



## Committee of the Whole (2) Report

---

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023      **WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE VAUGHAN'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**FROM:**  
Nick Spensieri, City Manager

**ACTION:** DECISION

---

### **Purpose**

To authorize the execution of a multi-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Vaughan, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF) for the purpose of advancing Vaughan as a launchpad for creative industries, talent and Canadian art. This partnership will catalyze Vaughan's creative economy as a launchpad for the art of Canada by attracting talent, creating training, educational and exhibition opportunities, and providing a significant economic catalyst for artists and creative entrepreneurs in Vaughan.

## **Report Highlights**

- The creative and cultural industries have been identified by Council and successive Economic Development strategies as a key opportunity to develop the local business community and attract talent.
- Creative industries and cultural amenities generate significant economic value by attracting and retaining workers involved in creative and knowledge-intensive professions. By offering a vibrant cultural scene that elevates the quality of life, cities attract economic activity and create a climate where innovation and creativity can flourish.
- Propelled by a surge in digital transformation, the creative industries are playing an increasingly prominent economic role by creating new jobs and facilitating business growth in other sectors.
- Economic Development is working with the nationally significant McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the well-established Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF) to advance Vaughan as a launchpad for creative industries, talent, and Canadian art.
- Partnership between McMichael, VFF, and the City of Vaughan will leverage an expanded and reimagined McMichael art gallery to create spaces for programming, events, and cultural experiences which advance Vaughan as a hub for arts, culture, and the creative industries.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to execute a multi-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Vaughan, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF), for the purpose of advancing a launchpad for arts, culture and creative industries in Vaughan.
2. THAT the MOU be in a form satisfactory to the City Manager (or designate) and the City Solicitor (or designate).
3. THAT the Office of the Chief, Communications and Economic Development communicate news and success generated by the partners and partnership.

## **Background**

***The creative and cultural industries have been identified by Council and successive Economic Development strategies as a key opportunity to develop the local business community and attract talent.***

Vaughan Economic Development's 2010 Business Strategy, *Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy* and Economic Development's 2019 Strategic Business Plan highlight the creative industries as a key emerging sector and area of focus for economic development activities and resources.

***Creative industries and cultural amenities generate significant economic value by attracting and retaining workers involved in creative and knowledge-intensive professions. By offering a vibrant cultural scene which elevates the quality of life, cities attract economic activity and create a climate in which creativity and innovation can flourish.***

Cities with high density of creative activity and cultural amenities become highly attractive to educated, ambitious and energetic young people who want to live in areas with abundant opportunities for leisure, entertainment, and cultural and community connection.<sup>1</sup> Companies also want to locate their businesses in areas where they can access an available, skilled, and creative workforce and where their employees can enjoy a high quality of life.

Cities can secure long-term economic growth by developing cultural amenities which attract businesses and young “wealth creators” who power economic prosperity by generating new ideas, starting businesses, and creating jobs.

***The creative industries are playing an increasingly prominent economic role by creating new jobs and facilitating business growth in other sectors.***

A 2016 report by the McKinsey Global Institute highlights the digital creative economy and the trade associated with it as one of the fastest rising components of global trade and a key feature of competitiveness in the era of digital globalization.<sup>2</sup> The creative economy is a powerful emerging economic sector that is being strengthened by a surge in digital transformation which has created new demands for digitization, creative design and digital communications.

This trend is not only creating opportunities for businesses and talent in the creative sector; the creative industries directly enhance productivity and growth in other sectors by generating new software tools, connecting new and innovative goods and services with customers through creative sales and marketing.

---

<sup>1</sup> [magnet-cities.pdf \(kpmg.com\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [mgi-digital-globalization-full-report.ashx \(mckinsey.com\)](#)

***Concentration and density of businesses and highly skilled workers in the creative and cultural industries, along with related facilities and business, enables partnerships and cooperative projects to develop.***

Clusters of creative and culturally oriented businesses and workers are conducive to innovation, original ideas, and economic growth. Facilities, events and organizations which value and support innovation and creativity are important for facilitating cross-sectoral exchange and catalyzing creative activity. Examples of these types of amenities include creative and cultural hubs, incubators, studios, cultural arts centres, galleries, coworking spaces, exhibition spaces, and cultural/industry events.

