

AGB VISION AND STRATEGY

2026-2040

**Delivering Today
Building Tomorrow**



Approved June 18, 2026

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Art Gallery of Burlington operates on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, on lands associated with the Brant Tract Purchase, Treaty No. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1795, later confirmed by Treaty No. 8 of 1797. We acknowledge this land as part of the broader traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat peoples, whose histories, teachings, and stewardship of this place stretch across countless generations.

Our commitment extends beyond acknowledgment. We recognize the principles of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant—an enduring agreement among the nations of the Great Lakes region emphasizing peaceful coexistence, shared responsibility for the land, and respect for all living things—and we accept our place within that responsibility.

As stewards of the largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, we feel this responsibility in a particular way. Clay is one of the Earth's oldest languages. It carries memory, identity, and knowledge across time. In many Indigenous teachings, the Earth is understood not as a resource but as a living relation. Stories of creation and belonging remind us that the materials we work with in art are not separate from the land but of it. When we celebrate ceramic art, we celebrate a living relationship between human hands, cultural knowledge, and the Earth beneath us.

The Art Gallery of Burlington commits to honouring that relationship through meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities and to centering Indigenous voices, perspectives, and knowledge in our exhibitions, programming, and future development. We invite all who enter this space to reflect on the land's history and on our shared responsibility to care for it.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2025, the Art Gallery of Burlington retained **TCA Projects, led by Tim Commisso**, to guide the development of the **AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040**.

The work was led by the **AGB Board of Directors through its Governance & Nominating Committee**, in close collaboration with **Emma Sankey, Executive Director**, with the goal of establishing an ambitious yet grounded vision for the Gallery's current and future work. The process was designed to clarify long-term priorities, connect organizational ambition to practical implementation, and position the AGB to respond strategically to the opportunities and responsibilities ahead.

Through this work, TCA Projects brought a practical, financially responsible and results-oriented approach to strategic planning, helping the AGB connect its artistic, community and civic ambitions with the organizational capacity, partnerships, resources and implementation strategies required to advance them.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There are moments in the life of an institution when everything converges—when the work of years past, the energy of the present, and the promise of the future all come into focus at once. For the Art Gallery of Burlington, this is that moment.

We do not say that lightly. We say it because we have seen what this organization is capable of. We have watched artists take risks in our studios, families discover something unexpected in our galleries, young people find their voice through our programs, and community members return again and again—not because they must, but because this place means something to them. That is not a small thing. That is the foundation everything else is built on.

This AGB Vision & Strategy is the result of many voices—board members, staff, artists, partners, and community members who gave their time, their honesty, and their belief in what AGB can become. We are grateful to each of them.

What follows is not our plan. It is our shared plan—a collective commitment to the future of AGB.

We also want to be clear about what we are asking of ourselves. The years ahead will require discipline, courage, and a willingness to make bold decisions in service of a long-term vision. There will be hard work and extensive due diligence before there are grand openings. But we enter this period with confidence—in our team, in our community, and in the extraordinary opportunity that stands before us.

Burlington deserves a cultural destination worthy of its ambition. We believe AGB is the institution to build it.

With gratitude and determination,

Natasa Veljovic, Board Chair

Emma Sankey, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Art Gallery of Burlington stands at an inflection point.

With a clear mission, a growing audience, and a once-in-a-generation opportunity on Burlington's spectacular waterfront, AGB is poised to become something greater—not just a gallery, but a cultural landmark that defines this city and region for decades to come. Rooted in more than fifty years of artistic leadership and home to the world's largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, AGB occupies a distinctive place within Canada's cultural landscape.

This Strategy sets the foundation for AGB's next chapter. It provides a clear framework for decision-making, organizational alignment, public accountability, and measurable progress over the next five years while advancing a long-term vision to 2040.



Image Credit: Art Gallery of Burlington, 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek

A Vision Across Two Horizons

This Strategy establishes a focused five-year delivery framework while advancing a long-term vision extending to 2040.

Horizon 1 (2026-2030)

Deliver on Our Mission, Ready Our Future

AGB will strengthen its artistic leadership, deepen community impact, grow audiences, expand public visibility, and build the organizational, workforce, philanthropy and fundraising, and financial capacity required for long-term transformation.

Strategic Directions:

- **Lead Artistically**
- **Living Cultural Ecosystem**
- **Voice and Presence**
- **Organizational Resilience**

This first horizon focuses on strengthening the foundation by delivering with purpose today while preparing the institution for the opportunities ahead.

Horizon 2 (2030-2040)

From Gallery to Cultural Landmark

Building from that foundation, AGB will work with the City of Burlington, Indigenous communities, civic partners, funders, and community stakeholders to advance a landmark waterfront cultural destination and help shape a vibrant Cultural Commons on Burlington's waterfront.

Strategic Directions:

- **AGB Waterfront Project**
- **Cultural Commons**

This horizon focuses on physical transformation, long-term civic impact, public cultural infrastructure, and the creation of a lasting cultural legacy for Burlington.

Across both horizons, AGB will grow its public presence, deepen strategic partnerships, strengthen organizational resilience, and expand its role as a leading cultural institution within Burlington and beyond.



Image Credit: Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek

AGB Waterfront Project

At the centre of AGB's long-term vision is the opportunity to help create a landmark waterfront cultural destination for Burlington.

The AGB Waterfront Project is more than a new facility. It is an investment in culture, community connection, artistic leadership, economic and tourism growth, and the long-term vitality of Burlington's Waterfront and downtown.

Building on more than fifty years of artistic leadership and community impact, the project positions AGB to expand its role as a cultural anchor for the city and region, creating a destination that reflects Burlington's ambition, identity, and future.

The years ahead will require discipline, partnership, strengthened fundraising capacity, alignment with the City of Burlington, public trust, and sustained commitment. This Strategy provides the framework for that work and the long-term transformation it is intended to achieve.

AGB LEGACY, ROLE, FUTURE, AND OUR ARTISTIC VISION

A Cultural Legacy in Burlington

The Art Gallery of Burlington has been a living part of this city for more than fifty years. What began as a grassroots vision for a shared creative space grew into one of Ontario's most distinctive public galleries—a place where artists, communities, and ideas have come together across generations, leaving an indelible mark on Burlington's cultural identity. This creative spirit is carried forward by today's independent Guilds working alongside the AGB, each nurturing artistic growth and skill-sharing across generations.

At the heart of AGB's story is an unrivalled commitment to contemporary craft and material-based practice. Beginning in 1983, AGB built the largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics in the world—a collection that speaks to a foundational belief that craft is not peripheral to art but central to it.

That conviction has shaped everything: our exhibitions, our studios, our learning programs, and our deep relationships with artists from across Canada and around the world.

Image Credit: A Curve Not A Line, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Roya DelSol



AGB Today: A Cultural Hub in Transition

AGB has always been more than a public gallery or a collection. Over fifty years, something more layered has grown here—incrementally and with deep community roots. Studios and galleries and classrooms have drawn people together around a shared belief that making is a form of belonging, and that art is most alive when it is shared.

From therapeutic clay workshops in partnership with Joseph Brant Hospital to a youth program with growing reach and impact to the Community Generator series opening doors for artists across the broader region, AGB has built a culture of connection. And that culture is this institution's greatest asset. What this AGB Vision & Strategy does is name it, claim it, and build deliberately toward it.

The living cultural ecology that has taken root at AGB is a foundation to be understood, strengthened, and fully realized.



Image Credit: Textile Studio, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2025.
Photo Credit: Darren Rigo

The work ahead is to deepen our resolve to expand artist-led and co-authored programming, develop shared resources, and grow community-engaged workshops that bring people together across generations and disciplines. It means strengthening the way we support artists and communities through cooperative, intergenerational, and cross-disciplinary modes of making as an integrated way of working.

It also means building partnerships beyond the arts, across health, environmental, and educational sectors in recognizing that creative practice intersects with all aspects of life.

AGB is dedicated to building sustainability into every aspect of making and presenting by drawing on the values of circular economies that have long existed within craft and Indigenous communities. Practices of sharing, reuse, and mutual support are principles we are committed to embedding into our institutional structures in a meaningful and lasting way.

A Moment of Transformation

AGB has long understood that making is more than production. It is a way of connecting people to place, to one another, and to the questions that shape contemporary life. This is why making has always been at the centre of everything we do.

Now, at fifty years, the conditions for something greater have converged. Growing demand, an aging facility, and a singular waterfront opportunity create both an urgent challenge and an extraordinary possibility. But this moment is about more than a building. It is about what AGB is ready to become: not just a place where culture happens but a fully realized cultural ecology that is intentional, integrated, and deeply rooted in this community.

This will require two things simultaneously: strong, excellent delivery today and bold, strategic investment in the transformation that lies ahead.

The spirit that built this institution—curiosity, craft, and the belief that making connects us—is the same spirit that will carry it forward. What began as instinct is becoming vision. What grew organically is now being given form.

Image Credit: Gikino'o'amaatowin – This Is All Learning, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2025. Photo Credit: Darren Rigo



A Landscape Shaped by Clay

Every institution is shaped by its place.

For the Art Gallery of Burlington, that place is a shoreline landscape formed over thousands of years by the geological forces that created Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment. Those same forces left rich deposits of clay and shale throughout Burlington and Aldershot, materials that would shape the region's natural environment, Indigenous histories, industries, architecture, and creative traditions.

Long before colonial settlement, Indigenous peoples throughout the Great Lakes region worked with clay as part of cultural, artistic, and practical traditions rooted in deep relationships with the land. These histories remind us that clay is not simply a resource or material; it is part of a much longer story of human connection to place.



Image Credit: Brendan Tang Artist Residency, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2025. Photo Credit: Robin Yang

As Burlington grew, clay continued to shape the community in new ways. Local deposits supported generations of pottery, brickmaking, and construction, helping build the homes, schools, churches, industries, and civic buildings that accompanied the city's development. The material history of Burlington is, in many ways, a story written in clay.

Today, that relationship between land, material, and community continues through the Art Gallery of Burlington. As stewards of Canada's largest public collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, the AGB occupies a unique position where the history of place and the practice of artistic creation intersect. Clay is not simply one medium among many within our walls, it is part of the story of this community itself.

This connection reflects a broader truth about culture. Culture does not emerge in isolation. It grows from place, from people, from shared experiences, and from the landscapes that shape them. At AGB, clay serves as both material and metaphor. It is an active agent and collaborator transformed through imagination, knowledge, skill, and care into something meaningful, lasting, and shared.

This understanding resonates deeply with the future we envision. As Burlington evolves, AGB seeks to strengthen connections between people and place, creativity and community, heritage and innovation. The Gallery's commitment to craft, making, learning, and cultural exchange is grounded in the belief that culture is not separate from everyday life. It emerges from the same land, stories, relationships, and aspirations that define a community.

