

Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol



STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2018

Christine Lockett Associates
Beverly Dywan/Design in Three Dimensions
November 30, 2012

Ms Meighan Wark
County Librarian &
Director of Cultural Services
Huron County Library,
Museum & Historic Gaol
110 North Street
Goderich
Ontario N7A 2T8

December 20, 2012

Dear Ms Wark

We are happy to submit the Strategic Plan, 2013 – 2018 for the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol. It has been a great pleasure to work with you and the dedicated staff of the Museum and Gaol, and to gather the thoughtful feedback of the many visitors, County staff, stakeholders and community members who completed surveys and attended meetings.

Yours sincerely

Christine Lockett
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Beverly Dywan
Design in Three Dimensions

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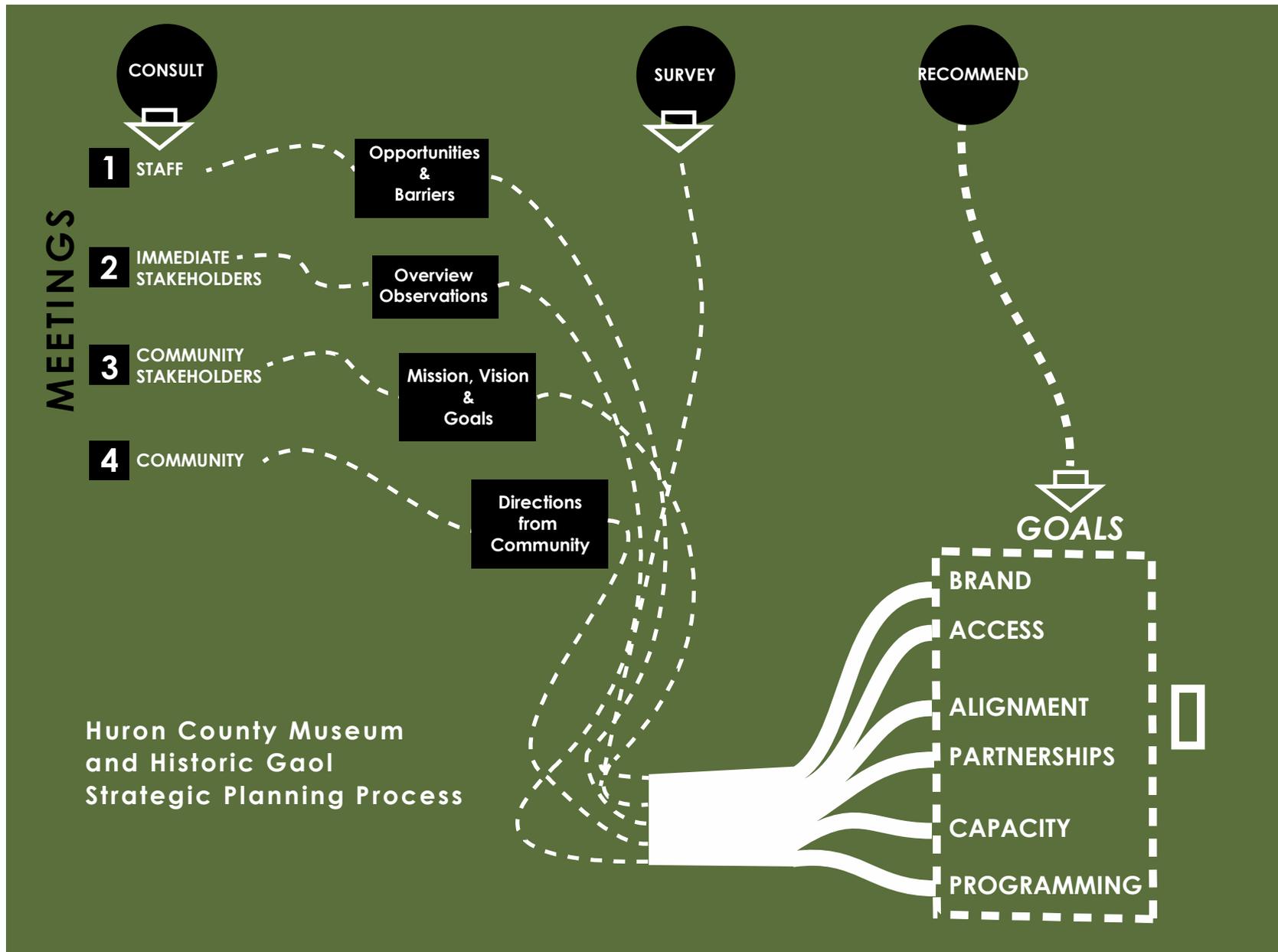
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is the summation of a strategic plan process, which took place from June - November 2012. In renewing the strategic plan an opportunity arose to review prospects and challenges with regards to the museum and archives space planning, as well as storage, strategic partnerships with other organizations, sponsorship, events, membership and promotion. The plan was developed in consultation and collaboration with the leadership, staff, volunteers and community of the Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol (HCMHG).

The process included four meetings, which took place over five months, to help gain input and insights through a series of stakeholder group sessions. The input began with the staff, and moved outward to volunteers and affiliated governance and heritage stakeholders, then to community stakeholders and finally to an open Town Hall process. This included an on-line survey, with wide community publicity. All meetings were held at the Museum, save the last, which was held at the Bainton Gallery in Blyth.

In addition, context for the strategic plan was established via a review of key documents and information collected from comparable museums.

The strategic planning process has resulted in proposed new Mission and Vision statements and six priority goals, for consideration by Council. These foundational statements are outlined below. The external factors and discussions that led to the formation of these salient factors are discussed in more detail in the body of the report. The report concludes with some suggestions for strategic directions and initiatives that will support the six priority goals.



MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement is the backbone of any organization. It is its purpose or reason for being. The existing Mission Statement for the HCMHG was last determined in the 1980s.

A revised Mission Statement was the result of consulting with HCMHG staff, the chair of Huron County's Committee of the Whole Day 2, the Warden, and stakeholders from the heritage community. This was a day-long workshop that analyzed the current Mission Statement, Vision and Goals. A more modified and condensed mission was determined, based on critical discussion about the Collection, Resources, and Audience for the Museum and Gaol.

The new Mission Statement for consideration by Council is:

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

VISION

The Vision for an organization is aspirational. It outlines what and where the organization wants to be, and may be a long term view. There was no existing Vision Statement for the HCMHG.

The Vision Statement determined through this process, for consideration by Council is:

The vision of the Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol is to nurture and inspire heritage and culture through partnerships and collaboration in our communities.

