

2026-2031

STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN



Our Story so Far



MTC was never just a building. It was an idea: that **theatre should belong to the people of Manitoba.**

When the Winnipeg Little Theatre and Theatre 77 merged to form the Manitoba

Theatre Centre in 1958, founders John Hirsch and Tom Hendry set out to create great theatre with broad appeal: ambitious, welcoming and rooted in this place. Classics, Broadway hits and new Canadian work shared the stage, while the creation

of a second stage for experimental work in 1960 and a provincial tour in 1961 expanded the idea of what a theatre centre could be and whom it could serve.

That idea was bold and transformative. Great art did not have to be imported from elsewhere or held at a distance. Theatre could be made here, in Manitoba, for Manitobans. MTC became a place to be entertained, inspired and changed. Its success helped create a network of regional theatres across North America and established MTC as a leader in the development of professional theatre in Canada.

Over the decades, that original vision continued to grow. The Warehouse opened in 1969, followed by the Mainstage in 1970. The theatres were renamed for Hirsch and Hendry in 2008, the Mainstage was designated a National Historic Site in 2009, and in 2010 the company received its royal designation from Queen Elizabeth II.

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Today, MTC carries that spirit forward through work on our stages and throughout our community: producing theatre across two venues, touring across Manitoba, supporting artists and new work, creating opportunities for young people, and bringing audiences together through the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival and Pimootayowin: A Festival of New Work.

More than 65 years after MTC was founded, the idea at its heart remains both simple and ambitious: Manitoba deserves a theatre of its own. As we look to the future, we are building

on that legacy by deepening our relationships with artists and communities, developing new voices and new Canadian work, creating more ways for people to participate in theatre, and ensuring that MTC continues to reflect the province it serves.

The next chapter is not about leaving our founding vision behind. It is about realizing it more fully: a theatre that is excellent and popular, ambitious and welcoming, rooted in Manitoba and open to the world. A theatre that belongs to everyone.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

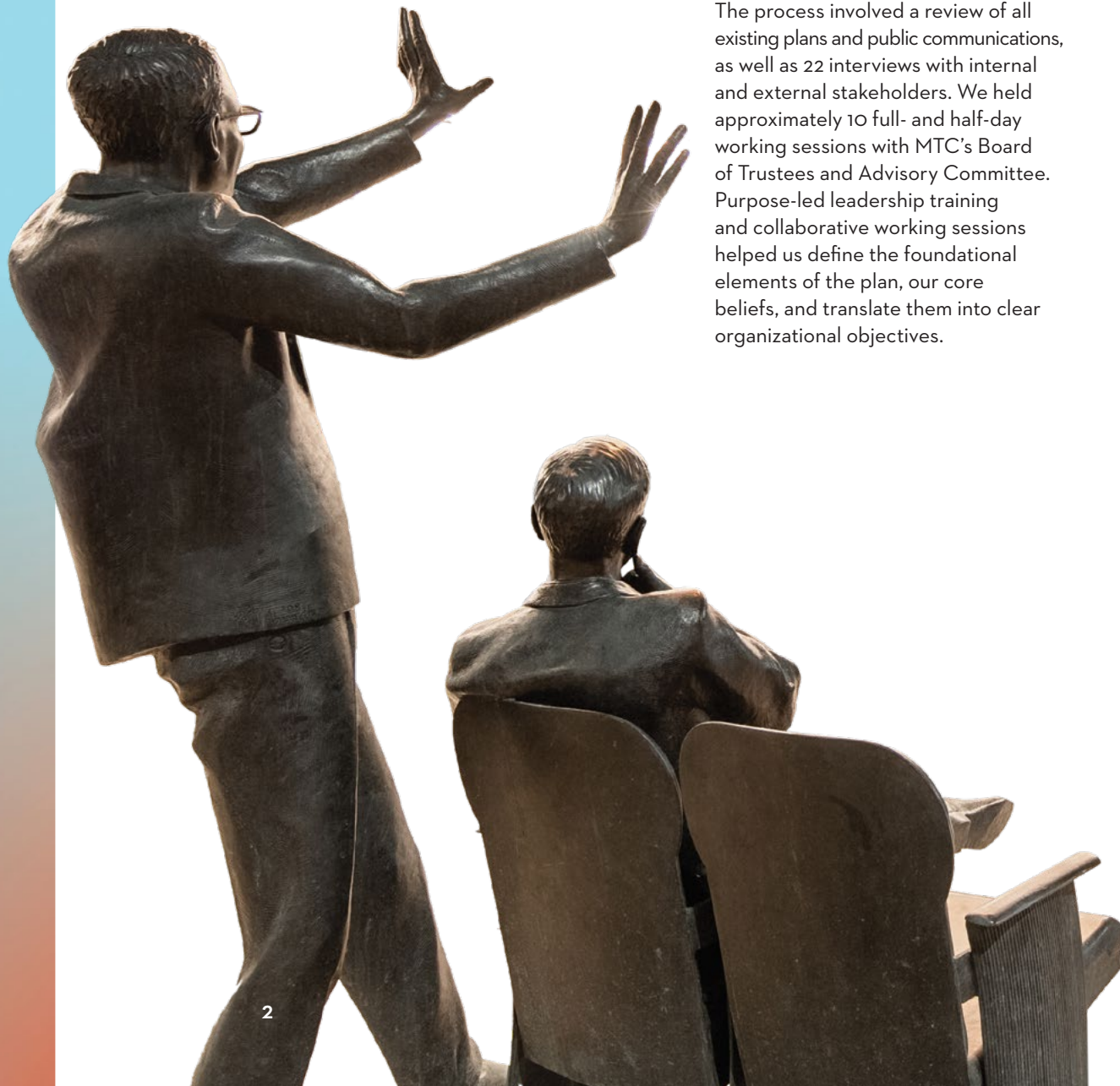
Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Inninewak, Anishinewak, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Setting the Scene