AGB sits on Treaty 3¾ land along the shore of Lake Ontario, within a landscape shaped by water, the escarpment, clay, and human activity over millennia. To create here is to be in relationship with that history and with the responsibilities that accompany it. It is to recognize that culture is both inherited and made anew.

The future Cultural Commons envisioned through the AGB Waterfront Project builds upon this foundation. It seeks to create a place where art, craft, learning, gathering, ecology, and civic life are interconnected—a contemporary expression of the enduring relationship between people, creativity, and place.

Because here, clay is more than a material. It is a reminder that the places we inhabit also shape us.

Artistic Vision

A useful place to begin is with a question that sits beneath everything AGB does: **What role can art play in helping people understand themselves, one another, and the world around them?**

For AGB, the answer begins with making.

Making is more than a creative act. It is a way of learning, connecting, questioning, and imagining. Across cultures and throughout history, the act of making has helped people express identity, share knowledge, respond to change, and build community. It remains one of the most powerful ways we understand our relationship to each other and to the world we inhabit.

This belief sits at the centre of AGB's artistic vision.

AGB works at the intersection of contemporary art, craft, community practice, and cultural exchange. We see these not as separate disciplines but as interconnected ways of understanding human experience. Through exhibitions, collections, studios, learning programs, public gatherings, and artistic production, we create opportunities for people to engage with creativity as both a personal and collective act.

Image Credit: Pottery Studio, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek



At AGB, materials are not simply mediums, they are languages. Clay, fibre, wood, metal, glass, digital technology, and emerging forms of creative practice each carry histories, knowledge systems, cultural memory, and possibilities for innovation. Artists work within these traditions while continually expanding them, creating new forms of expression that reflect the complexity of contemporary life.

This approach recognizes that artistic rigour and community relevance reinforce one another. The most compelling artistic work often emerges from meaningful engagement with people, ideas, histories, and lived experiences. Likewise, vibrant communities are enriched by opportunities to encounter challenging, inspiring, and transformative artistic practice.

As Burlington grows and changes, AGB will continue to champion voices, perspectives, and experiences that reflect the diversity of Canada. Diasporic, Indigenous, newcomer, youth, and historically underrepresented perspectives are essential contributors to the cultural conversations that define our time.

The Gallery also embraces the evolving relationship between tradition and innovation. We reject the notion that craft and technology exist in opposition. Material literacy and digital fluency are complementary forms of knowledge. The future of creative practice will require both. AGB seeks to create space where historic techniques, contemporary technologies, interdisciplinary experimentation, and emerging forms of artistic expression can coexist and inform one another.

Ultimately, AGB's artistic vision is grounded in a simple belief: creativity is fundamental to civic life. Art helps communities make meaning. It creates spaces for dialogue, empathy, curiosity, reflection, and shared experience. It strengthens a sense of belonging while opening pathways to new ideas and possibilities.

As we look toward the future, AGB will continue to evolve as a living cultural ecosystem where making, learning, gathering, and artistic exploration are deeply interconnected. Through this work, we seek to cultivate the conditions in which creativity can thrive for artists, for communities, and for future generations.

AGB MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission (now) → AGB Vision & Strategy (how) → Vision (future)

Mission

To bring people into meaningful relationships with contemporary art and craft through making, learning, and discovery—deepening connections to each other, to materials, and to the ideas of our time.

Grounded in the world's largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, AGB believes that craft is not peripheral to art but central to it, and that making is one of the most powerful ways human beings build understanding, community, and belonging.

Five-Year Vision (2026–2030)

To be a stronger, more visible, and deeply connected AGB that is recognized for artistic excellence, meaningful community impact, and the leadership required to realize Burlington's future waterfront cultural destination.

Vision (to 2040)

To be Burlington's defining waterfront cultural destination: a nationally recognized centre for contemporary art and craft where making, learning, creativity, and community come together, and where AGB stands as the cultural anchor of a vibrant and inclusive Cultural Commons.

Values (Who AGB Is)

Creative: We believe making is essential to how people express, connect, learn, and imagine new possibilities.

Rooted: We are grounded in material practice, place, and the cultural histories that shape our community and our work.

Welcoming: We create accessible and inclusive spaces where people feel invited to participate, explore, and belong.

Curious: We embrace experimentation, dialogue, and the evolving intersections of art, craft, technology, and contemporary life.

Courageous: We lead with ambition, integrity, and a willingness to take creative and institutional risks in service of culture and community.

Guiding Principles (Our Operational Commitments)

The following guiding principles express how AGB advances its mission, relationships, and long-term vision:

- **Equity, Access, and Belonging**
- **Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation**
- **Environmental Stewardship**
- **Centering Artistic Production and Innovation**
- **Community Collaboration and Partnership**
- **Accountability and Public Trust**

These principles are embedded across AGB's strategic directions, organizational decisions, and long-term development priorities.

HOW THIS STRATEGY WORKS

From Vision to Delivery

The Strategy establishes AGB's long-term vision, Strategic Directions, and Key 2030 Outcomes, while the accompanying internal Implementation Plan translates that direction into phased actions, timelines, lead responsibilities, resource requirements, and accountability measures. Together, they provide a clear framework for decision-making, accountability, and organizational alignment over the next five years while advancing AGB's broader vision to 2040. The work outlined within this document is intended not only to strengthen AGB today, but to prepare the organization for a larger civic and cultural role within Burlington's future.

The Strategy is fully integrated and aligned, combining long-term directions with clear measurable outcomes to ensure that strategic ambition is matched by disciplined implementation, organizational accountability, and practical delivery.

More than a traditional strategic plan, this document is intended to function as a long-range institutional and civic framework that guides decision-making, organizational sustainability and readiness, public accountability, and waterfront transformation through a period of significant growth and change.

Built for Accountability and Adaptation

The Art Gallery of Burlington is an independent charitable organization governed by an independent Board of Directors. As stewards of a prominent, publicly owned waterfront site entrusted to the organization by the City of Burlington, AGB recognizes its responsibility not only as a cultural institution but as a long-term civic partner.

In this role, the Board has both the authority and the expectation to look beyond present constraints and set a bold and purposeful vision for the Gallery's future. The AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040 reflects that responsibility: a confident, future-facing commitment to steward the organization, its public value, and its civic potential for the benefit of the community.

This Strategy is designed to support informed decision-making, transparent governance, and sustained organizational alignment as AGB advances both its mission and its long-term waterfront vision. Implementation will be supported through the separate AGB Implementation Plan, which establishes detailed actions, responsibilities, timelines, and resource requirements aligned with each Strategic Direction.

Progress toward the Strategic Directions and Key 2030 Outcomes will be supported through regular organizational performance tracking, ongoing Board oversight, and annual public reporting intended to strengthen accountability, transparency, organizational learning, and long-term strategic alignment.

Implementation priorities will cascade into annual organizational priorities, departmental workplans, team lead objectives, and individual staff goals. At each level, measures, timelines, deliverables, and responsibilities will be refined to support clear accountability and practical delivery.

While implementation approaches may evolve over time, the long-term direction, Strategic Directions, and Key 2030 Outcomes established within this Strategy are intended to provide a stable and consistent framework for organizational decision-making through 2040 and beyond.

The Strategy balances measurable operational commitments with broader institutional and cultural ambitions. While many outcomes are supported through quantitative targets and performance measures, others are intentionally qualitative—recognizing that artistic leadership, cultural influence, community relationships, and public value are not always best measured through numerical indicators alone.

Grounded in Community and Partnership

This Strategy was shaped through workshop sessions and collaboration involving Board leadership, staff, the strategic planning team, and online engagement sessions with stakeholders and community voices; it was further informed by the guiding feedback and recommendations gathered through the detailed engagement process undertaken as part of the Facility Master Plan and Future Needs Feasibility Study. This study assessed the AGB's current facility, future space and program requirements, and the feasibility of options to support the Gallery's long-term growth and evolving community needs.

That process confirmed a shared understanding of both the opportunities and responsibilities facing AGB in the years ahead. Key themes consistently emerged throughout these engagement sessions and workshops:

- **strengthening organizational resilience and long-term sustainability;**
- **building the institutional, workforce and fundraising infrastructure required for transformation;**
- **deepening Indigenous relationships, representation, and partnership;**
- **expanding community impact and cultural participation;**
- **and strengthening AGB's public presence and cultural leadership role within Burlington and beyond.**

The process also reinforced a broader conviction: that the future of AGB is inseparable from the future of Burlington's cultural identity and waterfront evolution.

Image Credit: Russna Kaur, Been there twice, haven't got there yet (the space behind a thin screen, and prying eyes), Art Gallery of Burlington. 2025. Photo Credit: Darren Rigo



AGB Vision Alignment with City of Burlington Plans

AGB's Vision & Strategy 2026–2040 aligns strongly with the City of Burlington's long-term priorities for community well-being, cultural development, waterfront activation, environmental stewardship, destination development, and purposeful growth.

