

Museum Transition FAQs

October 2025 – The Board of Directors and staff of MVCA recognize the significant impact that R. Tait McKenzie and James Naismith had on the national and international stage, and that they are well loved sons and a source of pride for the community of Mississippi Mills and Canada at large. We have managed these collections for many years with pride. The need to transition the museum to new ownership and management is not due to a lack of appreciation for the men, their contributions, or the need to preserve Canada's heritage.

Why is MVCA working to divest of the McKenzie & Naismith collections?

Museum operations are no longer part of MVCA's mandate and there is no sustainable funding model for MVCA to support museum operations at the Mill of Kintail CA beyond 2028.

When the museum was acquired and developed by MVCA in the 1970s, its did so largely with provincial and federal funds. Since then, most operating and capital costs have been assumed by the Authority, which is largely funded by its member municipalities.

Today, ~50% of the museum's revenues come from levies paid by the eleven municipalities within MVCA's jurisdiction. Board members from those municipalities and their municipal councils agreed to subsidize museum operations until the end of 2028. Beyond that, they have indicated that the museum will need to be a full-cost recovery operation.

What options were considered to date?

In 2019, a Committee was struck to examine the following options:

- Transfer the collection to another existing museum or other organization.
- MVCA retains the collection and the museum is supported by fundraising
- Transfer the collection to a new organization

Following public consultation, in 2021 MVCA's Board approved the Committee's recommendation to keep the collection at the MOK under MVCA's control. That decision was made on the understanding that stakeholders would support MVCA in fundraising and securing sustained financial support from upper tier governments and others.

What fundraising efforts were made?

In 2022, a Board member from the Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation agreed to chair a subcommittee to focus on museum fundraising. Ads were placed and calls made to solicit members to sit on the committee, however, no one stepped forward to help with this effort and the Foundation abandoned this approach.

Despite this, a targeted campaign was held in 2022-23 to support replacement of the museum roof. Approximately \$10,000 was raised over 5 months. The capital cost of the replacement was over \$42,000.

The Foundation also held a 50/50 campaign at the Mill of Kintail during the 50th Anniversary event that netted ~\$300.

Throughout this period, the Foundation and MVCA used social media and its seasonal fundraising campaign to promote the museum and seek donations. An average of \$4,650/year has been donated to the museum since 2019. The annual operational funding gap projected for 2029 is in the order of \$50,000/year.

What organizations were contacted for support?

MVCA reached out to various organizations regarding opportunities to loan exhibits to increase foot traffic, assume management of the collection, provide operational funding, and obtain donations and grants. Organizations contacted included but were not limited to:

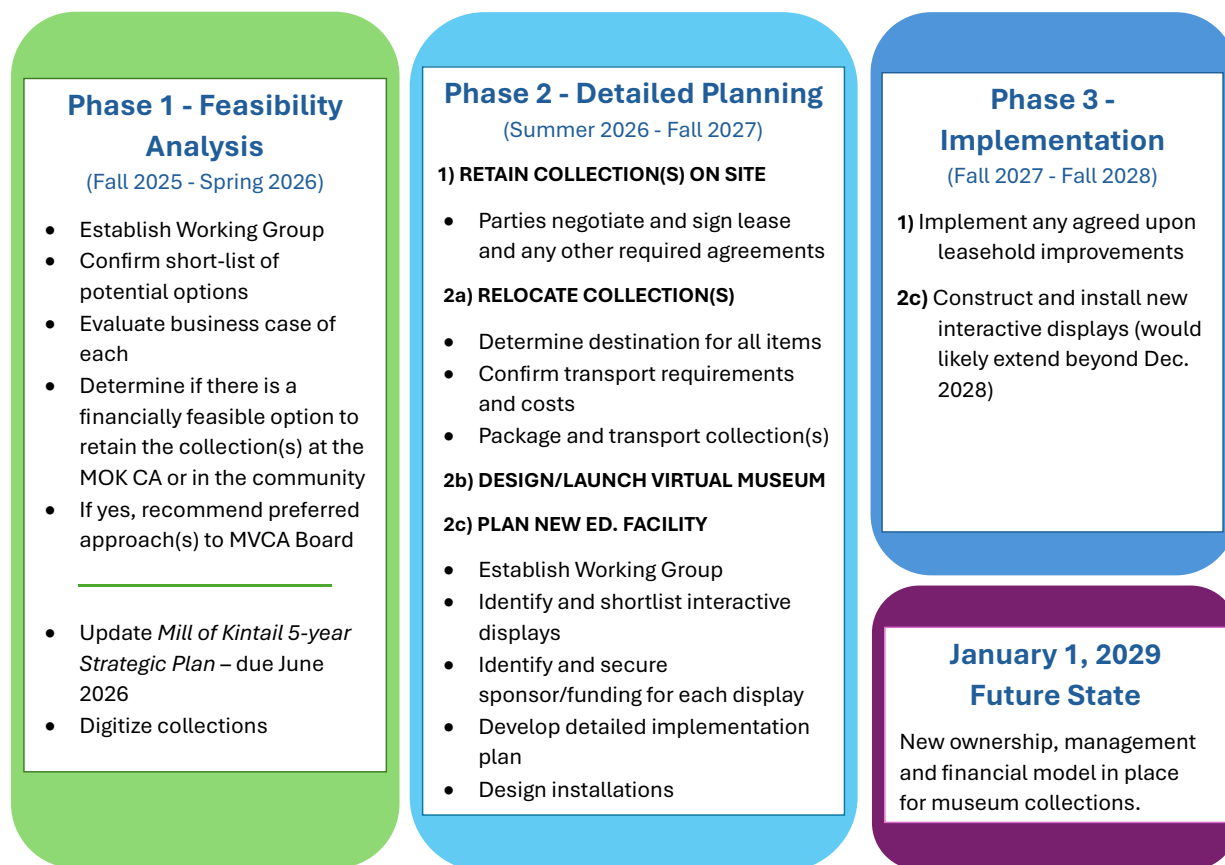
- NBA Canada
- National Capital Commission (NCC)
- Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT)
- Canada Heritage
- Walk of Fame

