

REPORT FOR ACTION

Strategic Plan - 2024 Key Results and Initiatives

Date: April 10, 2025
To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place
From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer
Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

Exhibition Place's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan has reached its halfway mark. This report highlights the key achievements of the third year, 2024.

In 2024, Exhibition Place hosted 2029 events driven by growth in tenanted business, attracting over 5.5 million attendees, including community use. To support this volume of events and guests, staff worked diligently on initiatives that enhanced the organization and aligned with our six strategic goals: Exceed Client and Visitor Expectations, Promote Site Animation 365-days a Year, Solidify Position as a Leading Convention and Event Space, Enhance Brand Identity and Promotion, Invest in our People and Culture, and Ensure Competitively Priced Services and Sustainable Operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no negative financial implications to this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan establishes a framework to guide the decision-making of the Exhibition Place Board of Governors, management, and staff toward our long-term goals and vision.

At its meeting on February 19, 2021, the Board received a report that outlined the recent Request for Proposal evaluation process and an award to enter into a consulting agreement with Optimus SBR for the provision of facilitator services for the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 for Exhibition Place.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EP16.11>

At its meeting on September 28, 2021, the Board received an update report and presentation by Jesse Burns, Senior Manager, Optimus SBR, on the Exhibition Place 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Update.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EP19.7>

At its meeting on June 9, 2022, the Board approved the draft 2022-2026 Strategic Plan as outlined in the report from the Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place on May 26, 2022.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EP24.12>

At its meeting on April 5, 2023, the Board received an update on year one of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan as outlined in the report from the Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place on March 21, 2023.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EP3.10>

At its meeting on April 25, 2024, the Board received an update on year two of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan as outlined in the report from the Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place on April 11, 2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EP9.13>

COMMENTS

As Canada's premier destination for conventions, exhibitions, events, and entertainment, our success relies not only on our achievements but also on how we uphold our values—collaboration, innovation, integrity, inclusivity, and accountability throughout the process. Guided by the principle of continuous improvement, this alignment fosters a culture that empowers staff to shape and realize their objectives and initiatives. This section highlights key results from the Strategic Plan in 2024.

Exhibition Place: A Driver for Toronto's Economy

One of the priorities in the strategic plan was to assess the positive economic impact of the various business activities at Exhibition Place on the city. To achieve this, an external business analysis consultant, HLT Advisory, was engaged to conduct an economic impact study using Destination International's Event Impact Calculator. Unlike previous studies that relied solely on data from anchor events facilitated by Exhibition Place, this assessment included all business activities, especially those of tenants. The study revealed that in 2023, Exhibition Place generated an economic impact of \$594.5 million, contributed \$80.6 million in tax revenue, and supported 3,726 jobs.

Fostering a People-Centric Workplace Culture

At Exhibition Place, we recognize that we cannot achieve results in today's ever-changing and unpredictable environment without our employees and teams effectively adapting and collaborating to meet the needs of clients and visitors. Our approach to attaining this end is a framework that is focused on building a people-centric culture and is anchored by three fundamental pillars: a) ongoing training on organizational systems, policies, plans, procedures and skill development; b) aligning and celebrating our values within work performance; and c) emphasizing and implementing strategies for engagement and human connection. Critical importance was gauging the organizational key results in tandem with applying the cultural pillars, with attention to the cooperative and collegial nature of how work is completed.

Moreover, acknowledging the significance of mental health, we have made considerable investments in staff well-being through our new employee assistance provider, Telus Health. This online platform offers staff various resources, including counselling, wellness programs, financial planning, and family support. With an inclusive and innovative approach, these services are available through virtual, in-person, or self-directed methods, ensuring flexibility and accessibility for our staff.

What follows is more than just a workplace; it is a community that purposefully views individuals as people rather than mere workers, bound together by human connection. This investment in our people has led to a significant reduction in sick days, decreasing from an average of 4.1 days in 2023 to 3.4 days in 2024. This figure is significantly lower than the average of 8.3 days reported by Statistics Canada for Toronto.

Advancing Sustainability Leadership

The Strategic Plan's focus on sustainability reflects a commitment to environmental and social sustainability practices. In 2024, we launched the Roadmap to Net Zero Carbon, reinforcing our industry leadership in sustainability. As potential clients assess venues based on their sustainability commitments and dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the Sales and Marketing team has created resources to showcase our efforts in these areas as a socially conscious value proposition for prospective clients and industry leaders.

The Operations team has integrated new transportation alternatives that promote sustainability. For instance, a successful initiative in 2024 was a partnership with York University to test the new SARIT (Safe, Affordable, Reliable, Innovative Transit) Micro Electric Vehicles. This initiative has further electrified our fleet, which now comprises 42% green vehicles, providing staff with more eco-friendly options for maintaining the grounds.

Recent upgrades made by Capital staff at the Enercare Centre have reduced energy consumption and advanced our net-zero carbon goal. The installation of 50,000 square feet of new white membrane roofing on the lower sections is expected to decrease energy costs by 10–15%. Furthermore, installing a new cooling tower has yielded \$15,000 in annual energy savings.

Moreover, Exhibition Place has expanded its existing electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure by doubling the number of charging stations available to visitors to encourage sustainable choices.

Promoting Site Animation Throughout the Grounds

From a community perspective, the most notable pursuit in 2024 was the support and encouragement of community partnerships that activate the grounds. The Board approved the Partnership Policy in 2024, which was subsequently integrated into the community activation planning process for that year. This initiative allowed Exhibition Place to facilitate seven community partnership activations, further enhancing site animation. Notably, this fall, Exhibition Place partnered with the Bentway, TTC, and local artist Jessica Thalmann to showcase a temporary public art installation titled "Resurfacing." The installation was situated along Manitoba Drive, a major transit point that welcomes visitors to the grounds.

Exhibition Place's historical and architectural significance laid the groundwork for new programming. An urban sketching workshop allowed participants to explore the unique architecture of our many heritage buildings through guided instruction. Additionally, a new tour highlighting the evolution of Exhibition Place was created in partnership with Toronto's Emerging Historian Program.

Building on the success of the spring and summer activations in 2023, Exhibition Place branded its community events under the "Your Yard Series" campaign, establishing a consistent brand identity across all social media platforms. Existing offerings continued to thrive, with Yoga in the Park experiencing a 50% increase in participation, while Beekeeping workshops operated at capacity for the second consecutive year. Staff members look forward to building on the programming success in 2024.

Attached as Appendix A is a summary of the Strategic Plan 2024 Key Results and Initiatives, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Strategic Plan - 2024 Key Results and Initiatives