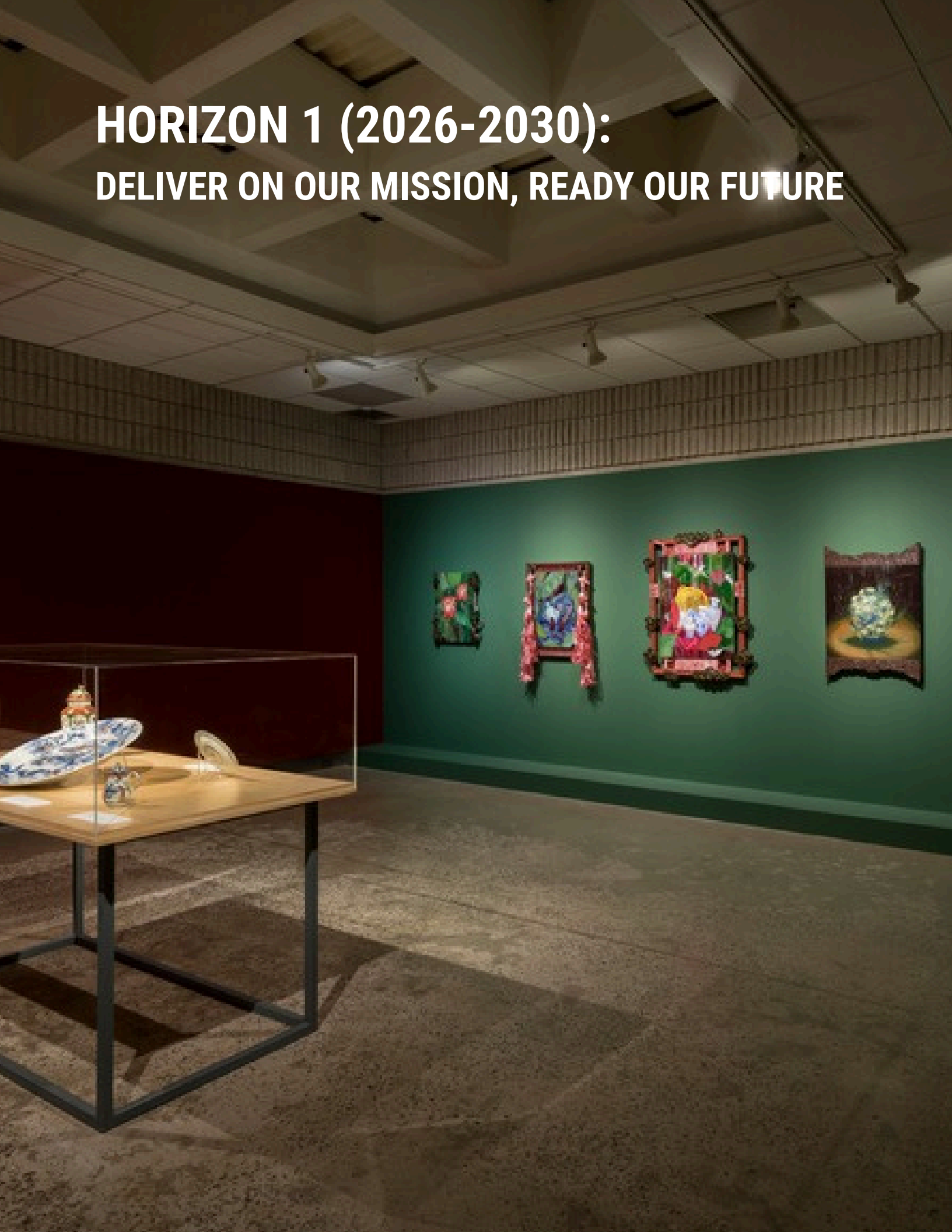
Through Horizon 2050 and the emerging Burlington Culture Plan, the City is advancing a vision centred on connected communities, accessible and inclusive public life, sustainable growth, cultural placemaking, environmental responsibility, and transparent civic partnership. These priorities are complemented by Discover Burlington's Destination Stewardship Plan, which identifies destination development, visitor experience, and the waterfront as important contributors to Burlington's identity and economic vitality.

AGB's Strategy supports these priorities by positioning the Gallery as a public cultural institution, waterfront anchor, community connector, and long-term civic partner.

Image Credit: Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek



HORIZON 1 (2026-2030): DELIVER ON OUR MISSION, READY OUR FUTURE



AGB STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2026–2030

Strategic Direction 1: Lead Artistically

Advance Artistic Leadership and Cultural Stewardship

Strategic Context

Artistic leadership, curatorial rigour, and cultural stewardship are central to AGB's identity, credibility, and future direction. As the cultural landscape evolves, galleries are increasingly expected not only to present high-quality exhibitions and programs, but also to contribute meaningfully to contemporary artistic discourse, research, representation, and sector leadership.

AGB's artistic vision builds on its established strength in contemporary craft and material-based practice, including its important collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics. The collection provides a distinctive foundation for stewardship, research, interpretation, and artistic leadership, while the strategy also seeks to expand how material-based practices are understood today through deeper engagement with interdisciplinary practices, technology, ecology, place, diasporic perspectives, and Indigenous knowledge systems. These are guided by appropriate consultation, protocols, and relationships.

Input from Strategic Planning workshop participants reinforced the importance of representation, curatorial leadership, collections stewardship, artistic research, and national profile. These priorities position AGB to strengthen its role as a leading centre for contemporary craft and material-based practice by supporting artists, deepening cultural stewardship, advancing representation, and contributing meaningfully to contemporary art and craft discourses.

Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Strategic Direction establishes the artistic vision, curatorial frameworks, research priorities, and cultural stewardship principles that guide the organization and inform the broader Living Cultural Ecosystem (Strategic Direction 2).

Strategic Intent

To be a recognized leader in contemporary craft and material-based practice by strengthening AGB's artistic identity through curatorial leadership, collections stewardship, representation, Indigenous, ecological, and cultural stewardship, as well as research and national contributions to contemporary artistic discourse.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about institutional artistic leadership. It governs how AGB defines, deepens, and shares its artistic vision. This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about institutional artistic leadership. It governs how AGB defines, deepens, and shares its artistic vision.

It establishes the curatorial, collections, research, representation, and stewardship frameworks that will guide AGB's artistic direction and shape the broader cultural ecosystem. Priorities related to participation, audience engagement, public access, and visitor experience are advanced through Strategic Direction 2: Living Cultural Ecosystem.

Image Credit: Fine Arts Studio, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek



Key 2030 Outcomes

Artistic Leadership and Curatorial Vision

By 2030, AGB will strengthen and formalize its curatorial vision to guide exhibitions, collections, interdisciplinary practice, research, and artistic planning across the organization.

This outcome ensures that AGB's artistic choices are intentional, coherent, and aligned with its long-term role as a leader in contemporary craft and material-based practice. It brings together priorities related to curatorial leadership, integrated practice, interdisciplinary approaches, and artistic research.

The emphasis is not on creating a new curatorial identity from scratch, but on clearly articulating and deepening AGB's artistic direction so it can guide institutional decisions, partnerships, research, and public-facing work.

Indigenous, Ecological, and Cultural Stewardship

By 2030, AGB will deepen the integration of Indigenous consultation, ecological stewardship, and place-responsive approaches across exhibitions, collections, interpretation, and artistic planning.

This outcome recognizes that artistic leadership must be grounded in relationships, responsibility, and appropriate consultation. It includes Indigenous curatorial protocols, engagement with Indigenous artists and knowledge-holders, and deeper integration of ecological, land-based, and material stewardship within the artistic practices supported by AGB.

Collections, Representation, and Knowledge Production

By 2030, AGB will strengthen representation in its collections development, research, publications, and knowledge production, building on its collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics while expanding support for Indigenous, Black, racialized, diasporic, and underrepresented artists.

This outcome recognizes that representation is not only about exhibitions and programs. It must also be reflected in acquisitions, collections policy, commissioning, curatorial practice, research, publications, and institutional knowledge production. Building from AGB's collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, this work will support the continued stewardship, interpretation, and evolution of the collection while ensuring future collecting and research priorities reflect the diversity of artists, communities, and material-based practices shaping contemporary art and craft.

National Artistic Leadership and Sector Influence

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its position as a nationally recognized centre for contemporary craft and material-based practice through exhibitions, institutional collaborations, publications, research activities, touring opportunities, and sector leadership.

This outcome focuses on how AGB contributes beyond its own walls. It advances AGB's role in the broader arts and culture sector through institutional partnerships, research, publications, collaborations, conference participation, touring opportunities, and contributions to contemporary craft and material-based discourses. Through this work, AGB will strengthen its national profile and contribute meaningfully to the future of contemporary craft and material-based practice in Canada.

Strategic Direction 2: Living Cultural Ecosystem

Deliver the Experience

Strategic Context

AGB's strength lies in the way its exhibitions, studios, learning opportunities, membership, public programs, and community relationships work together as a connected cultural ecosystem. This Strategic Direction focuses on making that ecosystem more intentional, accessible, and navigable by creating multiple points of entry where people can make, learn, gather, and participate. Those who engage with the AGB will move through cultural experiences shaped by AGB's studio and Guild legacy, public learning role, community partnerships, and evolving forms of cultural participation.

Input from Strategic Planning workshop participants and internal reflection reinforced that this ecosystem is a defining institutional strength, but one that must be more clearly articulated, intentionally connected, and strategically leveraged. AGB's long-term relevance will depend on its ability to strengthen how people experience, access, participate in, and move through the organization.

Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Strategic Direction focuses on the public experience of the organization: how AGB connects people to art, artists, making, learning, culture, community, and place.

Strategic Intent

To be a connected, accessible, and high-impact cultural ecosystem integrating exhibitions, studios, learning, public participation, membership, and community engagement through meaningful cultural experiences and creative exchange.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about how people experience, access, participate in, and move through AGB's cultural ecosystem. It governs participation, audience pathways, studio access, learning, membership, public engagement, community partnerships, and integrated cultural experience. Priorities related to curatorial authority, collections leadership, artistic discourse, or institutional positioning are advanced through other Strategic Directions.

Image Credit: Pottery Studio, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Darren Rigo



Key 2030 Outcomes

Integrated Cultural Experience and Participation Pathways

By 2030, AGB will strengthen connections across exhibitions, studios, learning, memberships, events, and public participation so that visitors and participants experience the organization as a connected cultural ecosystem.

This outcome focuses on how people move through AGB. It brings together priorities related to integrated programming, audience movement, repeat participation, and visitor pathways. The goal is not simply to coordinate programs internally, but to create a more intentional and welcoming experience for the public.

Studio, Membership, and Making Culture

By 2030, AGB will stabilize and expand its shared studio and membership model to strengthen Guild continuity, support artistic participation, enhance studio sustainability, and broaden public access to creative experiences.

This outcome recognizes the studio ecosystem as one of AGB's most distinctive institutional strengths. It protects the continuity of Guild relationships while expanding access to making, membership, and studio-based participation for broader communities.

Audience Intelligence, Access, and Inclusion

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its ability to understand, support, and expand participation through audience insight, cultural access, community well-being partnerships, Indigenous-led programming, and inclusive public experiences.

This outcome brings together participation systems, audience development, access, inclusion, and community-connected programming. It recognizes that participation must be understood through both data and relationships and that access must be responsive to evolving community needs.

Community-Connected Cultural Ecosystem

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its role as an integrated and community-connected cultural institution by creating sustained participation through accessible cultural experiences, long-term partnerships, and ecosystem-wide public engagement.

This outcome describes the mature state of the Living Cultural Ecosystem. It positions AGB as a year-round cultural platform that connects people, programs, artists, studios, learning, and community life.

Strategic Direction 3: Voice and Presence

Amplify Our Voice

Strategic Context

AGB delivers strong programming, artistic leadership, and community impact, but its broader public visibility, civic influence, and institutional profile have not yet been fully realized. As AGB advances toward a significant capital expansion and an expanded civic role, the organization's ability to clearly communicate its value, identity, and public purpose becomes increasingly important.

Input from Strategic Planning workshop participants reinforced the need for clearer institutional positioning, stronger communications, more proactive government and civic relations, and greater visibility across community, corporate, cultural, and public sector audiences.

This Strategic Direction focuses on how AGB is understood, valued, and positioned publicly. It strengthens institutional narrative, public visibility, civic leadership, advocacy, and accessibility in communications; it supports the organization's ability to speak with clarity and confidence about its role in Burlington's cultural future.

Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Strategic Direction provides the voice and positioning required to support AGB's artistic leadership, community relevance, waterfront ambitions, and long-term civic impact.

