

Mayor Bowman, members of the Executive Policy Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Ernest Cholakis and I am here as Chair of the Winnipeg Art Gallery Board of Governors. With me are Stephen Borys, Director & CEO of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Barry Rempel, Chair of the Inuit Art Centre Capital Campaign.

We are here today to follow up on a process that started three years ago with a request to the City of Winnipeg to provide support to the Inuit Art Centre initiative.

We are also here to follow up on the letter of January 13, 2014 which confirmed a $75,000 grant to the Inuit Art Centre campaign from the 2014 City of Winnipeg Operating Budget.

That letter further advised that the balance of the request ($ 4,925,000) would be referred to the 2015 and 2016 Budget process.

So, we are pleased to be before you today to update you on the project and request your consideration for the balance of the WAG's request to be considered in these upcoming budgets.



As Mayor and Councillors, you are here because you want to make Winnipeg a better place to live, to work, to raise a family.

I am here, as a volunteer with the Winnipeg Art Gallery, for the same reasons.

I firmly believe that the Inuit Art Center initiative at the WAG is an important project for all Winnipeggers and will be a significant legacy for future generations.

It will enhance the quality of life for all Winnipeggers – making the city more dynamic, and a better place to live, work, play – and stay.

This is more than a 'typical' gallery or a building. The IAC project will create a centre of engagement, a forum for education and discussion.

It is a unique project the only one of its kind in the world and Winnipeg is the only place where this is possible. The Inuit Art Centre will become another international destination in the city.



I am thrilled and honoured to be a part of this project and am pleased to tell you the WAG is well positioned to take on this project. These are exciting times at the WAG:

- We have a strong team and great leadership.

- We are engaging younger and more diverse audiences, reaching more than 25,000 youth annually through programming such as school tours and art classes.

- Our social media engagement tops more than 1 million views on wag.ca and we have a strong Twitter following.

- Popular and relevant exhibitions such as the recent Dali/Beaverbrook exhibition, 100 Masters: Only in Canada and Norman Rockwell exhibits are leading to record audiences. The recent Dali/Beaverbrook exhibit brought in more than 4,000 people in the first 24 hours.

- We are experiencing strong community support, with many Winnipeggers engaged with the WAG for the first time. WAG membership now tops 5,000 and we are attracting increasing levels of support and sponsorships from the private sector.

The Inuit Art Centre initiative reaffirms the WAG's strong commitment to inclusion, and to being a community centre for all Winnipeggers.



The Winnipeg Art Gallery was the first civic art gallery in Canada, established in 1912 when a group of **visionary Winnipeg leaders**–businessmen, recognizing "the civilizing effects of art," – each contributed $200 to rent two rooms in the old Federal Building at the corner of Main and Water Streets and create the vibrant institution that exists today. Now 102 years old, the Winnipeg Art Gallery has grown from a small civic gallery to Canada's sixth largest gallery with an international reputation for excellence.

This reputation rests on many factors, but a large part rests on the WAG's collection and record of publication of Inuit art.

Inuit art is one of the symbols of Canada. It is one of the art forms that are synonymous with Canadian identity.

The WAG–partially due to its history and geography/location in the centre of North America and more specifically because of the vision of Ferdinand Eckhardt, the Gallery's dynamic leader in the 1950s– is home to the largest collection of contemporary Inuit art in the world.

With more than 13,000 pieces of Inuit art – including sculpture/carvings, tapestries, drawings, prints and more – this world-class collection makes up more than half of the WAG's permanent collection.

Through the years the collection has grown significantly in size, scope and importance, particularly through community support and donations. Yet due to a lack of space,



The visible vault is a key distinguishing feature.

The first of its kind in North America, it is visible to pedestrians and cars, putting the WAG's more than 7,500 carvings on display for the community to experience. Four classrooms (of students) can be accommodated around it.

The Inuit Art Centre will be a centre of engagement with Inuit and Indigenous art and peoples.



The Inuit Art Centre will expand economic opportunities through tourism, partnerships and associated development.

It will be a world-class destination, adding to the critical mass of attractions in the city which includes the Journey to Churchill and Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The WAG currently attracts 150,000 visitors annually. This is expected to increase dramatically with the Centre.

It will create jobs – through construction, training opportunities, and new positions that will contribute to an expanding knowledge economy.

It will secure Winnipeg's reputation as a cultural capital.



The WAG's Studio program will be located on the 2nd floor with purpose-built art education and art-making spaces.

Programming will be expanded to include Indigenous artists-in-residence and curator-in-residence opportunities and provides arts education in Indigenous art forms.

It will provide programming particularly for youth from across the City and educational opportunities for youth and adults. This includes research opportunities and partnerships with post-secondary institutions, attracting scholars from around the globe.

The Province of Manitoba sees the Inuit Art Centre as integral in educating all our youth about the North, a fact that was captured in a recent Memorandum of Understanding between the WAG and the Province of Manitoba.



The Gallery space is the largest space in North America dedicated to Inuit art.

It will present the art in cultural context and include space for video art and hands-on activities for families.



The Centre design is reflective of the vast Arctic landscape, a place where only one or two per cent of Canadians ever have the opportunity to visit.

By virtue of its location in the heart of the North American continent in Winnipeg, the Inuit Art Centre will be accessible to a wider community.

This “access to the North” will be a large tourism draw.

The Inuit Art Centre also opens up the possibility of a sister-city relationship with Iqaluit that we hope the City of Winnipeg will take advantage of.



The Contemporary Gallery will be a place for gathering, for celebrations and will feature First Nations and Métis art. With an unobstructed view of the Legislature.

Almost all of the new space is for the public, not for offices. Once exception is that it will also house the Manitoba Inuit Association offices.

New building has been designed and the project considered in a manner that provides operating efficiencies with existing WAG operations so the WAG will not be back to ask for an increase in operating support.



The Inuit Art Centre is a $60-million initiative.

Our private sector goal is $25 million.

We recognize the current fiscal challenges the City faces and are thrilled that the City has chosen to recognize the arts and culture sector as an economic driver by increasing its investment in this budget.

The City of Winnipeg's leadership is essential to making the Inuit Art Centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery a reality as it is a strong signal to federal, provincial and private sector support.

Given the impact and benefits of this legacy project on the City of Winnipeg, we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that this transformational project can be realized for the benefit of all Winnipeggers.

This process started three years ago and thank you for your support last year.

Thank you for considering this request for the Inuit Art Centre.