GOALS

Goals are an actionable way to gather the mission statement and vision of the Museum into a tangible, targeted direction.

Six key strategic goals for the period 2013 to 2017 were identified for the Huron County Museum and Gaol through the Strategic Planning process:

- 1) *To create a distinct brand for the Museum***
- 2) *To align physical facilities with future aspirations***
- 3) *To increase access to the Museum's resources***
- 4) *To develop community partnerships***
- 5) *To build capacity for:***
 - improving visitor service***
 - extending marketing and communications reach***
 - increasing the number of members and volunteers***
 - improving skills in event planning***
 - obtaining sponsorships***
- 6) *To drive an increase in attendance through dynamic programming***

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol (HCMHG) is made up of the Museum proper, at 110 North St, and the Gaol, at 181 Victoria St, N. Goderich ON. The Huron County Museum was established between 1948 and 1950.

By-law 49-1949 gave an historic committee "charge of all historic documents and articles and responsibility for housing museum articles and anything of historic value". In 1950, the County purchased the old Goderich Central School from the Goderich Board of Education for use as a museum.

The original Museum collection was created by Mr. Joseph Herbert Neill (1885-1969), as a result of a lifetime of collecting of objects from Huron County and elsewhere. In 1948 he sold all of his 1,000 objects to the County of Huron and became the first curator of the Museum. Over the next 15 years, Mr Neill continued to collect, and added a log cabin to the museum grounds, for use as his residence. It is now occupied by the Huron Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society.

In 1989 a new addition to the Museum was opened. Both the new wing and the Central School building were brought up to current building and museum standards. Today, the Huron County Museum consists of over 25,000 sq. ft. of gallery and support space and an additional 15,000 sq. ft. of collections storage and maintenance space. The facility also includes archival stacks, an archives reading room and Corporate Records storage.

In 1991 the Museum amalgamated with the Historic Gaol, a National Historic Site. There are three additional sites: the Marine Museum, located on town property near the beach in Goderich, the Sky Harbour Gallery, located near the Goderich Airport, and Tiger Dunlop's Tomb. The Museum also stores collections at several off-site storage buildings. The Sky Harbour Gallery and Tiger Dunlop's Tomb are unstaffed sites. All sites were reviewed and considered for the strategic planning activities.



CURRENT CONTEXT

The population of Huron County is relatively stable, at about 60,000 people. The demographic is older than the provincial median, with a significantly higher proportion of seniors (17.9%) compared to the province (13.6%). Most of the population is of English, Scottish, or Irish descent, with foreign-born immigrants representing less than 0.5% of the population. The population density is low and severe winter weather can sometimes make travel during the winter difficult.

A Huron County Official Plan was adopted in 1999 under By-law 30-1998. The Community Services section of this document notes that the community has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, which includes sites of archaeological value. The plan notes that:

The community will have regard for the conservation and wise management of its significant built heritage resources, natural heritage and cultural heritage landscapes. An inventory of heritage resources in the County is encouraged.

In 2005 the Corporation of the County of Huron applied for funding to federal Cultural Capitals program and was turned down with "lack of a municipal cultural plan" as a main factor in the decision. This event was the catalyst for preparing the comprehensive Huron County Cultural Plan of February 2008. This plan lays out the economic and social benefits of a vibrant cultural sector, the challenges for the cultural sector, and many recommendations for improvement and growth. The next year, the Economic Development Opportunities Blueprint noted that within the target sector of Culture and the Creative Economy the Huron County Cultural Plan of 2008 should be implemented. The following year, the County prepared a Five Year Review of the Official Plan, which endorsed the Cultural Plan as providing a framework for priorities and cultural development. The 2010 Official Plan also stipulated that an inventory of heritage resources would be compiled. This inventory was completed in 2012 and the results published in the document Huron County Cultural Mapping: Lake, Land and Local.

In summer 2012, an Ad Hoc committee of volunteers from the Huron County Historical Society, interested in the preservation of archival material for the County of Huron, created a report entitled Preservation of Archival and Heritage Material in Huron County. Recommendations from this report allude to the great interest and concern for the preservation of archival materials from Huron County. With its deep and rich history, and its many municipalities containing separate



and distinct stories as told through their archives, it is a document that Council has mandated the HCMHG to consider in tandem with the growing need for storage and facilities at the HCMHG.

Some of the seminal findings of the 2008 Cultural Plan still resonated during the 2012 discussions held to create this Museum strategic plan. Some overarching themes of the 2008 Plan that remain current:

- Funding and support from all levels of government lacking
- Youth and children's programming focus needs developing
- No money in budget for staff training
- "silos"—little networking and sharing among groups
- Small budgets to advertise and promote events
- Ongoing discussion about how "Goderich-centred" the HCMHG is or should be

GOVERNANCE

The four sites noted earlier are operated by the County of Huron. The land on which the Marine Museum is located is town property. The building in which the Sky Harbour Gallery is located is owned by the Town of Goderich. The Museum reports to the Committee of the Whole Day 2. Museum staff are County employees.

The HCMG receives some of its funding from the Provincial government through the Community Museum Operating Grant program. Each year, as part of the granting process, CMOG reviews community museums applying for grants against established standards. In 2010 one of the standards being assessed was Governance. The HCMG met the Standard for having a mission statement that identified the purpose of the museum. However, the Standard of "clear understanding of Board's and management's roles within the function of the museum" was identified as not being met. As follow up actions relating to governance, CMOG requested that a Ministry Governance standard be submitted and that a strategic plan be developed. These two initiatives are currently underway.



OPENING HOURS

Museum hours are Monday – Saturday 10 am – 4:30 pm, Sundays 1 – 4:30 pm.

Gaol hours are the same, from early May to late October. In the Fall, the Gaol is open Sundays to Friday from 1:00 to 4:30 and on the Saturdays from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The Marine Museum is open daily in July and August from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm.

The Sky Harbour Gallery is unstaffed and opens by appointment or during special events such as Doors Open.

As the Museum and Historic Gaol are County-run facilities, they are closed on public holidays: Good Friday and Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year's.

Operating hours are similar to public service hours, ie a 4:30 closing time. This restriction prohibits volunteers from the teen sector to help out after school. Evenings may see occasional meeting use, if the wages for an attending staff member are paid.

ADMISSION RATES

Current admission rates to all sites are as follows: Adult \$7.50, Seniors \$6.50, Student \$5.50, Child \$4.00, Family \$25, Preschool free, Members free.

