

Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Executive Summary

At Huron County Museum and Historical Gaol (HCMHG), we are storytellers - preserving, sharing and fostering history.

During the period this strategic plan covers, we will engage with more people to increase a shared understanding of our culture, leading to greater social cohesion and stronger Huron County roots.

It will also be important to put strategies and practices in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization. We are acutely aware that preserving the past implicitly means we will ensure future generations will have access to artifacts, places and stories.

Amidst the rapidly changing environment, it will be critical that flexibility and adaptability are embraced to improve responsiveness to new opportunities, user needs and societal trends.

Developing programs and exhibits that represent the diversity of our County and our rich history will be a core focus. To truly be diverse, it is imperative that we are also inclusive, embracing and respecting differences.

Process

This plan was created beginning in the fall of 2018 and through to spring 2019. The first step involved discussing the outcomes of the previous strategic plan as a staff group. This conversation identified actions that should be continued in the new plan, those that could be discontinued as well as actions that had not yet received attention but were still applicable to HCMHG's future. The vision and mission were also revisited and modified.

HCMHG then examined the changing landscape through internal and external scans using the SWOT and PEST frameworks. Stakeholders and the public were engaged through focus groups and an online survey to determine where things were going well, what could use improvement, suggested changes, threat identification and areas of priority. Common themes that emerged included: Messaging overload leading to communication challenges; the need for increased diversity and inclusion; concerns over youth retention and their engagement with heritage and culture; changing environments requiring flexibility and adaptability; and funding concerns.

Guiding Principles

The vision and mission statements will act as touchstones throughout the life of this strategic plan.

Vision: The vision of the Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol is to nurture and inspire heritage and culture.

Mission: The Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol engage our community in preserving, sharing and fostering Huron County culture.

Strategic Directions

Based on the common themes identified, the work of the HCMHG over the next four years will be directed by the overarching strategic directions of:

- 1) Engage with more people
- 2) Focus on long-term sustainability

Underlying Themes

In addition to the two strategic directions, the themes of **diversity/inclusion** and **flexibility** will be supported through all the work that is done.

This means that all programs and services will be designed through the lens of gathering a wide range of ideas, voices and viewpoints as well as remaining open and accessible to all. It is imperative that through this plan the diversity of Huron County is represented.

A culture of creativity, learning, trust and adaptability will allow the flexibility necessary to adapt to quickly changing environments and best meet user's needs. The Plan will be revisited annually to address relevance, new information and budget considerations.

Strategic Directions

Engage more people

By engaging with more people, the HCMHG will not only grow its audience but also increase its brand recognition amongst the crowded leisure-time marketplace. As more people become engaged with HCMHG, a common understanding of Huron County can be created which will lead to stronger social cohesion. Targeted strategies and partnerships to reach children and youth through the school system will enhance exposure to the rich and varied offerings the HCMHG can provide. Further to this, an early appreciation for our past and understanding of our local history has the potential to contribute to greater youth retention.

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
Engage and inspire the next generation of Huron County by sparking an interest in their heritage and culture	Create a strategy to engage with every Huron County student before their graduation	Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Business Development Manager	2020	Staff time + < \$1,000	-Strategy is created
	Implement strategy targeted towards youth and schools	Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Business Development Manager	2021	Staff time + \$5,000-\$10,000	-Strategy is implemented -Number of students engaging with HCMHG doubles over duration of plan
	Create an education committee to advise on relevant programming and tools to connect with students/youth	Director of Cultural Services/ Curator of Dialogue and Engagement	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-Committee is created -Attendance by 75% of committee members at each meeting
Connect with audiences beyond physical sites	Engage with people throughout Huron County using outreach opportunities to increase exposure	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Registrar/ Archivist	Ongoing	Staff time + mileage <\$1,000	-At least 1 new event attended annually
	Make content more discoverable online	Registrar/Archivist	Ongoing	Staff time + ≈\$1,000 annually	-10% annual increase in artifacts (including archival materials) available online

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
Create dynamic exhibits that generate interest and attention	Complete regular, ongoing remediation of permanent exhibits to incorporate changes in methods of storytelling and refresh spaces to re-engage return visitors	Senior Curator	Ongoing	Staff time + >\$10,000 annually for consultation and supplies	-At least one gallery updated annually
	Incorporate technology to enhance storytelling opportunities and enrich visitors' experience	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement	2021	Staff time + technology costs (highly variable)	-Technology options researched -New technology incorporated as deemed relevant
	Create and/or source dynamic temporary exhibits that address topics that matter to audiences	Senior Curator	Ongoing	Staff time + \$5,000-\$10,000	-Increase in positive visitors feedback on temporary exhibits
Maximize existing footprint to support enhanced participation	Work with Ontario Ancestors to find another location and utilize cabin for programming	Director of Cultural Services/Archivist	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-New location found by 2021
	Create a collections development plan to identify collection priorities	Senior Curator	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-Plan completed and implemented
	Complete the RE_ORG process	Senior Curator/Registrar/Archivist/Museum Technician	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-RE_ORG process completed
	Evaluate space needs once corporate records are relocated	Director of Cultural Services/Senior Curator/Registrar/Architect/Museum Technician	2021	Staff time + \$1,000-\$5,000	-Space evaluated and steps for moving forward created
	Create a workspace for object conservation	Senior Curator/Museum Technician	2022	Staff time + ≈\$1,000	-Workspace created

