study](#) report (2022) investigated how Nanaimo Art Gallery should grow to meet the needs of the community and what the future facility could be like. The feasibility study **explored the feasibility of 3 development routes**, creating architectural concepts for routes 2 and 3:

Route 1: Redeveloping the existing building (a former bank building at 150 Commercial St);

Route 2: Building a new gallery facility on the existing site at 150 Commercial St; and,

Route 3: Building a new facility on a greenfield site (i.e., an undeveloped site that has not previously been built on).

In summary, the study confirmed that **the Gallery’s current facility is too small**, and that it **does not meet accessibility standards for a public building**. The study highlighted solid community support for an expanded gallery; 60% of over 100 community members surveyed considered it a priority to expand Nanaimo Art Gallery’s size. Furthermore, the research showed that the community values having the Gallery downtown but wants a future facility to incorporate outdoor space.

The architectural study included in the report confirmed that **the facility should have 18-25,000 sq. ft. of indoor space and be in a prominent downtown location**, preferably with access to green space. Considering routes to achieving this, the study found it would be technically unfeasible to expand the current building through renovations; **numerous complicating factors would make a renovation more costly and less functional than a replacement building**. However, the architectural study found that building a new facility on the current site (150 Commercial Street, Nanaimo) would be feasible, and suggested it could also be located at a greenfield site in a park or at the waterfront close to Nanaimo’s Downtown core.

The total cost estimate for the existing site (including demolition and site preparation) is \$21 million and \$19.5 million for a greenfield site respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. Cost Estimates from 2022 Feasibility Study

Estimated Cost	
150 Commercial Street	
Total Estimated Budget	\$ 21,036,886
Greenfield Site	
Total Estimated Budget	\$ 19,555,642

1.6 Nanaimo Art Gallery’s Recent Activities

Despite the challenges with the current facility, Nanaimo Art Gallery has continued to thrive in a post-pandemic world. Key successes achieved in recent years include:

Strengthening organizational capacity and financial sustainability

- Hired an Executive Director with over 15 years of cultural leadership experience
- Worked with the City of Nanaimo to increase core operating funding
- Increased core operating funding from BC Arts Council
- Developed visioning statements and values for the Gallery
- Worked with cultural contractors to enhance capacity
- Created a five-year Strategic Plan: [Creating Space 2023-2028](#)
- Developed a Board recruitment strategy
- Increased employee wages and established a robust employee benefits plan
- Created the new role of Director of Learning and Engagement, expanding the department and increasing programming
- Formalized the Indigenous Engagement Coordinator role

Currently recruiting a Director of Development and Communications

Sharing stories and fostering deeper dialogue with communities

- Established a new role for a part-time Marketing and Communications Coordinator
- Developed a new interactive website
- Launched an online platform to share the Gallery’s off-site projects
- Increased Nanaimo Art Gallery’s social media presence
- Introduced new graphic signage in the Gallery’s entrance way

Creating a welcoming and accessible experience for all

- In 2022/23, the total audience served was **21,889** (240% higher than pre-pandemic numbers)

- During first the first seven months of 2023/24 fiscal year the total audience served was **17,320**
- Increased outreach activities and increased outreach attendance in 2022/23 by over 300% from 2021/22
- Established complimentary admission for those who identify as Indigenous
- Included a Hul'q'umi'num greeting in the lobby
- Celebrating seven years of hosting Hul'q'umi'num classes at the Gallery
- Established a 'Pay It Forward' program to fund bursaries for youth programming
- Prioritized accessibility through infrastructure improvements and exhibition enhancements
- Joined the City's LEAP program

Thriving as a creative space to gather and share artistic encounters

- Worked with over 150 artists in 2022/23
- Developed 12 in-house exhibitions and hosted three touring exhibitions since the pandemic
- Hosted a blockbuster travelling exhibition, *Border X*, complete with a community skateboarding space
- Toured two Nanaimo Art Gallery exhibitions to Burnaby
- Exhibited 26 local artists in the Gallery since the pandemic
- Supported the creation of dozens of new artworks
- Added 87 works to the permanent collection held in trust for people of Nanaimo
- Hosted seven events along the Millstone River, including plant walk and workshops
- Created a weekly drop-in program for teens
- Developed a weekly Art Lab Sunday program that is open to everyone and free for members
- Revamped the 'Artists in the Schools' program
- Created a volunteer program

Preparing for a new Nanaimo Art Gallery

- Participated in the City's Infrastructure Task Force
- Developed a feasibility study for an expanded Class A art gallery (2022)
- Completed a second phase of feasibility work (the 'Future Gallery' work outlined in this report)
- Secured funding from three levels of government for 'Future Gallery' feasibility work

2. Report on Recent 'Future Gallery' Work

2.1 Community Engagement Highlights

In this phase of work, Nanaimo Art Gallery sought to engage as widely as possible with the community to gain further feedback and ideas to shape the future vision for the Gallery.

Key community engagement activities:

- **Hosting an Open House** event at the Gallery, co-facilitated by Nordicity on February 17th, 2023.
 - The primary purpose of the Open House was to test out the community engagement survey, and to share an update on the 'Future Gallery' project with the cultural community to engage them in sharing ideas.
- **Seeking public input at community events** and activities in Nanaimo throughout summer 2023.
 - The purpose of participating in community events was to spread the word of plans for the Future Gallery more widely and to gain wider input from a broad range of people – including those unfamiliar with Nanaimo Art Gallery. Additionally, the engagements provided the opportunity for community members to ask questions about the project.
 - Nanaimo Art Gallery had a prominent presence at numerous events including Commercial Street Night Market, Pride, Artful Resilience, GoByBike, and the Youth Can Group, The Gallery also conducted engagement at Woodgrove Mall, two Vancouver Island Regional Library branches, Silly Boat Races, the Cedar Market and at Tourism booths along Nanaimo's waterfront during the summer.

Appendix A details the findings from the public summer engagement activities.

Key Open House Engagement Highlights:

- 151 people attended the Open House event. Of the attendees, 61 people took the survey.
- Almost all Open House survey participants had visited the Gallery at some point prior to the event. **Nearly half of the 61 survey participants indicated that they visit the Gallery every few months (48%)** while a minority of respondents visit once a year or more (11%), once a week or more (11%), or every few years (7%). Of the respondents, all but four participants (7%) indicated that they had visited the Nanaimo Art Gallery before.
- There was fairly **even participation** in the survey across adult age groups. Of the 53 survey participants who shared their age groups, 21% were aged 26 to 35 years old, 19% were aged 56 to 65 years old, and 23% were 65 years of age or older.
- Of the 52 participants of who identified what they like most about Nanaimo Art Gallery, the **top three things participants enjoy are the Gallery's downtown location (54%), it's interesting and thought-provoking exhibitions (46%), and its strong relationships with the local community (23%).**

- The Gallery is viewed as a place to connect with other community members. Of 52 participants who responded to this question, 37% said that they usually **visit the Gallery to connect with other community members**, indicating that the Gallery is not only a place to experience art and learn but also a public hub where community members connect with one another.

Key Summer Engagement Highlights:

- Throughout the summer, Nanaimo Art Gallery engaged with diverse members of the public, across age groups and demographics. The public survey attracted **nearly 250 complete responses** and over 700 partial responses.
- The survey attracted **broad participation from diverse community members**. Of the 304 survey participants who opted to say if they self-identified with an under-represented group, 18% identified as LGBTQ2IA+, 11% as a person with a disability, 8% as Indigenous, 8% as a Person of Colour, and 6% as newcomers to Canada.
- Many survey participants have visited the Gallery already. **Of 285 survey responses, over a third (36%) of public survey participants visit the Gallery every few months**, with most viewing exhibits (83%) and over half visiting the Gallery store (51%).
- The Gallery is recognized by the public for providing many benefits to the community. When survey participants who have visited Nanaimo Art Gallery were asked what they like most about it, the top three responses from 282 participants included its **downtown location** (33%), the Gallery **support of local artists** (32%), and **Art Lab/learning and engagement programs** (26%).
- The community identified several things they would like to see more of from a new Nanaimo Art Gallery facility. Of 279 respondents who have visited the Gallery, 46% said they would like to see **new community spaces** in the future facility – including exhibition spaces for regional artists, areas that can be rented by the community, and/or a café with outdoor spaces – making this the most desired attribute.
- Participants who had not yet visited the Gallery expressed a keen interest in the Gallery expanding its offerings. Of the 57 survey participants who had not visited Nanaimo Art Gallery, nearly half (49%) indicated that they would be interested in seeing **exhibitions featuring work by local or regional artists**, making this the most popular response.
- Qualitative responses to an interactive ‘Create Space’ engagement activity (which asked participants to envision how the Future Gallery could support positive community outcomes) indicated that participants want the Future Gallery to be a **vibrant and inclusive** space, **fostering creativity, connectivity, and wellbeing**.