In 2024, NBA Canada loaned the Authority a statue celebrating the first-ever WNBA game hosted in Canada and funded its transport. NBA Canada does not provide sustained operational funding support. The NCC does not operate museums and does not provide grants to museums. Ontario Heritage Trust requires an endowment to accompany the assumption of any new collections and facilities. Canada Heritage offers several grants but not to support base operations, and is not mandated to assume this museum. In 2023, Canada's Walk of Fame provided a \$10,000 gift to the Naismith Family who turned it over to MVCA for the museum.

Most recently, MVCA requested the Municipality of Mississippi Mills to consider increasing funding for the museum, and/or assuming the collection; and reached out to the Mississippi Mills Textile Museum to solicit an expression of interest as we had received notice that they were considering this option.

What is the Transition Plan?

MVCA's Board has approved a Transition Plan that provides time for staff to work with the community to determine if there is a financially sustainable option to retain the McKenzie and Naismith collections at the Mill of Kintail.



A [Working Group](#) made up of community representatives and museum experts is being formed to conduct the feasibility analysis and table its findings to MVCA's Board of Directors by June 2026. This will allow sufficient time to implement whatever decision the Board makes by the end of 2028.

A third-party facilitator will be retained to guide meetings and activities of the Working Group. Bev Holmes, Mississippi Mills councillor and MVCA board member has been appointed to sit on the Working Group.

Isn't the R. Tait McKenzie collection tied to the property?

This question was raised by the community in 2019 and MVCA submitted [historical documents](#) to the provincial court to make a determination on the matter. The [Superior Court decision](#) issued December 2020 states that MVCA:

“is the absolute owner of the art and artefacts gifted by the Respondents and, as such, may retain or dispose of these items as may be required in order to comply with the *Conservation Authorities Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.27, and amendments thereto or to comply with any other statute, by-law or directive of the Province of Ontario or of the Applicant.”

What communications has MVCA had with local stakeholders?

Following the 2021 Board decision to retain the collection, the Authority has had regular conversations with Board representatives from Mississippi Mills and participated in [museum stakeholder consultations](#) held by Mississippi Mills in 2023 to inform development of its Community Services Plan.

Post pandemic, the Mill of Kintail's [Museum Advisory Committee](#) was re-established. Four meetings were held over the past two years during which financial and mandate challenges were discussed.

Last year, MVCA issued a [Discussion Paper](#) and carried out consultations to inform development of the [Land Conservation and Resource Strategy](#). Survey questions addressed the scope of services delivered by MVCA and whether MVCA should manage the museum collections going forward.

In July 2025, MVCA issued a survey to determine public interest in supporting the current museum or the development of a new water/watershed centre between now and 2029.

Why was a water/watershed centre proposed?

Hazard and watershed management are part of MVCA's core mandate. Public education and outreach on these matters were identified by the Board of Directors as an area requiring attention during drafting of MVCA's *2026-2030 Strategic Plan*. If the McKenzie and Naismith collections are relocated off-site, grants and municipal levies would be used to transition the historic Baird grist mill to house interactive displays relevant to MVCA's core mandate.