Strategic Intent

A strong, visible, and influential cultural voice that strengthens AGB's public profile, civic leadership, institutional reputation, and role within Burlington's cultural identity and broader contemporary cultural landscape.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about how AGB is understood, valued, and positioned publicly. It governs institutional narrative, communications, advocacy, government relations, public visibility, civic leadership, accessible communications, and external influence. Priorities related to artistic discourse, audience participation, or internal organizational systems are advanced through other Strategic Directions.

Key 2030 Outcomes

Institutional Identity and Narrative

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its institutional identity, public narrative, and communications framework so that its artistic leadership, civic role, community impact, and waterfront ambitions are clearly understood.

This outcome focuses on how AGB defines and communicates who it is. It brings together brand positioning, institutional narrative, messaging, storytelling, and communication standards.

Civic Leadership and Government Relations

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its civic leadership and government relationships in support of cultural advocacy, public-sector alignment, and long-term waterfront and city-building priorities.

This outcome recognizes that AGB's future role requires strong relationships with municipal, provincial, and federal partners. It positions AGB as a civic cultural leader and trusted partner in Burlington's long-term development.

Visibility, Reach, and Destination Awareness

By 2030, AGB will expand institutional visibility, public awareness, and regional profile across digital, media, tourism, and community-facing platforms.

This outcome focuses on external reach. It is about increasing who knows AGB, understands its value, and sees it as part of Burlington's cultural and waterfront identity.

Accessible and Inclusive Communications

By 2030, AGB will strengthen accessibility, inclusion, representation, and cultural responsibility across communications, storytelling, marketing, and public-facing materials.

This outcome ensures that AGB's public identity reflects the communities it serves and the values it holds. It includes accessible communications, inclusive storytelling, Indigenous voices and cultural protocols, and public-facing representation.

Strategic Direction 4: Organizational Resilience

Strengthen the Organization

Strategic Context

The ability of AGB to deliver its mission and realize its long-term vision depends on the strength, sustainability, and resilience of the organization itself. Engagement throughout the strategic planning process consistently identified financial sustainability, organizational alignment, governance capacity, infrastructure stewardship, workforce sustainability, fundraising capacity, and operational readiness as critical foundations for future success.

As AGB prepares for the greater complexities associated with long-term growth, expanded civic expectations, revenue diversification, and the future AGB Waterfront Project, strengthening the organization is essential.

This Strategic Direction recognizes that transformational cultural leadership requires a resilient and well-supported institution, one capable of sustaining current operations while preparing responsibly for long-term civic and organizational transformation. This includes building financial, operational, governance, philanthropic, and fundraising infrastructure to support current day-to-day operations and future capital campaign readiness.

Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Strategic Direction provides the internal operating foundation required to support strategic delivery, financial resilience, philanthropy and fundraising capacity, workforce sustainability, accountability, and institutional readiness.

Strategic Intent

To be a resilient, sustainable, and well-aligned organization with the financial, operational, philanthropic, governance, and leadership capacity required to support long-term growth, public value, and transformational cultural development.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about how AGB is structured, resourced, governed, and sustained to deliver its mission and advance long-term transformation.

It governs financial resilience, fundraising capacity, infrastructure stewardship, organizational capacity, workforce sustainability, implementation systems, accountability, inclusion, and institutional readiness. Priorities related to artistic leadership, public participation, external positioning, or project advocacy are advanced through other Strategic Directions.

Key 2030 Outcomes

Financial Sustainability, Philanthropy, and Capital Readiness

By 2030, AGB will strengthen its financial sustainability, revenue diversification, fundraising and philanthropy capacity, donor stewardship systems, infrastructure stewardship framework, and capital project readiness to support long-term organizational resilience and the transformation of AGB as a major waterfront destination.

This outcome brings together revenue diversification, major gift growth, philanthropic leadership, fundraising systems, facility-condition planning, infrastructure stewardship, and capital project readiness. It recognizes that long-term strategy must be grounded in financial and infrastructure realities, and that future capital ambitions will require a robust development function capable of supporting philanthropy, sponsorships, grants, donor cultivation, campaign readiness, and non-municipal revenue growth.

Organizational Capacity and Workforce Sustainability

By 2030, AGB will align its organizational structure, staffing model, workforce systems, and operational planning with the priorities and transformational requirements of the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040.

This outcome focuses on the people, systems, and structures required to deliver the Strategy. It includes organizational alignment, staffing capacity, compensation, succession planning, leadership development, workforce sustainability, and the phased growth of specialized capacities required to support implementation.

Strategic Management and Accountability

By 2030, AGB will strengthen strategic management, implementation tracking, performance measurement, governance oversight, and organizational accountability.

This outcome ensures that the Strategy remains actionable and measurable. It connects institutional priorities to implementation systems, dashboards, reporting, annual planning, budgeting, and Board oversight. It also supports the cascading accountability framework through which strategic priorities are translated into annual organizational priorities, departmental workplans, team objectives, and individual goals.

Inclusive, Sustainable, and Indigenous Organizational Practice

By 2030, AGB will strengthen inclusive, sustainable, and Indigenous-informed organizational practices across staffing, governance, operations, planning, and institutional culture.

This outcome recognizes that resilience is not only financial or operational. It must also be grounded in equity, sustainability, Indigenous relationship-building, environmental responsibility, and inclusive institutional practice.

Image Credit: Board of Directors, Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Ema Walters



HORIZON 2 (2030-2040): FROM GALLERY TO CULTURAL LANDMARK



Image Credit: Proposed Art Gallery of Burlington, concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.

Strategic Direction 5: AGB Waterfront Project

Build the Cultural Destination

Strategic Context

The AGB Waterfront Project represents a transformational cultural investment that will expand AGB's physical presence, community impact, and long-term role within Burlington's civic and cultural future.

Foundational planning work has been completed. The next phase requires disciplined advancement through governance, business planning, municipal alignment, Indigenous consultation, community engagement, funding, approvals, and project readiness. While AGB plays a central role as cultural anchor, catalyst, convener, and project champion, the AGB Waterfront Project must advance in partnership with the City of Burlington and through appropriate municipal processes, Council direction, and civic approvals.

The project begins with place. Located on treaty land along the shores of Lake Ontario, the site carries deep Indigenous history and significance that must shape how AGB approaches this work. Indigenous engagement is not a procedural requirement within the Waterfront Project; it is a foundational commitment that will continue to inform the vision, design, relationships, and future programming of the facility.

Engagement throughout the strategic planning process reinforced the importance of maintaining momentum, strengthening public trust, building organizational readiness, and advancing broad-based support across government, community, Indigenous, philanthropic, and funding partners.

Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Direction positions the AGB Waterfront Project as a defining civic and cultural opportunity for Burlington and a central catalyst for AGB's long-term transformation.

Strategic Intent

To develop a publicly supported and implementation-ready waterfront cultural destination anchored by AGB and advanced in partnership with the City of Burlington, Indigenous communities, funders, and community stakeholders to support long-term civic, cultural, and ongoing waterfront transformation.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about how AGB will help lead, convene, advocate for, and advance the AGB Waterfront Project in partnership with the City of Burlington and broader community stakeholders.

It addresses project readiness, governance, municipal alignment, civic approvals, funding strategy, public trust, Indigenous guidance, sustainability, and long-term implementation preparation. Priorities related to district-wide city-building, public participation systems, or institutional communications are advanced through other Strategic Directions.

Key 2030 Outcomes

Governance, Planning, and Readiness

By 2030, AGB will establish the governance, planning, organizational, and implementation-readiness structures required to advance the AGB Waterfront Project through future approvals, partnerships, funding, and construction readiness phases.

This outcome focuses on the internal and project-level structures needed to move from vision to readiness. It includes governance, leadership coordination, business planning, decision-making processes, and phased readiness documentation.

Municipal Alignment and Civic Approvals

By 2030, AGB will work in partnership with the City of Burlington to advance the municipal alignment, Council direction, and civic approval processes required to support future AGB Waterfront Project planning, readiness, and implementation phases.

Image Credit: Art Gallery of Burlington. 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek



This outcome explicitly recognizes that the AGB Waterfront Project is a civic infrastructure initiative that must proceed through City process. It positions AGB appropriately as a partner, catalyst, and cultural anchor within a broader municipal governance framework.

Funding, Partnerships, and Investment Readiness

By 2030, AGB will strengthen the funding, partnership, and investment relationships required to support the long-term advancement of the AGB Waterfront Project and future construction readiness.

This outcome focuses on financial and partnership viability. It includes public-sector funding, philanthropic readiness, private-sector relationships, investment partnerships, and coordinated funding strategy.

Public Trust and Civic Alignment

By 2030, AGB will strengthen public trust, civic alignment, and stakeholder confidence for the AGB Waterfront Project through coordinated engagement, consultation, and transparent project communication.

This outcome recognizes that project legitimacy depends on sustained public confidence, clear communication, meaningful engagement, and responsiveness to community and stakeholder input.

Indigenous and Sustainable Waterfront Leadership

By 2030, Indigenous consultation, environmental stewardship, sustainable design, and long-term cultural guidance will be embedded throughout the AGB Waterfront Project planning, engagement, design, and future development processes.

This outcome ensures that the AGB Waterfront Project is shaped by cultural responsibility, environmental stewardship, Indigenous guidance, and long-term sustainability from the outset.

Strategic Direction 6: Cultural Commons

Build the Civic Landscape

Strategic Context

The AGB Waterfront Project is not only a facility initiative, it is also a catalyst for the broader transformation of Burlington's cultural landscape and waterfront identity.

The opportunity to establish a vibrant Cultural Commons reflects the growing role of culture in city building, economic development, tourism, public life, ecological stewardship, and community belonging. Anchored by AGB, the vision for a Cultural Commons extends beyond a single building to imagine a connected waterfront district integrating arts and culture, public space, education, environmental stewardship, mixed-use development, tourism, and year-round community activity.

AGB acknowledges that this work takes place on the traditional lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Indigenous consultation, relationship-building, and cultural guidance are foundational commitments that will continue to shape the vision, planning, design, and future evolution of the Cultural Commons.

Engagement throughout the strategic planning process reinforced the importance of partnerships, cross-sector collaboration, sustainability, public accessibility, and civic alignment in advancing this long-term vision. AGB's role is not to independently realize a city-building initiative but to help shape, convene, advocate for, and advance this work in partnership with the City of Burlington, Indigenous communities, cultural organizations, environmental partners, tourism stakeholders, and community partners.

Concept Image Only: This rendering is for illustrative purposes and represents a conceptual vision for the Cultural Commons. It does not reflect a final design, approved plan, or future built form. Concept design by Brook McLroy Inc.



Within the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040, this Strategic Direction positions AGB as a cultural anchor within a broader civic and cultural landscape that will contribute to Burlington’s identity, economy, waterfront, and public life for generations to come.

