The Burlington Performing Arts Centre

Request for Proposals

Strategic Planning Services | 2028–2030

RFP Issue Date: Monday, October 26, 2026

Submission Deadline: Monday, November 16, 2026, at 4pm EST

Project Completion: May 2027

Maximum Project Budget: $50,000, excluding HST

1. Organizational Overview

The Burlington Performing Arts Centre (BPAC) is a charitable, not-for-profit organization serving Burlington and the surrounding region. Since opening in 2011, BPAC has established itself as a cultural destination, presenting professional performing arts experiences, supporting artists and arts organizations, and providing opportunities for community participation and engagement.

Located in downtown Burlington, BPAC is a LEED Gold-certified facility featuring a Main Theatre, flexible Community Studio Theatre, Family Lobby and outdoor Plaza.

Through its BPAC Presents season, arts education and community engagement programs, and partnerships, BPAC connects audiences with a diverse range of artistic experiences while contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of the region.

In addition to its own programming, BPAC operates an active venue rental business, providing performance, rehearsal and event space for community organizations, arts groups, commercial presenters and other users. Supporting community access to the facility is an important part of BPAC's mandate and operations.

The facility is owned by the City of Burlington and operated and managed by BPAC. The organization is responsible for day-to-day operations, facility management and maintenance, alongside its artistic programming, rental and community activities.

BPAC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, to which the Executive Director reports, and receives annual operating support from the City of Burlington.

2. Project Background & Context

BPAC is entering its next phase of organizational development following a period of leadership transition, renewal and operational growth.

With its current strategic planning period concluding in 2027, BPAC is seeking to develop a new three-year Strategic Plan for the 2028–2030 calendar years that builds on existing organizational work, reflects its current operating environment and establishes clear priorities for the years ahead.

The intent is not to fundamentally reinvent the organization, but to consolidate progress, assess emerging opportunities and challenges, and establish an achievable direction for continued development.

The planning process should consider BPAC's interconnected responsibilities as a professional performing arts presenter, community-serving cultural institution, charitable organization and venue operator. It should examine the relationship between artistic ambition, audience and community engagement, organizational capacity, facility operations and financial sustainability.

Preliminary areas for strategic exploration include:

Organizational Capacity & Sustainability: People, governance, internal systems, organizational structures, operational effectiveness, facility management, financial resilience and long-term sustainability.

Artistic Programming & Cultural Leadership: Artistic vision, programming priorities, support for artists and arts organizations, education and engagement initiatives, and BPAC's evolving role within the regional cultural landscape.

Community Access & Audience Development: Accessibility, audience growth and retention, community relationships, partnerships, participation and opportunities to strengthen connections between BPAC, its programming and the communities it serves.

Brand, Visibility & Revenue Development: Organizational positioning, public awareness, marketing effectiveness, earned and contributed revenue, and opportunities to strengthen BPAC's financial sustainability and community profile.

These areas are intended as starting points for exploration rather than predetermined strategic priorities. The planning process should identify where BPAC can have the greatest impact while balancing artistic, community, operational and financial considerations.

BPAC has access to existing organizational reports, planning documents, financial and operational information, audience data and relevant community research that will be made available to the successful consultant. The planning process is expected to build on this work rather than duplicate research already undertaken.

3. Project Objectives

BPAC is seeking an experienced consultant to guide a collaborative strategic planning process, working closely with the Executive Director and leadership team, with focused engagement from the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and selected community stakeholders.

The primary objective is to develop a practical and achievable 2028–2030 Strategic Plan, supported by a clear implementation roadmap and financially informed business plan.

The resulting work should:

1. Establish clear organizational priorities, objectives and measurable goals for the 2028–2030 planning period.
2. Assess BPAC's organizational capacity, existing resources and operational considerations in relation to its strategic ambitions.
3. Identify opportunities to strengthen artistic programming, audience development, community access, organizational visibility, revenue generation and long-term sustainability.
4. Consider the relationship between BPAC's artistic and community mandate and its business activities, including ticket sales, rentals, sponsorship, philanthropy, memberships and public funding.
5. Translate strategic priorities into an actionable implementation roadmap identifying key activities, sequencing, responsibilities, resource considerations and measures of success.
6. Develop a supporting business plan connecting strategic priorities with the operational, financial and human resource considerations associated with implementation.
7. Provide practical tools to inform annual business planning, budgeting, resource allocation and ongoing monitoring of progress.