2.2 Engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation

Engaging meaningfully with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) is a **priority for Nanaimo Art Gallery**, not only in relation to the Future Gallery project, but throughout the organization’s work. Nanaimo Art Gallery respectfully recognizes the Snuneymuxw as rightsholders with the project, as the Gallery sits on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw.

Prior to this project, Nanaimo Art Gallery had been building strong relations with Snuneymuxw Elders, artists and other community members, including through Hul'q'umi'num language classes at the Gallery. However, the Gallery did not previously have a relationship with the Nation at an institutional level. As such, the Gallery connected directly with SFN staff during this project, starting in the fall of 2022 and into winter 2023, to share early plans for the future Gallery for feedback and to discuss opportunities to walk together as we realize next steps for the future facility. This connection included in-person meetings with SFN's Executive Director and Communications Manager, and several following conversations regarding the Future Gallery project.

SFN have stated that they are interested in working with Nanaimo Art Gallery on the 'Future Gallery' project as one of their key special projects, as it is important to the well-being of their community, especially the youth. The terms of reference are currently being defined for this working relationship and next steps.

2.3 Site Options Analysis with the City's Real Estate Team

Nanaimo Art Gallery and Nordicity's Project Team worked closely with the City of Nanaimo's Real Estate team to develop **siting study criteria** to help select potential locations for the Future Gallery and then to **analyze potential site options**.

Siting Study Criteria and Scoring Framework

The development of the site criteria was informed by findings from Nanaimo Art Gallery's Feasibility Study⁷ and similar siting studies conducted by the City of Nanaimo's Real Estate team. The agreed criteria were broken down into two key areas: **mandatory** criteria and **preferred** criteria:

- **Mandatory criteria** included considerations of what the site *must* include to accommodate a Gallery. Considerations included:
 - **Building size:** 18,000 – 25,000 sq. ft., over 2-3 storeys if needed
 - **Parking:** Accessible parking nearby or onsite, most parking nearby within 1-2 blocks
 - **Loading access:** Fair safe access and egress for bus and truck loading and unloading
 - **Location:** In the downtown core, within the preferred 'inner downtown circle'
- **Preferred criteria** provided further detail into other elements desired for a new site, including:

⁷ Nanaimo Art Gallery's operational needs and community-defined priorities for the Future Gallery, as outlined in the Nanaimo Art Gallery Phase 1 Feasibility Study Final Report, August 2022 <https://pub-nanaimo.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=43802>

- **Technical:** Considerations of geotechnical and archeological site issues, consistency with City Plan and current zoning, and 'highest best use' in the long view.
- **Ease:** Considerations relating to the ease of site acquisition (i.e., assembly, cost, restrictive covenants on title, and willingness of seller), development costs (i.e., ability to tie into existing infrastructure and off-site costs), any preparation work required (i.e., demolition, contamination, geotechnical piling, etc.), partnerships (i.e., ability to partner with public/private groups on the site, or if other key strategic projects can benefit from this location and/or project), and political and public support (i.e., location something the public would support, and location helps stimulate transformation and investment in the downtown core).
- **Impact:** The impact the site would have if the Gallery was built there; for example placemaking impact (i.e., access to appealing outdoor space, and location contributes strongly to Nanaimo's sense of place), visitation (i.e., high level of foot traffic, proximity to the heart of the downtown core, and access to public transit), and neighbourhood impact (i.e., project fits with the existing neighbourhood, project enhances the neighbourhood, and project complements adjacent properties).

For the preferred criteria, Nordicity's Project Team developed a **weighted scoring system** to further evaluate sites. This system gave each preferred criterion a % weight out of 100%, where a 15% weighting means a criterion had greater importance than a 10% weighting. Each site was then evaluated based on each criterion using a scale of one to five (one being poor and five being excellent). Sites then received a total score out of 100, meaning that sites could be ranked in comparison to each other based on their scores.

Figure 1. Weighted Scoring System Sample

		Preferred Criteria								
		TECHNICAL	EASE			IMPACT				
		Technical considerations	Site acquisition	Development costs	Partnerships	Political/public support	Place-making	Visitation	Neighbourhood Impact	
	Weight	15%	15%	15%	10%	15%	15%	10%	5%	SCORE (out of 100)
Site Option	Site Name Here	4	4	3	3	4	3	5	3	73
		1	2	3	4	5				
		Very Poor	Poor	OK	Good	Excellent				

Site Options Analysis

Once the siting study criteria was confirmed, the City of Nanaimo's Real Estate Team compiled a long list of nearly 40 potential sites in Nanaimo that met the 'mandatory' criteria for the Future Gallery's location.

After reviewing the comprehensive list together with the City’s Real Estate team, Nanaimo Art Gallery and Nordicity’s Project Team selected 14 site options from the long list of close to 40 sites. The 14 sites were selected for review as they are based within Nanaimo’s inner downtown circle,⁸ given that community engagement activities have consistently confirmed the Gallery’s downtown location as a key priority. See Figure 2 for image of the inner downtown circle.⁹

Using the scoring framework, Nanaimo Art Gallery and Nordicity’s Project Team took a walking tour of the 14 sites to score them based on the ‘Impact’ criteria (defined above). Next, the City’s Real Estate Team scored those sites for ‘Technical’ and ‘Ease’ criteria. The scores were used to shortlist sites based on those with the highest scores.¹⁰

Figure 2. Downtown Nanaimo ‘inner circle’



2.4 Strategy for Capital Campaign

Nordicity retained the services of Global Philanthropic Canada to develop a Fund Development Strategy for the Nanaimo Art Gallery’s quest to pursue building and funding a purpose-built facility. This phase of the project included developing observations and recommendations for implementation that are based on recent analyses of the organization’s current activity, knowledge of funding programs for significant cultural infrastructure projects, and research on recent philanthropic trends for the region. **See Appendix B for the Fund Development Strategy** developed by Global Philanthropic for Nanaimo Art Gallery (November 2022).

There are public sources of revenue that will likely be available to the project once more details are known, and an application can be made with more specifics and offer a greater likelihood of success. Regardless, Global Philanthropic’s work found that there will need to be significant effort with securing funds from the private sector. As such, the building of a significant major gift fundraising effort and program will be required. As the needs extend beyond the

⁸ The Project Team defines the ‘inner downtown circle’ as East of Terminal Avenue, South of Terminal Avenue and Highway 1, and North of Crace Street.

⁹ Note: During the walking tour, a few sites in the Old City Quarter off Fitzwilliam Street were also visited

¹⁰ Note: the purpose of the ranking was to identify the top 5 sites for further review. Upon identification of the top 5 sites, ranking was not considered in further evaluation.

organization's current capacity and expertise, the Gallery will likely be tasked with contracting these needs to a partner to successfully lead the fundraising effort for a new facility.

3. Next Steps

The next phase of the 'Future Gallery' project is to develop a **detailed Business Plan** for the Future Nanaimo Art Gallery, as well as a **Case for Support** and **Test Case for a Capital Campaign**. While the Nanaimo Art Gallery Society has secured funding for this work, we now need to move from site options analysis to site selection in order to develop the business plan, case for support and test case. Having 2-3 shortlisted sites will mean that the Gallery can move forward in meeting the goals of Nanaimo's Integrated Action Plan to expand Nanaimo Art Gallery and create a Class A gallery. This work is directly connected to the City of Nanaimo's Integrated Action Plan, Action 132- Nanaimo Art Gallery Phased Development Plan.

In addition to the \$25,000 that the City of Nanaimo contributed to the feasibility study, **Nanaimo Art Gallery has raised \$117,000 in grants** from Nanaimo Hospitality Association, Canadian Heritage, and the BC Arts Council, to support these last two years of work the 'Future Gallery'. For the next stage of work, Nanaimo Art Gallery has committed \$60,000 in restricted funds, as well as \$25,000 in Arts Infrastructure funding from the BC Arts Council. Please note that \$25,000 in Arts Infrastructure funding is to be used before March 31, 2024. We have requested a 6-month extension, but still **there is urgency in this work**. Without specific sites to analyze, the Gallery will not be able to retain the funding and will lose momentum on the existing work.

Request to Council

Nanaimo Art Gallery requests that Council direct City staff to work with us to identify two sites so that the Gallery can develop a detailed business plan for the 'Future Nanaimo Art Gallery' and a Case for Support and Test Case for a Capital Campaign.

Appendix A. Summer Engagement Findings

Introduction

This Public Engagement Summary Report from the **'Future Gallery' Project** presents the findings of survey and engagement outreach conducted at different community events in the summer of 2023. These events included Artful Resilience, GoByBike, Commercial Street Night Market, Pride, and the Youth Can Group. Nanaimo Art Gallery also conducted engagement at Woodgrove Mall, two Vancouver Island Regional Library branches, Silly Boat Races, the Cedar Market and at Tourism booths along Nanaimo's waterfront during the summer. Nanaimo Art Gallery had a physical presence at each of these events, surveying members of the public, engaging them in a 'Make Space' activity to envision the future of Nanaimo Art Gallery, and spreading the word of plans for a new facility.