Strategic Intent

To support a connected and inclusive waterfront cultural district anchored by AGB and advanced in partnership with the City of Burlington, Indigenous communities, cultural organizations, environmental partners, and community stakeholders as part of Burlington’s evolving civic identity, cultural life, public realm, ecological stewardship, and visitor economy.

Core Role of this Strategic Direction

This Strategic Direction is fundamentally about how AGB will help shape and advance the long-term evolution of Burlington’s waterfront as a connected civic and cultural landscape.

It governs civic vision, city-building integration, partnership ecosystems, destination identity, Indigenous guidance, ecological stewardship, public realm alignment, and place-based development. Priorities related to facility project implementation, organizational operations, public-participation systems, or communications strategy are advanced through other Strategic Directions.

Key 2030 Outcomes

Civic Vision and City-Building Integration

By 2030, AGB and the City of Burlington will advance an integrated Cultural Commons framework that aligns long-term district vision, public realm priorities, partnership approaches, and cultural development objectives with Burlington’s broader civic and waterfront planning objectives.

This outcome focuses on civic vision and municipal integration. It recognizes that the Cultural Commons must be shaped through City alignment, public-realm planning, cultural development priorities, and long-term city-building processes.

Partnership Ecosystem and District Activation

By 2030, AGB will strengthen strategic partnerships across cultural, educational, tourism, environmental, civic, and development sectors to support long-term waterfront cultural district development and enrich year-round community life.

This outcome focuses on the relationships and collaborative infrastructure needed to activate the district over time. It includes educational partnerships, collaboration with environmental organizations, civic relationships, mixed-use opportunities, programming partnerships, and accessible and affordable public realm experiences.

Cultural Tourism and Civic Destination

By 2030, AGB will strengthen Burlington's position as a cultural tourism destination through regional partnerships, destination development initiatives, and expanded waterfront cultural experiences.

This outcome focuses on destination identity. It positions the Cultural Commons as part of Burlington's broader visitor economy, regional cultural profile, and long-term waterfront experience.

Inclusive and Sustainable Place-Based Development

By 2030, Indigenous guidance, environmental stewardship, public green-space preservation, ecological sustainability, and place-based development principles will be embedded in Cultural Commons planning and future waterfront district development.

This outcome grounds the Cultural Commons in stewardship and place. It includes Indigenous cultural guidance, ecological responsibility, enhanced Brock Community Park and green space experiences, public-realm stewardship, and long-term sustainable waterfront development.

Together, these Strategic Directions position AGB to strengthen its artistic leadership, deepen community impact, advance organizational resilience, and realize a transformational cultural future for Burlington's waterfront. Collectively, they establish the strategic framework that will guide AGB's growth, partnerships, decision-making, and civic impact through 2030 and beyond.

LOOKING BEYOND 2030

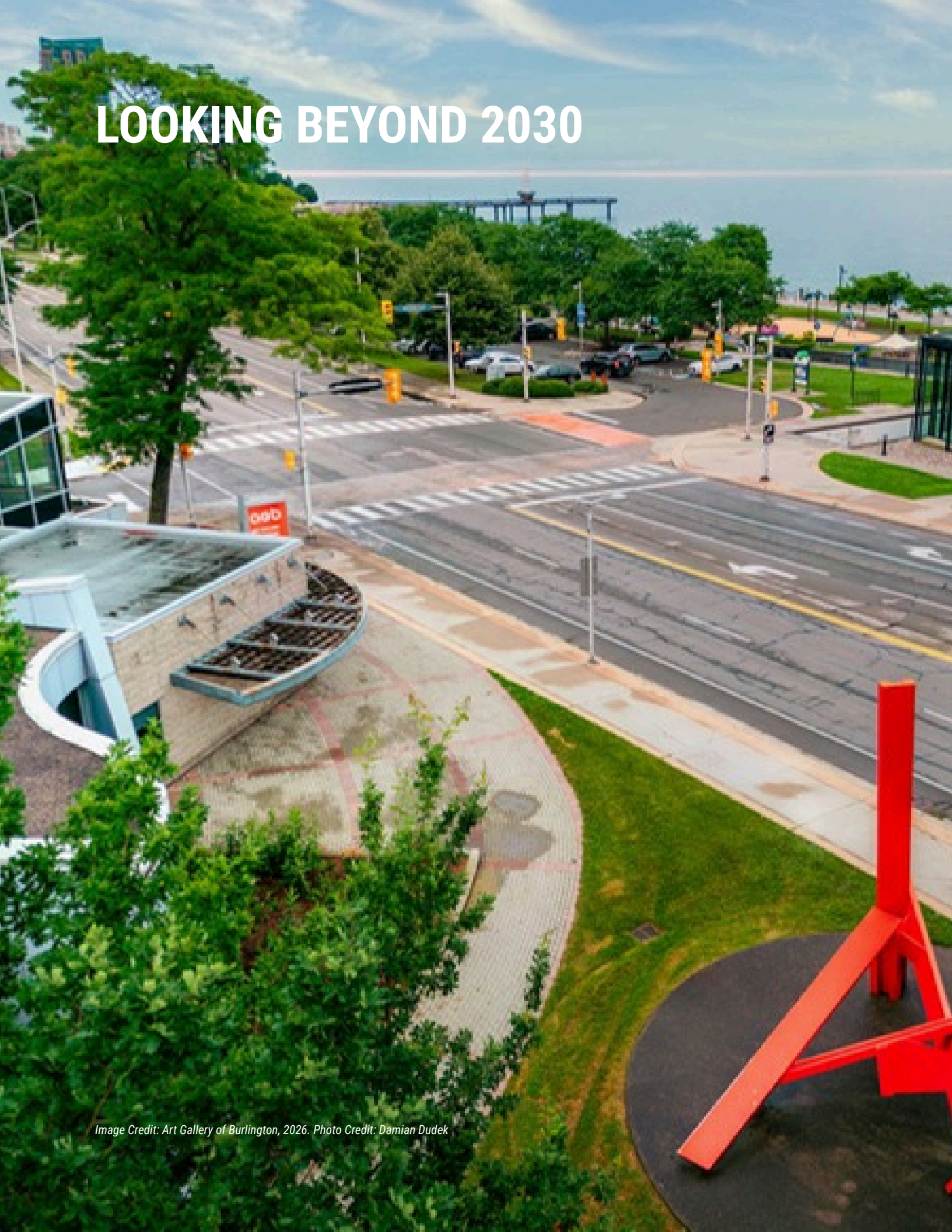


Image Credit: Art Gallery of Burlington, 2026. Photo Credit: Damian Dudek

AGB WATERFRONT PROJECT

The Strategic Directions outlined within this AGB Vision & Strategy document establish the organizational, artistic, operational, and civic foundations required to support AGB's long-term transformation through 2030 and beyond.

The following sections describe two connected but distinct long-range initiatives that extend beyond the five-year AGB Vision & Strategy:

- **the proposed AGB Waterfront Project, which is focused on the advancement of a new landmark cultural facility; and**
- **the broader Cultural Commons vision, which is focused on the long-term evolution of Burlington's waterfront cultural district and public realm.**

While deeply interconnected, each initiative will require independent planning and project due diligence, community and stakeholder consultation, project approvals, partnerships, and phased implementation over time.



Image Credit: Proposed Art Gallery of Burlington, concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.

Current Status

To date, the proposed AGB Waterfront Project has been considered by Burlington City Council on an information basis only, most recently through the receive-and-file of the preliminary Phase 1 Report in June 2025. No formal approvals have been granted to date.

As the project advances, all future phases—including business planning, design development, procurement strategy, funding approaches, site planning, and facility operations—will require staged review, consideration, and approval by Burlington City Council.

The AGB Board and staff fully recognize that the project must be advanced through disciplined planning and due diligence, broad community engagement, Indigenous consultation, and a multi-partner funding strategy involving municipal, provincial, federal, philanthropic, and private-sector participation.

Concepts referenced throughout this section represent long-term planning directions and exploratory opportunities only. All future development remains subject to additional study, consultation, partnership development, municipal approvals, and funding availability.

Why the AGB Waterfront Project—and Why Now

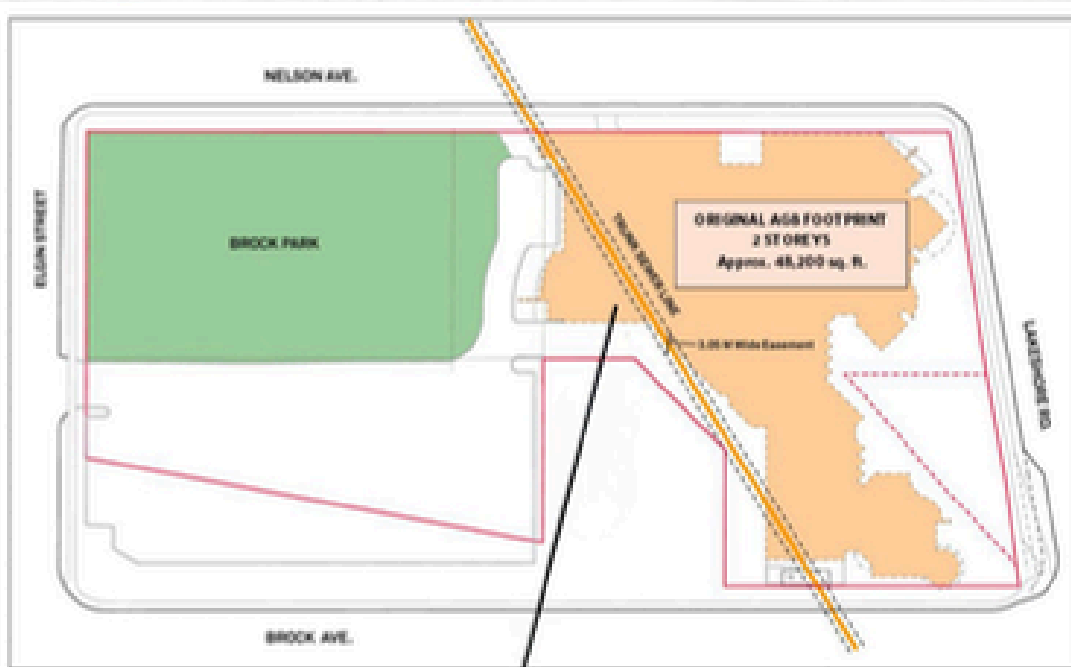
The proposed AGB Waterfront Project represents far more than the replacement of an aging facility. It is a long-term cultural infrastructure investment intended to strengthen Burlington's cultural identity, public waterfront legacy, visitor economy, and future as one Canada's most liveable communities.

For more than fifty years, the Art Gallery of Burlington has served as one of the city's defining cultural institutions and one of Canada's leading centres for contemporary craft and material-based practice. During that time, the organization has evolved far beyond the capacity of its existing building.