These admission rates are broadly in line with the rates charged at other county museums (please see Appendix 1). During the course of the Strategic Planning Retreat it was suggested that the revenues from admissions (\$44,000) is less than the cost to the County of collecting and processing admission revenues. Admission at some comparable museums is free - this is the case at the Wellington County Museum where a donation in lieu of an entry fee is suggested. Under this system, the Wellington County Museum has found that donations almost match admissions.

FACILITIES AND RENTAL EVENTS

The Museum contains a theatre, meeting rooms and two temporary galleries. The galleries are used almost continuously, and the other facilities are used occasionally, with rentals annually making up 1435 admissions (2011 numbers), and rental income of \$3500. The Gaol, with the Governor's House, does not have rental facilities per se. It is our understanding that the furniture in the Governor's House is not original but donated, and represents a similar type of furnishing that would have been in place in the late 19th/early 20th century. The Gaol has a large enclosed yard, where some programs take place in a secure location, one in which people are able to move around.

ONSITE ATTENDANCE

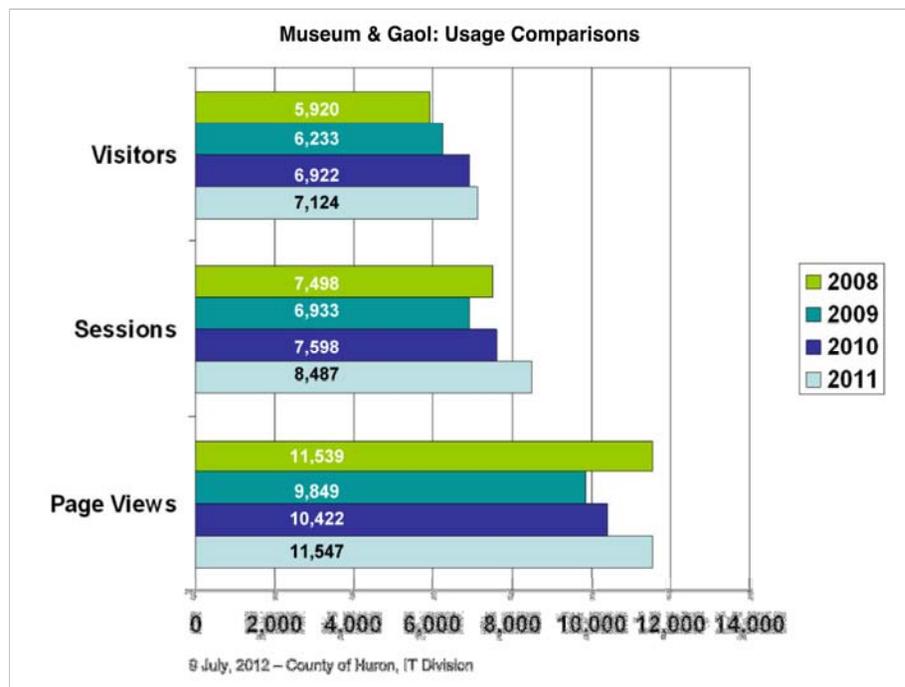
The attendance to all of the sites combined for the HCMHG, for 2011 was 17,255. With the addition of programs, the numbers increase to 18,703. The five years leading up to 2011 averaged about 23,000 annual visitation.

The Marine Museum welcomed 1,377 visitors during July and August in 2011, with an average of 1,670 in each of the five years previous. Revenue derived from visitation is difficult to ascertain because of an untracked multi-site ticket offer.

Sky Harbour is open by request. Attendance numbers are not available, however low visitation there is the result lowered activity at the airport.

Attendance analytics shows a trend toward enhanced visitation during special events. February's Family Day has created an upsurge in attendance since new programming was initiated at the Museum. The Gaol enjoys success in visitation during the 'Behind the Bars' event, and averages 1620 visitors per month in July and August, higher than the Museum's attendance by 500 visits during those month.

VIRTUAL VISITS THE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA:



Web analytics indicate that web hits to the HCMHG site are increasing. Traditionally, museums used their physical attendance as the benchmark for their popularity. The Internet has changed all that. As more people are using the Internet for research and entertainment, many museums have increased their web presence, and use it as a marketing and engagement tool. Visitation to websites is a clear analytical tool for institutions, to point interest from outside parties to funders, government, and potential sponsors.

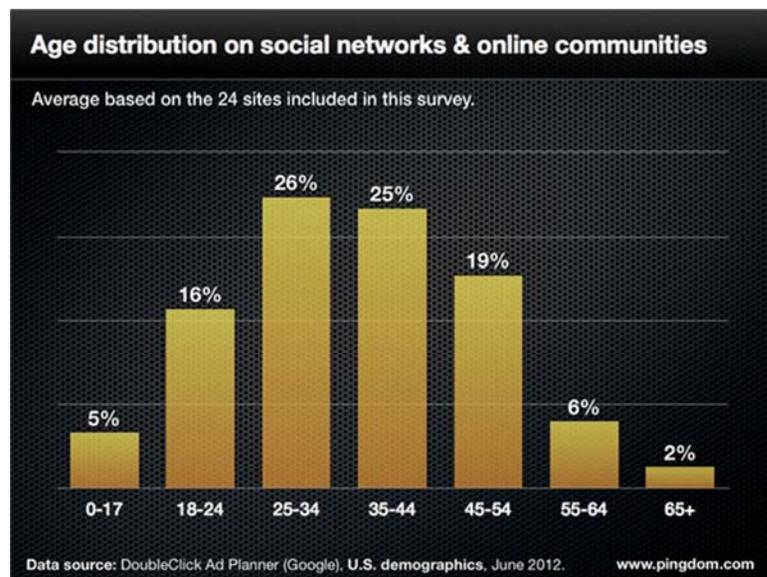
The HCMHG website sits within that of the Huron County site. It necessarily conforms to the look, feel and navigation of that site. Changes to the site are accessed through the IT division of the County of Huron, as are the Facebook page and the Twitter account. As the maturity and electronic evolution of the Museum grows, and continue to in this digital age, the sophistication and ongoing fluidity of websites will be a necessity. The Museum's independence to engage its visitors will give it the capacity for direct

feedback that it can use to analyze and customize its Internet presence.