Key Highlights

Key Summer Engagement Highlights:

- The public survey attracted **nearly 250 complete responses** and over 700 partial responses from diverse members of the public, across age groups and demographics.
- Of the 304 survey participants who opted to say if they self-identified with an under-represented group, 18% identified as LGBTQ2IA+, 11% as a person with a disability, 8% as Indigenous, 8% as a Person of Colour, and 6% as newcomers to Canada.
- **Over a third (36%) of public survey participants visit the Gallery every few months**, with most viewing exhibits (83%) and over half visiting the Gallery store (51%).
- When survey participants who have visited Nanaimo Art Gallery were asked what they like most about it, the top three responses included its **downtown location** (33%), the Gallery **support of local artists** (32%), and Art Lab/learning and engagement programs (26%).
- 46% of survey respondents who have visited the Gallery said they would like to see **new community spaces** in the future facility – including exhibition spaces for regional artists, areas that can be rented by the community, and/or a café with outdoor spaces – making this the most desired attribute.
- Of survey participants who had not visited Nanaimo Art Gallery, nearly half (49%; n=55) indicated that they would be interested in seeing **exhibitions featuring work by local or regional artists**, making this the most popular response.
- Qualitative responses to the interactive 'Create Space' engagement activity (which asked participants to envision how the Future Gallery could support positive community outcomes) indicated that participants want the Future Gallery to be a **vibrant and inclusive** space, **fostering creativity, connectivity, and wellbeing**.
- Compared to Open House engagement findings from earlier in the year, summer engagement participants were more likely to respond to the 'Create Space' activity by suggesting potential sites for the future facility, with responses centred on **downtown**. The increased likelihood of participants talking about sites may suggest that more

people are now aware of the Future Art Gallery project and planning activities compared to six months prior when the Open House was hosted.

Public Survey Findings

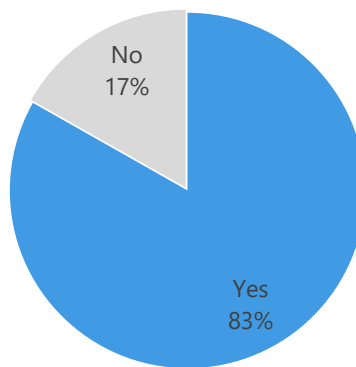
To gain valuable engagement input from the broader community on what they would like to see from a future Nanaimo Art Gallery facility, a survey questionnaire was deployed from April 21st to September 8th, 2023. The public survey was completed by participants at various in person community events throughout summer, as well as online.

The survey received **242 complete responses and 710 partial responses** from a wide range of community members. Participants shared their experiences at Nanaimo Art Gallery, and identified its strengths and challenges, and shared their hopes for the Future Gallery. Key findings from the survey are presented in the following sections.

Survey Results

To gauge participants' familiarity with the Gallery, they were asked if they had visited before (Figure 1). Out of the 381 respondents, a majority indicated they had visited before (83%).

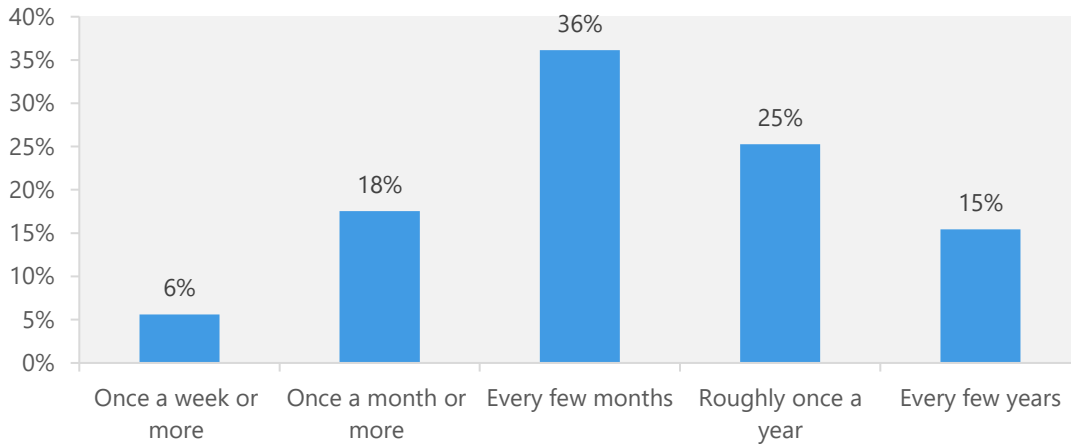
Figure 3 Have you been to Nanaimo Art Gallery? (n=381)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Moreover, participants were asked how often they visit the Gallery (Figure 2). Just over **a third reported they visited every few months (36%)** and a quarter said they visited roughly once a year (25%), while smaller numbers said that they visit once a month (18%), every few years (15%), or once a week (6%).

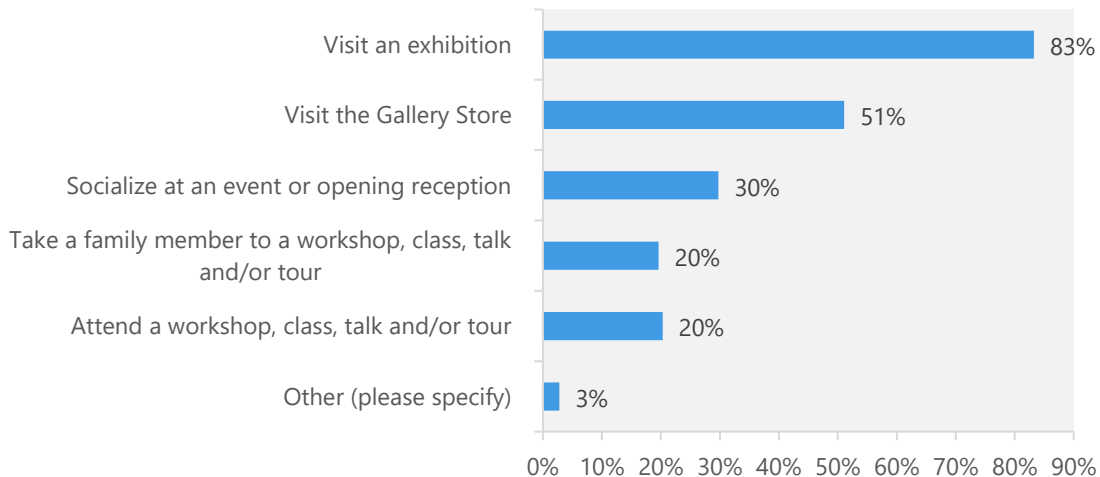
Figure 2 How often do you visit Nanaimo Art Gallery? (n=285)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Respondents were asked to share what they usually do at the Gallery (Figure 3). Participants could choose more than one response. Most visit to see an exhibition (83%), while over half visit the Gallery’s store (51%). Notably, nearly a third of respondents attend to socialize at events or opening receptions (30%).

Figure 3 What do you usually do at Nanaimo Art Gallery? Select all that apply. (n=286)

