

Strategic Plan 2026-2034

MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK



MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK

MP
ICE FLOOR

ACCESSIBLE
ENTRANCE ON
104TH
STREET

MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK

1220
FIFTH
AVENUE
MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK

MUS
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OF NE



PORT CITY SKETCHPAD
FROM MY VISIT TO THE MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

NAME: Lila

 Draw an artifact!



What is an artifact?
An artifact is an object made by a human being. In a museum, artifacts tell us about people and places from the past.

I chose this artifact because...
I thought it was really cool and it kind of reminds me of a genie bottle!

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK **FREDERICK A.D. SCHWARZ EDUCATION CENTER**

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Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to share the Museum of the City of New York's 2026–2034 Strategic Plan—our first comprehensive roadmap since 2018. This plan charts a course for the Museum's growth over the next decade. Our overarching goal is to foster civic pride and engagement for New Yorkers and tourists alike.

This plan was made possible by the steadfast leadership of our Board of Trustees, the dedication of our new Chair, Matt Brown, and the unwavering support of our members, donors, staff, and community partners. The plan reflects our shared commitment to deepening the Museum's impact and relevance to our city. At its heart are three strategic objectives: 1) to increase access to MCNY for all New Yorkers; 2) to establish MCNY as a key New York City cultural asset; and 3) to drive transformative, flexible, and sustainable growth.

To achieve these objectives, the plan outlines 11 tactical goals organized under four key areas of focus:

1. Exhibitions and Programs

We will leverage our collection more substantially, create new models for exhibitions, and expand educational and public programming to engage audiences of all ages.

2. Collections

We will position our collection as a mission-critical asset, improve stewardship and access, and invest in storage and digitization.

3. Space and Location

We will explore expansion opportunities, invest in our historic Fifth Avenue building, and pursue strategic partnerships to provide greater access to exhibitions and collections.

4. Business, Brand, and Fundraising

We will strengthen our brand, grow earned revenue, and invest in development and communications to support our mission.

This plan is both ambitious and grounded in our 100-year history of access and inclusion. Thank you for being part of our continuing story.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Hill Wilchfort". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Hill Wilchfort
Ronay Menschel Director and President
Museum of the City of New York

Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends,

It is with great enthusiasm that I join the Ronay Menschel Director and President, Stephanie Hill Wilchfort, in presenting the Museum of the City of New York's 2026–2034 Strategic Plan—a dynamic roadmap designed to guide the Museum's development and amplify its role in New York's cultural landscape.

Since becoming Chair of the Board of Trustees in 2024, I have been deeply inspired by the extraordinary commitment of our Trustees and the tireless dedication of the Museum's team members. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of them for their insight, creativity, and unwavering belief in the Museum's mission.

As we plan for the future, I am proud to reflect on the Museum's founding in 1923 by my great-grandfather, Henry Collins Brown. His vision was clear: to create a museum for everyone—a place that would celebrate and champion the dynamism and ambition of New York City. This Strategic Plan carries forward that legacy, ensuring that New Yorkers of all backgrounds are welcomed and see themselves reflected and inspired at MCNY.

I invite you to join us in this exciting journey, as we build on our legacy and embrace the possibilities ahead.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "me" in a cursive, lowercase font. The signature is fluid and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Matt Brown
Board Chair
Museum of the City of New York



MUSEUM
OF THE CITY
OF NEW YORK

NY AT ITS CORE
400 YEARS OF NYC HISTORY
ONGOING

CELEBRATING THE CITY
RECENT PHOTOGRAPHY ACQUISITIONS FROM
THE NY OF GIVING SOMETHING FOUNDATION

Image by Filip Wolak.



Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The Museum of the City of New York explores the people, places, and ideas that shape New York’s iconic character. We invite New Yorkers and visitors alike to discover their place in the city’s evolving story.

Vision Statement

We foster civic pride through experiences that champion New York’s creativity, ambition, and resilience. We connect visitors of all backgrounds to the city’s past and present, inspiring people to participate in shaping the future of our city and our world.



Theory of Change

The Museum of the City of New York...

explores the people, places, and ideas that shape New York City's iconic character.

creates experiences that connect visitors to New York's past, present, and future.