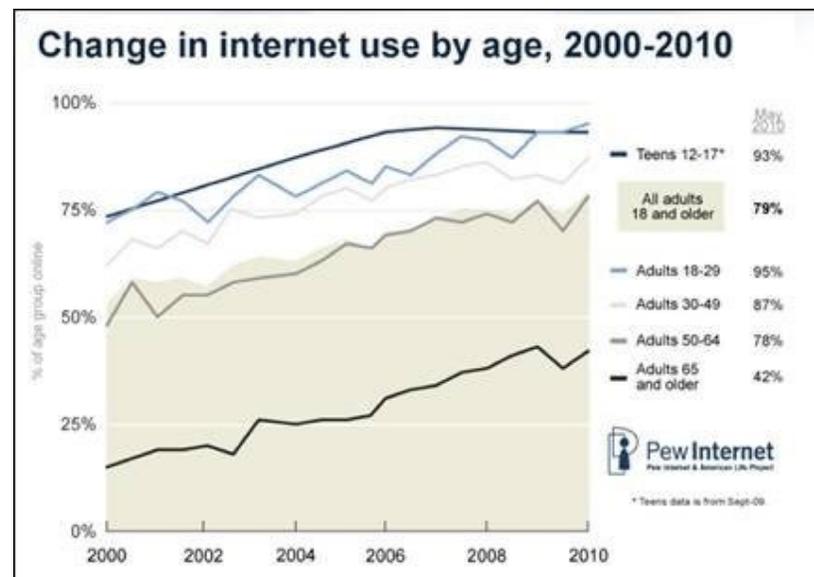
Flickr, Wikipedia, Vimeo, Youtube, Twitter, Pinterest and other social media portals are access points for many people to their interests. Trends indicate that Twitter users are getting younger, while Facebook participants are getting older. The world is connected, and the essence of social media is to be social - to create connections and to use these for real encounters. The Museum, in analyzing the social media connections it is creating, can evolve its presence within the community by asking for meaningful interaction and paying attention to what their connectors are giving them as feedback. Response to this commentary can then be used to make decisions about exhibits and events that have already been noted as interesting. This alludes to a current trend toward prototyping activities prior to their actual building, which can save time, energy and effort if performed prior to implementation.

As the Museum moves toward the middle of this century, digital media will be within the vast majority of the public's purview. This movement will evolve the ways in which the Museum communicates, and its public participates. The following charts show the current age ranges participating in online communities, and the changes of simple Internet use since 2000. In every age category, accessing the Internet has increased as adults' information acquisition. Data such as this points out the ever-shifting digital climate within which all business must operate now. Using it to its advantage is an important factor in growing audiences and staying relevant.

As the museum's demographic ages, the trend toward normative communication becomes a pressure. Seniors and younger are embracing this electronic communication medium. The effective use of the Internet and social media are



2012



2000-2010

strong factors to be considering for the future embrace of the Museum's community.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

The participation of volunteers and community groups are essential to the vitality of any museum.

The Museum Friends (a volunteer group) are a key ally to the HCMHG. The library system provides free passes to the HCMHG, and has 'Museum on the Go' programs for free (which have a cost if experienced at the HCMHG). Ontario Genealogical Society - Huron Branch uses the Museum's theatre for their meetings. The potential reach of museums is guided by the social networks of its community, and its community can become the best unpaid sales reps for them, if the relationships are nurtured effectively.

Community imperatives are important to staff - a personal connection creates both the enjoyment of being a part of the community, and the burden of expectation. However, outside organizations may not always be familiar with the time needed to create displays or other activities necessary for the Museum's involvement in their events. This has been noted as a bottleneck for effective time management.



A key strategy to move the museum into a position of increased relevance in the region will involve undertaking a more strategic approach by programming in partnership with community groups. The advantages of these partnerships are: cost sharing, audience development, and access to new avenues for marketing. The development of strategic partnerships takes time and focus, however, which is challenging in the context of the current heavy workload of museum staff. One outcome of this new approach is likely to be a limit on the Museum's ability to provide resources for unscheduled requests for participation in community events. A Community Advisory Council, made up of local arts, heritage, and educational groups was mentioned frequently in the course of consultations as a mechanism for encouraging strategic planning of partnership-based community programming.

One model for programming developed through strategic partnerships is the Museum's current involvement in the international public-private partnership 2013 Remembrance for the Great Lakes Storm of 1913. This has woven many relationships, the Museum being just one, and was a project created by people in the County interested in its heritage.

EXHIBIT THEMING

From information received from the HCMHG: "The ordinary and extraordinary lives and events surrounding the historical founding, settlement and culture of Huron County are captured in our permanent exhibitions. Special highlights pertaining to this region's connections with the Scottish colonial promoter John Galt and The Canada Company, late 19th and early 20th century farming, plus the beginnings of this region's salt industry feature prominently in the Museum's collections."

Also provided was a list of temporary exhibits, which are drawn from the collection, or borrowed exhibits. The annual Huron County Art Show and Sale proves to be a popular exhibit in the temporary exhibitions gallery on the main floor.

During the Strategic Planning process, an on-line survey asked respondents about the likelihood of visiting exhibits about various topics if they were presented at the HCMG (see Appendix Two for the complete survey results). One hundred and twenty-two responses were received to this survey. This response rate is enough to indicate trends, but is not effectively generalizable.

The three most popular survey topics for exhibits which took advantage of the Museum's collections, were:

- Weather events such as The Storm of 1913 or the Tornado of 2011
- Famous individuals from the County
- Families of Huron County

When considering preferred topics for travelling exhibits borrowed from other museums, the survey results were:

- Ice Age Mammals
- Fashion During World War II
- Our Feathered Friends: an Introduction Bird Watching

The importance of involving the community when making selections of subject matter for exhibitions was emphasized in the feedback from the Ministry to HCMG's 2011 grant application for Community Museum Operating grant funding. The Ministry has requested that HCMHG update the Exhibitions Policy to include a process of including the community when selecting and developing exhibitions.

COLLECTIONS AND STORAGE

Collections Policy

The topics of the collections, their rate of growth, and storage are inextricably linked, and are considered together here.

Currently there are 30,123 object records in the collection; 9,874 archival records; 6,781 photograph records; and 1,077 library records. There is no acquisitions budget for the museum and so all items that are part of the collection are donations.

The collection policy is defined as:



"Huron County Museum was established to house the collection of J.H. Neill, to collect, preserve, study, exhibit and interpret objects that pertain to the historical founding, settlement and culture of Huron County. The [HCMHG] is committed to maintaining a collection management process that enables the best possible management of its collection, thus preserving the history of Huron County and its residents."

On the County of Huron's website, the following information is seen on the Museum's collection donation page: "The Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol accepts donations of artifacts into the Collections. We are extremely judicious about adding to the collections and want to ensure that everything we collect is of high quality and fits within our mandate", and provisos that the artifacts are historically significant to Huron County, in good condition and are permanently donated.

