



Pender Islands Museum Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026



Adopted January 2022

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Preface

In November 2016, Board Member Simone Marler wrote this introduction to a discussion paper about the need for Strategic Planning:

“The 2005 official opening of the Pender Islands Museum in the restored, historic Roe House was the culmination of years of dedicated effort to find a permanent home to preserve the history and development of our community. It was simply and unequivocally a huge achievement.

Now it's time to honour and sustain that remarkable effort. After 12 years in operation, the museum faces changing demographics, community and visitor expectations, and technologies that present challenges and opportunities.”

As the Pender Islands Museum moves beyond the halfway point of its 30-year lease with Parks Canada, it is opportune that a Strategic Plan be developed.

The original Strategic Plan 2018-23 grew from the desire of the museum's Board to take an active hand in shaping the future of the museum and realizing its potential. During 2018, the board made progress on each of the five major goals outlined in the plan. The plan was updated following a strategic planning meeting on April 2, 2019. Pandemic conditions prevented a further update until December 9, 2021, when the Board met again to update the plan and set out priority actions for 2022-2026. This document is the result.

We continue to agree that the Pender Islands Museum continues to be well positioned to become a “great little museum.”

1. Introduction

Small museums face myriad challenges. The best response, if the museum is to thrive, is clarity. The Board needs a clear vision, a clear sense of priorities and a clear set of actions required to be successful.

This Strategic Plan is the result of work first accomplished in April 2018 when Board members of the Pender Islands Museum, along with several invited stakeholders, met for two days to discuss, debate, and agree on a path for the museum's future.

The Plan described a vision for the organization as well as principles that will guide its actions over five years. It also laid out a series of goals and actions that the organization will focus upon.

The best plans are not static. Nor are they lengthy. They are tools that are easy to use. This Plan can - and should - be read and regularly updated. The Board reviewed and updated the plan in April 2019 and again in December 2021.

2. Our Direction

Our Mission

Our Mission Statement helps establish the purpose of our museum:

We love our Islands' stories, so we:

- **Preserve** Pender's history
- **Tell** the community's story
- **Collect** Pender's heritage
- **Show** things worth seeing
- **Celebrate** what make our Islands unique

Our Vision

Our Vision captures our aspirations. It is intended to be a "stretch."

Our Vision is to be a great little museum.

The following messages amplify our Vision:

- We are "the" place to discover the stories of the Penders.
- We are a special museum about a special island
- We are valued and enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Values

Six important values guide the work of the Pender Islands Museum:

1. Relevant

This is not a stuffy museum. It does not stand on a pedestal and lecture. It gives a real sense of the people who live(d) on the Penders.

2. Visitor-centred

When we make decisions, we keep the visitor's needs and interests as a primary concern.

3. Collaborative

We invite and enjoy working with others - other people, other organizations.

4. Trusted

We responsibly care for the heritage resources entrusted to us. We are a trusted source of information about the Islands' history.

5. Educational

We are passionate about sharing our knowledge about the heritage of the Penders.

6. Welcoming

We are hospitable and invite exploration and participation by everyone.

Audience

Everyone is welcome at our Museum. However, our exhibitions and programs will be created with two particular audiences in mind:

1. Penderites

Residents, weekenders, our guests and their families

2. Off-Islanders

Visitors and tourists

3. The Strategic Plan (2022 - 2026)

Note: In reviewing the draft of this document, the Board noted the likelihood that COVID-19 will be an ongoing disruptive force. This plan underscores the many ways in which our “great little museum” can continue to do good things, adapting operations and projects to ensure we remain relevant to our community and visitors.

Our Plan for the next 5 years confirms five Strategic Goals.

1. Improve and enrich the visitor experience

The visitor's experience at the Pender Islands Museum will be welcoming, accessible and engaging throughout. Improvements will be made in stages. Each one will be a deliberate step in support of the Vision.