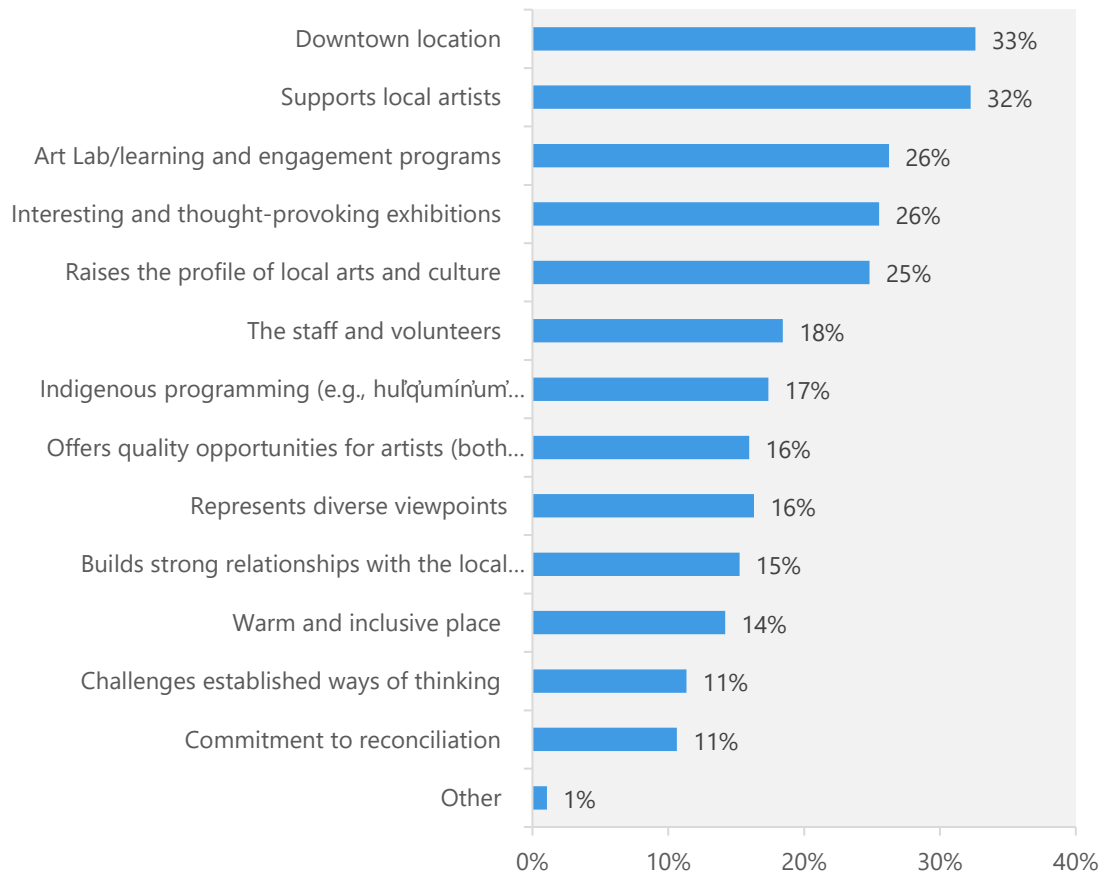


Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

When participants who have visited Nanaimo Art Gallery were asked what they most like about it (Figure 4), **a third of participants responded that they appreciate the downtown location (33%) and the Gallery’s support for local artists (32%)**. The other three notable characteristics were the Art Lab/Learning and Engagement programs, which was highlighted by

just over a quarter of participants (26%), the interesting and thought-provoking exhibitions (26%), and the Gallery's role in raising the profile of local arts and culture (25%).

Figure 4 What do you like most about Nanaimo Art Gallery? Select up to 3. (n=282)

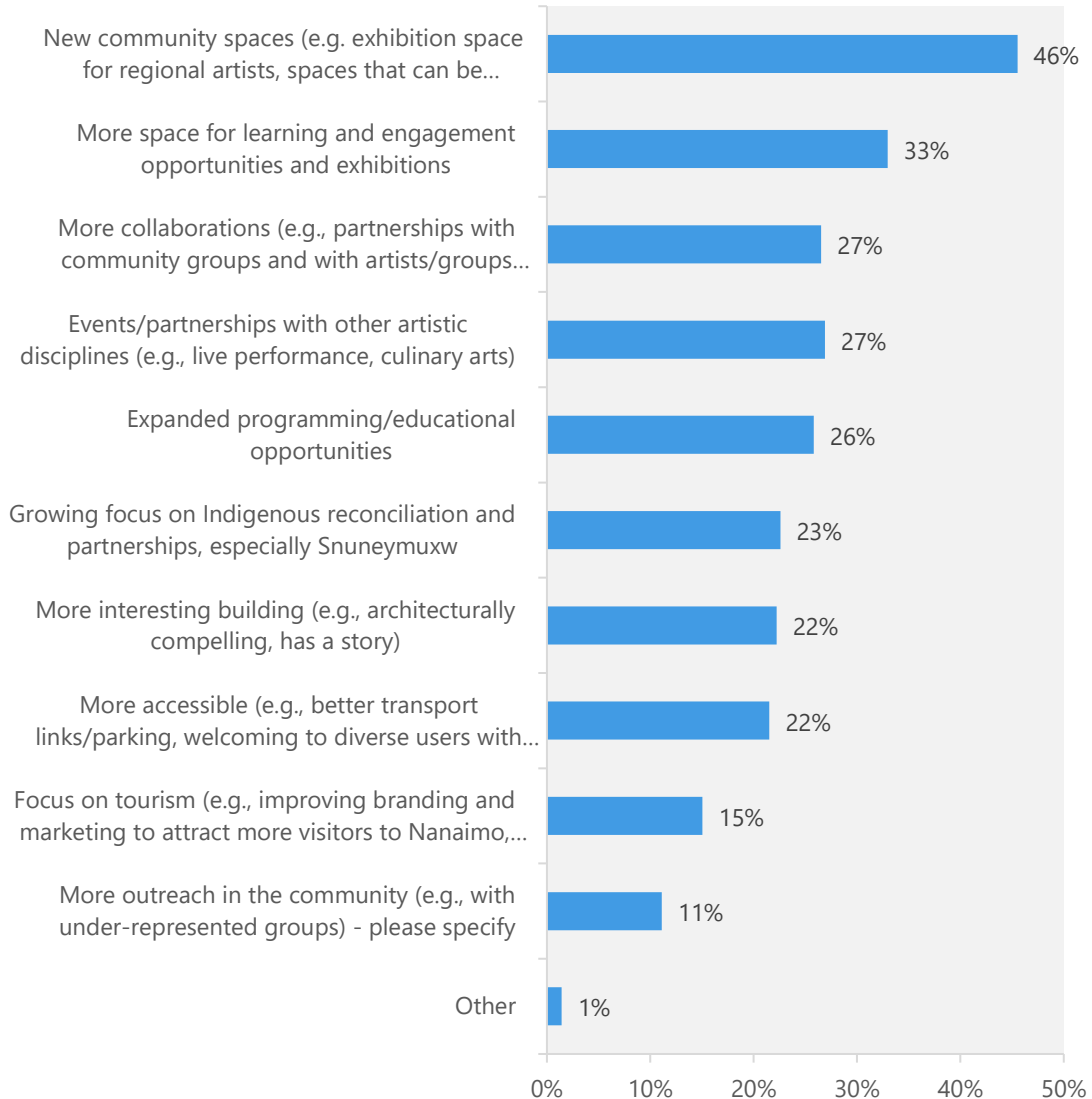


Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

To better inform plans for the Future Gallery, participants who had visited the Gallery were asked, "What would you personally like to see (or see more of) in a new Nanaimo Art Gallery facility?" (Figure 5). The majority of participants indicated they would like to see **new community spaces** – including exhibition spaces for regional artists, areas that can be rented by the community, and/or a café with outdoor spaces (46%). Notably, participants were explicit in their comments about the need for space and the promotion of work by local artists. For example, "Downtown Nanaimo needs a gallery for local artists. It would be great if Nanaimo Art Gallery had a separate space for this."

Moreover, respondents indicated a desire for **more spaces dedicated to learning and engagement opportunities, as well as exhibitions** (33%). They also expressed interest in more collaborations with communities and groups of artists from across Canada and internationally (27%), and in events or partnerships involving other artistic disciplines (27%).

Figure 5 What would you personally like to see (or see more of) from a new Nanaimo Art Gallery facility? Select up to 3. (n=279)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Participants who indicated they had never visited the Gallery were asked to elaborate on why they had not visited (Figure 6). The majority cited a lack of opportunity (56%), while a smaller group expressed uncertainty about why they had not visited (11%). Under the "other" category, a quarter of participants (25%) highlighted various **accessibility barriers**, including limited parking options, difficulties for individuals with walking disabilities, and elevated travel costs for those living outside the city to travel in. Further participants explained in open-ended comments that they had not visited because they reside in other cities or provinces. A few participants admitted they were unaware of the Gallery's existence and recommended increased marketing efforts.

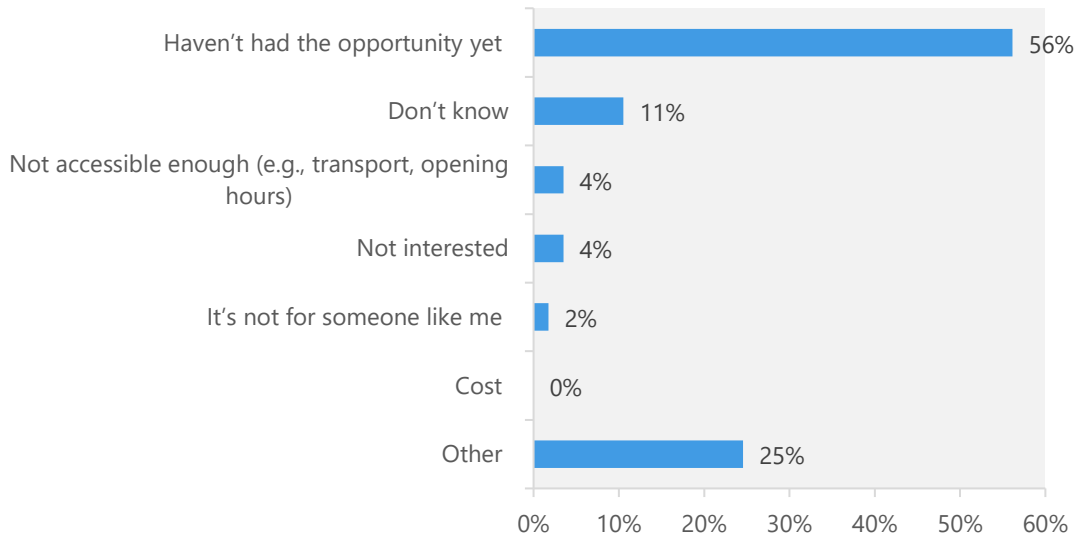
"Parking is the biggest issue for downtown Nanaimo. You can have great shows but if it's hard to get to people will get frustrated and give up..."