The planning process should balance ambition with organizational capacity, establish realistic priorities and provide a working framework that BPAC can maintain and adapt beyond the consultant's engagement.

4. Scope of Work

The successful consultant will lead and facilitate a collaborative planning process in close partnership with BPAC's Executive Director and leadership team.

BPAC anticipates the following broad phases of work. Proponents are encouraged to recommend an approach that achieves the project objectives within the established timeline and budget.

4.1 Discovery & Organizational Review

The consultant will:

- Review BPAC's current Strategic Plan, organizational reports, financial and operational information, audience data and other relevant planning materials.
- Consider available external research, including municipal and regional planning documents, demographic information and community research.
- Examine BPAC's operating model, including the relationship between artistic programming, venue rentals, community access and earned and contributed revenue.
- Work with the Executive Director and leadership team to establish a shared understanding of BPAC's organizational position, opportunities, challenges and priorities.
- Identify key considerations to inform strategic development.

The review should draw primarily on existing information and identify significant gaps where further analysis may be warranted.

4.2 Leadership & Stakeholder Engagement

The consultant will develop and facilitate a focused engagement process that includes:

- Ongoing working sessions with the Executive Director and leadership team throughout the project.
- A preliminary meeting with the Executive Director, Board Chair and Vice-Chair.
- One facilitated two-hour strategic planning session with the Board of Directors.
- Appropriate engagement with BPAC staff and volunteers.
- Targeted consultation with selected community stakeholders, which may include artists, arts organizations, venue renters, cultural partners, community organizations and other relevant groups.
- An opportunity for structured Board feedback on emerging strategic priorities at the April 5, 2027 Board meeting, before the implementation roadmap and business plan are finalized.

The consultant will work with BPAC to determine an appropriate engagement methodology, which may include interviews, facilitated discussions, surveys or other suitable approaches.

Formal Board, staff, volunteer and community stakeholder engagement is anticipated to take place in February 2027, allowing findings to inform strategic development sessions with the Executive Director and leadership team in mid-March.

Engagement should be purposeful and manageable, recognizing BPAC's operational commitments and available staff resources.

4.3 Strategic Direction & Priority Development

Working collaboratively with BPAC leadership, the consultant will:

- Synthesize findings from the organizational review and engagement process.
- Identify and refine strategic priorities for 2028–2030.
- Establish supporting objectives, desired outcomes and measurable indicators of success.
- Consider opportunities for artistic development, audience growth, community impact and organizational sustainability.
- Assess strategic opportunities in relation to organizational capacity, available resources and financial considerations.
- Facilitate discussion around organizational choices, priorities and realistic sequencing.

The resulting strategic direction should articulate both BPAC's organizational aspirations and the practical conditions required to achieve them.

4.4 Implementation Roadmap & Business Planning

The consultant will work with BPAC leadership to translate the strategic direction into an actionable implementation roadmap and supporting business plan.

This work should address:

- Key actions and activities required to advance each strategic priority.
- Recommended sequencing and milestones across the three-year planning period.
- Organizational responsibilities and accountability.
- Potential staffing, financial, facility and operational implications.
- Revenue development opportunities and financial sustainability considerations.
- Measurable indicators to monitor progress.

- Opportunities requiring further assessment, investment or additional organizational capacity.

The supporting business plan should be financially informed and grounded in BPAC's existing operating model. It should consider the relationship between artistic programming, audience development, venue operations, earned revenue, contributed revenue and public funding.

Where appropriate, the consultant should identify potential financial scenarios, risks and trade-offs associated with proposed strategic initiatives.

The consultant is expected to facilitate this assessment in collaboration with BPAC leadership, using available organizational information, rather than independently develop detailed departmental budgets, staffing allocations or a comprehensive financial feasibility study.