Our exhibitions, programs, and collections...

express New York's influence on art, popular culture, and civic life around the world

reflect contributions of people from many different backgrounds to the city's identity

highlight levers of power and tools of civic engagement in our city

so that New Yorkers...

gain knowledge to be thoughtful change-makers in our city and beyond

see themselves as part of the continuum of New York's history

are proud of New York City and their shared identity as New Yorkers

so that all visitors...

experience moments of wonder, awe, and beauty connected with our city.

understand past and present struggles and the perseverance of New Yorkers.

respect and appreciate multiple perspectives on our city.

are hopeful about New York City's future.

The power of New York stories inspires people to engage, contribute, and lead.

About the Museum of the City of New York

<p>200,000+ VISITORS SERVED EACH YEAR</p>		<p>4^{to} 6 SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS PER YEAR</p>	<p>PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS: 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <i>New York at Its Core</i> 2 <i>Activist New York</i> 3 <i>Timescapes</i>
<p>AVERAGE AGE OF VISITOR: 43 <i>years old</i></p>	<p>2,200 ACTIVE MEMBERS <i>and counting</i></p>	<p>750,000+ OBJECTS IN OUR COLLECTION</p>	
<p><i>Reaching</i> 11.5 MILLION PEOPLE ON OUR DIGITAL CHANNELS</p>		<p>OUR VISITORS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RICH CROSS-CULTURALISM OF OUR CITY AND BEYOND</p>	
<p>Public Programs</p>	<p>Frederick A. O. Schwarz Education Center</p>	<p>50% of our visitors are from within the 5 boroughs</p>	
<p>OVER 60 PROGRAMS PER YEAR <i>with approximately</i> 11,000 ATTENDEES</p>	<p><i>Serving</i> 40,000 STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES PER YEAR</p>	<p>30% come to us from around the United States</p>	
		<p>20% are international visitors</p>	





Image by David Lurvey.

...-Off
... the New Yorker's
... and the City of New York
... the Museum
... the City of New York
... the City of New York

NUEVA YORK DE JENGIBRE:
El Gran Corso de Pastelería del Día

... de la Gran
... de la Gran
... de la Gran

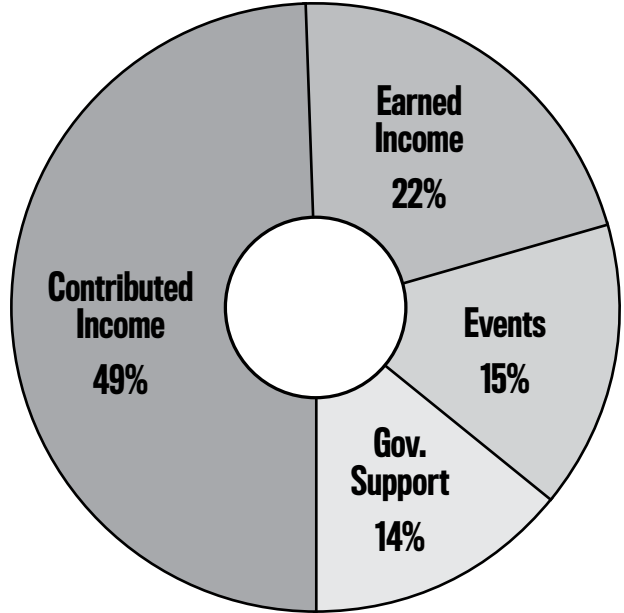
Financials

FY2025 Sources of Support and Revenue

Contributed Income ¹	\$8,090,764	(49%)
Earned Income ²	\$3,526,432	(22%)
Events	\$2,485,468	(15%)
Government Support	\$2,316,526	(14%)