OUR PLANNING PROCESS

MTC's strategic plan was built through listening, reflection, and collaboration, grounded in an understanding of where we are today and a shared ambition for where we can go next.

The process involved a review of all existing plans and public communications, as well as 22 interviews with internal and external stakeholders. We held approximately 10 full- and half-day working sessions with MTC's Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee. Purpose-led leadership training and collaborative working sessions helped us define the foundational elements of the plan, our core beliefs, and translate them into clear organizational objectives.



WHAT WE HEARD

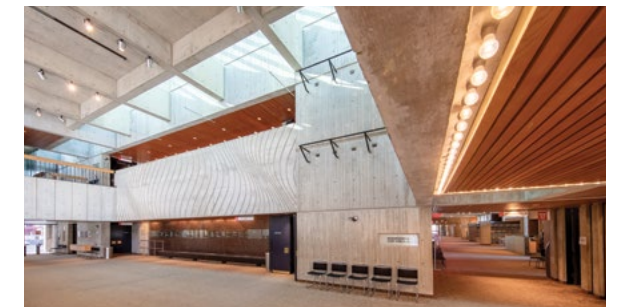
Our stakeholder conversations reflected a wide range of perspectives, and several themes emerged consistently – helping shape the priorities in this plan.

Stakeholders see **MTC as a civic and cultural anchor**, and highlighted an opportunity to more widely share and celebrate our broader contribution to Manitoba – as an employer, training ground, home for Canadian and Indigenous stories, tourism attraction and a key player in the downtown vibrancy and revitalization.

They encouraged us **to be ambitious while bringing our community with us**. Long-time patrons, subscribers, donors, board members and volunteers care deeply about MTC and want to remain part of its evolution. **Artistic excellence must remain at the heart of what we do**, complemented by a patron experience that matches the quality of the work on our stages – from parking and accessibility to hospitality and the animation of our public spaces.

The Pimootayowin Creators Circle emerged as **vital in advancing reconciliation**, deepening Indigenous artistic leadership, developing new work and strengthening the ecosystem for Indigenous artists. Stakeholders encouraged us to grow it thoughtfully, sustainably and with the resources and time required to realize its full potential.

We also heard that **accessible pathways into MTC matter**. School programs, affordable tickets, volunteering, artist development and early exposure can create relationships that last a lifetime.



As Manitoba's largest theatre, MTC is also expected to lead – supporting artists, strengthening partnerships and contributing to a thriving provincial theatre ecosystem.

Finally, stakeholders support **an ambitious renewal of MTC's facilities**, provided it is thoughtful, collaborative and connected to a broader civic vision. And they reminded us that ambition requires capacity: clear priorities, strong internal alignment and the people, resources and systems to deliver them well.

