
Niagara Historical
SOCIETY  MUSEUM

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

Vision

To be a dynamic and valued part of the community that is dedicated to educating the people of Niagara and our visitors about local history and providing activities that enrich their lives; to maintain the highest standards of museum collections management, conservation and accessibility.

Mission Statement

The Niagara Historical Society & Museum is a team of staff and volunteers which passionately collects, preserves, researches, educates and promotes the history of Niagara-on-the-lake and its communities. We inspire an appreciation of local history through engaging programs and exhibitions.

Values

The Niagara Historical Society & Museum values

- collaboration
- professional integrity and excellence
- stewardship
- innovation
- sharing of ideas and knowledge
- being inclusive and welcoming

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

1. Our collection contains a very good sample of early Canadian history
2. The Society has published extensively for over 100 years
3. Success with community outreach projects
4. Communications with community partners and cultural organizations
5. Good, attractive facility within the Old Town
6. Core of committed members and volunteers with strong expertise
7. Competent staff
8. Name recognition
9. Opportunities for programming and partnerships with community groups
10. Availability and support of talent within Niagara-on-the-Lake
11. Strong local history collection and research base

Weaknesses

1. Some of the textiles (uniforms and dresses) require conservation work
2. Small size of staff
3. Staff turnover risk
4. Space – difficult to have tour groups, programming, in the museum or large functions onsite
5. Lack of proper storage for collections
6. Lack of knowledge and material culture related to native history
7. Lack of guaranteed funding
8. Outreach to schools is inadequate
9. Passive, aging membership
10. Collection is not fully curated

11. Competition with other “tourist attractions” in NOTL, low visibility
12. Competition with other non profits for donations

Opportunities

1. 100th anniversary of the Great War should provoke the public’s attention on the topic which could be responded to by exhibitions, publications and events.
2. 150th anniversary of Canada as a country
3. An increased potential for funding for activities and marketing surrounding the Great War and the 150th anniversary
4. Educational programming
5. Partnering with other cultural institutions

Threats

1. Potential lack of government support for cultural institutions
2. The uncertainty of what Parks Canada and the Federal government will be doing for the anniversary means that we will be required to be nimble in order not to duplicate activities
3. Negative impressions of war in general may impact people’s opinion on commemorating wars
4. The Lincoln & Welland Regiment has been looking for funding for several years and may be getting closer to open a larger regimental museum.
5. Increase in the cost of living and travel
6. Vagaries of Town Grant fund decisions
7. Competition for donor funding

Strategic Priorities for the Niagara Historical Society

1. Increased Financial Sustainability and Capacity

- 1.1 Increase the Town's awareness of and investment in the Museum
- 1.2 Develop a revenue growth strategy
- 1.3 Implement major fundraisers
- 1.4 Develop a Planned Giving program

2. Ensure adequate space

- 2.1 Expand and renovate the Museum facility
- 2.2 Develop a collection review and deaccession plan

3. Enhance community engagement

- 3.1 Expand our outreach programming
- 3.2 Improve communication to members
- 3.3 Enhance the visitor experience

Action Plan

1. Strategic Goal: Increased Financial Sustainability and Capacity						
Objectives	Activities	Steps	Responsibility	Date of completion	Projected costs	Potential funding sources
1.1 Increase the Town's awareness of and investment in the Museum	Annual presentation to Town Council about the Museum's activities and our needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create template presentation (key talking points) 2. Analyze Town contribution over the last 5 years in comparison to expenses. 3. Schedule meeting presentations with Town Clerk 	-Staff -Board of Directors	Ongoing	0	-
	Through Town Liaison committee, strengthen relationship with Town	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Town Councillors to become a line item on the budget 2. Increase the financial contribution from the Town 3. Increase communications with Town Staff and Councillors 	-Board of Directors -Staff	2016	0	-
1.2 Develop a revenue growth strategy	Investigate the feasibility of a gift shop on Queen Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with possible partners to gauge interest 2. Create a budget to gauge feasibility 3. Research grants that will provide start up funds 4. Meet with potential partners to outline the logistics 	-Finance committee -Staff	2018	TBD	Trillium Foundation
	Phoenix Circle Membership Drive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate benefits/experiences more clearly 2. Identify interested parties within our regular membership 3. Contact those who may be interested in joining 4. Follow up phone calls to confirm 	-Membership and Development Committee -Staff	ongoing	-	-
	Create a line of museum products to be sold in our gift shop & shops in NOTL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review collection and develop catalogue of possible images that can be reproduced and purchased 	-Staff -Publications Committee	2017	TBD	-

1.3 Implement major fundraisers	Niagara Polo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local volunteer committee 2. Provide administrative support for the event 3. Prepare and implement a marketing strategy 	-Staff -Polo committee	2016	TBD	Sponsors, ticket sales
	150 th Anniversary of Canada- Fundraiser	TBD	-Membership and Development -Staff	2017	TBD	TBD
1.4 Develop a Planned Giving Program	Communicate Bequest opportunities and Stock Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold an information session for members which outlines the different ways one can give 	-Finance Committee -Membership Committee -Staff	Ongoing	-	