The collections policy contains a section on de-accessioning and some de-accessioning does take place on an irregular basis. During the Strategic Planning Retreat it was suggested that de-accessioning be undertaken regularly.

During the consultation process, collections were identified as a key resource of the museum that are currently underutilized. To improve access to collections, a number of strategies were noted: change exhibitions on-site more frequently, get more collections digitized and online, and send small exhibitions out into community venues such as storefronts. Another form of collecting, i.e. recording oral histories, is another area that could create additional strength as an interpretive history element, and an additional electronic collection format.

Focused parameters for collecting can ensure that future growth is sustainable. With a qualitative analysis of the collections, factors that could be considered are:

- *Does the museum want to have a representative collection (objects selected to represent a theme, time period, or geographic area) or a systematic collection (objects selected to exemplify an entire range of significant types or variants within that collection category)?*
- *In what ways is the history of Huron County distinct from that of the surrounding counties and how could those special qualities guide the future focus of collecting (eg. the exceptional size of the agricultural economy, the salt mining industry, flight training schools)?*

STORAGE

Main storage in the Museum volume is 5805 sq. ft. There is climate control in place, with an RH range of 23.5 – 63% on the main level, and 25.7 - 71.5% on the second.

Airport storage location: 8127 sq ft, with no climate control. [There are additional items kept outside, exposed to the elements.]

The **Marine Museum** has a total of 1069 sq ft of storage with no climate control. Vulnerable items are returned to the main museum storage in September.

Sky Harbour has 860.5 sq. ft. of storage with an RH range of 30 – 82%

Storage of Records for the Corporation of the County of Huron are contained within the main Museum's storage, occupying 770 sq ft the middle floor of 3 'layers' of storage. Corporate Records retention are legally required, and many are accessed daily. Although they do not specifically need climate control, they need to be both accessible and secure. The original agreement, from memory by museum staff, was a 12-14 month period of storage for Corporate Records. It has become 12-14 years.

Upon visiting the various storage facilities of for the HCMHG, a variety of standards are indicated, as may be inferred from the statistics above.

There are pressures on the storage, and what can be seen are the following:

- The collection is quite large, and in need of suitable storage that meets industry standards. The collection is in need of analysis based on qualitative measures, to ensure its relevance.
- Storage conditions at the locations outside the main museum do not meet accepted standards. Artifacts are inaccessible at the airport location, because of structural instability of the storage unit. Conditions for successful retention of metal, wood or other organic material are not met in that location. In any artifact storage, general museum guidelines ask for a reasonably consistent temperature and relative humidity. Some gradual and minimal seasonal fluctuation is acceptable. An acceptable range is normally 40% to 60%. According to the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario: *This condition applies to all buildings physically capable of maintaining these standards and to all additions to existing buildings or sites. Some buildings, because of structural or historical considerations, may require that this range be adjusted. Such adjustments must be based on individual assessments carried out in consultation with Ministry technical staff.*
- County Corporate records consume a percentage of the only storage location with climate control equipment. Although these are important records to retain for their useful period, they need not be located at the Museum.

BUDGET ASSESSMENT

General Note

There are generally accepted standards for assigning budget categories within museums and for allocating the percentage of the total budget within those categories. This assessment compares the percentages of costs in the various budget categories of the HCMHG budget with the generally accepted percentages for museums. In particular, this assessment looks at the categories of, salaries and benefits, occupancy costs, curatorial, exhibitions, and marketing. The cost categories considered are shown on the table that follows, together with the normal cost distribution for museums.

Staff Costs/Salaries and Benefits

The industry standard for staff costs is between 50% and 60% of total operating costs. The current HCMHG budget shows staff costs including benefits as \$535,116 which is 45% of the total budget expenditure of \$1,183,356.

Occupancy Costs

Occupancy Costs cover the cost of rent, grounds keeping, janitorial services, maintenance and repairs, operation of security systems and insurance. The HCMHG budget does not include a specific category called Occupancy Costs, but

it can be calculated to be approximately \$495,791 from the HCMHG budget from items in the HCMHG Operational category, as shown below:

HCMHG Operational Category:

- Rent	\$488,376
- Maintenance Contracts	\$3217
- Insurance	\$1822
- Security	\$976
- Janitorial	\$300
- Grounds	\$500
Maintenance & Repairs	<u>\$600</u>
Total Occupancy Costs =	\$495,791

The norms for Occupancy Costs are between 15% and 20% of total expenditures. The HCMHG Occupancy Cost is 42% of total expenditures. There may also be costs within the HCMHG Purchased Services category that should also be included within Occupancy Costs, but the significant item within this category is the rent cost.

Columns 5 and 6 in the table following postulate reducing the Occupancy Cost at HCMHG from 42% of the total expenditure to 20%, achieved by reducing the cost of rent from \$488,376 to \$175,000.

Curatorial and Conservation Costs

It is recommended that museums reserve 5% to 10% of their running costs for the non-salary costs of curatorial and conservation. The HCMHG line for curatorial supplies is \$11,580. Currently, curatorial supplies represent 1% of total expenditures.

Exhibitions and Public Program Costs

It is recommended that museums reserve 10% to 15% of their running costs for the non-salary costs of exhibits and education. The HCMHG line for exhibits and for program supplies and costs is \$18,200. Currently, exhibitions and public program cost represent 2% of total expenditures.

Marketing

Industry standards for marketing by museums are 5% of their total operating expenditures. The promotions and public relations and advertising lines in the HCMHG budget show a sum of \$14,033, which is 1% of total expenditures.

Columns 7 and 8 in the table following postulate allocations to the curatorial, exhibitions and public programs, and marketing categories so that they represent 5%, 10% and 5% of the total budget, which would be within standard norms.

Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol, current and potential budget assessment

Cost Categories	Normal Cost Distribution for Museums	Huron County Museum and Gaol Current Budget		Revised Budget for 20% Occupancy Costs		Revised Budget with 10% Exhibitions, 5% Curatorial & Marketing		Revised Budget with no change in rent; 8% Exhibitions, 4% Curatorial & Marketing	
		Cost	Percentage	Cost	Percentage	Cost	Percentage	Cost	Percentage
Salaries and Benefits	50% to 60%	\$535,116	45%	\$535,116	60%	\$535,116	52%	\$535,116	39%
Occupancy Cost (includes rent or taxes, Utilities, Grounds-Keeping, Janitorial, Maintenance & Repairs, Security on Building, Building Insurance)	15% to 20%	\$495,791	42%	\$175,000	20%	\$175,000	17%	\$495,791	36%
Equipment		\$8,196	1%	\$8,196	1%	\$8,196	1%	\$8,196	1%
Purchased Service		\$48,951	4%	\$48,951	6%	\$48,951	5%	\$48,951	4%
Operational (minus Occupancy Costs above)		\$38,139	3%	\$38,139	4%	\$38,139	4%	\$38,139	3%
Program (minus Curatorial, Exhibits & Promotion)		\$13,350	1%	\$13,350	2%	\$13,350	1%	\$13,350	1%
Curatorial and Conservation Costs	5% to 10%	\$11,580	1%	\$11,580	1%	\$50,000	5%	\$60,000	4%
Exhibitions and Public Program Costs	10% to 15%	\$18,200	2%	\$18,200	2%	\$105,000	10%	\$105,000	8%
Marketing Expenses	5%	\$14,033	1%	\$14,033	2%	\$50,000	5%	\$60,000	4%
Total Expenditures	90% to 115%	\$1,183,356	100%	\$862,565	100%	\$1,023,752	100%	\$1,364,543	100%

OPERATING REVENUES MUSEUM AND GAOL (2012 Budget)

Provincial grants	\$ 64,788
Federal grants	\$ 15,161
Other (self generated)	\$ 83,100
County Levy	<u>\$1,020,307</u>
TOTAL	\$1,183,356

If the HCMG Operating Budget is to be brought in line with industry norms, then the budget will need to be re-balanced to significantly reduce the expenditures on rent, and to increase the funds raised from both self-generated revenues (admissions, rentals, gift shop, ecommerce, memberships) and from fundraising initiatives. Taken together, these initiatives would create funding levels for exhibits, programs, education and marketing that would be sufficient for dynamic public offerings that are key to the HCMHG's goals.

FUTURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

In 2011, the County commissioned a Building Condition Assessment for both the Huron County Museum site and the Historic Gaol site. For the Gaol site, it was estimated that the 20 year Capital Expenditure Forecast would total \$1,424,010, which averages \$71,200.50 per annum. The scope of this assessment did not include any structural changes that may be necessary to adapt the facility for improved access by persons with disabilities. At the same time, an assessment of the Museum site resulted in a forecast need for \$2,831,336 in capital expenditures in the course of the next 20 years, averaging \$141,566.80 annually as estimated.

This assessment was commissioned and coordinated by the County's Property Services Department.

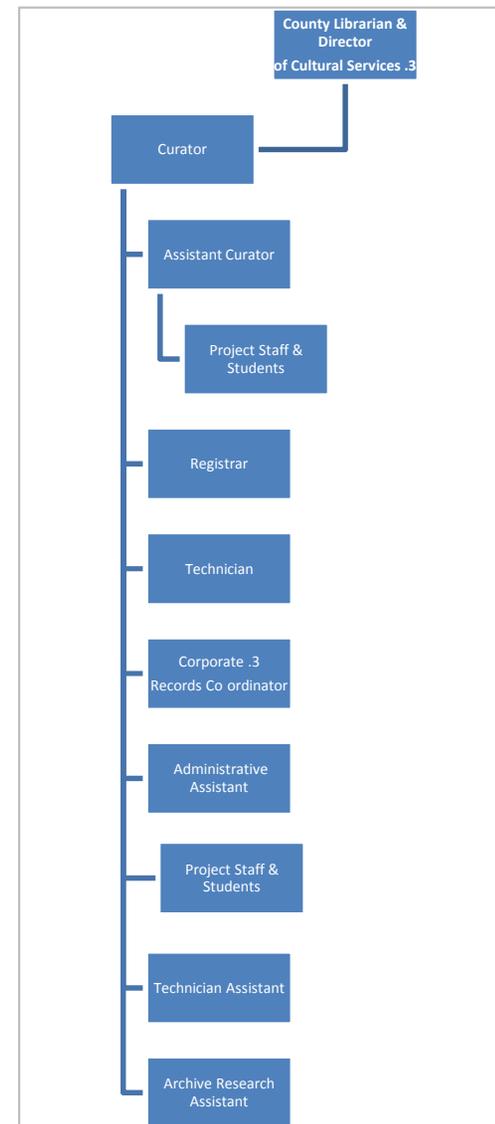
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The current organizational structure is conveyed through the organizational chart seen at the right:

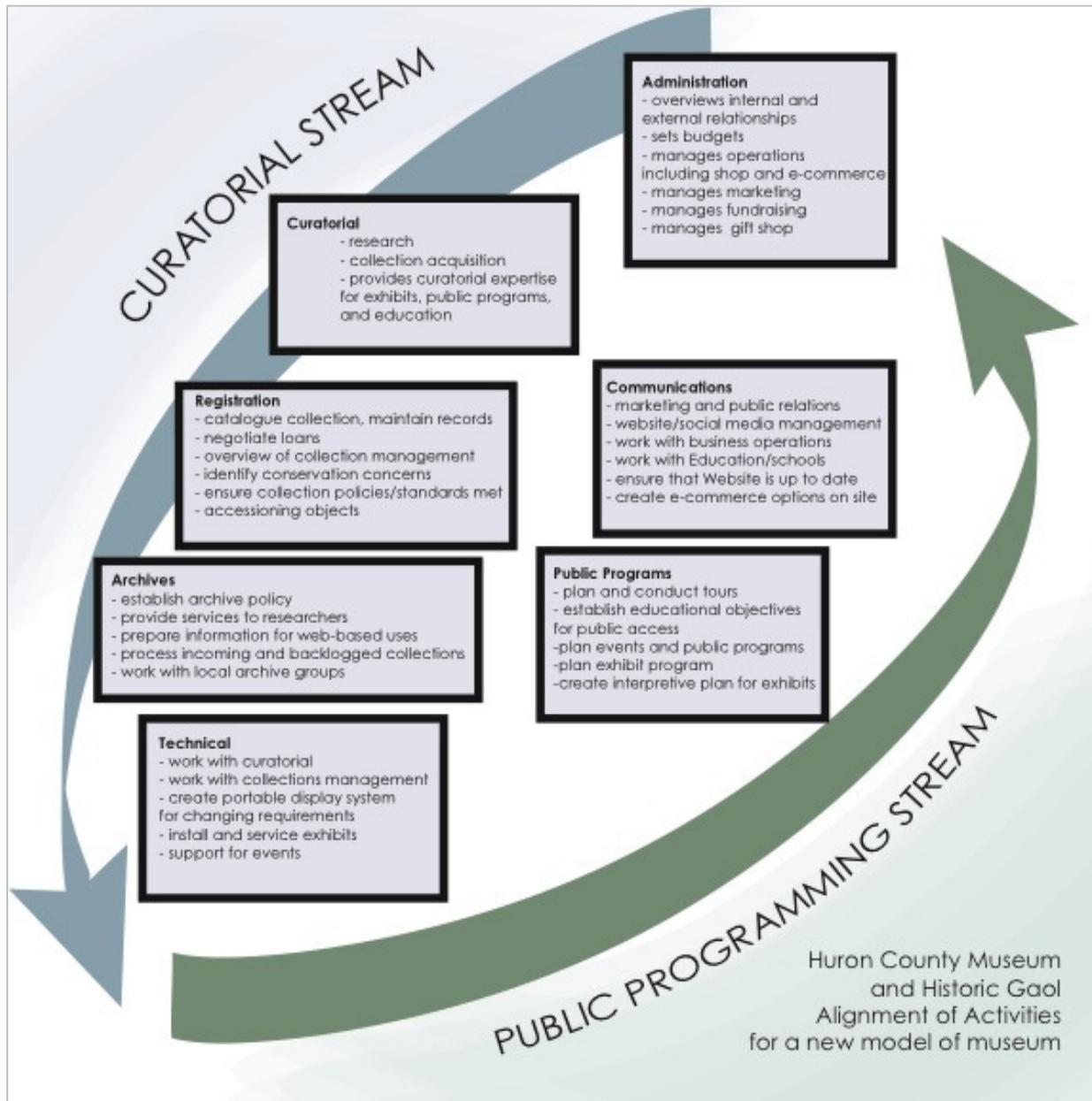
The hierarchy of the museum is based on a part time Director who also functions as Chief Librarian and Director of Cultural Services for the County of Huron (Position is .3 Museum and .7 Library). The de-facto senior role of the museum is assumed by the Curator, with all staff as direct reports, excepting project staff and students.