2. Improve care and knowledge of the collection

Collections will be well managed, records will be comprehensive, collections information will be accessible to all, and risk to collections will be reduced. We will actively collect the stories of elders and build relationships to share the story of the Indigenous presence on our islands.

3. Strengthen the Museum's sustainability

The museum will have diverse sources of revenue including grants, sponsorships, and leverage an existing bequest. It is financially stable. The volunteer force will be stable. The Board is engaged and active. People with needed skills will be targeted for volunteer involvement in project or leadership roles. We collaborate with community organizations on shared goals.

4. Increase awareness of the Museum and what it offers

The museum will build on its identity to continue to raise its profile and increase public awareness to what it offers.

5. Improve the quality of the building and its site

A maintenance and development plan will address the facility's need for repair and renovation over the short, medium, and long term. Ongoing improvements will be made in collections care and storage.

Let's describe each Strategic Goal in turn and describe the prioritized actions required to reach our goals...

1. Improve and enrich the visitor experience

The visitor's experience will be welcoming, accessible and engaging. The story will be clearly organized. There will be key moments in the experience that are memorable.

All improvements to the visitor experience will be deliberate steps in support of the museum's Vision. Each improvement will be developed with the visitor as a central consideration.

Actions

1. *An Exhibition Master Plan*

Develop an exhibition master plan in consultation with the board and knowledgeable community members that identifies:

- a. A series of doable exhibit improvements.
- b. Key themes of exhibitions and their sequence of presentation, including a sensitive renewal of our islands' Indigenous history and presence.
- c. Integrate consultation and development into the master planning process.
- d. Improvements to be made over 5 years with identification of potential resources to accomplish them.

2. *Exhibition Interventions*

Until the master plan is implemented—and in preparation for it—continue with exhibit interventions that enhance the visitor experience:

- a. Continue to simplify the exhibitions by removing exhibition clutter.
- b. Continue to update new signage to introduce the overall story and each main theme.
- c. Continue to produce small temporary displays.
- d. Introduce a few simple but memorable interactive experiences.
- e. Highlight a few key objects in the exhibitions. Target acquisitions to fill gaps.

3. *An Appealing, Predictable Program*

Plan an attractive and predictable calendar of programs that is doable within ongoing changing health/safety parameters (e.g., events, presentations, walks, summer/youth programs), often in collaboration with other organizations.

Outcomes

Exhibition and program choices are strategic: they support a plan that in turn supports the Vision.

There is an ongoing schedule of exhibition improvements, with emphasis on the Indigenous storyline presence.

The visitor experience is of consistent quality from start to finish.

Within the likely uncertainty of public health constraints, visitation/attendance build modestly.

2. Improve the care of - and knowledge about - the collection

All museum collections and archival holdings will be catalogued; documents and photographs will be digitized and accessible in an ongoing process of 5-10 years.

There will be significant improvements in collection storage space and standards—including the archives—and risks to the collections will be reduced. Also, a long-term solution for storage needs will be addressed.

Actions

1. Address Collections Storage Future

Assess and make improvements to collections storage to achieve a higher standard of care for museum and archival collections; plan and implement a project for collection storage expansion space. (See also Goal #5)

2. Develop a Plan

In concert with the Exhibition Master Planning process, assess gaps in the collection and create a strategy to target desired artifacts and archival pieces from the community. Continue acquisition and de-accessioning, guided by the Acquisition Policy.

3. Catalogue the Collection

Continue cataloguing the collection to acceptable museum/archival standards.

4. A Focus on Local Stories

Preserve the stories and memories of elders as part of our collection. Ensure the "The Stories that Brought You Here" online series is preserved/ linked.

5. A Focus on Digitization

Continue the process of improving scanning capacity and digitize archival holdings with appropriate back-ups.

6. Online Access to Collections

Sustain and enhance a user-friendly portal to search the museum's collections.

7. Community Hall Collection

Explore the future of the museum collection and aging displays located there.

Outcomes

Key gaps in the collection are filled in line with Exhibition Master Plan. Storage is available for important objects/documents that are offered for donation.

