Know History
Historical Services

OAKVILLE

Shaping the Future of The Oakville Museum

Community Strategic Planning 2026 – 2030

March 2026

Shaping the Future of The Oakville Museum

Land Acknowledgement

Oakville, as we know it today, is rich in the history and modern traditions of many First Nations. From the lands of the Anishinaabe, to the Attawandaron and Haudenosaunee, these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in First Nations history.

As we gather today on the sacred lands of Treaties 14 and 22, we are in solidarity with Indigenous brothers and sisters to honour and respect Mother Earth, the original nations of the trees and plants, the four legged, the flyers, the finned and the crawlers as the original stewards of Mother Earth.

We acknowledge and give gratitude to the waters as being life and being sacred and to the carriers of those water teachings, the females.

Shaping the Future of The Oakville Museum

We acknowledge and give gratitude for the wisdom of the Grandfathers and the four winds that carry the spirits of our ancestors that walked this land before us.

The Town of Oakville is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We acknowledge and thank the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Treaty holders, for being stewards of this traditional territory.

Why Create a New Strategic Plan

Oakville is rapidly changing

- Growing population
- Increasing cultural diversity

Many residents

- Don’t know the museum exists
- Don’t see themselves reflected in its stories

Opportunity to:

- Strengthen identity
- Build belonging
- Lead cultural engagement in the community

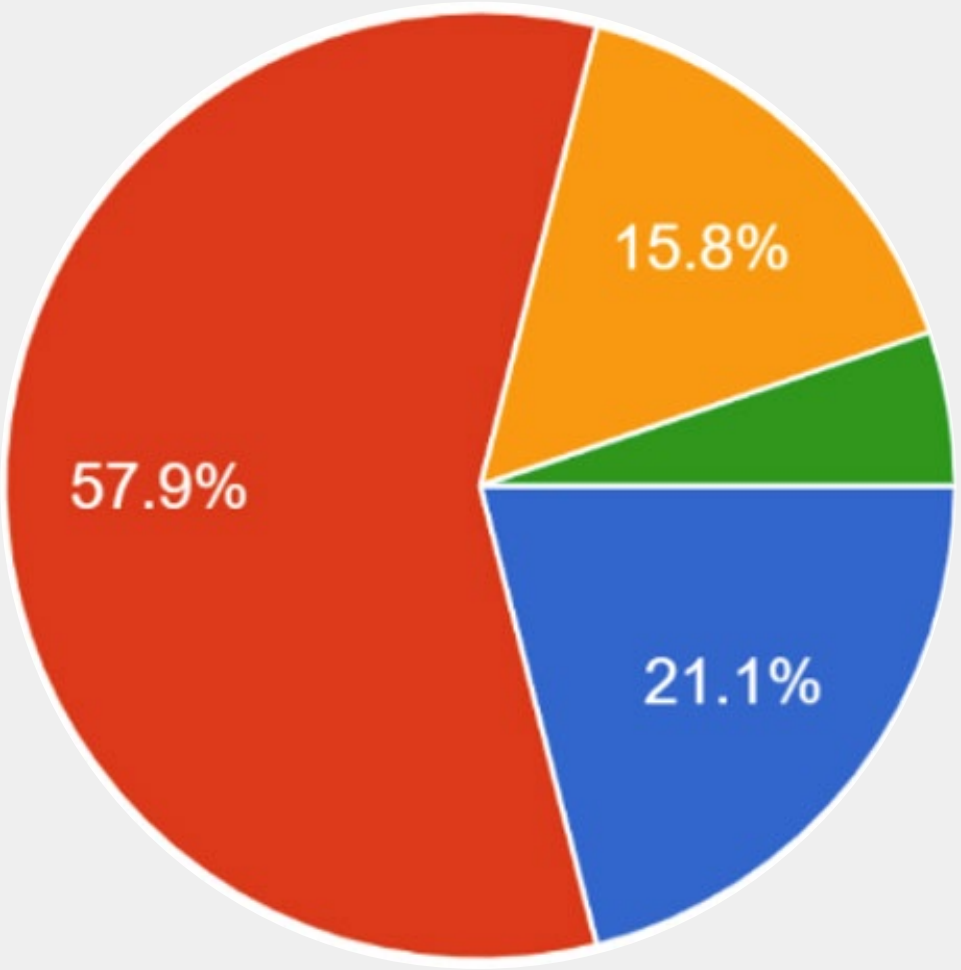
Oakville’s Community is Changing

- Increasing diversity
- Newcomer populations rising
- Opportunity to reflect broader stories

Who We Need to Reach

- Youth & students
- Families
- Newcomers to Canada
- Diverse cultural communities
- Lifelong learners

How well do you think the museum currently connects with the broader community?