The resulting framework should provide a clear connection between strategic direction and operational delivery, informing BPAC's annual business planning and budgeting processes.

4.5 Review, Refinement & Finalization

The consultant will:

- Present preliminary findings and proposed strategic priorities to BPAC leadership for discussion and refinement.
- Support a structured Board review of emerging strategic priorities.
- Prepare a draft Strategic Plan, implementation roadmap and supporting business plan.
- Incorporate feedback from the Executive Director, leadership team and applicable Board review processes.
- Prepare final documents and an accompanying presentation for consideration and approval by BPAC's Board of Directors in May 2027.
- Provide final materials in presentation-ready and editable formats to support implementation, publication, reporting and communication.

5. Expected Deliverables

The successful consultant will be responsible for developing an integrated 2028–2030 Strategic Plan, supported by an actionable implementation roadmap and business plan.

The deliverables should provide BPAC with a clear strategic direction and practical tools to guide organizational decision-making, annual business planning, budgeting and implementation.

5.1 Engagement Findings Summary

A concise summary of findings from Board, staff, volunteer and targeted community stakeholder engagement, identifying:

- Key themes, opportunities and challenges.
- Areas of alignment and differing perspectives.
- Considerations and recommendations to inform strategic priority development.

The summary will be presented to the Executive Director and leadership team in advance of the mid-March 2027 strategic development sessions. The intent is to provide a clear synthesis of engagement findings rather than an extensive consultation report.

5.2 Strategic Plan | 2028–2030

A concise, accessible Strategic Plan establishing BPAC's organizational direction for the three-year planning period, including:

- Clearly articulated strategic priorities and supporting objectives.
- Desired organizational outcomes and measurable indicators of success.
- Consideration of BPAC's artistic and community mandate, internal capacity and long-term sustainability.
- A clear connection between strategic priorities and operational realities.

The Strategic Plan should be suitable for presentation to BPAC's Board of Directors and for broader communication with stakeholders and community partners.

5.3 Implementation Roadmap

An actionable three-year roadmap translating the Strategic Plan into a manageable sequence of activities and deliverables. The roadmap should identify:

- Key actions associated with each strategic priority.
- Recommended timelines, sequencing and milestones.
- Organizational responsibilities and accountability.
- Resource considerations and potential staffing, financial and operational implications, developed in collaboration with BPAC leadership.
- Measurable key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Approaches to monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress.

The roadmap should distinguish between actions achievable within existing organizational resources and those requiring additional capacity, investment or further exploration.

5.4 Supporting Business Plan

A practical, financially informed business plan connecting BPAC's strategic priorities with the operational and financial considerations required to advance them. The business plan should include:

- An assessment of organizational capacity in relation to the proposed strategic priorities.
- Identification of potential resource requirements and operational implications, developed in collaboration with BPAC leadership.
- Consideration of existing and potential earned and contributed revenue streams, including programming, rentals, sponsorship, philanthropy, memberships and public funding.
- High-level financial assumptions, resource estimates and implementation dependencies associated with key strategic initiatives.
- Identification of significant financial risks, trade-offs and opportunities for sustainable growth.
- Recommended approaches to prioritizing and sequencing investments.

- A proposed operational focus for 2028, identifying key activities, priorities, resource considerations and milestones to inform BPAC's annual business planning and budget development.
- A broader business and operational outlook for 2029–2030, reflecting the anticipated progression of the Strategic Plan.

The business plan should provide sufficient financial and operational substance to support organizational decision-making, rather than serving solely as a high-level narrative.

BPAC is not seeking a comprehensive independent financial feasibility study or detailed departmental budgets as part of this assignment. However, the supporting business plan is expected to include meaningful financial analysis, informed by BPAC's existing financial and operational information and developed collaboratively with leadership. Proponents should clearly describe the level of analysis, financial modelling and business planning included in their proposed approach and fee.