All objects are catalogued in the museum's collections management systems.

All archival photographs are scanned and have a digital file.

Elder interviews are prioritized and conducted on an ongoing basis.

Risk to collections is reduced.

3. Strengthen the Museum's sustainability

The museum has diverse sources of revenue including grants and sponsorships. We welcome bequests.

The museum is financially stable, produces an annual budget, and has discretionary funds for important projects. It actively researches and secures new sources of money.

The volunteer force is stable. Follow-up on potential volunteers is timely and thorough. The Board is engaged and active in ensuring new board members with needed skills are recruited.

Actions

1. Grants and More

Continue to take advantage of available granting sources in a timely manner. Secure sources of community/business support. From time to time, consider paying for specialist expertise.

2. Develop the Board

Keep the Board invested and engaged in the museum's future with regular planning sessions. Pay particular attention to recruitment of new board members with key skills. Revisit the list of skill sets required and identify key committees.

3. Develop Volunteer Base

Rebuild volunteer base through continued recruitment, training, and recognition. Enhance security of volunteer hosts at the site. Add "advisor/project" roles drawn from community members willing to lead special projects.

3. Promote and Build Membership

Stay in touch with members on a bi-annual basis. Promote opportunities and benefits of volunteering for members. Identify board member to take on this role.

4. Reaching Out to Partners

Reconnect with community organizations on shared goals. Seek corporate support for important projects.

Outcomes

The museum organization is financially stable and has funds to operate and accomplish some important projects. The museum continues to take advantage of potential funding opportunities.

The Board is engaged, active and aligned. A few community members with special skills are active as advisors or on special projects.

The volunteer contingent is well supported and adapting/rebuilding from the effects of the pandemic on volunteer willingness to host.

We work effectively with community organizations on shared goals/programs.

4. Increase awareness of the Museum and what it offers

The organization will take steps to raise its profile, build on its established brand, and increase public awareness of its role, value, what it offers and what it does.

Actions

1. *A Communication Plan*

Continue to develop and deliver an annual communications plan, building on an existing set of promotional mechanisms. Build on and reconnect with previously successful *Community Outreach* efforts.

2. *Social Media Action*

Develop and implement a creative social media presence that goes beyond Facebook. Encourage positive reviews of the museum on sites such as *TripAdvisor*.

3. *An Effective Web Site*

Continue to maintain our visitor-centred web site, keeping it up to date and visually appealing. Use it more effectively as an email interface.

4. *Our Brand*

Continue to be consistent in applying the new museum's new identity to ensure a strong, consistent visual brand and consistent communications messaging.

5. *Beautiful Photography*

Update the set of high-quality photographs to capture the site and highlights of the visitor experience.

Outcomes

The residents of Pender know about and are proud of the museum; it has a strong reputation and there is awareness of its role.

Community groups with shared interests collaborate with the museum or welcome the museum's participation in their efforts.

The Museum is on the must-see list for visitors to Pender.

Over the next five years, attendance has builds back with increased repeat attendance.

5. Improve the quality of the building and its site

Over the next five years, the organization will continue to pursue steps to address the quality and functionality of its building and site.

Actions

1. *A Future for Collections Storage*
Resolve long-term storage needs.
2. *Planning for Renewal*
Use master planning process to help address interrelated exhibition, storage, and programming challenges. Continue to develop project implementation and funding details in readiness for potential grant funding.
3. *Dealing with Maintenance*
Continue multi-year maintenance schedule, in consultation with Parks Canada. Priorities include:
 - Pest management plan (may affect heating requirements)
 - Fire suppression system
 - Workroom upgrades
 - Consistency of running water & washroom availability
 - Structural load/accessibility of attic

Outcomes

Suitable off-site storage has been secured.

The museum has a capital improvement/expansion plan and cost estimates for building, maintenance, and site improvements.

Risk to collections is reduced.

Collections are stored and displayed with improved environmental conditions.

Key functions (collections, programs, exhibits, administration) are prioritized for space.