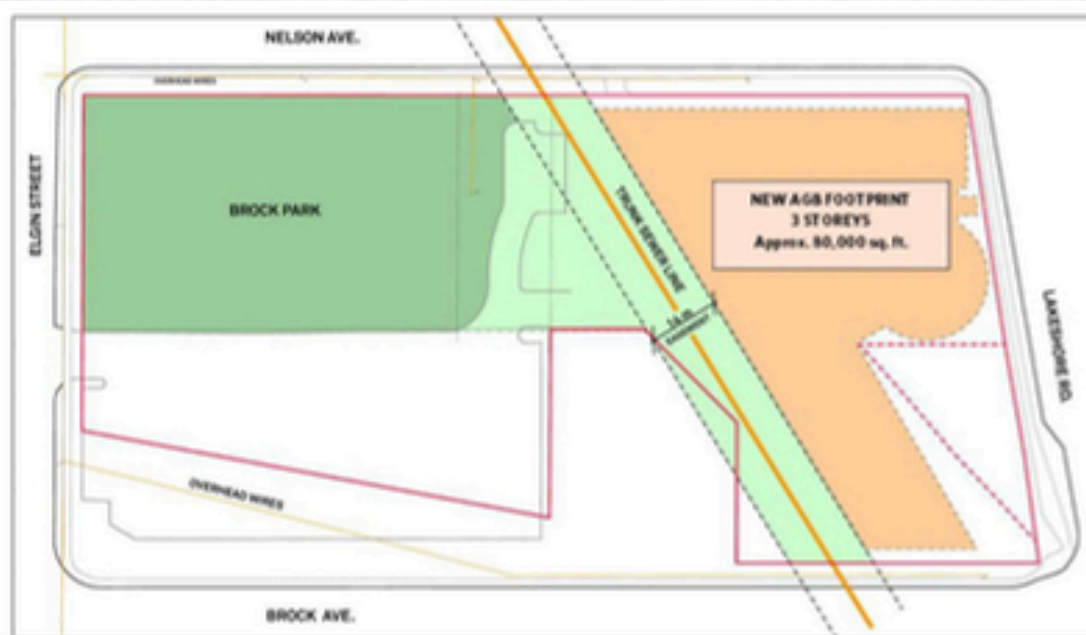
Annual visitation has grown from approximately 19,000 visitors in 2019 to more than 30,000 in 2025, while exhibitions, studios, learning programs, community partnerships, and public participation have expanded significantly.

At the same time, the current facility—originally constructed in 1978 and expanded incrementally over decades—faces increasing limitations related to accessibility, operational efficiency, collections care, exhibition capacity, studio demand, and long-term sustainability.

Current Site



Proposed Site



AGB has also demonstrated strong financial performance and disciplined organizational management over this same period. **Since 2019, total revenues have increased by approximately 34.5%, including significant growth in own-source program and service revenues and private-sector sponsorship and other revenues.** The organization has also strengthened its financial position through the repayment of \$283,500 in outstanding deficit funding to the City since 2022.

This growth demonstrates both increasing community demand and AGB's ability to expand earned and contributed revenue while managing its responsibilities carefully. It also reinforces the need for facility infrastructure, development capacity, and long-term investment strategies that match the scale of AGB's current and future role.

Incremental facility renewal alone is no longer considered a viable long-term solution.

The AGB Waterfront Project creates the opportunity to establish a purpose-built cultural facility designed around how AGB operates today—and how it intends to evolve in the decades ahead.

At its core, the project is about creating a place where people gather, learn, make, experience art, and participate in public life together—strengthening civic connection and community belonging through culture.

Burlington's continued growth, evolving waterfront, and expanding cultural participation have created a moment of opportunity, one that calls for cultural infrastructure reflecting the scale, ambition, and future identity of the community itself.



Image Credit: Proposed Art Gallery of Burlington, concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.

The proposed AGB Waterfront Project also aligns closely with Burlington's broader strategic priorities related to waterfront revitalization, cultural investment, tourism development, downtown vibrancy, sustainability, and year-round public life.

The Case for Investment

Advancing the AGB Waterfront Project is supported by four interconnected cases for investment.

The Business Case (Return on Investment)

The AGB Waterfront Project creates the opportunity to transition from ongoing reactive capital reinvestment in an aging facility toward a long-term cultural infrastructure solution designed for operational sustainability, expanded capacity, and future growth.

A new facility would support increased art exhibitions, expanded program and learning opportunities, improved collections care, enhanced accessibility, larger community gathering spaces, and stronger year-round programming capacity. It would also provide greater operational efficiency and long-term lifecycle sustainability than continued incremental renewal of the existing building.

Increasingly, cities across Canada are recognizing cultural infrastructure not as a discretionary amenity, but as essential civic infrastructure supporting economic development, community well-being, tourism, learning, and long-term city-building.

The project represents an opportunity to align cultural infrastructure investment with Burlington's long-term growth and evolving waterfront identity.



*Concept Image Only: This rendering is for illustrative purposes and does not represent the final design or appearance of a future Art Gallery of Burlington.
Concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.*

The Economic Impact Case

The AGB Waterfront Project also represents a significant long-term economic development opportunity for Burlington.

Investment in cultural infrastructure generates direct and indirect economic benefits through construction activity, tourism, employment, local spending, downtown revitalization, and broader creative economy growth. Comparable Canadian cultural infrastructure projects demonstrate the key role that major cultural destinations can play in strengthening regional economies, visitor activity, and year-round public life.

Based on preliminary analysis and comparable projects, a proposed \$116 million capital investment for the AGB Waterfront project has the potential to generate:



**~ \$180 MILLION IN TOTAL ECONOMIC
OUTPUT DURING CONSTRUCTION**



**~ 600 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
(FTE) CONSTRUCTION JOBS**



**~ 70 ONGOING ANNUAL JOBS
ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATIONS,
TOURISM, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY**



**\$12-13 MILLION ANNUAL ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY WITHIN BURLINGTON**

With annual visitation already exceeding 30,000 visitors within the current facility, projected visitation for the future waterfront facility is expected to reach approximately 62,000 annual visitors, with additional long-term growth anticipated as the broader waterfront cultural district and Cultural Commons vision continues to evolve over time.

The Social and Cultural Case

The AGB already plays a significant role in community well-being, learning, inclusion, and civic life through exhibitions, studios, education programs, and public cultural participation.

An expanded and purpose-built facility would significantly strengthen that impact by improving accessibility, increasing participation opportunities, expanding year-round programming, and creating new opportunities for community connection through arts and culture. Investment in cultural infrastructure also contributes directly to civic identity, quality of life, community pride, and long-term cultural resilience.

As Burlington continues to evolve, the AGB Waterfront Project creates an opportunity to establish a landmark cultural institution that reflects both the city's ambitions and the growing role culture plays in shaping vibrant and inclusive communities.

Concept Image Only: This rendering is for illustrative purposes and does not represent the final design or appearance of a future Art Gallery of Burlington. Concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.



The City-Building Case

The AGB Waterfront Project is a catalytic city-building initiative that supports the long-term evolution of Burlington's downtown and waterfront.

It aligns with broader municipal objectives related to downtown revitalization, waterfront activation, and the creation of a vibrant, year-round cultural destination that strengthens the city's economic, social, and cultural fabric.

What the Project Enables

Early and evolving schematic concepts imagine a significantly expanded cultural facility integrating:

- **contemporary exhibition environments;**
- **larger and more accessible studios and maker spaces;**
- **dedicated learning and community programming areas;**
- **enhanced visibility and interpretation for collections;**
- **flexible gathering and event spaces;**
- **and stronger physical connections to Burlington's waterfront and public realm.**

The project also creates the opportunity to strengthen AGB's role as:

- **a regional cultural destination;**
- **a year-round civic gathering place;**
- **a centre for contemporary craft and material-based practice;**
- **and a long-term cultural anchor within Burlington's future waterfront identity.**

These concepts continue to evolve through ongoing planning, consultation, and technical analysis.

A Phased and Disciplined Approach

Significant foundational work has already been completed, including preliminary feasibility analysis, strategic planning alignment, and early project readiness work intended to position the organization for disciplined long-term advancement.

The Strategy establishes a phased framework for advancing the AGB Waterfront Project responsibly and transparently over time.

The project is intended to progress through sequential stages including:

- **business planning;**
- **governance and organizational readiness;**
- **Indigenous consultation;**
- **community engagement;**
- **funding alignment;**
- **approvals;**
- **and pre-construction planning.**

This phased approach is intended to support evidence-based decision-making, maintain alignment with municipal priorities, strengthen public confidence, and position the project for future multi-partner funding opportunities.

Indigenous consultation and relationship-building are intended to remain foundational to the project's evolution not as procedural requirements, but as essential parts of shaping the project's long-term vision, design, and cultural role within the community.

A key near-term priority will be the continued refinement of the project business case, comparative lifecycle analysis, and updated Facility Condition Assessment information required to support long-term decision-making.

Long-Term Civic Opportunity

The AGB Waterfront Project establishes the institutional and physical foundation required to support AGB's long-term growth, expanded public impact, and future waterfront destination presence.

Beyond the facility itself, the project creates the opportunity for broader cultural, civic, and public-realm transformation along Burlington's waterfront over time, strengthening the city's identity as a connected and culturally vibrant waterfront community.

The project also creates the opportunity to strengthen Burlington's position within the broader regional and national cultural landscape through a major waterfront cultural destination anchored in contemporary art, craft, and material-based practice.

CULTURAL COMMONS

A Waterfront District Opportunity

Beyond the future AGB facility itself lies a broader long-term opportunity: the continued evolution of Burlington's waterfront as a connected cultural district and civic commons.

The Cultural Commons represents a long-range vision for how culture, public space, learning, ecology, housing, tourism, and community life could become more intentionally integrated within Burlington's waterfront over time.

Anchored by the Art Gallery of Burlington, the Commons is envisioned as a district where culture extends beyond a single building and becomes woven into the public life of the waterfront itself, creating places for gathering, learning, celebration, creativity, and year-round community use.

Over time, the Cultural Commons has the potential to become one of Burlington's defining civic environments—a place where culture, ecology, learning, housing, tourism, and public life intersect along the waterfront in ways that shape both community identity and everyday urban experience.

This vision remains conceptual and long-term in nature. Any future evolution of the district would require extensive consultation, partnership development, planning analysis, municipal land-use planning and approvals, and phased implementation over a number of years.

Brock Community Park as Civic Heart

At the centre of this vision is Brock Community Park

The park is not peripheral to the Cultural Commons vision—it is foundational to it.

The long-term intent is to preserve and enhance Brock Community Park as a year-round public gathering space supporting outdoor cultural activity, ecological stewardship, learning opportunities, passive recreation, and community programming.