From the comparables noted in other Ontario Regional museums (see Appendix 1) it is noted that a two stream structure is an efficient norm for staff organization within museums, i.e. to task defined areas of expertise and activity in the curatorial OR public programming streams.

To examine the organizational structures in small museums also indicates that the 'sea change' from technology facing all institutions is being reflected in organizational development. Many areas of museum work such as fundraising, marketing and communications can embrace an effective use of new media to gather support and publicity, as can outward facing engagement options for visitors, local or international.

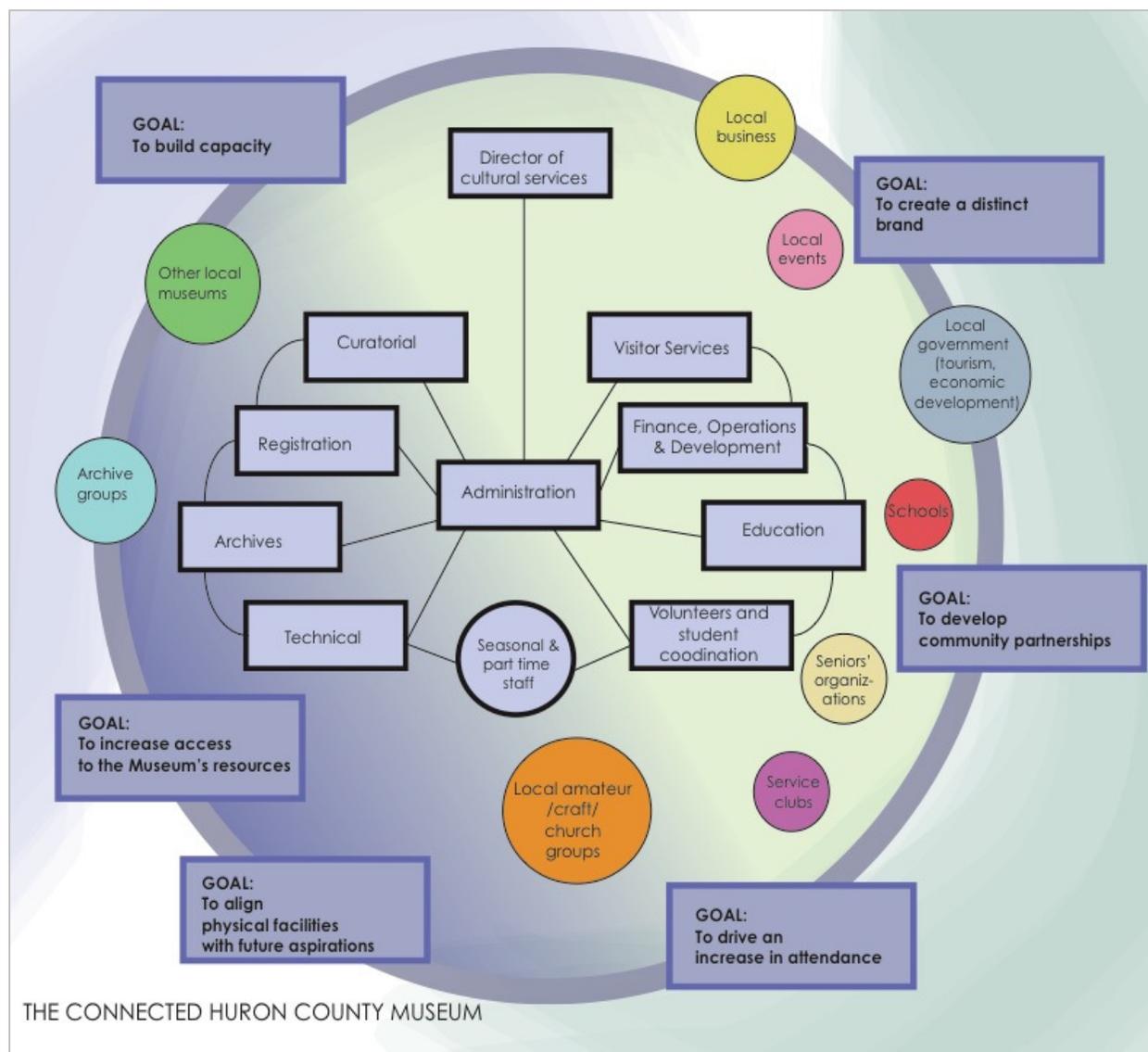


HCMHG organizational chart



One of the goals identified during strategic planning is to build capacity in a number of new skill sets. The skill sets and how they interrelate are shown here: The diagram to the left shows the two suggested streams, connected but specialized.