- Survey Participant

"I am an contemporary Indigenous artist living on Gabriola and the ferry line ups, cost, and parking ease have been a factor."

- Survey Participant

Figure 6 Why haven't you visited Nanaimo Art Gallery yet? Please select your primary reason. (n=57)



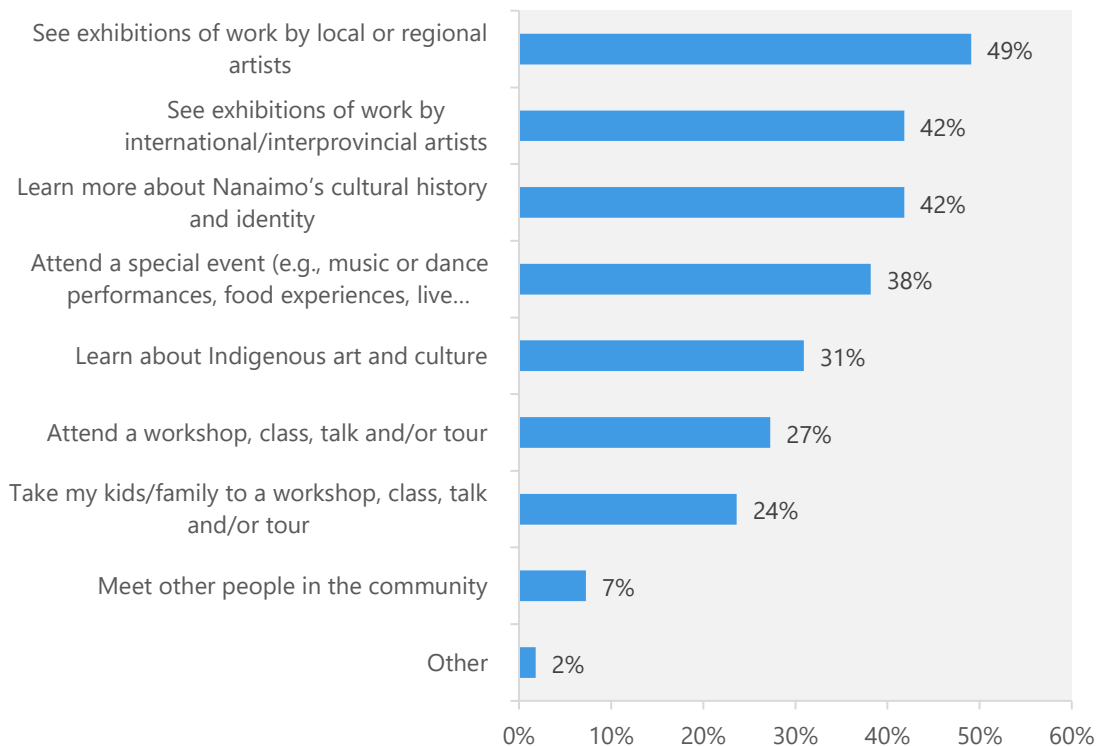
Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Participants who have not yet visited the Gallery were asked what they would like to do if they were to visit (Figure 7). **Nearly half indicated that they would like to see exhibitions featuring work by local or regional artists (49%).** Other things participants would like to do include viewing exhibitions by international or interprovincial artists (42%), learning more about Nanaimo's cultural history and identity (42%), and attending special events such as music or dance performances, food experiences, or live entertainment (38%). Of the 27% of participants who expressed interest in attending a workshop, class, talk, and/or tour, open-ended comments suggested a desire for workshops focusing on fibre arts, pottery, drawing, sketching, and knitting, as well as additional activities for children.

"I love the suggestions presented for the functions of this gallery and would have included more given the chance. The opportunity for the gallery to interact with the community as a whole is vital to its development and acceptance with a wider audience. The fact that the gallery is now expanding its educational offerings is a great step. Many of these skills and techniques are not offered by other institutions such as parks and recreation."

- Survey Participant

Figure 7 If you visit Nanaimo Art Gallery, what would you like to do there? Select up to 3. (n=55)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Finally, respondents were asked the open-ended question, "Where do you think the future Nanaimo Art Gallery facility should be located?" Over 230 responses were garnered. The following word cloud (Figure 8) visually depicts the topic responses received. **Downtown (as well as downtown area, and downtown core) was cited most frequently as the preferred location.** While most participants did not specify where downtown, those who did were most likely to suggest the **waterfront/harbour area or Old City Quarter** as desirable locations. A few participants also noted a desire for existing spaces to be repurposed such as the current Nanaimo Art Gallery location, the former A&B Sound building, and Jean Burns site. Further comments provided included participants stressing the need for the Gallery to have more space, parking, and to ensure – that the Future Gallery is accessible by foot and/or public transit.

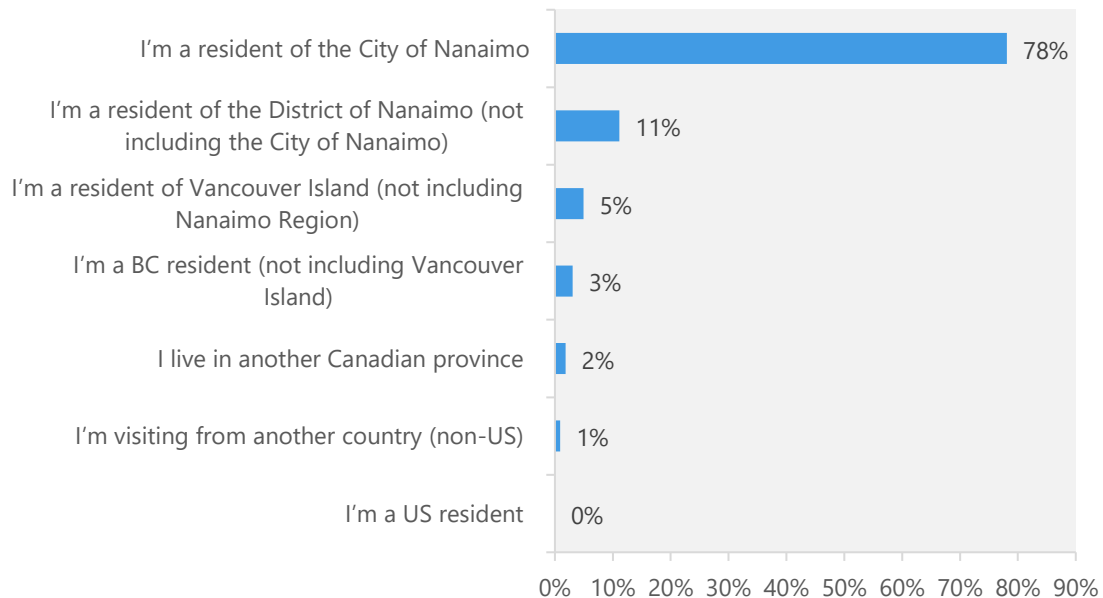
Figure 8 Word Cloud



Respondent Profile

The majority of survey respondents reported being residents of the City of Nanaimo (78%) (Figure 9). A smaller portion indicated residence in the District of Nanaimo, but not within the City itself (11%), while a much smaller segment identified as being a resident of Vancouver Island more broadly (5%). Out of the 324 respondents, a very small minority were international visitors (1%).