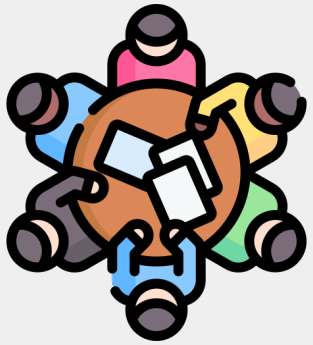


Shaping the Future of The Oakville Museum

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

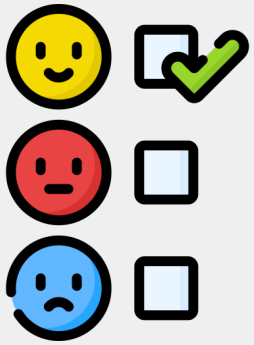
- Understanding our community and its needs
- Planning for a shared future
- Building on what we do best, and understanding where we can do better

How This Plan was Developed



Internal staff workshops

Community partner sessions



Public survey feedback

Ongoing conversations

Current Standing of The Oakville Museum

Current Standing of The Oakville Museum

Current Standing of The Museum

- A trusted cultural institution
- Strong reputation for quality programming
- Deep community relationships

"Families create memories here, and those experiences last."

What The Oakville Museum Does Well:

- Strong school programs and camps
- Engaging in-person exhibitions and events

"Don't lose what already works—it's phenomenal."

What The Oakville Museum Does Well:

- Meaningful community impact
- Passionate, knowledgeable staff
- Community partnerships
- Outreach and satellite exhibits

"The human connection with visitors—the warmth and joy—is what makes it special."

What We Heard

What We Heard

Community Feedback Overview

Museum seen as:

- Important
- Welcoming
- High quality

"It invites all people in to share their stories."

Visitor Experience Feedback

How important is the museum to the cultural life of the community?

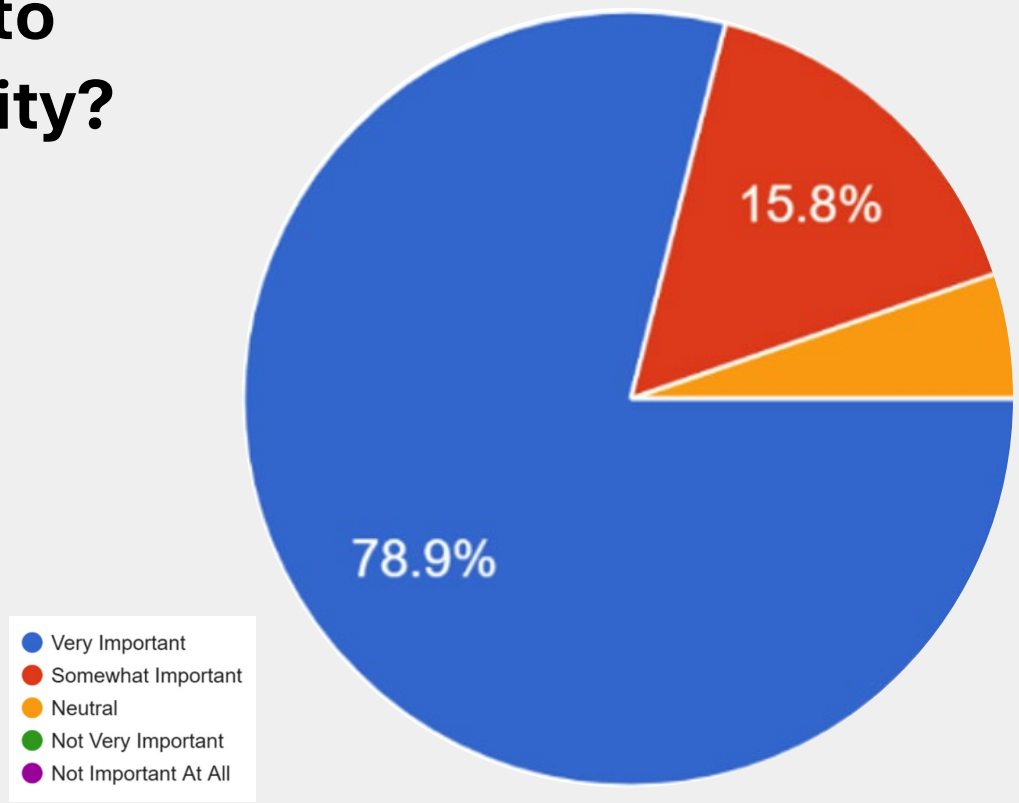
Rated mostly: Good to Excellent

Strengths:

- Staff
- Exhibits

Opportunities:

- Accessibility
- Interactivity



Community Voice Highlights

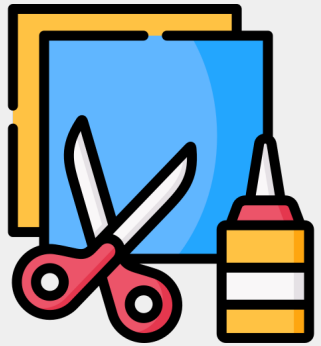
"Very important to cultural life" (majority response)

Top requests:

- More hands-on programming
- More walking tours / outdoor experiences
- More community events

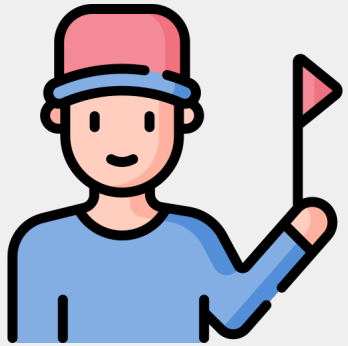
"These experiences create lifelong connections."