Since the HCMHG is the largest museum in Huron County, it may be seen as the central resource to enhance the professional capabilities of all of the heritage associations in the county. The size of Huron County dictates that people may prefer to visit a location nearer to their own municipality.



There are other smaller museums, and a number of archives within the County. A 'connected' Huron County Museum could engage strategically with these small organizations, the wealth of history research work and benefit could be shared amongst many people, often volunteers. To capture important stories is something that would be of great value within Huron County, and could underpin the information needs for many exhibits, both physical and virtual. Crowd sourcing this requirement through cooperative efforts is a new opportunity that could create a mesh of information empowering all parties to a stronger sense of heritage community.

The third meeting with community and stakeholders finalized some actionable goals for the HCMHG, as noted earlier.

Recommendations aligned to these goals from the community are an excellent start to charge the HCMHG with focused targets to take them forward. They have been prioritized from urgent through to important, but all within actionable aspirations. This prioritization will help make a strong foundation for the sequence of the other goals to then be realized.

GOALS REITERATED, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) To create a distinct brand for the Museum

Undertake a branding study to clarify and define how the Museum and its other sites align with the overall mission, vision, and goals. Analyze the potential of each site for their strengths as tourism and cultural drivers in the County of Huron.

2) To align physical facilities with future aspirations

Move the County records to a different location, and use the vacated space to store artifacts at present in unsuitable off-site locations.

Set a target rate of collections growth to inform future facility planning.

Create focused parameters for acquisitions to ensure that future growth is sustainable by undertaking a qualitative analysis of the collections.

Commission a study from an architect and engineer to develop a 20 year plan for collections storage that considers a range of alternatives from new construction through additions to existing facilities. To be coordinated with the Collections Policy and the overall archival and Corporate Records program needs for the County of Huron.

While long-term planning is underway, improve current standards for storage and care of museum collections, as seen in industry standards.

3) To increase access to the Museum's resources.

Change HCMHG opening hours so that the facilities are accessible on public holidays and for one evening per week.

Increase awareness of the location of the HCMHG sites with enhanced signage from the downtown core (for example a procession of banners to the museum), at popular tourist locations such as the Beach, interpretive labels at the outdoor exhibits, and enhanced external signage at the Historic Gaol.

Increase opening hours to the Historic Gaol to include the shoulder months, with a special Christmas program in the Governor's House. A new heating system in the Governor's House can enable this change.

As far as possible, remove collections from the Sky Harbour Gallery. Incorporate the collection into rotations in the Military Gallery or into travelling exhibits.

Help the OGS to find another location, and use the log cabin for other functions such as: a wedding chapel (as a revenue source), a small classroom, a biographical exhibit about the Museum's founder, Mr Neill.

Outside the times when in use for the Huron County Art Show, market the main floor Temporary Exhibitions Gallery (which can be teamed with the use of the theatre) for external rentals. Uses could include: corporate meetings, reunions, retreats, seminars, anniversaries etc.

It is *strongly* recommended that the HCMHG and its sites have a dedicated website. It should be accessible under AODA guidelines, and managed by the Museum; simple and nimble for changes as the Museum adds information.

4) To develop community partnerships.

Explore partnerships with:

Community Economic Revitalization Committee

Business Improvement Associations

Schools

Service Clubs

Arts, Heritage, and Archival organizations

5) To build capacity in the areas of visitor service, marketing and communications, membership and volunteers, event planning and sponsorships.

Re-balance the HCMHG budget through a reduction of rent charged by the County, and increasing self-generated revenue, to allow for increases in budget lines for exhibits, programs, education and marketing.

Appoint an Administrative Manager reporting to the Director of Cultural Services for the County of Huron. This position will assess the financial position of the Museum, and lead in revenue-generating activities, marketing, fundraising, and the creation of partnerships. This position anticipates a potential further change in the Museum's organizational structure.

Revise the organizational structure to include 2 streams: curatorial and public programming. This will strategically allow for enhanced business development, while also ensuring a strong focus on curatorial and archival work in support of the museum's Mission and Mandate.

Bring earned revenue up in all areas: admissions, rentals, retail sales, memberships, endowments, sponsorships, and donations.

Reinstate a gift shop, with e-commerce and an affiliation with the Canadian Museums Associations Museum Retail Consortium Program.

Obtain liquor event licenses to increase variety, attendance and revenues from events.

6) To drive an increase in attendance through dynamic programming

Create a community advisory group, and a community policy, to solicit the needs of the community as a mechanism for determining events, exhibits and other public and education activities.

Enhance March Break programming, in coordination with the local community and recreation centres, and libraries.

Create evening programming one day per week, to align with new evening opening hours, and to generate attendance from new audience groups.

CONCLUSION

The HCMHG is clearly a museum with an interested and dedicated staff and constituency, who are eager to meet the challenge of having the institution play a greater role in the cultural and economic life of the County. The last major investment into the HCMHG was in the building, which occurred over two decades ago. Storage is at capacity, and the public spaces need increased versatility to enable active programs for enhanced revenue generation. The current budget, after payment of rent and staff costs, is insufficient to generate programming at a level that will allow the museum to be a focus for culture, creativity and tourism, that can elevate it as a player and strong participant in the socio-economic health of the County.

The strategic planning process captured the observations from the community and immediate stakeholders of the HCMHG. Although the keen interest with which many hold the HCMHG, the challenges surfaced easily, with budget, facilities, and community partnerships rising as signature themes.

The six Goals set through this process will benefit from prioritization, and actions assigned to accomplish them- some for the next five, and some possibly up to the next twenty years. Recommendations seen throughout this report reveal issues in several areas of need. It is up to the HCMHG and the local government to take into consideration their own aspirations for what the HCMHG is to become, and how it will get there. It is at a critical juncture in its potential. If it is to evolve, its future must be taken in hand by those in the County with influence to permit the evolution it is due.

This strategic plan provides a framework to address the needs of the HCMHG, both aspirational and pragmatic. It is pointing to a clear fact - that every future decision made needs to be strategic, aligned with the vision, and progressive towards a sustainable and healthy climate of heritage and culture for Huron County. By becoming grounded, with a clear sense of purpose, the HCMHG will attract those who identify with its mission, and will invite them to support the Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol through membership, energy and funding. By being accountable to them, the HCMHG will continue to retain their support and sense of community, through responsive and adaptable leadership in Huron County, to make the region a vibrant and connected cultural and heritage destination.

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