Figure 9 Please indicate where you are visiting from today. (n=324)

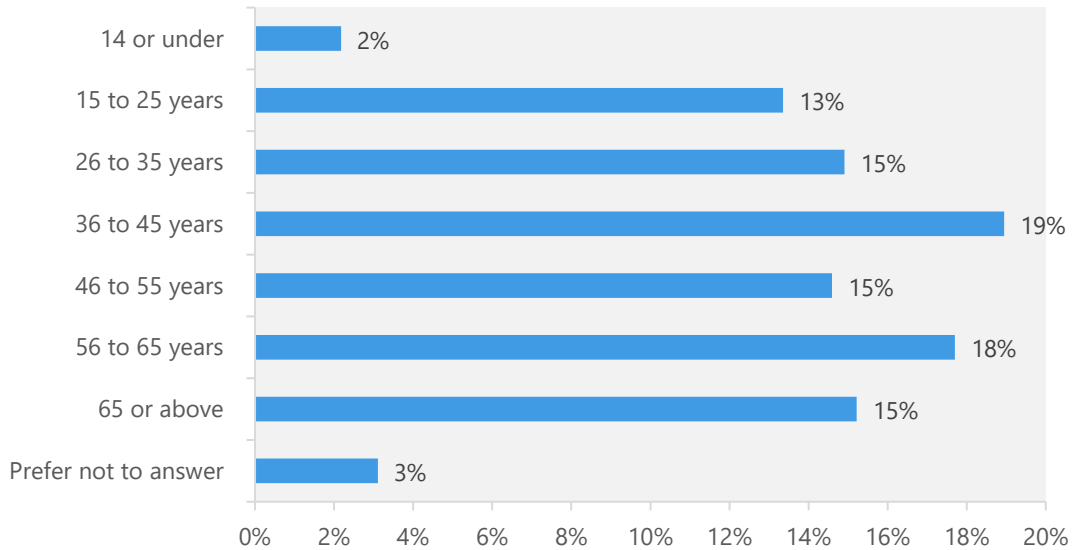


Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Survey respondents were also prompted to specify their age group (Figure 10). There was a **fairly even distribution of participation across age categories**. The most represented groups

were those aged between 36 to 45 years old (19%) and 56 to 65 years old (18%). The remaining respondents were dispersed among the 15- to 25-year-old age range (13%), followed by those aged 26 to 35 (15%), 46 to 55 (15%), and 65 or above (15%). Those under the age of 14 constituted a very small minority of respondents (2%).

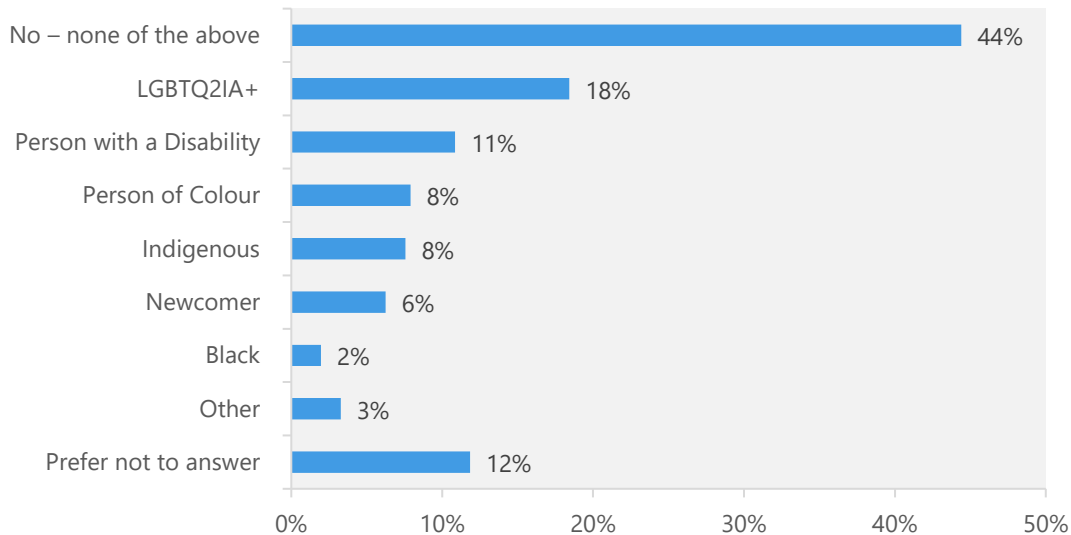
Figure 10 Please indicate your age by selecting the appropriate range below. (n=322)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

For a more nuanced demographic evaluation, **participants were asked if they identified with any under-represented groups** (Figure 11). Respondents could select more than one response. Many did not identify with any of the listed categories (44%), although a considerable number identified themselves as being LGBTQ2IA+ (18%), or as persons with disabilities (11%). Smaller proportions identified as Persons of Colour (8%), Indigenous (8%), newcomers (6%), or Black (2%). Other participants specified unique identifications, such as being neurodivergent or seniors.

Figure 11 Do you self-identify with any of the following under-represented groups? Select all that apply. (n=304)



Source: Nanaimo Art Gallery Public Survey 2023

Public ‘Create Space’ Board Findings

This section looks at community participation during Summer Engagement outings which were facilitated by Nanaimo Art Gallery Staff and volunteers. Specifically, this section presents findings from passersby in response to the question **“How can the future Nanaimo Art Gallery create space for... Art? Community? Creativity? A thriving Economy? Wellbeing? Innovation? Sustainability? Celebrating Nanaimo?”**

The “Create Space” engagement materials were displayed on panel displays at Nanaimo Art Gallery pop-up tents at some of the community outings, depending on staff availability to facilitate the activity.

Art

When participants were asked **how the future Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for art**, participants identified the need to prioritize space for both “new and older” local artists. A participant noted there should be “more exhibitions for the public on local art” while others noted the desire to see “more types of art shared, including sharing of art online”. Another participant noted that they would like Nanaimo Art Gallery to have a textiles lab. Other types of art comments were related to the desire for more art classes (although they did not specify which type of art classes).

“I would love for there to always be a local/smaller artist exhibition and a non local/more known exhibition at a time. Creating opportunities for smaller or local artists to get a spotlight but also creating a space for locals to see new art, bring in tourists with more known names, etc.”

- Summer engagement

Community

When participants were asked **how the future Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for community**, a variety of angles were offered. Many understood ‘community’ in terms of the general need for more physical community spaces to “meet people, visit with family, study, and socialize”. One individual used the words “inspirational, welcoming, and interactive” to describe how the Future Gallery could attract community members. Another spoke to how the Future Gallery should provide space for community members to feel safe to “share unique cultures and ways of knowing”.

Creativity

When asked **how the future Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for creativity**, participants responses focused on the types of programs and activities they would like to see more of at the Gallery. Examples provided included adult art programs, toddler programs, writing workshops, theatre sports, and sip/eat and paint sessions.

A Thriving Economy

Contributing to **a thriving economy** is another key theme for Nanaimo Art Gallery. While a limited number of responses were garnered for this theme, the number one desire was to see the Gallery gain a coffee shop/café. A patio for the café would encourage visitors to linger at the Gallery longer, and provide visitors with a connection to nature. One unique idea from a participant is for the Gallery to support a creative business owners’ panel.

“It would be nice to have indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces or installations in outdoor spaces around the city.”

- Summer engagement participant

Wellbeing

Participants understood the theme of **making space for wellbeing** primarily in terms of health and environment. For example, some participants described how they would like the Future Gallery to have “green space, outdoor seating, and outdoor group space” to contribute to wellbeing. Others described how they would like to see more of the Future Gallery “doing art outside” or the desire to see “peaceful nature exhibits” at the Gallery.

Innovation

In terms of **how Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for innovation**, a limited number of responses were garnered compared to other themes. Participants provided examples of what that could look like through exhibits and programs. Examples included the Future Gallery hosting “table talks,” and exhibiting “interactive art pieces”.

Sustainability

When participants were asked **how the future Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for sustainability**, three main topics were highlighted. The first was the connection between sustainability and the development of an energy-efficient building for the Gallery. One participant spoke about achieving “zero carbon,” through practices such as “planting garden beds” and being “LEED Certified”, following sustainable building standards. Another participant identified encouraging “active transport” as a way that the Gallery could encourage and support sustainability. Finally, another participant spoke to the combination of sustainability and art themes, if the Future Gallery were to provide “nature art and sustainable design classes”.

Celebrating Nanaimo

Lastly, when participants were asked **how the future Nanaimo Art Gallery could make space for celebrating Nanaimo**, responses tended to focus on new site locations for the Future Gallery. Several participants noted a strong desire for the Gallery to “stay downtown”. Furthermore, one participant specifically highlighted the desire to see Nanaimo Art Gallery move to Maffeo Sutton Park, with the work occurring in partnership with local host nations.

“Nanaimo needs something to be proud of; an arts centre. Nanaimo needs something to provide hope and opportunity for youth; a gorgeous arts centre. Nanaimo needs a world class art gallery, theatre, museum, and music house. Nanaimo needs to become the Island’s Art Centre. Build something architecturally stunning; the ‘biggest house’ for all to gather, celebrate and play in. Elevate our hope and joys. Let art and the arts fill up our centres as well as provide a centre. Invite everyone, near and far to \$ up for something more glorious than we are now imagining.....Futuristic.”

- Summer Engagement Participant

Summarizing Public Engagement Themes

The summer engagement activities revealed a range of comments, ideas and possibilities for the future Nanaimo Art Gallery. Ultimately, across the responses, there was a strong desire to create a **vibrant and inclusive space that fosters creativity, connectivity, and wellbeing**.