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
Increase the strength of the HCMHG brand	Understand the motivations of potential audience to better meet their needs by exploring CRM or other data analysis tools	Business Development Manager	2021	Staff time + \$1,000-\$5,000	-Creation of database on visitor trends/information -Promotions segmented and targeted to specific audiences
	Utilize partnerships to build brand by raising profile among new user groups	Business Development Manager	2022	Staff time + <\$1,000	-At least one new partnership generated annually
	Create a distinctive value proposition to stand out from the competition for the public's leisure time	Business Development Manager	2022	Staff time + \$1,000-\$5,000	-5% increase in attendance

Focus on Long-term sustainability

As keepers of the past, HCMHG will ensure that the organization, and the knowledge it holds, operates in a manner that safeguards a long and prosperous future. By developing new partnerships, efficiencies in sharing skills and resources will be realized and a network of support will be strengthened. As a municipal entity, the HCMHG will be a leader in conservation efforts. HCMHG will remain financially viable through reinforcing an understanding among funders with respect to the importance of heritage and culture as well as controlling costs and exploring new avenues for revenue generation.

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
Seek out partnerships to share skills, resources and ideas	Take Museum workshops and displays to local libraries and other partner venues to meet people where they are	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Archivist	2019	Staff time + Mileage <\$1,000	-Four new workshops/displays in exterior venues annually
	Increase the HCMHG's leadership role with lower-tier museums and heritage organizations by acting as a resource providing skills and expertise	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Archivist/Registrar/Museum Technician	2020	Staff time + Mileage <\$1,000	-Promotional material created outlining resources available -Increased interaction with organizations

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
	Create a local group of Huron County heritage organizations	Senior Curator	2022	Staff time + Mileage <\$1,000	-Group created -Participation from at least 50% of local heritage organizations
	Collaborate with other County departments	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement/Business Development Manager/Archivist	Ongoing	Staff time + Mileage <\$1,000	-Consultation provided on Tourism strategy -Collaboration occurs with Planning dept. on heritage buildings/landmarks
Implement environmentally sustainable practices and celebrate natural heritage	Work with Property Services to implement energy saving features	Director of Cultural Services/Senior Curator/Museum Technician	Ongoing	Staff time (Costs would be reflected in Property Services budget)	-Reduce energy consumption by the target indicated in the Conservation and Demand Management Plan (CDMP)
	Highlight local natural heritage features and stories	Senior Curator/Curator of Dialogue and Engagement	2023	Staff time + \$1,000-\$5,000	-Natural heritage featured in galleries and programs
	Learn environmental best practices from other Museums and Municipalities	All	2021	Staff time <\$1,000	-Each staff member connected with a Museum/Municipality to learn their practices
	Replace inefficient technologies	Museum Technician	2022	Staff time Technology cost highly variable	-Energy reduced by target in CDMP
	Reduce disposable plastic in gift shop, events and programs and use environmentally friendly materials in exhibit design	All	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-New materials sourced and used for 50% of gift shop items -Environmental exhibit design materials researched
	Publically promote the measures taken through a marketing strategy	Business Development Manager	2021	Staff time + <\$1,000	-Promotional material created

Goal	Action	Who	When	Resources	Measurement
Build support with funders and advocates to ensure long term financial support	Collect data, outcomes and impacts of services and programs to communicate value to funders	Curator of Dialogue and Engagement	2020	Staff time + <\$1,000	-Creation of tool to collect feedback following interaction with HCMHG
	Nurture existing relationships and establish new ones to ensure longstanding support of Museum objectives	All	Ongoing	Staff time + <\$1,000	-Increased participation in stakeholder groups (ex. Friends, BTBs, etc.)
	Focus on a targeted financial giving strategy with annual campaigns and marquee event	Business Development Manager	2019	Staff time + \$5,000-\$10,000 (more than recovered in fundraising)	-Annual donations rise by 50%
	Maximize income streams by proactively seeking out new and creative rental opportunities	Business Development Manager	2021	Staff time + <\$1,000 (more than recovered through rental income)	-At least one new rental agreement created annually
Ensure sufficient staffing levels to maintain energy and support for new strategic directions	Review current staffing complement to maximize skill utilization and support key areas identified in consultation and planning: programming, collections and customer service	Director of Cultural Services	2020	Staff time Costs are determinate on review findings	-Review completed -Adjustments made to job descriptions and assigned tasks

*The majority of the estimated costs are regularly captured in existing budget lines.

Implementation

Implementation of the goals identified will take place over four and a half years from mid-2019 to the end of 2023. Success will be determined by the progress made on identified goals, responsiveness to changes, increased diversity and inclusion in programs and services as well as positive relationships maintained with stakeholders.