Total **\$16,419,190**

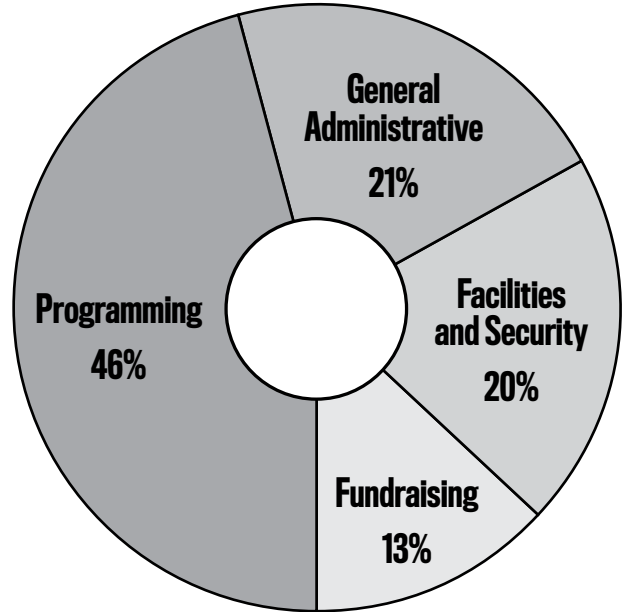
Endowment **\$38,291,200**



FY2025 Expenses

Programming	\$7,498,150	(46%)
General Administrative	\$3,524,854	(21%)
Facilities and Security	\$3,234,090	(20%)
Fundraising	\$2,162,096	(13%)

Total **\$16,419,190**



1. Includes fundraising, board dues, the value of in-kind donations, and endowment income
 2. Includes admissions, venue rentals, retail, and services income

Strategic Plan 2026-2034

Introduction

The Museum of the City of New York celebrated its centennial in 2023. In the years leading up to this milestone, the Museum made significant investments in capital improvements, experimented with new exhibition formats, and tested innovative marketing and advertising strategies. Now, informed by data and insights from our two-year centennial program, MCNY stands at a pivotal moment as we prepare for our next 100 years—beginning with a strategic plan that articulates the Museum’s priorities for the next decade.

This plan was developed through a rigorous process that included meetings with Board members and Museum staff, surveys, and a comprehensive market review conducted across the spring, summer, and fall of 2025. The resulting framework establishes goals organized across four functional verticals: Exhibitions and Programs; Collections; Location and Space; and Business, Brand, and Fundraising.

Together, this structure outlines the Museum’s planned work over the next eight years and demonstrates how these priorities cut across departments, aligning resources and efforts in support of our shared objectives.

Strategic Objectives

The Museum seeks to achieve three transformative strategic objectives over the next decade:

<p>Drive transformative, flexible, and sustainable growth</p>	<p>Establish MCNY as a key New York City cultural asset</p>	<p>Increase access to MCNY for all New Yorkers</p>
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Tactical Goals

These overarching objectives will be delivered across four interrelated functional areas, via eleven tactical goals.

Exhibitions and Programs	Collections	Location and Space	Business, Brand, and Fundraising
<p>1 Create new models for permanent and temporary exhibitions that serve at least 300,000 people annually</p>	<p>4 Reposition the collection as a mission-critical brand asset and set of activities at MCNY</p>	<p>6 Make critical infrastructure investments in the Museum’s building at 1220 Fifth Avenue</p>	<p>9 Increase investment in marketing and communications activity to drive awareness, visitorship, and revenue</p>
<p>2 Leverage the collection more substantially for exhibitions</p>		<p>7 Explore expansion to an additional location to improve access and increase space for exhibitions and collections</p>	<p>10 Invest in development strategy, process, and operations</p>
<p>3 Drive visitorship through education and public programs</p>	<p>5 Identify the best solutions for collections storage, access, management, and care</p>	<p>8 Consider opportunistic partnerships and short-term options for exhibition and promotional activity in other locations</p>	<p>11 Support earned revenue activities, including venue rentals, group tours, and retail</p>

Exhibitions and Programs

In 2019, roughly 320,000 people visited MCNY. Following the 2020 pandemic, visitation continues to recover, with most visitors indicating that they intend to see all the exhibitions versus a single show. Visitation is highest on days when there are also public programs with broad appeal. The average age of MCNY's visitors is 43, suggesting that there is a strong mix of older and younger demographics who are already engaged with the Museum's programming.

MCNY content highlights the city's culture, communities, and built environment, revealing how New York's history and creativity have shaped broader social, artistic, and political movements. By showcasing the city's art, popular culture, and civic life, the Museum celebrates the creativity, ambition, and resilience that define New York City and continue to inspire people around the world.

EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS



Above Ground: Art from the Martin Wong Graffiti Collection. Image by Filip Wolak.

Tactical Goals

- 1** Create new models for permanent and temporary exhibitions that serve at least 300,000 people annually
- 2** Leverage the collection more substantially for exhibitions
- 3** Drive visitorship through education and public programs

Collections

The Museum of the City of New York’s collection embodies the tangible history of the city—tracing its social, cultural, political, and physical evolution over time. Encompassing more than 750,000 objects, including photographs, paintings, costumes, decorative arts, and archival materials, the collection is a resource for exploring and interpreting New York’s diverse and complex stories.

In 2023, the Museum modernized its collections management system by adopting The Museum System (TMS), the industry standard, and establishing a foundation for improved stewardship and access. With this upgrade in place, the Museum is now positioned to undertake the critical work of cataloging roughly 60% of the collection, which is not fully documented or accessible to the public.

Cataloging and digitization offers an opportunity to use the Museum’s collection more substantially for exhibitions, a practice that lowers the cost of rotating shows; allows the Museum to identify critical gaps in the collection; and encourages collections preservation and scholarship.



Image by David Lurvey.

Tactical Goals

4

Reposition the collection as a mission-critical brand asset and set of activities at MCNY

5

Identify the best solutions for collections storage, access, management, and care

Location and Space

In a city defined by its density, diversity, and creativity, the Museum’s physical presence is a powerful statement of identity and purpose. MCNY’s current facility at 1220 Fifth Avenue was completed in 1932 and was designed primarily to house a furniture and decorative arts collection in period rooms. The facility is flanked by Central Park and institutional neighbors, including healthcare and educational facilities. Transportation options to the Museum from other parts of the city—particularly from the outer boroughs—are limited, as are adjacencies to other cultural institutions, shopping, and restaurants that typically help drive sustained traffic.

Visitation is one of the Museum’s most important metrics in fulfilling its mission and vision. Alongside exhibition quality and appeal, proximity to public transit, other cultural institutions and attractions, residential development, and tourist infrastructure all play a critical role in driving traffic. The architecture and layout of the Museum also shape the visitor experience, influencing exhibition design and programmatic opportunities.

LOCATION AND SPACE



Tactical Goals

- 6** Make critical infrastructure investments in the Museum's building at 1220 Fifth Avenue
- 7** Explore expansion to an additional location to improve access and increase space for exhibitions and collections
- 8** Consider opportunistic partnerships and short-term options for exhibition and promotional activity in other locations

Business, Brand, and Fundraising

A strong, visible brand and a diversified, sustainable revenue base are critical to the Museum’s long-term vitality and its ability to advance its mission at scale. Sharpening MCNY’s public presence, deepening relationships with donors and partners, and expanding brand-aligned earned revenue activity are essential for the institution’s sustainability and growth.

Proactive investment in promoting the Museum has been shown to drive visitorship and revenue. A modern website and targeted paid media campaigns—especially around major exhibitions—can reach audiences who might not know the Museum, as well as those who visit regularly. A credible brand supported by a public relations and communications strategy helps position MCNY for stronger fundraising: a well-known and respected institution is more likely to attract individual donors, corporate support, and foundation grants. Strategic investments in space rentals, retail offerings, and exhibition-related products increases institutional revenue while enhancing audience experience.



Image by Christine Butler.

Tactical Goals

9

Increase investment in marketing and communications to drive visitation and revenue

10

Invest in development strategy, process, and operations

11

Support earned revenue activities, including venue rentals, group tours, and retail



Michael R. Bloomberg speaking at MCNY's Centennial Gala. Image by Bryan Bedder.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

The Museum of the City of New York wishes to thank the Board of Trustees, Executive Team, and Museum Staff for their engagement and input during the development of this Strategic Plan.

The Museum acknowledges the support of an anonymous family foundation in making this strategic plan possible.

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Special thanks to Nick Michael, *Chief of Staff and Strategy*, Tracy McFarlan, *Director of Curatorial Affairs*, and Marissa Martonyi, *Director of Design* for their help in managing and delivering this strategic plan.





**MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK**

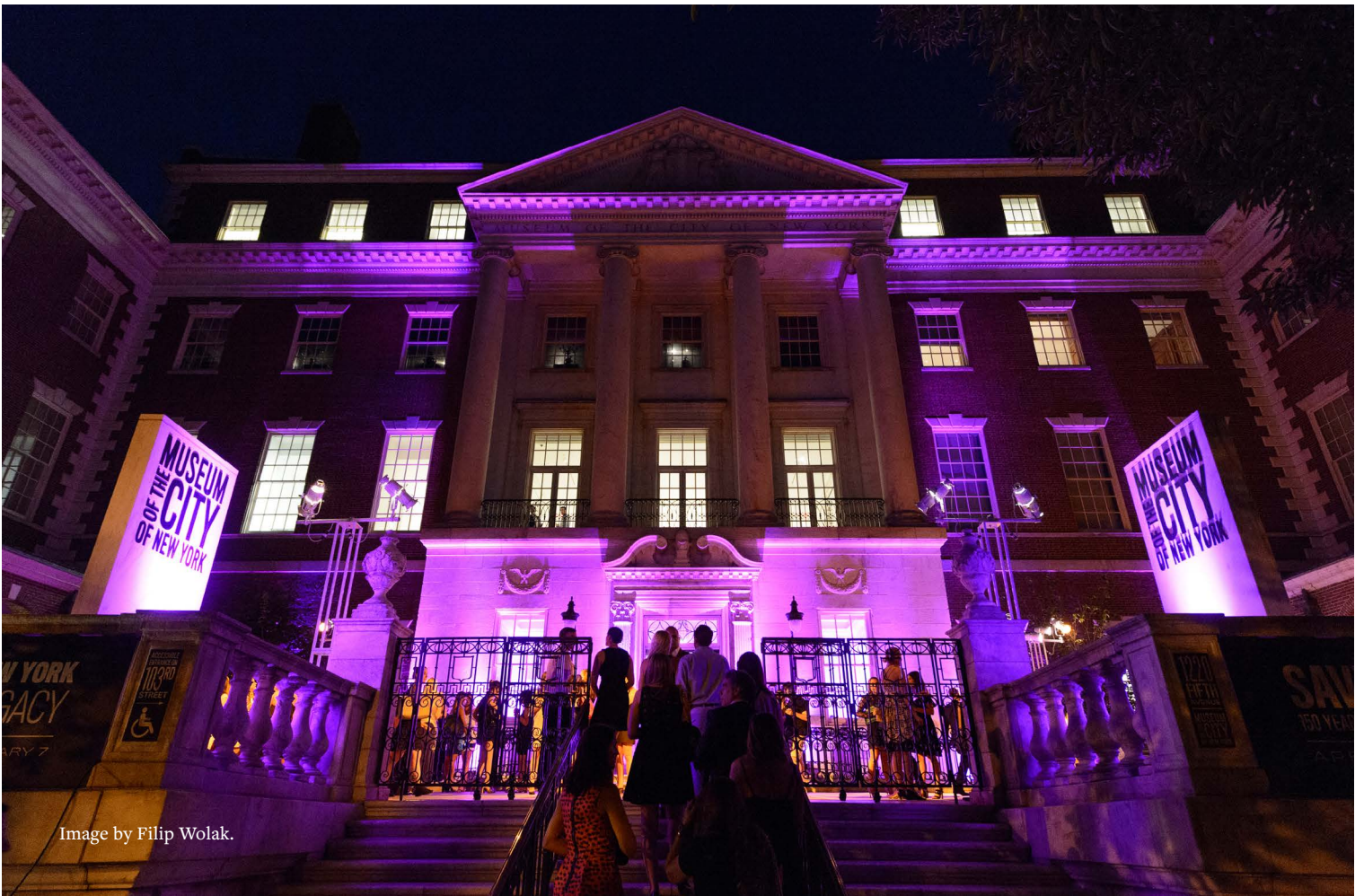


Image by Filip Wolak.

Museum of the City of New York
1220 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street
New York, New York 10029

212.534.1672 | info@mcny.org
mcny.org

@MuseumOfCityNY



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support MCNY**