5.5 Final Presentation & Working Documents

The consultant will provide:

- A presentation of the final Strategic Plan and supporting implementation and business planning components at BPAC's May 25, 2027 Board meeting, in collaboration with the Executive Director.
- Final documents in PDF and editable formats.
- A concise public-facing summary of the Strategic Plan.
- An editable implementation and progress-tracking tool that BPAC can maintain internally.
- Supporting materials and relevant findings developed through the planning process.

Final approval-ready documents must be provided in time for inclusion in BPAC's May 18, 2027 Board package.

6. Project Timeline

BPAC anticipates the following schedule for the procurement and strategic planning process.

6.1 RFP & Consultant Selection

Milestone	Date
RFP Issued	Monday, October 26, 2026
Deadline for Questions	Monday, November 9, 2026
Responses to Questions	Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	Monday, November 16, 2026, 4pm EST
Internal Proposal Review	November 16–19, 2026
Shortlisted Proponents Contacted	Friday, November 20, 2026
Consultant Interviews (if required)	November 26–27, 2026
Reference Checks	Tuesday, December 1, 2026
Notification of Successful Proponent	Thursday, December 3, 2026
Contract Finalization	By Friday, December 11, 2026
Project Kickoff	Week of December 14, 2026

6.2 Anticipated Project Schedule

Project Phase	Key Activities / Milestones	Target Timeline
Project Initiation & Discovery	Kickoff, organizational review and assessment of existing research	December 2026 – January 2027
Engagement Planning	Confirm engagement approach, participants and scheduling	January 2027
Engagement & Consultation	Board planning session; staff, volunteer and targeted stakeholder engagement	February 2027
Findings & Analysis	Synthesis and presentation of engagement findings to leadership	Early March 2027
Strategic Development	Working sessions with Executive Director and leadership team	Mid-March 2027
Preliminary Strategic Direction	Development of proposed priorities, objectives and outcomes	Late March 2027
Board Progress Review	Presentation and structured feedback on emerging strategic priorities	April 5, 2027
Implementation & Business Planning	Development of roadmap, financial considerations and supporting business plan	April 2027
Draft Review & Refinement	Working draft provided to the Executive Director and leadership team for collaborative review, feedback and refinement	Late April – early May 2027
Final Deliverables	Approval-ready documents submitted for Board package	By May 18, 2027
Board Presentation & Approval	Consultant presentation of final plan for Board consideration and approval	May 25, 2027

The successful consultant will work with BPAC's Executive Director and leadership team to confirm a detailed project schedule, allowing sufficient time for leadership involvement, review and refinement.

The April 5, 2027 Board meeting will provide an opportunity for feedback on the emerging strategic direction before the implementation roadmap and business plan are finalized.

The project schedule must accommodate the May 18 Board package deadline and the consultant's participation in the May 25 Board meeting.

7. Proposal Requirements

Interested proponents are invited to submit a proposal outlining their qualifications, proposed approach and fees for completing the assignment.

Proposals should be concise, approximately 10 pages excluding CVs and relevant work samples. BPAC is seeking sufficient information to assess the proponent's qualifications, understanding of the assignment and proposed methodology, rather than extensive supplementary documentation.

Proposals should include the following:

7.1 Consultant / Firm Profile

- Brief overview of the consultant or firm.
- Relevant experience in strategic planning, business planning and organizational development.
- Experience working with non-profit, charitable, community-serving or comparable organizations.

- Identification of the proposed project lead and additional team members, including their respective roles.

Experience within the performing arts or cultural sector is considered an asset but is not a requirement.

7.2 Understanding of the Assignment

A brief description of the proponent's understanding of BPAC's organizational context, project objectives and desired outcomes, including the relationship between its artistic, community, operational and financial responsibilities.

7.3 Proposed Approach & Methodology

An outline of the proposed planning process, including:

- Approach to discovery and organizational review.
- Proposed structure for ongoing collaboration with BPAC's Executive Director and leadership team.
- Approach to Board, staff, volunteer and community stakeholder engagement.
- Methodology for developing strategic priorities, an implementation roadmap and supporting business plan.
- Proposed level of financial analysis and business planning.
- Approach to ensuring recommendations are practical, achievable and aligned with organizational capacity.

Proponents are encouraged to identify additional considerations or recommendations that would strengthen the process.