2. Strategic Goal: Ensure adequate space

Objectives	Activities	Steps	Responsibility	Date of completion	Projected costs	Potential funding
2.1 Expand and renovate the Museum facility	Follow recommendations on the feasibility study by Lord Cultural Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research potential capital grants 2. Fundraising Feasibility study 3. Attendance and Operating Revenue Projections 4. Preparation of a Functional Programme 5. A More Sophisticated Capital Costing 	-Staff -Project Mgmt/Logistics Ctte Fundraising Ctte	2017	TBD	
	Produce architectural drawings of new building expansion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide on budget 2. Work with town and neighbours 3. Put out RFP or competition 4. Choose design 	-Staff -Project Mgmt/Logistics Ctte	2017	TBD	
	Implement a capital campaign to secure funds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have an information session with a professional fundraiser 2. Hire a professional fundraiser 3. Develop a list of potential sponsors 	Fundraising Ctte	2017	TBD	
	Develop permanent exhibitions for new space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and write text 2. Choose artefacts for display 3. RFP for exhibit design 4. Award contract 	-Staff -Project Mgmt/Logistics Ctte	2020	TBD	Federal grants, Trillium Foundation, Donors
2.2 Develop a collection review and deaccession plan	Develop a collections review process and evaluation chart	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Conduct the review process location by location in the storage rooms. If necessary, bring in volunteer consultants to assist. 6. Tabulate results and present to the CC to review and provide recommendations. 	-Staff -Volunteers -Collections Committee	Ongoing	0	

	Conduct deaccessioning process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a communications document about the deaccessioning process and its necessity to distribute to the membership. 2. Once objects have been identified for possible deaccession during the collections review, the CC will recommend a method of disposal. 3. Process the deaccessions through the records system. 4. Find an appropriate home for the object in a similar institution or, if necessary, send the items to an auction house. 5. All proceeds will be added to the Collections budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff -Collections Committee -Board of Directors 	Ongoing	0	
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3. Strategic Goal: Enhance community engagement

Objectives	Activities	Steps	Responsibility	Date of completion	Projected costs	Potential funding
3.1 Expand our outreach programming with mobile museum	Development of mobile structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research design and cost 2. Find out if there are any restrictions for parking/storing, etc 3. Purchase plans and building materials 4. Get building company to oversee and volunteers to assist 5. Build “tiny museum” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -staff -volunteers -Membership and Development 	2016-2017	TBD	Anonymous donor
	“Pop up” events in the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore possible locations in community. 2. Develop partnerships with community organizations and events 3. Develop education kits for schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff -Membership and Development Committee 	2018 (ongoing)	TBD	
	Offsite mini exhibitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore possible locations in Niagara-on-the-lake where a mini exhibition could be mounted temporarily. 2. Research possible themes that relate to the location. 3. Mount exhibition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff -Board of Directors 	2018 (ongoing)	\$3,000	-Sponsorship- depending on the theme of the exhibit.
3.2 Improve communication to members	Promote email communication with our members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote email communication at museum events and in the newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff -Board of Directors 	ongoing	\$0	-
	Promote Museum’s social media and our website to members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop 2 year Social Media plan and policy 2. Communicate benefits of following the museum on social media 3. Article in the newsletter about social media activities. 4. Include social media graphics on rack cards and posters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Board of Directors 	2016	\$0	-

	Publication on the beginning of the Niagara Historical Society- Janet Carnochan Historical Notes in the local newspaper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct research in the Society files 2. Develop a framework for the publication 3. Write a draft to be reviewed by the Publications Committee 	-Staff -Volunteers	2018	TBD	-
3.3 Enhance the visitor experience	Develop Community events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heritage Festival 2. First Fridays Series with MONA 3. Partner with local groups to deliver new programming 		Ongoing	TBD	
	Increase the number of professional staff at the Museum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff and the Finance Committee will meet and explore options for hiring another staff person. 2. Explore potential of Brock University Co-op students and/or interns from other University programs 	-Staff -Finance Committee -Board of Directors	2017	TBD	-Museum budget -Town support
	Repoint the Society historical markers around the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine which historical markers require work from the report conducted in 2010. 2. Re-install plaques on markers where text is no longer visible. 3. Upload the marker locations to our website. 	Staff	2018 IN PROGRESS	\$10,000	-Foundations -Private sources
	Develop 5 years of temporary exhibitions for Memorial Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life Under Canvas until April, 2016 2. Janet's Gems – 120 Years of Collecting (2016) 3. 150th anniversary of Canada – Cultural Mosaic (2017)-Title TBD 4. Polish Soldiers 100th Anniversary (2017) 5. Niagara's Founding Families 6. Historic homes in Niagara 7. Travelling exhibits where applicable 	Staff	2016-2020	\$3,000 - \$10,000 annually	-Grants -Sponsors -Foundations -Society budget -Legacy Fund (Heritage Canada)
	Develop an animation project for Canada's 150th	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and write scripts 2. Contract animation 3. Outreach and education package for school 4. Make available online 	Staff	2017	50,000	Canada 150 Fund