



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: February 1, 2016

SUBJECT: Varley Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2014-2018
PREPARED BY: Niamh O'Laoghaire, Director, Varley Art Gallery of Markham, ext. 3273
Moe Hosseini-Ara, Director of Culture, ext. 3596

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) THAT the report and presentation entitled Varley Art Gallery Strategic Plan 2014-2018 be received for information; and
- 2) THAT Council endorse the finalized Strategic Plan for the Varley Art Gallery of Markham; and
- 3) THAT Varley Art Gallery of Markham staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to put the Strategic Plan 2014-2018 into effect.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to General Committee with respect to the Varley Art Gallery of Markham's Strategic Plan 2014-2018. The strategic plan has been finalized, since the original goals and strategic imperatives were presented to and approved by Council in April 2014. The detailed goals and tactics will guide staff and direct the Gallery's work plan over the next 3 years. The strategic plan was presented to and endorsed by the Varley Art Gallery of Markham Foundation Board at their board meeting on January 11, 2016.

BACKGROUND:

The Vision and the Strategic Imperatives for the Strategic Plan were endorsed by General Committee on April 30, 2014. In late 2014, a new Manager for the Gallery was hired by the City. In early 2015, the new Manager and Gallery staff began work on fleshing out the detailed steps of the plan in order to create a multi-year work/business plan. That work has now been completed and has been endorsed by the Foundation and is the subject of this report.

History of the Varley Art Gallery

The Varley Art Gallery of Markham is named in honour of Frederick Horsman Varley (1881-1969), a founding member of Canada's famed Group of Seven. While a significant landscape artist, Varley was the only member of the Group who regarded himself primarily as a portrait painter. His art practice, from the time of his arrival in Canada in 1912 until his death in 1969, has led to his recognition as one of the leading portraitists of the twentieth century in Canada. Varley became a close friend of Kathleen and Donald McKay in the early 1950s, moving into their Toronto house in 1953. When the McKays returned to Unionville in 1957 to live in Kathy McKay's ancestral home, Varley accompanied them. He spent the last twelve years of his life (1957-1969) on Main Street Unionville. The following is a brief timeline of events that led to the creation of the art gallery and the formation of the Foundation Board:

1988 Kathleen McKay donated 67 works of art to the then Town of Markham on condition that a suitable facility be built to house the art she has donated. She also donated \$1.2 million to create an endowment to support care of the art.

1992 The Varley-McKay Art Foundation of Markham was created to manage the Kathleen McKay endowment.

1997 The Varley Art Gallery of Markham opened at 216 Main St. Unionville, on land purchased by the City of Markham.

2006 A Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment #1) between the City of Markham and the Varley-McKay Art Foundation is signed. As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding:

“The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set out the roles and responsibilities of the Town, including the Gallery and the Foundation, including the Board, with respect to the administration of the Gallery, the acquisition, deaccession and management of the Art Collection, the management of the McKay Endowment Fund and the use of Gallery facilities.”

The Foundation....shall receive and maintain funds and apply all of the principal and income there from for the following charitable purposes:

- a. To educate and promote the public’s appreciation of the fine arts in the Town of Markham through the use of the Gallery;
- b. To maintain & expand the existing collection of art works, objects and documentary material in respect of the collection; and to preserve & exhibit the collection.

In 2010, the City commenced work to undertake the strategic plan for the Varley Art Gallery with the Foundation Board. The process was put on hold for a number of reasons. In 2014, the City re-initiated the strategic planning process with the Foundation Board and community leaders with a strong connection to the Varley Art Gallery. This process involved several phases including: Data Collection/Research; two day-long Workshops; finalizing of five strategic imperatives and associated strategic initiatives. Varley McKay Art Foundation Board members, City staff, including Culture Department, Senior Staff and key stakeholders participated in the process. The staff of the Varley Art Gallery were also fully engaged throughout the process. The process resulted in the following Vision and Strategic Imperatives:

Vision

Our vision is to be a cultural hub of national significance in the City of Markham to:

- Share and celebrate the life and work of F. H. Varley and other Canadian artists
- Inspire local and national audiences to engage with art, both historical and contemporary

Strategic Imperatives

- Build/Expand Permanent Collection
- Enhance Relationship with the Foundation Board
- Optimize Organizational Excellence
- Develop Exhibition & Programming Strategy
- Support the Creation of a Cultural Hub

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Through the strategic planning process participants developed a new shared vision for the Gallery and five strategic imperatives with associated high level strategic initiatives. The detailed Strategic Plan was completed with the active and enthusiastic participation of all key Varley Gallery staff, adhering closely to the existing framework endorsed by General Committee. The plan is also heavily informed by the intentions outlined in the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between the Varley-McKay Art Foundation and the City of Markham. The detailed Varley plan lays out clear steps for ongoing, and collegial collaboration between the Gallery and the Varley-McKay Foundation Board and is in clear

alignment with the strategic priorities of the Culture Department and the Culture Plan. The additional work done by the Gallery Director and staff has provided the tactics and goals which will help achieve the outcomes as laid out by the strategic imperatives. The Strategic Plan has been appended to this report as Attachment #2.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable


ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Finalization of the strategic plan supports the Council approved Culture Plan which provides the roadmap for enhancing and celebrating arts and culture as an integral part of the overall quality of life in the City of Markham.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable

**RECOMMENDED
BY:**


Moe Hosseini-Ara
Director of Culture



Brenda Librecz
Commissioner of Community
& Fire Services

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Memorandum of Understanding – Between: Corporation of the Town of Markham and Varley-McKay Art Foundation of Markham – Dated March 27, 2006

Attachment 2 - Varley Art Gallery of Markham Strategic Plan 2014-2018 – Dated November 17, 2015

Attachment 3 – Council Report – Strategic Planning for the Varley Art Gallery – Update – Endorsed by Council April 30, 2014