Appendix B. Fund Development Strategy by Global Philanthropic

- *See following pages*

The logo for Nanaimo Art Gallery, featuring the name in a black, cursive-style font on a yellow circular background.

*Nanaimo
Art Gallery*

Fund Development Strategy

November 2022

Global Philanthropic Inc. (Canada)

1350 Burrard Street, Suite 138
Vancouver, BC V6Z 0C2



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INTRODUCTION

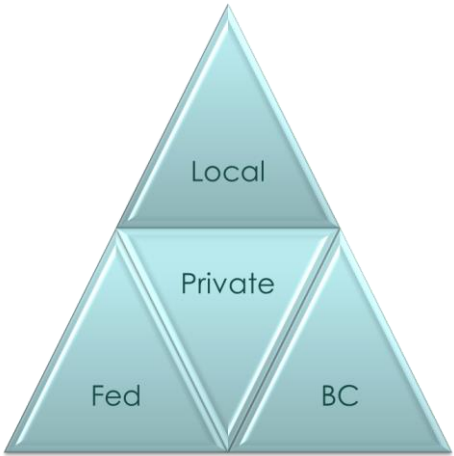
Nordicity retained the services of Global Philanthropic Canada to develop a Fundraising Strategy for the Nanaimo Art Gallery's quest to pursue building and funding a purpose-built facility. This phase of the project includes the observations and recommendations for implementation that are based on recent analyses of the organization's current activity, knowledge of funding programs for significant cultural infrastructure projects, and research on recent philanthropic trends for the region.

The majority of this content was shared in an extended in-person session with Nanaimo Art Gallery professional and volunteer leadership. Building of a significant major gift fundraising effort and program will be required. The needs extend beyond the organization's current capacity and expertise. So, the Gallery will likely be tasked with contracting these needs to successfully lead the fundraising effort across the finish line.

There are public sources of revenue that will likely be available to the project once more details are known and an application can be made with more specifics and offer a greater likelihood of success. Regardless, there must be a significant effort with securing funds from the private sector. Accomplishing this can alter the organization's culture and philanthropic trajectory moving forward. Success in a campaign such as this has the potential to create an even-stronger Nanaimo Art Gallery that extends far beyond what the physical space alone makes possible.

PRIVATE GIVING OVERVIEW

As noted below, for a project the scale of that envisioned by the Nanaimo Art Gallery, funding will likely be drawn from a number of sources. For government support - whether local, provincial, or federal – the specifics of the project will make the difference as to the pools from which and potential amounts the project would be eligible to pursue. Local funding will, undoubtedly be tied to the site that is selected and the spectrum of objectives the new project would achieve. Provincial and federal funding programs are evolving. Following the pandemic, the shifts are increasingly dynamic. After years of supporting charities through the economic uncertainty, new programs are emerging to assist building projects that are experiencing exponential increases in costs from their pre-pandemic budgets. The opportunities that will exist and are applicable for the Nanaimo Art Gallery will be dependent upon specific circumstances surrounding the effort and exactly when the project is ready to move forward. However, at the centre of it all is private support. Building the base of private support is something that the Nanaimo Art Gallery can pursue immediately. This will accelerate maximizing the potential for an essential component – one that may represent the most significant portion of a resulting campaign as well as being critical to ongoing operations.



Prior to the building of a successful fundraising program, the organization must focus on establishing a strong culture of philanthropy. When the board, staff, members, and volunteers are all committed to contributing and recognizing the value their gifts make to the organization's mission and the resulting outcomes, others outside of the

organization will also sense the value in joining those that are already committed. This perception has a way of permeating public awareness and growing profile. Of course, the Gallery must be committed to systems and infrastructure that adequately track constituent engagement and honour the value of these relationships in both their present and future value.

Research shows that the region does not have a significant tradition of major gift philanthropy – particularly within the arts and culture sector. The vast majority of five figure and larger gifts to the sector within Nanaimo and the mid-Vancouver Island region are donations/grants from foundations. The most significant recipient of major gifts and capital investments within the region is Vancouver Island University. Their fundraising program is likely to provide the most direct challenge followed by that of the regional hospital.

For the Nanaimo Art Gallery, the opportunity to embark upon a significant capital campaign is comparable to the benefits one experiences when producing a blockbuster exhibition. These are unique circumstances that are not frequently repeated. Campaigns such as these have an ability to consolidate resources and enable organizations to perform at a heightened state. Opportunities are leveraged to achieve even more than they traditionally would.

Ultimately, a campaign like the one that will be required to build a new Nanaimo Art Gallery has the potential to increase the institution's value in the eyes of the public. A campaign such as this is one that will solidify an organization's reputation. With good fortune, the Nanaimo Art Gallery will not stumble but instead earn "critical acclaim" from the philanthropic community. The future campaign for the Nanaimo Art Gallery has a power that is inherently transformative.

Knowing whether the Nanaimo Art Gallery is ready to embark upon this journey is connected to having adequate data – the review of which will reveal whether prospects and financial potential are present within the organization's relationships to yield the resources required to meet the goal.

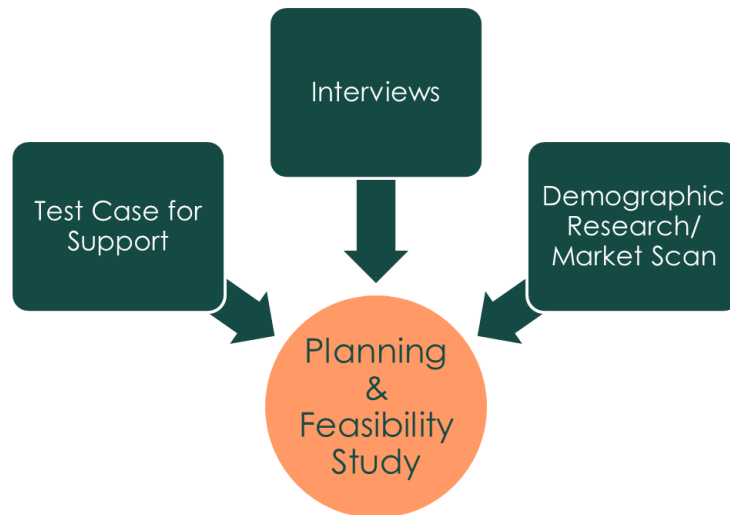
ACTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD WITH A CAMPAIGN

Best practice prior to embarking upon a campaign is to conduct a Planning/Feasibility Study. This activity requires the development of a Test Case for Support, which is based upon the proposed specifics of the project. Until a site is identified, construction along with operating costs estimated, and the funding gap quantified, it will be impossible to assemble the Test Case for Support to accurately measure the potential of a considered campaign.

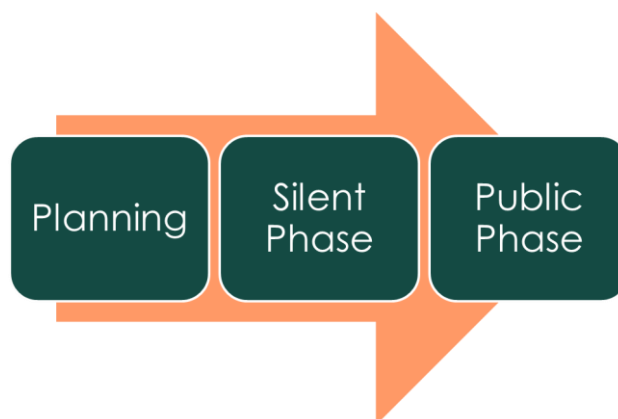
Those sites for the project with limited restrictions or challenges that will ease realization of the project should likely be preferred. As the Nanaimo Art Gallery's fundraising program – particularly major gifts – is fairly nascent, this campaign is already set to stretch the organization. Aspects of the project that can at the onset mitigate costs and control the extent to which funds must be raised will assist in expediting success. The one caveat is impact. Savings at the front to reduce costs should not prevail if they will adversely affect the Nanaimo Art Gallery's potential impact in the long run. Doing so will position the charity for significant hurdles in the long run that may make the initial expense pale in comparison. Impact is a significant consideration in developing and communicating the case for support.

The Case will be tested with a series of prospects that have potential to play a leadership role for the resulting campaign – either financially, as a volunteer or as a person of influence. These private interviews assess reactions to and engagement with the plan as proposed. The results of this series of interviews are paired with demographic research and a scan of other significant fundraising efforts that may have an impact on the catchment area for prospects.

The outcome of the Planning/Feasibility Study should provide the Nanaimo Art Gallery with an obtainable financial target as well as an analysis of structural or operational challenges as well as gaps in prospects required to successfully meet the goal.