Rather than viewing green space and cultural activity as separate priorities, the Cultural Commons imagines them working together to create a more connected waterfront experience where public life, ecology, and culture reinforce one another. The park represents the living civic heart of the Commons and a defining component of Burlington's waterfront identity.

A Vision Still Taking Shape

The Cultural Commons is not a finalized plan. It is an evolving city-building vision and direction intended to guide long-term thinking about Burlington's waterfront future.

Early concepts and exploratory discussions suggest opportunities that could include:

- **purpose-built, attainable, or creative-sector housing;**
- **mixed-use cultural and community-serving development;**
- **expanded public gathering and event spaces;**
- **educational and institutional partnerships;**
- **Indigenous gathering and cultural spaces;**
- **ecological and land-based programming opportunities;**
- **and stronger physical connections between the waterfront, downtown, and cultural destinations.**

These possibilities remain exploratory and subject to future study, consultation, partnership development, and municipal review.

Concept Image Only: This rendering is for illustrative purposes and represents a conceptual vision for the Cultural Commons. It does not reflect a final design, approved plan, or future built form. Concept design by Brook McLroy Inc.



Partnership, Learning, and Public Life

The long-term success of the Cultural Commons will depend on sustained collaboration across cultural institutions, educational partners, Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, tourism partners, community organizations, and the City of Burlington.

Over time, the Commons will create opportunities to support:

- **post-secondary partnerships and lifelong learning;**
- **creative sector development;**
- **arts-based tourism;**
- **ecological stewardship;**
- **mixed-use community development including new housing;**
- **and expanded year-round public activity.**

The intention is not simply to create a destination, but to strengthen a district that is actively used, inhabited, and experienced by residents and visitors throughout the year.

Beyond the Block: A Connected Cultural Waterfront

The Cultural Commons also exists within a broader opportunity to strengthen Burlington's waterfront as a connected cultural landscape.

Long-term concepts such as the proposed Greenway Cultural Corridor point toward opportunities to create a more connected waterfront experience linking cultural destinations, public spaces, ecological landscapes, pedestrian movement, public art, and year-round public activity along Burlington's downtown waterfront. Over time, this will strengthen connections between the Art Gallery of Burlington, Spencer Smith Park, Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Joseph Brant Museum, Brock Community Park, and the broader downtown waterfront experience through enhanced public realm design, cultural programming, and integrated pedestrian movement.

While still in a conceptual phase, this Cultural Commons vision reflects a growing recognition that culture can play a defining role in shaping Burlington's future waterfront identity, public realm, and civic experience.

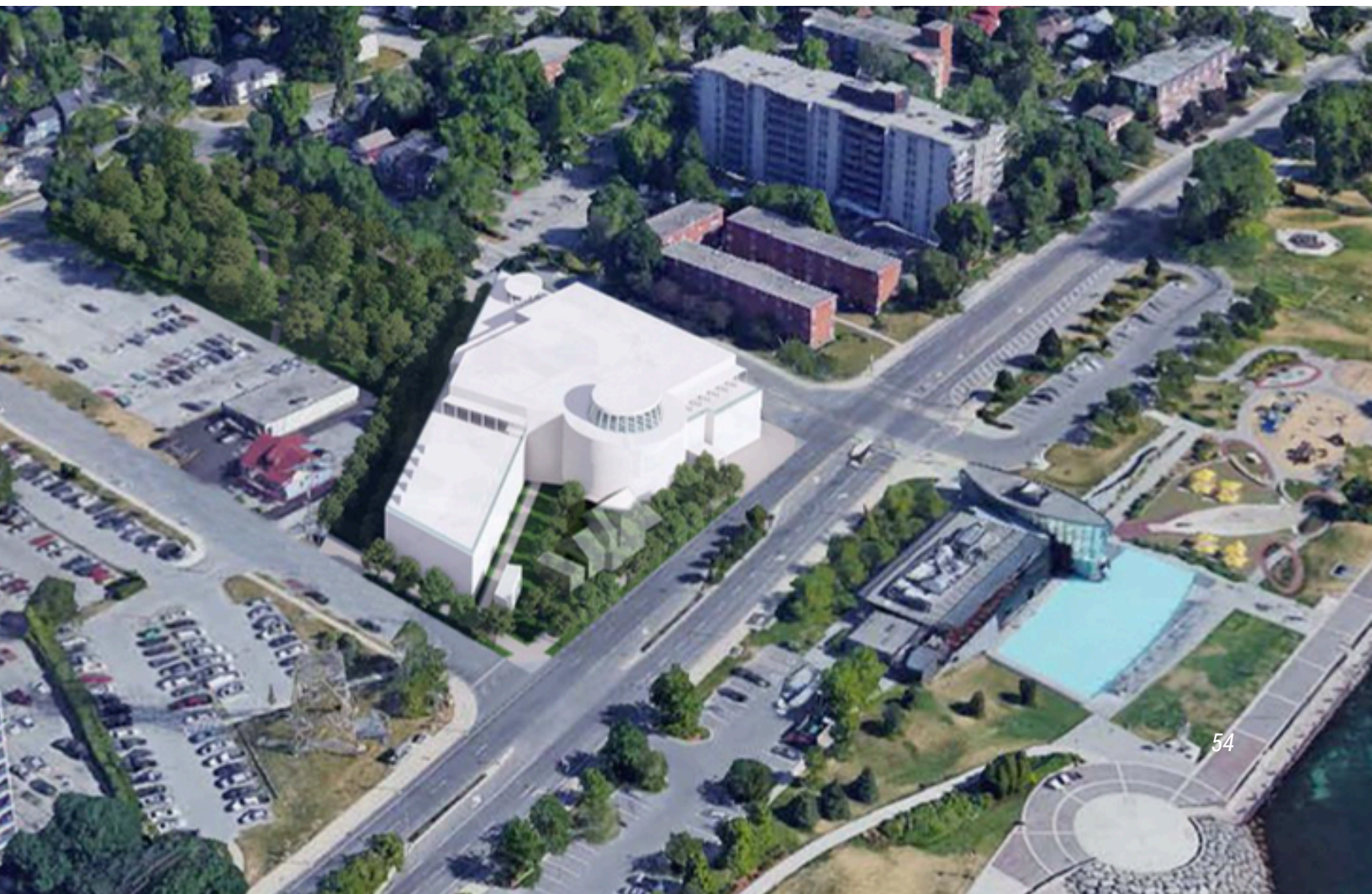
Toward 2040

By 2040, the ambition is to realize a connected and inclusive waterfront cultural district where arts and culture, year-round public life, environmental stewardship, learning, housing, tourism, and spaces for civic gathering work together to strengthen Burlington's identity as a waterfront cultural city.

Achieving that vision will require sustained public trust, long-term partnerships, significant investment, careful planning, and ongoing collaboration between the Art Gallery of Burlington, the City of Burlington, Indigenous communities, local businesses, and the citizens of this city.

The Strategy establishes the foundation for that work. The Cultural Commons represents the longer civic horizon toward which that foundation is intended to lead.

Image Credit: Proposed Art Gallery of Burlington, concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.



APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

The following table provides a high-level summary of the Key 2030 Outcomes across all Strategic Directions.

Strategic Direction	Key Themes and Outcomes
Lead Artistically	Artistic Leadership and Curatorial Vision: AGB will strengthen and formalize its curatorial vision to guide exhibitions, collections, interdisciplinary practice, research, interpretation, and public artistic discourse across the organization. Indigenous, Ecological, and Cultural Stewardship: AGB will deepen the integration of Indigenous consultation, ecological stewardship, and place-responsive approaches across exhibitions, collections, interpretation, and artistic planning. Collections, Representation, and Knowledge Production: AGB will strengthen representation, collections development, research, publications, and knowledge production in support of Indigenous, Black, racialized, diasporic, and underrepresented artists. National Artistic Leadership and Sector Influence: AGB will strengthen its position as a nationally recognized centre for contemporary craft and material-based practice through exhibitions, institutional collaborations, publications, research activity, touring opportunities, and sector leadership.
Living Cultural Ecosystem	Integrated Cultural Experience and Participation Pathways: AGB will strengthen connections across exhibitions, studios, learning, memberships, events, and public participation so that visitors and participants experience the organization as a connected cultural ecosystem. Studio, Membership, and Making Culture: AGB will stabilize and expand its shared studio and membership model to strengthen Guild continuity, support artistic participation, enhance studio sustainability, and broaden public access to creative experiences. Audience Intelligence, Access, and Inclusion: AGB will strengthen its ability to understand, support, and expand participation through audience insight, cultural access, community well-being partnerships, Indigenous-led programming, ecological and place-responsive programming, and inclusive public experiences.

Living Cultural Ecosystem	Community-Connected Cultural Ecosystem: AGB will strengthen its role as an integrated and community-connected cultural institution through sustained participation, accessible cultural experiences, long-term partnerships, and ecosystem-wide public engagement.
Voice and Presence	Institutional Identity and Public Narrative: AGB will strengthen its institutional identity, public narrative, and communications framework so that its artistic leadership, civic role, community impact, and waterfront ambitions are clearly understood. Civic Leadership and Government Relations: AGB will strengthen its civic leadership and government relationships in support of cultural advocacy, public-sector alignment, and long-term waterfront and city-building priorities. Visibility, Reach, and Destination Awareness: AGB will expand institutional visibility, public awareness, and its regional profile across digital, media, tourism, and community-facing platforms. Accessible, Inclusive, and Sector Leadership Communications: AGB will strengthen accessibility, inclusion, representation, sector presence, and public-facing institutional leadership across communications, storytelling, marketing, partnerships, and cultural discourse initiatives.
Organizational Resilience	Financial and Infrastructure Resilience: By 2030, AGB will strengthen its financial sustainability, revenue diversification, fundraising and philanthropy capacity, donor stewardship systems, infrastructure stewardship framework, and capital readiness to support long-term organizational resilience and waterfront transformation. Organizational Capacity and Workforce Sustainability: AGB will align its organizational structure, staffing model, workforce systems, and operational planning with the priorities and transformational requirements of the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040. Strategic Management and Implementation Systems: AGB will strengthen internal strategic performance, implementation tracking, dashboard systems, operational planning, budgeting alignment, and organizational performance management. Strategic Accountability, Public Trust, and Inclusive Organizational Practice: AGB will strengthen governance accountability, public trust, inclusive organizational practice, Indigenous leadership, equitable recruitment, environmental sustainability, and public reporting on strategic progress and organizational impact.
AGB Waterfront Project	Governance, Planning, and Project Readiness: AGB will establish the governance, planning, organizational, and implementation readiness structures required to advance the Waterfront Project through future approvals, partnerships, funding, and construction readiness phases. Municipal Alignment and Civic Approvals: AGB will work in partnership with the City of Burlington to advance the municipal alignment, Council direction, and civic approval processes required to support future AGB Waterfront Project planning, readiness, and implementation phases.

