

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Strategic Planning Consultancy

Issued By: Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (Royal MTC)

Issue Date: October 17, 2025

Submission Deadline: November 1, 2025

Anticipated Selection: November 10, 2025

1. Introduction

Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (Royal MTC) invites proposals from qualified consultants to lead a **comprehensive update of our Strategic Plan**. Our current plan was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic and requires a refreshed vision to address new realities and opportunities for Manitoba's largest professional theatre.

This RFP seeks a consultant or consulting team with experience in non-profit arts and culture organizations, demonstrated skill in strategic and tactical planning facilitation, and the ability to incorporate meaningful Indigenous and community engagement throughout the process. The process will also include a brand refresh component to ensure alignment between Royal MTC's strategic vision and its public identity.

2. Background

Royal MTC exists to celebrate the widest spectrum of theatre art. Deeply rooted in Manitoba, and proudly located on Treaty 1 territory, our organization aspires to reflect and engage the community through the stories we tell and the way we work. MTC is located in the heart of Winnipeg, Manitoba, in the historic Exchange District. Our building is a national historic site, renowned for its brutalist architecture. MTC is in its 69th year of operation.

In this update, we seek to:

- Reaffirm our mission, vision, and values.
- Set clear strategic priorities for the next 5+ years.
- Integrate principles of reconciliation and Indigenous engagement authentically into our planning and future operations.

- Launch the early stages of a brand refresh process, ensuring that our public-facing identity reflects our renewed mission, vision, values, and community connections.
 - Provide the precursor to a robust capital plan and campaign for Royal MTC, identifying key programmatic areas for future development and their capital needs.
 - Within our strategic priorities, address organizational precarity, HR career paths & succession planning, MTC’s relationship to Winnipeg Fringe Festival, and organizational culture.
 - Provide frameworks (Objectives and Key Results – OKRs) that will guide future tactical planning, and work with the senior leadership team to develop a framework and first year of the annual tactical plan.
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3. Scope of Work

The selected consultant will:

1. Strategic Planning Design & Facilitation

- Working with the planning committee, plan and facilitate an inclusive strategic planning process with the Board, senior staff, and other key stakeholders.
- Facilitate both large and small group workshops.
- Incorporate authentic Indigenous engagement (in collaboration with a separate Indigenous Engagement Consultant as required).
- Lead meaningful community consultation as determined with the planning committee, board & management team.

2. Review & Analysis

- Review existing strategic documents, “blue sky” ideas, the Fringe operational agreement, and related materials.
- Utilize qualitative analysis tools, including AI or other tools, to summarize and present this information concisely for planning discussions.
- Ensure that topics raised move forward out of the planning process.

3. Strategic Plan Development

- Deliver a revised Strategic Plan that includes:
 - Updated mission, vision, and values.

- Strategic priorities supported by measurable **Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)**.
- Recommendations for succession planning, staff retention, and HR resilience.
- Integration with brand refresh, Fringe operational considerations, and future capital revitalization projects.

4. Tactical Plan Framework

- Provide tools and processes that enable the senior leadership team to translate the strategic plan and its OKRs into a detailed tactical plan for Board approval.
- Support the creation of the first annual tactical plan with senior leadership.

5. Brand Refresh Insights

- Collate feedback from the Board, leadership team and other community stakeholders, to define the scope of a future brand refresh.
- Identify alignment between Royal MTC’s strategic mission, vision, values, and its public identity.
- Draft a preliminary brand refresh framework that includes key insights, clear positioning recommendations that articulate how Royal MTC should be perceived in its various communities, and articulate messaging foundations to guide future brand and marketing work.

4. Required Qualifications

Proposals should demonstrate:

- Proven experience facilitating strategic planning for non-profit arts or cultural organizations.
- Strong skills in workshop design, facilitation of group discussions, and consensus building.
- Experience working with Boards of Directors and senior leadership teams.
- Familiarity with brand refresh or brand identity development processes for cultural organizations.
- Understanding of Indigenous engagement best practices and cultural protocols; ability to collaborate with an Indigenous Engagement Consultant as needed.

- Familiarity with OKR development and implementation.
 - Knowledge of HR planning, succession strategies, and staff retention approaches in a creative environment.
 - Familiarity with the arts & cultural ecosystem and the challenges facing the sector, as well as the local context (area challenges, and opportunities).
 - Able to identify and engage sub-contractors to bolster skillset of the lead facilitator, if required.
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5. Deliverables

The final deliverables will include:

- A detailed work plan with timeline and engagement milestones.
 - Stakeholder engagement summary report.
 - A draft and final Strategic Plan document that includes defined OKRs aligned with strategic goals.
 - A framework to support the senior leadership team in developing the tactical plan.
 - A set of preliminary brand refresh insights, including key findings, positioning recommendations, and messaging foundations.
 - Presentation of the Strategic Plan to the Board of Directors for final approval.
 - Support materials for the tactical planning phase.
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6. Timeline

- **RFP Issued:** October 17, 2025
- **Deadline for Questions:** October 28, 2025
- **Proposal Submission Deadline:** November 1, 2025
- **Selection & Notification:** November 10, 2025
- **Planning Process Begins:** In-person facilitated conversations with committee, board & management, ideally on November 21 & 22, 2025 or on another mutually agreeable date.
- **Community Consultations:** December 2025 through February 2026 (approx.)

- **Plan Development Workshop:** March 2026 (approx.)
 - **Draft Plan Delivered:** April 2026 (approx.)
 - **Final Plan Approval:** September 21, 2026 (board meeting before the AGM)
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7. Budget

The total project budget for phase one (strategic planning facilitation and initial brand refresh framework) should not exceed **\$25,000 CAD (excluding GST)**. This includes all fees, travel, preparation, and facilitation costs.

8. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

- **Cover Letter:** Brief introduction and understanding of the project.
 - **Approach & Work Plan:** Outline of proposed methodology, engagement strategy, timeline, and deliverables, including OKRs and brand refresh.
 - **Team & Experience:** Bios of key consultant(s) and relevant experience, particularly in arts, culture, strategic planning, Indigenous engagement, brand development, and non-profit governance. MTC is willing consider a firm subcontracting portions of the engagement; please demonstrate how each area of the scope will be supported within your team or with sub-contractors.
 - **Relevant Examples:** Summaries of at least three comparable projects (preferably including strategic plans and/or brand refreshes for cultural organizations).
 - **Fee Structure:** Detailed budget including fees, expenses, and payment schedule.
 - **References:** Minimum of two references for similar work.
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9. Submission Details

Proposals must be submitted electronically (PDF format preferred) to:

Evan Klassen, Executive Director

Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

eklassen@royalmtc.ca

Subject line: *RFP – Strategic Planning Consultant*

10. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance and strength of experience (25%)
- Quality and feasibility of the approach and methodology (25%)
- Demonstrated understanding of Indigenous engagement needs (15%)
- Proposed budget and value for money (15%)
- Ability to move planning outcomes towards a future brand refresh (10%)
- References and past performance (10%)

Royal MTC reserves the right to request interviews with shortlisted proponents before final selection.

11. Additional Information

Royal MTC reserves the right to not award this contract, to negotiate scope and budget, or to award all or part of the work to more than one consultant if it is in the best interests of the organization.

We thank all respondents for their interest in working with Royal MTC.