The results of the study will inform any updates or changes that need to be undertaken to address gaps and ensure capacity for success. As those items are dealt with, a formal campaign plan can be developed. In many ways the interviews that comprised the Planning/Feasibility Study initiated the cultivation process for the resulting campaign. With a plan and leadership in place, the Nanaimo Art Gallery can embark upon securing leadership and insider gifts as a part of the campaign's silent phase. Once a majority of the campaign goal has been secured, the plan will indicate the time for when a public launch of the campaign's public phase can occur.



Below is a sample gift chart for the lead gifts and prospects that may be required to achieve the first 61% of a \$15 million campaign.

	Gift Range	No. Gifts	No. Prospects	Subtotal	Cumulative Total	Cumulative Percentage
Quiet Phase	3,000,000	1	1	3,000,000	3,000,000	20.00%
	1,000,000	1	2	1,000,000	4,000,000	26.66%
	500,000	4	8	2,000,000	6,000,000	40.00%
	250,000	8	16	2,000,000	8,000,000	53.33%
	100,000	12	30	1,200,000	9,200,000	61.33%
			26	57	9,200,000	9,200,000

With giving histories in the region and the Nanaimo Art Gallery in particular, work must be done to ensure the organization is ready to pursue the scale of campaign that is likely to be required. One benefit is that a reimagining of the Nanaimo Art Gallery is likely to have appeal beyond the existing catchment area. As Nanaimo draws in a growing population – particularly households drawn to Nanaimo’s lower cost-of-living compared to higher rates in the Greater Vancouver and Victoria areas while maintaining geographic proximity – the Gallery can benefit. However, this population may bring higher expectations for fundraising sophistication as the result of immigrating from areas with significant, active, and higher-profile philanthropic activity.

STEPS TO BUILD A MAJOR GIFTS PROGRAM

In many ways, the Nanaimo Art Gallery will embark on an effort to establish a major gifts fundraising effort. There are many considerations when building a major gifts campaign. Success is dependent upon having the right combination of the following conditions:

- An understanding of the solicitation cycle;
- An organizational environment that understands, respects, supports, and honours major donors;
- A compelling reason for prospects to contribute; and
- A pipeline of qualified prospects that can be compelled to donate.

An environment that attracts major gifts

Major donors are interested in enabling change and having an impact. They are also interested in knowing that they are not in it alone. To that end, they look to see what level of commitment – often exemplified by financial investment – that the board and organizational leadership are making toward the effort. As a result, the building of a major gifts program often requires an examination of governance practices, expectations, and policies along with the considerations for internal staffing.

At a minimum, the board should be demonstrating 100% participation in giving. While many boards have a minimum giving level, it is not always required. However, major donor prospects may start to question why they would make a financial commitment to a project in which the volunteer leadership is seemingly unwilling to invest. Major donor prospects usually understand that not everyone will have an equivalent financial capacity, but they generally expect that committed leadership will be able to contribute something greater than zero.

Creating, filling, and managing a major gift pipeline

Of course, having a populated pipeline of qualified prospects is essential. The pipeline can be filled in one of two ways. Qualified prospects can be identified within the ranks of current donors at lower levels, or they may be externally sourced.

Identifying prospects from within the pool of current base of support demands

engagement with the donors. Fostering deeper connections by creating opportunities for interaction and inviting input fuels a fundraising professional's insight into the motivations for a contributor. With this comes an enhanced ability to gauge the potential that exists for a current donor to be motivated to increase their giving for the right opportunity.

Filtering and finding prospects within the current constituency can also be done on a larger scale. A second way to identify major gift prospects from within the donor base is by conducting a wealth screening on the current base and leveraging the information to interpret which constituents may have the capacity and propensity for certain types of gifts if appropriately cultivated. This is an excellent way of populating a prospecting pipeline. Of course, it also requires continued feeding of the pipeline and donor pool at the lower levels so as not to decimate the points of entry with cannibalization.

Finally, a pipeline for major donors can be built with prospects identified that are external to the organization. For instance, if appropriately identified and targeted, funders committed to re-imagining Nanaimo and nurturing development of emerging or Indigenous artists might draw new potential contributors to the roster for an impact that is compellingly presented.

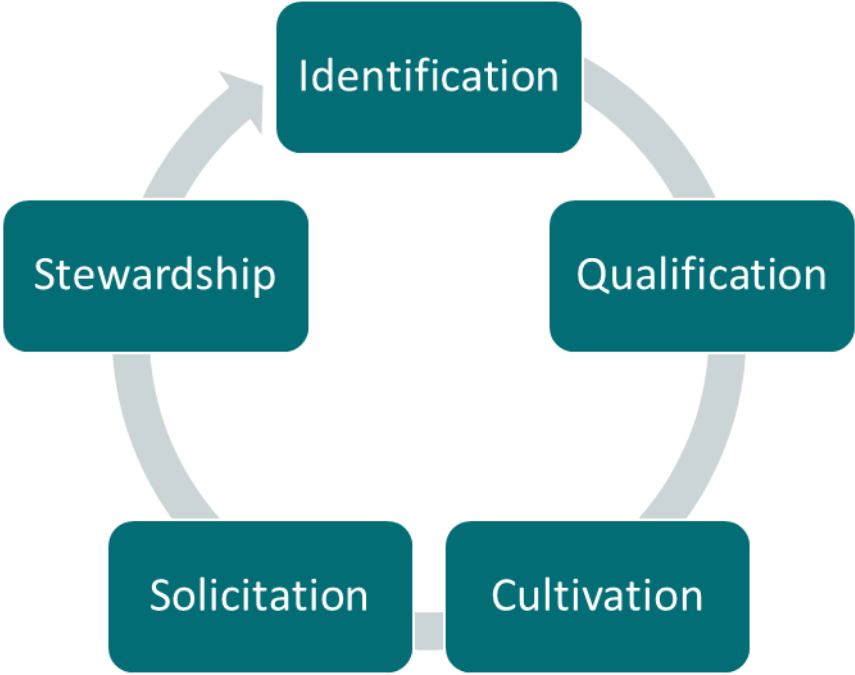
Appealing to a major gift prospect

To grow a major gifts program requires a relational versus a transactional approach to fundraising. Relationships require more touchpoints. They focus on the impact that is made via the support rather than what is received by either party – particularly the donor.

Philanthropic contributors are driven to make a difference. They seek to make change. To that end, the Nanaimo Art Gallery must zero in on and refine its statements for how a new facility will affect impact. In narrowing down prospective locales for the site, positioning the potential differences in impact that might vary due to options for the physical structure possible could make one more desirable than another – particularly with prospective donors.

Moving a major gift prospect through the solicitation cycle

All steps of moving prospects through the solicitation cycle are about maturing the community of donors and strengthening the base of support. These efforts are the building blocks for the future. The investments of identifying and qualifying the prospects is about ensuring the Nanaimo Art Gallery's limited resources are well directed. If it has been well cultivated, the outcome is virtually certain as the conditions surrounding it are known. Stewardship is important both for ensuring these value exchanges are relational and NOT transactional, but it is critical in preparing the organization for success in subsequent requests.



Board engagement is vital to creating a strong major gifts program. Board members provide community context when identifying and qualifying prospects. As volunteers, the board has an immensely valuable voice when cultivating and/or soliciting a prospect as it is not their "job" to do so. The board of the Nanaimo Art Gallery is not being compensated to make this request or attest to the organization's value. Because of that, volunteers possess a great deal of trustworthiness in the eyes of prospects. When

a board member personally asks a prospect to “join them” in also contributing to the cause, the perspective of peer to peer cannot be matched by a paid staff member making the same request. This is especially true if the volunteer is personally contributing a greater or equal amount to what is being requested. Even if not, the personal commitment to the cause will resonate. For those same reasons, a board that is actively engaged in thanking, acknowledging, and stewarding the major gifts received by the charity is formidable in establishing deep relationships between the donors and the cause.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

These are some of the steps that Nanaimo Art Gallery can undertake to ready itself for a campaign and prepare to attract the major gifts that will be required for success in realizing a new gallery.

- Focus on establishing relationships. This must be both with growing prospects for an expanded philanthropic base as well as advocacy efforts with political leaders and persons of influence that can facilitate accessibility to public funding, broadening insight into the identified funding opportunities as well as to shape how a submission might be received.
- Work toward confirming as many details as is possible on the site and the proposed facility – including information on the impact for programming, numbers and populations served, as well as the considerations that a purpose-built facility will have on collecting or conservation.
- Invest in systems (governance, prospecting, solicitation and CRM) that support growing a culture of philanthropy and establish as robust a data base of donor and prospect behaviours as is possible in advance of an actual campaign.
- Grow capacity for prospecting and fundraising. Shifting the practice of fundraising to one that engages more individuals throughout the organization.
- Refine and articulate a vision of what can be with the re-imagining of the Nanaimo Art Gallery.
- Develop the detailed Case for Support that can be tested as the centrepiece of an independent Planning/Feasibility Study for a campaign based on a specified site, budget and plan.