AGB Waterfront Project	Funding, Partnerships, and Investment Readiness: AGB will strengthen the funding, partnership, and investment relationships required to support long-term Waterfront Project advancement and future construction readiness. Public Trust and Civic Alignment: AGB will strengthen public trust, civic alignment, and stakeholder confidence for the AGB Waterfront Project through coordinated engagement, consultation, and transparent project communication. Indigenous and Sustainable Waterfront Leadership: Indigenous consultation, environmental stewardship, sustainable design, and long-term cultural guidance will remain embedded throughout AGB Waterfront Project planning, engagement, design, and future development processes.
Cultural Commons	Civic Vision and City-Building Integration: AGB and the City of Burlington will advance an integrated Cultural Commons framework aligning long-term district vision, public-realm priorities, partnership approaches, and cultural development objectives with Burlington's broader civic and waterfront planning objectives. Partnership Ecosystem and District Activation: AGB will strengthen strategic partnerships across cultural, educational, tourism, environmental, civic, and development sectors to support long-term waterfront cultural district development and year-round public life. Cultural Tourism and Civic Destination: AGB will strengthen Burlington's position as a cultural tourism destination through regional partnerships, destination development initiatives, and expanded waterfront cultural experiences. Inclusive and Sustainable Place-Based Development: Indigenous guidance, environmental stewardship, public green space preservation, ecological sustainability, and place-based development principles will be embedded in Cultural Commons planning and future waterfront district development.

APPENDIX B: CROSS-PLAN ALIGNMENT WITH THE CITY OF BURLINGTON

Shared City Priority Alignment

The following table shows how the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2030 aligns with shared City of Burlington priorities and destination priorities identified by Discover Burlington. It highlights AGB's role as both a leading cultural institution and civic partner—advancing artistic leadership, expanding access to culture, strengthening Burlington's cultural identity, supporting destination development, and contributing to purposeful waterfront growth.

Shared City Priority	City of Burlington Alignment	AGB Vision & Strategy Alignment	AGB Role	Result
1. Waterfront as Civic and Cultural Spine	Aligns with Horizon 2050 priorities around connected communities, purposeful growth, green space, lakefront protection, and civic identity. Also aligns with the Destination Stewardship Plan priorities around the waterfront as a core visitor and community asset.	Advanced through Strategic Directions: AGB Waterfront Project and Cultural Commons.	AGB acts as a cultural anchor, catalyst, and partner in advancing a year-round waterfront cultural destination in collaboration with the City.	AGB helps transform the waterfront from a passive civic asset into an active cultural, social, and economic gathering place.
2. Culture as Civic Infrastructure	Aligns with the Culture Plan's goal to broaden the role of arts and culture beyond program delivery to support placemaking, well-being, and economic opportunity.	Advanced through Strategic Directions: Lead Artistically, Living Cultural Ecosystem, and AGB Waterfront Project.	AGB provides cultural infrastructure for creation, learning, exhibitions, gathering, public engagement, and artistic leadership.	Culture is positioned as essential city-building infrastructure, comparable to libraries, parks, recreation, and community hubs.
3. Community Well-being, Belonging, and Access	Aligns with Horizon 2050 priorities around connected communities, health and well-being, equity, access, and inclusive civic life.	Advanced through Strategic Direction 2: Living Cultural Ecosystem, especially integrated cultural experience, studio access, audience inclusion, community well-being partnerships, and accessible participation.	AGB creates welcoming cultural experiences where people can make, learn, gather, participate, and feel connected.	AGB contributes directly to social connection, inclusion, lifelong learning, creativity, and community well-being.
4. Destination Development and Economic Impact	Aligns with the Destination Stewardship Plan's focus on tourism, regional partnerships, visitor experience, arts and culture, waterfront identity, and economic vitality.	Advanced through Strategic Directions: Voice and Presence, AGB Waterfront Project, and Cultural Commons, especially destination awareness, cultural tourism, civic destination identity, and regional partnerships.	AGB supports Burlington's destination economy by attracting residents, visitors, artists, partners, funders, and cultural tourism audiences.	AGB functions as both a cultural asset and an economic driver within Burlington's visitor, downtown, and waterfront ecosystem.

5. Environmental Responsibility and Stewardship	Aligns with Horizon 2050 and Destination Stewardship priorities around environmental responsibility, climate resilience, sustainability, green spaces, and stewardship.	Advanced through Strategic Directions: Lead Artistically, Living Cultural Ecosystem, Organizational Resilience, AGB Waterfront Project, and Cultural Commons.	AGB embeds ecological thinking through artistic practice, public programming, sustainable operations, waterfront design, and place-based development.	AGB contributes to Burlington's climate-conscious future by linking environmental stewardship with arts, learning, public space, and civic responsibility.
6. Indigenous Guidance, Reconciliation and Cultural Relationship	Aligns with City priorities around inclusion, belonging, Indigenous leadership, cultural representation, and respectful relationship-building.	Embedded across Strategic Directions: Lead Artistically, Living Cultural Ecosystem, Organizational Resilience, AGB Waterfront Project, and Cultural Commons.	AGB advances Indigenous consultation, cultural guidance, Indigenous-led programming, relationship-building, and stewardship protocols.	Indigenous guidance becomes a foundational principle shaping artistic practice, organizational planning, waterfront development, and Cultural Commons planning.
7. Governance, Partnership, and Public Accountability	Aligns with Horizon 2050 priorities around transparent, adaptive governance, collaboration, accountability, and data-driven decision-making.	Advanced through Strategic Directions: Organizational Resilience, Voice and Presence, AGB Waterfront Project, and Cultural Commons.	AGB strengthens implementation tracking, Board oversight, City alignment, Council process awareness, public reporting, and civic partnership.	AGB demonstrates that its long-term vision is ambitious, accountable, partnership-based, and aligned with appropriate municipal processes.

AGB's Six Strategic Roles

AGB delivers on shared City priorities through six distinct strategic roles. Each role reflects a dimension of AGB's civic contribution and is advanced through one or more Strategic Directions in the Implementation Plan.

AGB Strategic Role	Description	Primary Strategic Directions
Cultural Anchor	AGB anchors Burlington's waterfront cultural identity through exhibitions, studios, learning, public programs, collections, and future facility development.	Lead Artistically; Living Cultural Ecosystem; AGB Waterfront Project
Civic Partner	AGB works with the City of Burlington to align cultural, waterfront, tourism, environmental, and city-building priorities through appropriate municipal processes.	Voice and Presence; AGB Waterfront Project; Cultural Commons

Community Connector	AGB creates accessible cultural experiences that support belonging, participation, well-being, intergenerational learning, and creative exchange.	Living Cultural Ecosystem; Organizational Resilience
Destination Driver	AGB strengthens Burlington's regional profile, visitor economy, cultural tourism potential, and waterfront destination identity.	Voice and Presence; AGB Waterfront Project; Cultural Commons
Steward of Place	AGB integrates Indigenous guidance, ecological stewardship, green space priorities, and place-responsive cultural programming into its work.	Lead Artistically; Living Cultural Ecosystem; AGB Waterfront Project; Cultural Commons
Accountable Public Institution	AGB aligns strategy, implementation, governance, reporting, and resource planning to demonstrate public value and long-term sustainability.	Organizational Resilience; Voice and Presence; AGB Waterfront Project

Concept Image Only: This rendering is for illustrative purposes and does not represent the final design or appearance of a future Art Gallery of Burlington. Concept design by Brook McIlroy Inc.



APPENDIX C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Art Gallery of Burlington and TCA Projects would like to acknowledge and thank the many individuals and community partners whose time, insights and ideas helped shape the AGB Vision & Strategy 2026–2040.

The Strategy was developed through workshops, information sessions and one-to-one conversations led by Tim Commisso of TCA Projects, and was further informed by the findings of the Facility Master Plan and Future Needs Feasibility Study, conducted by Lord Cultural Resources. TCA drew on the study's findings and final report to help situate the Strategy within the broader perspectives already gathered from Board, staff, municipal, cultural, community, Indigenous and sector participants.

2026 Strategic Planning Engagement

Engagement	Participants
Board & Staff Workshop	Board: Susan Busby; Scott Cooper; Tracy King; Rachel Swiednicki; Natasa Veljovic; Garratt Wootton Staff: Suzanne Carte; Linda Cleroux; Helen Dreifelds; Jessica Generalovic; Sophia Finelli; Julie Wagner; Sarah Miserere; Emma Sankey; Albany Sutherland; Stephanie Vegh
Information & Engagement Sessions	Kim Ingram; Claire Green; Joe Apps; Emilie Cote; Rob McIssac; Megan Tregunno; Ute Lindner; Alli Dawe; Sanaz Aslostovar; Denis Longchamps; Tobi Bruce; Melissa Bennet; Mikah Fortier; Marg Jones; Gail Smith; Peter VanKessel; Tim Laspa; Rob Peachey; Nikola Wojewoda; James Elliott; Maia Jones; Lisa Koster; Andrea Perego; Heidi Noel; Ted Pietzrak; Patricia Roy; Sue Stasiuk; Chris Heaney; Steve Robichaud; Andrew Scott; Scott Hamilton; Curt Benson; Jacqueline Johnson; Calvin Brook
Government Officials	MPP Natalie Pierre; Mayor Marianne Meed Ward; Councillor Angelo Bentivegna; Councillor Kevin Galbraith; Councillor Lisa Kearns; Councillor Rory Nisan; Councillor Paul Sharman; Councillor Shawna Stolte

Facility Master Plan & Future Needs Feasibility Study Engagement

Engagement	Participants
AGB Board, staff & task force	Vickram Agarwal; Susan Busby; Suzanne Carte; Tim Commisso; Sophia Finelli; Jessica Generalovic; Rollin King; Tracy King; Dan Lawrie; Jasmine Mander; Olikha Mawji; Patricia Roy; Darren Sanger-Smith; Emma Sankey; Peter Van Kessel; Stephanie Vegh; Natasa Veljovic
Indigenous community	Michelle Longlade; Alexis Nanibush-Pamajewong; Stephen Paquette; Derek Sands; Catherine Tamaro; Marvin Terry; Matt Terry
Arts Burlington & guilds	Sue Cunningham; Paul Gerroir; Annette Gerard; Lawson Hunter; Tim Laspa; Mary Helen Osner; Andrea Perabo; Irena Skoczny Gratton; Susan Stasiuk; Leslie Sutherland
Civic, cultural & community stakeholders	Jamie Tellier; Mark Steffler; Ron Steginga; Ken Phinomen; Kimberly Watson; Maureen Healey; Emilie Cote; Lucy White; Gord Thompson; Brian Dean; Lita Barrie
Consulting & design team	Sean Stanwick; Natalie MacLean-Boissonneault; Budhadya Mukhuty; Dov Goldstein; Gail Lord; Calvin Brook; Dani Kastelein





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