Together, these insights reinforced a clear direction: build on what Manitobans already love about MTC while creating a more welcoming, ambitious, connected and resilient theatre for the future.



Our Belief System

We are Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (MTC), a theatre for all Manitobans.

We believe theatre brings people together, creates belonging, inspires bold ideas, and strengthens our communities by shaping our collective identity.

WE BELIEVE ...

Theatre is a vital part of a healthy society.

It is a home for inspiration, joy and entertainment – a place where people gather, reflect and build connection with each other.

MTC exists for all Manitobans – rooted in this place, and responsible to it.

Generations of audiences have sustained this theatre – shaping it into what it is today and what it can be in the future. Expanding who feels at home in our spaces is ongoing work that we choose and are compelled to do.

Theatre creates belonging.

Gathering around live storytelling is a transformative experience. It begins with welcome, grows through participation, and flourishes in a shared sense of belonging.

Theatre must be reflective, brave and inspiring.

Our founding principle was to produce great theatre with mass appeal. We meet this challenge by programming boldly – balancing an eclectic array of work aimed at capturing the imagination of our audience while shaping an important cultural conversation.

Manitoba's future is shaped by the artists & audiences we cultivate today.

By nurturing Manitoba artists and fostering meaningful connections between people and the arts, we build stronger communities, inspire curiosity, and seed a more creative and connected future for a vibrant Manitoba.

Excellence is a form of respect.

We pursue the highest standards in everything we do because excellence honours our artists, enriches our audiences, strengthens our teams, and serves the stories we tell.

Stories build empathy and shape our collective identity.

Theatre deepens understanding between people and communities. Through shared stories we explore who we are, what we believe is possible, and the kind of world we want to live in. As MTC's founding GM Tom Hendry said, theatre should give a place "an image of its soul."

OUR PURPOSE

We exist to hold an open door to all Manitobans, to share stories that connect us to each other and to our world.

OUR VISION

To create a world shaped by the most fantastic possibilities of our imaginations.

OUR AMBITION

To be Canada's preeminent regional theatre, unmistakably Manitoban, nationally significant and extraordinary in everything we do.

OUR OBJECTIVES FOR 2026-2031

- 1 -

**A vibrant home.
An open door.**

We are a vibrant and welcoming home for all Manitobans.

- 2 -

**Ambitious work.
Local talent.
Global reach.**

We produce ambitious, well-resourced programming that reflects Manitoba, cultivates its talent and reaches the world.

- 3 -

**Building on our promise.
The next act
for our campus.**

Our transformational campus redevelopment is positioning us for the next 60 years.

- 4 -

**Strong today.
Ready for tomorrow.**

We are financially resilient and sustainable.

- 5 -

**Exceptional people.
Inspired work.
Enduring impact.**

We are a future-ready organization that attracts and retains world-class talent and inspires them to do their best work.



1

A vibrant
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We are a vibrant and
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all Manitobans.

MTC has always been more than what happens on our stages. At its best, it is a place of gathering and belonging – a cultural home where people come together to share stories, discover something new and feel part of a community. Our opportunity is to make that sense of connection even stronger: to welcome more Manitobans, to create more reasons to engage with us, and to make every interaction feel thoughtful, vibrant and distinct. By opening our doors wider and creating experiences that extend beyond the performance itself, we can deepen lifelong relationships with our audiences and ensure MTC remains a place that every Manitoban feels is truly theirs.

What success looks like

- **Our theatres are welcoming and vibrant, making every visit memorable.**
- **There is always something happening at the theatre,** with a year-round campus activation plan creating more “bright nights” and reasons to gather beyond our performances, actively contributing to the health and vitality of our neighbourhood.
- **We reach more Manitobans,** growing our connection with households and communities across the province each year.
- **MTC and the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival** are brands that people love, trust and enthusiastically recommend.
- **More people discover live theatre through the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival,** growing and diversifying its audience while creating lasting connections to live theatre.
- **Every production offers opportunities to go deeper,** with enrichment and engagement activities that help audiences connect with the artists, stories and ideas on our stages.

2

Ambitious work. Local talent. Global reach.

We produce ambitious, well-resourced programming that reflects Manitoba, cultivates its talent and reaches the world.