***Recognizing, strengthening, and collaborating with existing cultural assets are vital aspects of economic development and strengthening economic vitality.***

Economic development approaches which integrate arts and culture are usually combinations of facility-centric, talent-oriented, and program-based approaches which seek to create spaces for creative development, education and talent development and vibrant programming and events.<sup>3</sup> Supporting the success and expansion of existing cultural facilities, programming and events and facilitating collaboration between cultural leaders in the community are key strategies for building a growing, diverse, resilient and prosperous creative economy.

***Economic Development is proposing an MOU with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF) to advance Vaughan as a launchpad for creative industries, talent and Canadian art.***

This partnership encompasses a facility-centric, talent-oriented and program-based approach to catalyzing economic opportunity by supporting the development of arts and culture in Vaughan. Collaboration between the three partners leverages the McMichael Canadian Art Gallery, anchored in the community of Kleinburg, film industry event and talent development programming by the VFF, and the City's economic and workforce development resources to create a significant economic catalyst for artists and creative entrepreneurs in Vaughan.

***The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is a nationally significant, globally recognized cultural institution and the foremost cultural anchor in the City of Vaughan.***

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/online/How-Arts-and-Culture-Catalyzes-Economic-Vitality.pdf>

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is the only major museum with a mandate to exclusively exhibit and promote Canadian art. The collection dates to 1955 when the founders began their collection with seminal works by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. The McMichael's permanent collection now encompasses more than 7,000 works by artists that increasingly reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada, including significant holdings of Indigenous and contemporary art and works by women.

McMichael plays a significant cultural role by offering visitors a distinctly Canadian experience that engages people with their identity, with their understanding of what it means to be Canadian, and with how Indigenous culture is an integral part of the identity of our country. It attracts visitors from the local community, across Canada and internationally to commune with the nature of Canada and the art of Canada.

***The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is embarking on a significant expansion and restoration project to create a more fitting home for the art of Canada and a building which creates new opportunities for creative exhibitions, education and programming.***

The expanded and reimagined building will include the following new education, dining, meeting and event, theatre and outdoor spaces to facilitate industry-leading exhibitions, best-in-class creative education and acquisitions programs, and unique cultural events. The project will expand the McMichael building by 52% and construction is expected to begin early in 2025.

***The Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF), the second partner in this initiative, is a not-for-profit organization committed to advancing the independent film industry and creating opportunities for audiences to experience Canadian and international short films.***

Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, VFF hosts an annual, 5-day international film which offers a platform for independent creators to share their films. The festival bolsters Vaughan's creative and tourism industries by attracting audiences, both local and global, to experience Vaughan's art and culture. A week of film screenings, networking events and panel discussions, and a red-carpet gala event offers filmmakers and industry professionals unique opportunities to connect and celebrate the art of filmmaking.

Throughout the year, VFF hosts signature events, educational workshops and networking opportunities to promote the growth and vibrancy of the local film industry. VFF's activities create valuable opportunities for filmmakers, film industry professionals and film enthusiasts to connect, exchange ideas, develop new skills and celebrate the art of film.

***The partnership between McMichael, VFF, and the City of Vaughan will leverage McMichael's expanded and reimagined building to create spaces for programming, events and cultural experiences which advance Vaughan as a hub for arts, culture and creative industries.***

Collaboration between the parties will create a world-class launchpad for Canadian artists and creative industry professionals. McMichael's new exhibition, education, event, studio, and theatre spaces will serve as a home for Vaughan's creative community. The new spaces also create opportunities for VFF to host regular programming, workshops and events which engage larger audiences and raise the profile of Vaughan's film industry. The City will support the partnership by leading creative industries cluster development activities and strategies, raising the profile of Vaughan's cultural scene, and amplifying the cultural, social and tourism-related benefits of this unique partnership.

## **Previous Reports and Authority**

[Vaughan Economic Development Strategy, Building a Gateway to Tomorrow's Economy \(2010\)](#)

[Feasibility Study for a Cultural Arts Centre in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, VMC Sub-Committee Report, December 4, 2019](#)

[Economic Development Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023](#)

[Update on the Development of a Cultural and Performing Arts Centre in the VMC, VMC Sub-Committee Report, June 21, 2022](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

McMichael, VFF and the City will undertake and explore a variety of collaborative and independent activities through this partnership to catalyze Vaughan as a hub for culture and creative industries.

