

2027-2031 Strategic Plan Update

Date: September 29, 2026

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer

Wards: Ward 10 – Spadina – Fort York

SUMMARY

The current Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 ends in December. This report updates the Board on the development of the 2027-2031 Strategic Plan ("The Plan"). The Plan will outline key priorities and delivery objectives for the next five years at Exhibition Place.

Staff from Optimus SBR and Exhibition Place will present to the Board a summary of themes and insights from stakeholder engagement sessions held this past summer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts to this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Exhibition Place Board of Governors was established in 1983 pursuant to the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act and continues as a city board under Section 407 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006. The governance and management of Exhibition Place is subject to the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and a Relationship Framework between the City and Exhibition Place. As outlined in the Relationship Framework, the Board is responsible for adopting and approving a strategic plan for Exhibition Place.

At its meeting on May 26, 2022, the Board approved the Strategic Plan 2022-2026.
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ep/bgrd/backgroundfile-226475.pdf>

COMMENTS

Since 1999, the Board has maintained a Strategic Plan to guide Exhibition Place's priorities, decision-making, and long-term direction. The Relationship Framework with the City of Toronto also requires the Board to adopt and approve a strategic plan. Once the Board approves the Plan, staff implement its goals and objectives to achieve the intended outcomes.

The Plan will position Exhibition Place to respond to major developments on and around the grounds, including implementing the Board-adopted Exhibition Place - Vision Plan and Concept Scenario, the Ontario Place Redevelopment, new transit infrastructure, and Hotel X Phase 2 development.

Consultant Selection and Background

On April 13, 2026, Exhibition Place issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to enter into an agreement with a proponent to facilitate and lead its strategic planning process.

The RFP closed on April 30, 2026, with five proposals received. A staff evaluation team scored the responses in accordance with the evaluation criteria and requirements set out in the RFP. The evaluation considered the proponent's qualifications, references, and experience with similar projects; the proponent's demonstrated understanding of the project scope of work; and the qualifications and experience of the proponent's project manager and team in designing strategic planning exercises. Based on the evaluation results, the team concluded that Optimus achieved the highest overall score and recommended it as the successful proponent.

Optimus SBR is an Ontario-based, Canadian-owned consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, organizational transformation, and implementation. Founded in 2011, the firm has grown to more than 400 consulting professionals. It has extensive experience supporting public-sector organizations, municipalities, and cultural and destination-based organizations, including Ontario Creates and the City of Toronto's History Museums. It previously led the development of Exhibition Place's 2022–2026 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Development and Engagement

To support the development of the Plan, Optimus SBR was provided with a range of background studies, including previous strategic plans, the Master Plan Phase 1 Proposals Report, the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment, and the recently Board-endorsed Exhibition Place Vision and Concept Plan. These materials provided the firm with a strong understanding of the organization's mandate, operations, and planning environment.

Throughout the engagement process, Optimus SBR, with support from Exhibition Place staff, consulted a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that diverse perspectives were reflected in the development of the Strategic Plan.

Between July and August, Optimus SBR held stakeholder sessions with the community, tenants, show clients, event organizers, the Board, and staff from the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario. These conversations explored stakeholders' perspectives on Exhibition Place's strengths, challenges, emerging opportunities, future priorities, and the organization's role in supporting the event, convention, and trade show business, as well as community, cultural, and planning objectives.

Further, staff from across departments and at all levels of the organization were invited to share their perspectives on organizational culture, service delivery, operational priorities, future opportunities, and areas for improvement. Engagement methods included three focus group sessions with staff, an organization-wide survey, and meetings with the Leadership Team.

Following the stakeholder engagement sessions, Optimus consolidated the feedback into key themes to assess the current issues and opportunities facing Exhibition Place. The feedback was organized into the following themes:

- Identity, Positioning and Destination Experience
- Access, Mobility and Connectivity
- Infrastructure, Technology and Site Modernization
- Events, Clients and Commercial Growth
- Year-Round Activation, Community and Public Value
- Partnerships, Governance and Destination Integration
- Organizational Capacity and Transition Management

As part of the agenda for the October 14, 2026, Board meeting, Optimus SBR will facilitate a 45-minute presentation. The presentation will provide Board members with a high-level overview of the key themes that emerged from the consultation process and an opportunity to provide feedback on these findings.

A final draft of the Strategic Plan will be brought to the Board at its December 17, 2026, meeting for approval.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - 2027-2031 Strategic Plan Update Presentation