Great theatre requires more than ambition – it requires the talent, time and resources to bring bold ideas and exceptional productions to life. MTC can build on Manitoba's extraordinary creative community by creating a place where artists grow, take risks and make exceptional work. We will nurture uniquely Manitoban and Indigenous stories, strengthen pathways for artists to build meaningful careers, and help new work find audiences beyond our stages. In doing so, MTC can strengthen Manitoba's creative ecosystem and create theatre that resonates at home and around the world.

What success looks like

- **Our productions have the resources to match our artistic ambition**, with annual programming budgets growing by approximately 40% over five years.
- **More new work begins here and goes on to a life beyond our stages**, reaching new audiences and future productions.
- **The Pimootayowin Creators Circle is positioned to thrive**, with established leadership, program direction, and sustainable funding.
- **We cultivate talent in our sector** with increased investment in our existing artist and artisan development programs.
- We will establish **a new Artist Fellowship program** that creates meaningful pathways to develop artistic careers.

3

Building on our promise. The next act for our campus.

Our transformational campus redevelopment is positioning us for the next 60 years.

For more than 60 years, MTC's stages have brought Manitobans together. The John Hirsch Mainstage, which opened in 1970, gave MTC a home, but not the whole home its founders imagined. The rehearsal, education, training and gathering spaces intended to sit alongside the Mainstage were never built. For decades, MTC has done extraordinary work inside an incomplete version of its own promise.

Now, we have an opportunity to reimagine the campus for the next generation. Our four-phase capital plan will transform MTC through accessibility improvements, a new adjoining building that realizes the original campus plan, and the renewal of both the John Hirsch Mainstage and the Tom Hendry Warehouse. Together, these investments will give MTC the spaces needed to meet our ambitions for the future.

What success looks like

- A visit begins with greater ease, including **improved parking options** for patrons.
- We welcome more people than ever, with **vital accessibility improvements** complete.
- The original vision for our campus moves closer to completion, with a capital campaign launched for a **transformative new building and expanded campus**.
- **Our John Hirsch Mainstage is positioned for its next generation**, with a comprehensive renewal plan in place.
- **The Tom Hendry Warehouse capital renewal plan is set**, to create a new home for the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, the Pimootayowin Creators Circle and our independent artistic community.



4

Strong today.
Ready for
tomorrow.

We are financially
resilient and sustainable.

Artistic ambition needs a strong financial foundation. For MTC to take creative risks, invest in artists, welcome more Manitobans and build for the future, we must have the resilience to think beyond the next season. That means strengthening and diversifying the ways our work is supported, deepening relationships with audiences and donors, and building resources that provide stability over the long term. With a more sustainable financial model, MTC can navigate uncertainty with confidence, seize new opportunities and ensure that extraordinary theatre continues to thrive in Manitoba for generations.

What success looks like

- We have the **financial freedom to pursue our ambition**, supported by a balanced mix of ticket sales, public funding, philanthropy, endowment income and new revenue streams.
- We have a **growing community of donors** supporting MTC with annual philanthropy and transformational gifts.
- A larger audience makes us a regular part of their year, **growing our subscriber base by 40%** to ensure an even stronger foundation for our organization.
- Our **endowment grows by more than 35%**, creating greater stability and the freedom to invest in MTC's artistic future for generations.
- **Strong financial systems give us confidence to act**, helping us make timely, informed decisions and invest where it matters most.

5

Exceptional people. Inspired work. Enduring impact.

We are a future-ready organization that attracts and retains world-class talent and inspires them to do their best work.



Behind every extraordinary experience at MTC are the many people who bring their talent, imagination and commitment to making it possible. To attract and inspire exceptional people, we need to create an organization where they can do the best work of their careers – united by a shared sense of purpose and supported by a culture that is inclusive, thoughtful and ready to evolve. By investing in our people, embracing new ways of working and ensuring our practices reflect our values, we can build an MTC where employees, artists and volunteers feel they belong, have what they need to thrive, and are excited to shape what comes next.

What success looks like

- **Our staff, artists, volunteers, and board members** are connected by a shared purpose and vision for the future.
- **MTC is a place where people want to contribute and belong**, and engagement among employees, artists and volunteers is continually improving.
- **We embrace technology** that expands what's possible, helping our people create, connect and work smarter while using it thoughtfully and responsibly.
- **We put our values into practice**, embedding reconciliation, environmental responsibility, accessibility and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) as core elements in how we work, make decisions and shape our future.

STORIES ARE VITAL.



Stories are vital. They are how we **see ourselves more clearly** and encounter one another more honestly.

When shared openly, they **build trust and connection** – not by smoothing over differences, but by asking us to sit with them.

This is why theatre matters.

And this is why it matters now.

By fostering meaningful connections between people and the arts, **we build stronger communities**, inspire curiosity, and seed a more creative and connected future for a vibrant Manitoba.

MTC exists **to hold an open door to all Manitobans** to share stories that connect us to each other and to our world.

We were **built for everyone**. A theatre for the people at the **heart of the continent** – at a confluence where stories have been told, simply and powerfully, for generations.

Our theatre is like a lantern – a light that draws people in, and shines outwards again. From this meeting place, **stories have rippled across communities** for more than half a century, shaping how we see ourselves and expanding what we believe is possible together.

Like prairie grasses, we are rooted in this place – in its creativity and resilience, and in the realities of its past and present. Our history shapes how we choose stories, how we bring them to life, and how we share them.

We set **bold expectations** – not as prestige, but as a standard we hold ourselves to. Because the stories deserve it. Because the artists deserve it. Because the audiences deserve it.

We aspire to be **Canada's preeminent regional theatre**, unmistakably Manitoban, nationally significant, and extraordinary in everything we do.

We envision a world shaped by **the most fantastic possibilities of our imaginations**. Where stories move freely between people, places, and stages. And where our theatres are filled with **joy, laughter** and **entertainment**, with **bold ideas** and **unforgettable moments** that you return to again, and again.

If you believe stories matter, if you believe people matter, then **this place belongs to you.**

**Come in.
Stay awhile.**



Our history gives us
permission to be bold.
Our responsibility
to the future requires it.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover

Jill Agopsowicz and Daniel Briere in *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*. Set Designer Brian Perchaluk, Costume Designer Joseph Abetria, Lighting Designer Hugh Conacher. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

Inside Front Cover

John Hirsch & Tom Hendry, photo supplied by MTC Archives

John Hirsch Mainstage and Tom Hendry Warehouse by Jerry Grajewski

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Evan Klassen & Kelly Thornton, photo by Jerry Grajewski

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Statues, photo by Royal MTC

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Mainstage interior and Warehouse exterior by Jerry Grajewski

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Kelsey Kanatan Wavey, Jeremy Proulx, Kathleen MacLean, Emily Solstice Tait in *The Secret to Good Tea*. Set Designer: Lauchlin Johnston. Costume Designer: Yolonda Skelton. Lighting Designer: Hugh Conacher. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

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Jordan Pettie, Alex Poch Goldin, Ari Cohen in *The Lehman Trilogy*. Set & Costume Designer Gillian Gallow, Lighting & Video Designer Hugh Conacher. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

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Photo by Royal MTC

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Beau Dixon, Petrina Bromley, Jesse Gervais, Derek Scott, Reena Jolly, Sharon Bajer in *Clue*, a co-production with the Grand Theatre. Set & Costume Designer: Brian Perchaluk. Lighting Designer: Kevin Lamotte. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

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Photo by Jerry Grajewski

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Melissa Langdon in *The Three Musketeers* directed by Christopher Brauer with fight direction by Rick Skene. Set Designer: Brian Perchaluk. Costume Designer: Michelle Bohn. Lighting Designer: Scott Henderson. Sound Designer & Composer: Daniel Roy. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

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Stephanie Sy and Elledyn Lount and the cast of *Waitress*. Set Designer Brian Perchaluk, Costume Designer Daina Leitold, Lighting Designer Bonnie Beecher. Photo by Dylan Hewlett

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Tess Benger in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Set Designer: Gillian Gallow, Costume Designer: Louise Bourret, Lighting Designer: Hugh Conacher. Photo by Emelia Hellman

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Davinder Malhi in *Life of Pi*, produced in partnership with Royal MTC and Citadel Theatre. Puppet Design & Fabrication by Puppet Stuff Canada, Set Designer Beyata Hackborn, Costume Designer Joseph Abetria, Lighting Designer April Viczko, Video Designer Corwin Ferguson. Photo by Nanc Price.

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