Most Requested Programs



Hands-on workshops

Community events



Walking tours

Outdoor experiences

What We Heard

Stories People Want (Potential Programming)

- Indigenous history (pre- and post-treaty)
- Black history expansion
- Newcomer and multicultural stories
- Everyday life in Oakville

"Newcomers should be able to see themselves in the museum."

What We Heard

Stories People Want (Potential Programming)

- Indigenous history (pre- and post-treaty)
- Black history expansion
- Newcomer and multicultural stories
- Everyday life in Oakville

"Indigenous and Black histories should be expanded and more visible."

Partnerships to Grow (Future Outreach)

- Indigenous communities
- Cultural organizations
- Schools and colleges
- Local historical societies

"Stronger connections with community groups will expand its reach."

"We need to tell more stories from different cultural communities."

Challenges

Challenges

Awareness & Marketing

- Limited visibility in the community
- Competing with Town-wide messaging
- Need for stronger brand identity

"I only recently discovered the museum—and I've lived here a long time."

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"It feels like the best kept secret in Oakville."

Awareness & Marketing

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- Need for stronger brand identity

"Great programs—but not enough people know about them."

Capacity Constraints

- Small team
- Limited ability to expand programming
- High demand vs limited resources

"Growth will require more staff and support."

Accessibility Barriers

- Physical access limitations
- Digital experience gaps
- Financial awareness barriers

"Accessibility [to exhibits] is a major barrier for many visitors."

Physical Space Limitations

- Growing collections need storage

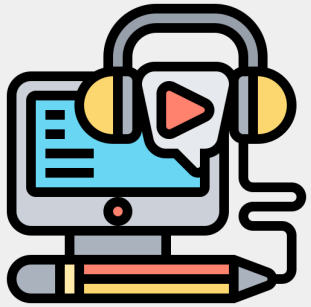
"There is no shortage of ideas—only a shortage of capacity."

Opportunities

Expanding Digital Reach

Virtual Exhibits

Online Collections



Hybrid programming

Global audience potential

"The experience should be both physical and virtual."

Opportunities

Community-Based Programming

- Cultural celebrations
- Indigenous partnerships
- Multicultural storytelling
- Pop-up and mobile exhibits

“It’s such a beautiful space… it just needs more engagement.”

Outdoor & Experiential Growth

- Gardens and waterfront
- Walking tours
- Outdoor storytelling
- Interactive installations

Becoming a Cultural Hub

- Move beyond traditional museum model

Create a space for:

- Events
- Gathering
- Dialogue

"Oakville was shaped by more than one family's experience."

What a "Cultural Hub" Means

- A place to **learn**
- A place to **connect**
- A place to **experience culture together**

"Make it a cultural hub—not just a museum."

Strategic Framework

Strategic Framework

Mission

The Oakville Museum preserves and shares the stories of Oakville's past and present through inclusive storytelling, community partnership, and engaging experiences that foster learning, connection, and belonging.

Strategic Goals

1. Increase Awareness & Visibility
2. Deepen Community Connections
3. Expand Digital Access
4. Enhance Visitor Experience
5. Build Organizational Capacity

Strategic Framework

Key Actions

- Strengthen marketing and branding
- Expand partnerships and outreach
- Invest in digital tools
- Enhance interactive experiences
- Grow staffing and resources

"More visibility, more partnerships, more community presence."

Strategic Framework

Key Actions

Awareness

- Develop independent brand + marketing strategy
- Increase social media and community presence

Community

- Expand partnerships (Indigenous, multicultural groups)
- Create culturally specific programming

Strategic Framework

Key Actions

Digital

- Improve website and online collections
- Develop virtual exhibits and 3D artifacts

Experience

- Add hands-on, sensory, and outdoor elements
- Expand walking tours and pop-ups

Strategic Framework

Key Actions

Capacity

- Pursue grants and partnerships
- Advocate for increased staffing

Future Impact

What Success Looks Like

- Increased awareness and visitation
- Strong digital presence
- Diverse and engaged audiences
- Expanded partnerships across Oakville

"The Oakville Museum is Canada's Museum."

Thank you for your participation!

This Strategic Plan is driven by the people of Oakville. Your voice shapes our future.

Please scan the QR Code to leave your feedback.