7.4 Project Work Plan

A proposed project schedule identifying key phases, activities, milestones and deliverables, demonstrating the ability to meet BPAC's May 2027 completion deadline. The work plan should identify anticipated requirements for BPAC staff and leadership participation, including estimated time commitments and responsibilities.

7.5 Relevant Project Experience

Brief descriptions of up to three comparable assignments completed within the past five years, including the nature of the work, scope and outcomes. Proponents may include examples of previous strategic plans, implementation frameworks or business planning work.

7.6 Financial Proposal

A detailed fee proposal identifying:

- Total project cost.
- Professional fees, including anticipated allocation by project phase or deliverable.
- Any additional expenses, including travel.
- Applicable HST, identified separately.
- Proposed payment schedule.

- Any optional services or enhancements, clearly identified and priced separately.

7.7 References

Contact information for two professional references from organizations for which the proponent has completed comparable work.

8. Evaluation & Selection

Proposals will be reviewed by BPAC's internal selection team based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Proposed approach and methodology	30%
Understanding of BPAC's organizational context and project objectives	20%
Relevant experience and qualifications, including strategic and business planning	**25%**
Project management, availability and capacity	10%
Financial proposal	15%
Total	100%

BPAC will place particular emphasis on the proponent's demonstrated ability to guide a collaborative planning process and translate strategic direction into practical implementation and financially informed business planning tools.

Shortlisted proponents may be invited to participate in an interview to further discuss their proposed approach, experience and working relationship with BPAC. BPAC may also contact references as part of the evaluation process.

The lowest-priced proposal will not necessarily be selected. BPAC reserves the right to select the proposal that, in its assessment, offers the best overall value and alignment with the objectives of the assignment.

9. Project Budget

BPAC has established a maximum project budget of $50,000, excluding applicable HST. This amount is inclusive of all professional fees, travel, materials and other project-related expenses.

Proponents must identify applicable HST separately in their financial submissions and provide a breakdown of costs by project phase or deliverable, together with a proposed payment schedule.

Proposals must include all required scope of work and deliverables within the maximum project budget. Any additional services or optional enhancements must be clearly identified and priced separately and are not guaranteed to be commissioned.

10. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format no later than Monday, November 16, 2026, at 4pm EST.

Submissions should be directed to:

Andrea Hughes
Executive Assistant & Secretary to the Board
The Burlington Performing Arts Centre
andrea.hughes@burlington.ca

CC: Sara Palmieri, Executive Director
sara.palmieri@burlington.ca

Subject Line: RFP Submission – BPAC 2028–2030 Strategic Plan

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by 4pm EST on Monday, November 9, 2026.

Responses to substantive questions will be communicated by Wednesday, November 11, 2026, through the same channels used to issue the RFP, ensuring that all proponents have access to the same information.

Late submissions may not be considered. BPAC will acknowledge receipt of proposals electronically.

11. General Conditions

11.1 Right to Accept or Reject Proposals

BPAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, request clarification or additional information, and negotiate with one or more proponents.

11.2 Changes to the RFP

BPAC reserves the right to amend the RFP, extend the submission deadline or modify the selection schedule at its discretion. Any material changes will be communicated through the same channels used to issue the RFP.

11.3 Proposal Preparation Costs

All costs associated with preparing and submitting a proposal, including participation in interviews, are the responsibility of the proponent.

11.4 Confidentiality

Information provided by BPAC throughout the procurement and planning process must be treated as confidential and used solely for the purposes of this assignment, unless otherwise authorized by BPAC.

11.5 Ownership of Deliverables

All final documents, reports, planning materials and tools developed specifically for BPAC under the resulting agreement will become the property of BPAC upon completion of the engagement and payment of applicable fees. Any pre-existing proprietary methodologies or materials retained by the consultant must be identified, with BPAC granted the necessary rights to use the final deliverables for its ongoing organizational purposes.

11.6 Contract Award

Selection of a preferred proponent does not constitute a binding agreement. The engagement will be subject to the successful negotiation and execution of a written contract acceptable to BPAC.