### **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**

To advance culture and creative industries in Vaughan, the McMichael is undertaking and/or exploring the following activities:

- a. A major capital expansion of McMichael's facility with exhibition, event and hospitality, education, and art production spaces that can serve as a home for Vaughan's creative community;
- b. Acting as a magnet for creative industries firms and launchpad for future businesses;
- c. Upon completion of a capital expansion, offering space to the VFF for signature programming and events;
- d. Activating both indoor and outdoor space, including to highlight creative industries businesses;
- e. Supporting public art projects and art education hubs across the City of Vaughan to generate interest in the creative industries, nurture wellness through creativity and provide opportunities for industry growth
- f. Providing strategic insights to inform and support Economic Development's creative industries cluster development activities.

#### Vaughan International Film Festival

To advance culture and creative industries in Vaughan, the VFF is undertaking and/or exploring the following activities:

- a. The execution of a multi-day, annual, international film festival showcasing short films from both experienced filmmakers as well as local student filmmakers.
- b. Advancing relationships between local, regional, and national filmmakers with industry stakeholders;
- c. Ongoing training and networking opportunities for students, residents, and entrepreneurs in the film industry, presented through various seminars, webinars, and interactive workshops;
- d. Boosting Vaughan tourism through the following:
  - i) Organizing a city tour for international talent who attend the festival, with the support of Tourism Vaughan
  - ii) Creating a digital database of sites in the city that have been featured in movies or television productions, co-hosted on both the VFF's homepage and [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca)
  - iii) Assisting the Economic Development team navigate current by-law and permitting challenges faced by film/tv productions looking to film in Vaughan.

- d. Developing public recognition of McMichael as VFF's home base while simultaneously helping to elevate McMichael's international presence.
- e. Investment attraction activities to increase the number of sites in Vaughan used for movies or television productions
- f. Provide strategic insights to inform and support Economic Development's creative industries cluster development activities.

### City of Vaughan

To advance culture and creative industries in Vaughan, the City is undertaking and/or exploring the following activities:

- a. Leading cluster and sector development research and strategies, including studies, with expertise and budget where available
- b. Providing strategic support to improve York Region Transit connections to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Kleinburg Village Business Improvement Area
- c. Leading Creative Industries learning activities, including site visits to institutions leading best practices
- d. Continuing to advance the Kleinburg Streetscaping and Parking infrastructure
- e. Exploring the use of city-owned spaces for creative industries activations
- f. Supporting the McMichael's capital campaign where appropriate through communications and other in-kind services
- g. Supporting the McMichael and VFF with various funding and grant applications with other levels of government
- h. Supporting the VFF as a film and filming investment attraction agency through a separate agreement

Together, McMichael, VFF and Economic Development will collaborate to advance Vaughan as a launchpad for creative industries, talent and Canadian art. This partnership will generate significant economic and social benefits for the city of Vaughan, including providing enriching cultural experiences, creating magnets which attract talent and business investments, and catalyzing Vaughan's tourism industry.



## **Financial Impact**

None.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Partnership between the McMichael, VFF and the City will strengthen Vaughan's position as a hub for arts, culture and creative industries within both York Region, and the broader GTHA region. By leveraging the broad networks and international significance of both McMichael and VFF, this new launchpad will raise the profile of Vaughan's arts and cultural scene on a national and global scale.

Vaughan's hubs for creative industries and culture, including this proposed initiative, will operate as part of the broader regional ecosystem, leveraging regional strengths and strengthening ties to other partners and hubs. Economic Development will leverage established relationships with regional partners, both public sector and in industry, to catalyze new opportunities for arts and cultural development and to amplify the impact of this initiative.

## **Conclusion**

Economic Development is committed to supporting and fostering the symbiotic relationships between culture, the creative economy and long-term economic prosperity by supporting and elevating existing cultural assets in the community. A partnership between McMichael, VFF and the City represents a facility-centric, talent-oriented, and program-based approach which will create a launchpad for creative industries, talent and Canadian art in Vaughan.

It is appropriate that Council (1) authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the attached multi-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Vaughan, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF), for the purpose of advancing a launchpad for arts, culture and creative industries in Vaughan; and (2) that the content of the Agreement be prepared to the satisfaction of the City Manager (or designate) and that the form of this Agreement be prepared to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor (or designate) prior to execution.

**For more information**, please contact: Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development, ext. 8891

**Attachments**

None.

**Prepared by**

Julie Flesch, Senior Advisor, Strategic Economic Initiatives, ext. 8993

Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development, ext. 8891

Michael Genova, Chief, Communications and Economic Development, ext. 8027

**Approved by**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager