

# 2016-2020



## MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN



**MUSEUM**  
STRATHROY-CARADOC  
*Discover Our Story!*

# Executive Summary

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc's Strategic Plan describes the direction the Museum will follow over the next five years to ensure the organization achieves its vision, mission, goals and objectives. The plan was created by the Museum Advisory Committee with the support of municipal staff.

This five year Strategic Plan was developed to optimize opportunities, enhance and develop programs and services that increase the Museum's profile, and most importantly, ensure the long term viability and vibrancy of the Museum. The plan summarizes key projects and challenges to be addressed over the next five years, and will identify and promote strategies that are essential in achieving the objectives of the Museum and the Municipality.

Finally, the plan details the programs and services that the Museum will deliver, and will describe financial and human resource allocation to demonstrate how strategies and initiatives will be realized.

A living document, this plan will become the basis of the Museum's work plan for the next five years. In 2020, it will be revised to reflect current trends, and new goals and objectives will be set to reflect the Museum's needs moving forward at that time.

To provide a framework for future planning and operation of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, the following vision and mission statements were retained as part of the planning process, inspired by the museum slogan ***Discover Our Story***:

## **Vision**

*To Encourage the  
Discovery of Our Story*

## **Mission**

*Preserve the past  
Share the experience  
Engage the community*

# Introduction

A number of significant projects have been accomplished over the past five years that have raised the profile of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc. Most notable were the renovation and expansion of the Museum location at 34 Frank Street (completed in 2012), the completion of the General Sir Arthur Currie Memorial statue (completed in 2014) with the support of the GSAC Memorial Project Committee and Veterans Affairs Canada, and the development and circulation of a national travelling exhibition entitled *The Life & Legacy of General Sir Arthur Currie* (completed in 2014), with the assistance of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Other goals achieved during this period include increased integration with the community and increased public awareness. The launch of a new website and social media platforms in 2012 have expanded our reach and engaged residents, while the development of an online collections database (2014) has greatly increased opportunities for public access to the collection. Significant acquisitions such as The Age Dispatch Collection and the R. S. Williams Glass Plate Negative Collection have also strengthened our holdings and generated public interest and media exposure.

# Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were used to shape the Strategic Directions of the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Strategic Plan:

- Maintain high levels of community satisfaction and enhance the visitor experience;
- Reach a diverse audience through marketing efforts and profile building;
- Increase the community's knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of Strathroy-Caradoc – tell our story;
- Continue to be relevant to future generations;
- Be recognized as an investment in our community's heritage and culture;
- Be a provincially recognized leader for successful community museums;
- Build upon the Museum slogan – “Discover Our Story”

# Strategic Directions

Building on the success of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, it was decided that the following five key Strategic Directions for Museum Strathroy-Caradoc would be retained to achieve the above noted goals and objectives:

**1 Enhance access, visibility and community engagement**

---

**2 Create and deliver great experiences**

---

**3 Develop partnerships that increase community involvement and support**

---

**4 Develop and maximize the value of our heritage collection**

---

**5 Manage our resources efficiently and effectively**

---

Through the implementation of the above noted strategic directions, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will endeavor to support the four pillars of the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) *Ontario's Museums 2025: Looking Ahead* vision, including the following pillars:

- Vibrant & Vital Museums
- Relevant & Meaningful Collections
- Strong & Successful Sector
- Effective & Collaborative Workforce

Based on an operational review of the Museum, the above noted Strategic Directions will build upon operational strengths and successful Museum programs and initiatives, and address areas of opportunity and improvement.



## 1 Enhance Access, Visibility, Community Engagement

---

This section examines ongoing successes and future objectives in the areas of Community Engagement Activities, Public Access to the Collection & Information, Education Programs, Community Use of Facilities, and Marketing & Communications. Through a variety of programs and initiatives, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc continually strives to engage the residents of Strathroy-Caradoc and promote community participation and ownership. The following provides a strategy that will ensure that the museum remains relevant, engaging and accessible in the years ahead:

Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be a resource and advocate for heritage resources through access, publication and educational programming in partnership with Library</li><li>• Development of signature event</li><li>• Improve visibility of Museum through partnerships with other organizations (online links, brochure exchange, etc)</li><li>• Increase use of electronic media marketing, particularly e-mail campaigns and social media outlets, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, etc.</li><li>• Enhance communication to local schools through exhibit promotional packages and classroom outreach visits</li><li>• Modernize Museum logo, solidify branding and identity in consultation with professional graphic designer</li></ul>

- Encourage tours of storage facility and identify measures to improve public interaction with the museum collection (“White glove tour”)
- Investigate reinstating day camp/summer programs for children with the support of grant-funded contract staff and community partnerships (YMCA, BIA, Art Group, SDAC, etc.)
- Develop a strategy for regular historical publications, coordinating with exhibit development
- Continue with promotion and implementation of Corporate Sponsorship Program through strategic targeting of potential sponsors
- Enhance organizational/filing systems to make resources more readily available to the public (research, etc.)
- Determine strategy to improve community engagement and patron interaction within the gallery space
- Actively promote free admission – credit Municipality and enhance perceived value
- Investigate strategies to engage library patrons and reduce discrepancy between library and museum visitors (directional signage, placement of exhibit elements, etc.)
- Investigate cross-promotional strategies in other municipal facilities
- Enhance directional signage/banners signifying the cultural district of the community and the location of the museum (utilizing visibility of Albert Street)
- Continue to develop and enhance museum outreach programs and exhibits (schools, community centres, etc), including access for members of the community who cannot visit the museum (nursing homes)
- Investigate creation and placement of museum directional signage in relation to community signage, with consideration for common routes taken by visitors, and incorporation of museum promotion with municipal welcome signage
- Utilization of municipal message board signage at the Fair Grounds Recreation Complex and Strathroy Fire Hall locations
- Engage new and diverse artists (youth, groups, etc.) and art exhibitions for the art gallery space through the promotion of call to artist submissions according to specific themes/mediums
- Facilitate the development and production of public art installations throughout the community, providing support to the Progress through Partnership committee

**Ongoing activities to enhance access, visibility and community engagement**

Since relocating to a shared facility with the Strathroy Public Library and the Strathroy Art Gallery, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc has benefitted from a high-traffic location, increased visibility, and special partnership opportunities within the community. We will continue our commitment to ongoing projects that reflect a spirit of cooperation with local organizations.



## 2 Create and Deliver Great Experiences

This section examines past successes and future objectives in the areas of Exhibitions and Displays, Public Programs and Customer Service. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc aims to provide unique experiences that engage and inspire visitors. This is achieved through the presentation of exhibitions and interpretive displays, programs and activities, tours and events, and the appropriate use of emergent technologies to enhance the visitor experience.

### Tasks

- Define, schedule and promote exhibit plan for Museum and Art Space
- Develop active program to engage artists to exhibit in Art Space, define exhibit themes through calls for submissions, identify and create exhibit opportunities through partnerships with educational institutions and arts organizations, and consider the effectiveness of the branding and naming of Art Space vs. 'Gallery'
- Promote and use Reading Garden & Art Space for special events, activities, etc.
- Investigate ways to improve separation of Art Space from computer work area in the library (glass panels)

- 
- Enhance educational component (programming, workshops, lectures, outreach, PD Day for Teachers, participation in Beyond the Blackboard, etc.)
- 
- Pursue the development of new programs and events (Museum lecture series, concert series, doors open event) to raise the profile of the Museum and engage new and diverse audiences
- 
- Expand and enhance Middlesex Heritage Trail Signage program (marketing opportunities, guided walking tours, etc.). Consider integration/promotion of businesses located in proximity to Heritage Trail signage locations (economic development component)
- 
- Visitor experience strategy – track visitor response, accept drop-box testimonials
  - Enhance interactive components (audio, touch-screen, etc.) in exhibition space
  - Improve exhibition space (gallery lighting, interpretation, seating, integration of audio, video projection to provide backdrop to items, etc.) to enhance visitor experience. See *Enhancements to Exhibit Space* document
- 
- Evaluate existing education programs and develop activities linked to exhibition themes and current curriculum (Discovery Friday program, School Edu-kits, etc)
  - Focus on enhanced customer service (hours, interpretation, accessibility, etc.), and self-directed and self-guided learning opportunities
- 
- Promote the Museum through the County of Middlesex and/or MTO Tourism Signage Strategy
- 
- In collaboration with the Corporate Services Department, develop interpretation and exhibition of Municipal History at Town Hall site (posting of historical content such as history of Mayors, could be integrated online)
  - Continue to develop Educational Collection – materials that can be handled for programming use
  - Develop space for long-term exhibit installations
  - Development of signature event to raise profile of museum and promote public awareness
  - Integrate feedback component into museum/municipal website to track visitor satisfaction, capture ideas and feedback
- 
- Development of online exhibitions and integration of publication software to allow for ‘book style’ presentation of historical information online
  - Establish a film screening series through collaboration with the London Ontario Media Arts Association
- 
- Develop a “Visiting Artist” residency program to bring professional artists to Strathroy on an annual basis, producing work and facilitating workshops at the Museum (supported by Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts)
  - To investigate opportunities to develop exhibitions that incorporate non-traditional display components
-

- 
- Introduce guest sign in table/built-in with promotions and comment box
  - Integrate pedestals and tablets into gallery space (iPad)
  - Develop lighting plan with additional fixtures for enhanced lighting in gallery (investigate integrating UV filters)
  - Finalize interpretation to aquarium feature
  - Develop more enticing donation bin option to encourage donations and provide recognition to municipal contribution
  - Create small gift shop wall, relocating the current donor recognition wall to the aquarium space for greater exposure
  - Office wall - streetscape scene as backdrop for monitor to capture history of site (Armoury)
  - Pillar directional signage for museum gallery
  - Eliminate use of museum entrance as waiting room for social services (introduce raised platform/glass pane, etc. - define as lead display space)
  - Define an exhibit prep area/solution/ office reorganization
  - Door vents in office for improved circulation for staff/volunteers
  - Install historical floor decal (earliest maps) on gallery floor
  - Purchase more effective timers for display case lighting
  - Create permanent recognition plaques (Rapley, Johnson), time capsule plaque
  - Produce centre of the room/pedestal style cases
  - Create additional room dividers to allow for flexibility in display
  - Drywall finish of gallery space and proper hanging track
  - Investigate 'selfie station' concept
  - Design concept development for permanent display space
  - Camouflage storage doors to blend into display space
  - Improved people counter devices to prevent damage/disruption
  - Finish drywall on art space wall
  - Panels separating computer area from art gallery space
  - Additional hanging track for art gallery
  - Anti-glare solution for program area
  - Further enhance touchscreen/interactive area in museum gallery
  - Further enhance LCD monitor display in museum lobby
  - Investigate stop motion video set kiosk as interactive element
  - Install lockable casters for all display cases
  - Purchase new mannequins and display mounts for exhibition development
-

### Ongoing activities to create and deliver great experiences

The current concept of temporary displays in the Museum gallery and outreach locations ensures that new, varied exhibit content is produced on a regular basis. The development of a schedule of upcoming exhibits shows that ongoing exhibit development will remain a priority over the next five years. The creation of a programming area within the Art Space during the 2012 renovation and expansion has provided suitable space for the development of ongoing museum programs and events. A focus on enhancing the collections storage facility as a space for public tours and programming will further enhance the visitor experience.

## 3 Retain and Develop Partnerships that Increase Community Involvement and Support

This section examines past successes and future objectives in the areas of Organizational Partnerships, Media Partnerships, and Museum Partnerships.



### Tasks

- Continue to develop and nurture relationships with community organizations and partners, including Strathroy BIA and Chamber of Commerce, Business & Industry, and the broader Arts & Cultural Community (Strathroy & District Historical Society, Strathroy District Arts Council, Wright Family Foundation, Municipal Departments, etc.)

- Maintain communications with Municipal Council – engage on implementation of Strategic Plan
- Enhance partnerships with local elementary and secondary schools to facilitate student engagement
- Establish partnerships with post-secondary institutions to provide opportunities for internship placement
- Ensure the Museum continues to represent the entire Municipality in its efforts to preserve, document and interpret our story and neighbouring communities that influenced its development
- Evaluate and enhance volunteer program – MAC and Dept. involvement (Volunteer Strategy)
- Foster partnership development with the Chippewa of the Thames and Muncey Delaware First Nation
- Participate in Regional and Local Tourism Strategy
- Clarify working relationship with the Museum Foundation and establish mutual fundraising priorities (immediate needs vs. future needs).
- Revitalize the Museum exhibit Corporate Sponsorship campaign
- Assess current relationship and explore enhanced collaboration on educational programming with St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. Evaluate SydenhamDiscovery.ca and develop long term plan for the site.
- Work with historical societies and heritage groups to promote and practice excellence in heritage advocacy and stewardship
- Develop ongoing partnership with Ontario Museum Association, including support for the Certificate In Museum Studies (CMS) professional development program
- Pursue academic partnerships to facilitate lectures, project support, design services, etc. (post-secondary institutions)

### **Ongoing Activities to Retain and Develop Partnerships that Increase Community Involvement and Support**

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc has developed many partnerships, and will maintain and strengthen those relationships in an effort to cultivate community involvement and support. Close participation with local stakeholder groups and communication and cooperation with other Municipal departments will lead to opportunities for the Museum's involvement within the community. Important partner organizations include, but are not limited to, the Huron-Perth-Middlesex Museum Network, the Ontario Museum Association and Canadian Museum Association, the London Ontario Media Arts Association, Strathroy BIA, Chamber of Commerce, the Middlesex County Library, local Conservation Authorities, the Strathroy Age Dispatch, and myFM Radio.



## 4 Develop and Maximize the Value of our Heritage Collection

---

This section examines past successes and future objectives in the areas of Collections Development and Management, Research and Public Access.

### Tasks

- Re-organize and maximize existing storage space (see *Collections Review* recommendations) and develop comprehensive plan for space and efficient use of storage capacity
- Promote community ownership of collection – “your” collection (adopt an artifact program)
- Enhance heritage collection related to the communities of Melbourne and Mount Brydges
- Assess research program, including support and access with respect to the new Wright Family Research Room and CMOG requirements
- Produce public information (pamphlets/flyers) on acquisitions/ how to donate/ what we collect/ ways of giving/ planned giving/ collecting community photographs
- Implement further measures to control relative humidity and temperature in storage facility (door improvements)
- Investigate temporary custody area and potential containment area for incoming artifact donations
- Assess archival collection and its impact on the role and function of Museum (AAO operational funding)
- Enhance elements of display and interpretation in storage facility for tours
- Utilize video format (YouTube, etc.) to provide a behind-the-scenes look at the Museum Collections Storage facility

---

and artifact highlights – potential to engage high school comm. tech. classes

---

- Collections appraisal for items of significant historical value
  - Continue to organize and document Strathroy Age Dispatch newspaper collection and R. S. Williams Glass Plate Negative Collection
  - Define a means to capture current events and activities
  - Develop a breakdown of the museum permanent collection to highlight major artifact categories/themes to promote public awareness of our holdings – utilizing online and print publications to promote (share with educational institutions, area schools, etc.)
  - Improved security for collection through integration of security cameras
  - Plan for replacement of the existing asphalt shingle roof as part of future capital priorities
  - Define strategy for Currie Exhibition Storage/Display
  - Relocation of printing press and type cases to exhibit space as permanent feature
  - Creation of temporary custody area at front of collections storage building where type cases currently sit
  - Establish work counter for volunteer work space/collections work area
  - Racks for tissue and foam rolls
  - Supplies at accessible height
  - Transition part of the art collection to an alternate storage location/town hall offices, etc.
  - Review of hanging storage for efficiencies (drawer storage, etc.)
  - Hang quilts on textile rolls, and create additional rolls for growth of collection
  - Purchase of additional shelves to maximize efficiency of existing units
  - Review of non-artifact storage (fabric) for disposal or future use
  - Identify opportunities for hanging textile storage
  - Relocate photo cabinet to office area for ease of access for research requests
  - Review of all inactive office files to eliminate unnecessary storage
  - Removal of wood and doors (construction materials) from storage and transfer to property management
  - Develop designated education storage
  - Review and evaluation of old display units for removal from storage
  - Space for photography of artifacts and items, lighting, etc.
  - Installation of remote hygrothermographic equipment to allow for general reading of temp and Relative Humidity in space
  - Improve weather stripping and insulating value of doors to enhance temperature and humidity control of facility
  - Give consideration to large display items as interpretation opportunities for tours of facility
-

- 
- Give consideration to a containment area in small storage room off mechanical room
  - Add elements to enhance tour experience (gloves, lab coats, etc.)
  - Improve ergonomics of desk/work space for staff and volunteers
- 

### **Ongoing Activities to Develop and Maximize the Value of our Heritage Collection**

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will manage the collection and ensure it is properly catalogued and stored according to museum standards to ensure ready access for the public and staff. The Museum will continue to develop its collection in a focused manner by specifically identifying and addressing gaps within the collection, while giving consideration to the physical space available for the collection. When tackling public inquiries or exhibit development, the Museum will strive to be a reliable and informed source by conducting comprehensive and accurate research.

## **5 Manage Our Resources Efficiently and Effectively**

---

This section examines past successes and future objectives in the areas of Collections Development and Management, Research and Public Access.

### **Tasks**

- Continued investment in professional development (staff and Advisory Committee)
  - Increasing efficiency in fundraising: finding potential sources of funding for events through grant writing, corporate sponsorship, events, targeted fundraising campaigns, etc. to reduce overall costs
  - Strengthen cooperation between the museum and SDHS (joint initiatives, location of events at museum, publications, projects, etc.)
  - Continually identify, record and review statistics and data associated with the operation of the museum (visitors, website analytics, feedback, etc.) to enhance operations
  - Identify methods of reducing overall operating expense and pursuing funding support from corporate, private and government sources
  - Work with the Department of Parks & Recreation on the implementation of a Volunteer Strategy to support the priorities of the Museum as part of a broader municipal plan (including volunteer recognition)
-

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance promotion of free admission to encourage monetary donations</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define plan for Museum gallery space (temporary and semi-permanent exhibition)</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigate options for Museum gift shop/ souvenir items for purchase</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize visitor surveys to determine resource allocation (physical, financial, human resources)</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formation of a grant sub-committee/task force as part of the Museum Advisory Committee, with the purpose of identifying and applying for grant opportunities that support the implementation of the Strategic Plan</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigate use of email list-serve through existing News &amp; Public Notices service of museum website to develop efficient means of communication with museum supporters</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For the implementation of Strategic Plan tasks, the Museum Advisory Committee will inform its decision making process based on a review of available resources and partnerships</li></ul>                                    |

**Ongoing Activities to Manage Our Resources Efficiently and Effectively**

The museum supports a continued investment in facility improvements by enhancement of visitor experience (accessibility, engagement, etc), and aiding in the increased efficiency of operations (environmental impact, expense, maintenance, etc).

# Museum Exhibit Concepts

Exhibit concepts that are to be considered (as identified through consultation with the Museum Advisory Committee) as opportunities permit include the following:

Furniture Industry
Heritage Architecture
Local Church History
Police Services History
Equestrian History (Harness Racing)
135 <sup>th</sup> Middlesex Battalion/26 <sup>th</sup> Regiment
Black History & Early Settlement / Underground Railroad
Secret Societies & Service Clubs
Agricultural History Exhibit Focusing on Major Products (Tobacco, Apples, etc.)
WWI Anniversary
Canada 150 Anniversary
Influence of Sydenham River/Thames River
History of Industry to the Present Day (eg. Vamco)
History of School Sections/ Education
Community Collections
Avro Arrow (Local Influence)
Political History - Bellwether Riding / Campaign Visits
Carnivals, Fairs, Circuses
Costumes/Stratford Festival/Fashion Design/Clothing and Shoe Stores
Public Works - Roads, Bridges, Transportation, Maps, Cartography, Land Grants
Terry Fox Exhibit
The Queen & Her Country (Queen Elizabeth)
Rebellion of 1867 / Confederation
History of Barber Shop's in Strathroy-Caradoc
Dental History
Ontario Ministry of Gov. & Consumer Services – Ontario's Agricultural Past
Canadian Museum of Nature Exhibits
ROM Travelling Planetarium
ROM DinoMobile or other Dinosaur Travelling Exhibits
Bank of Canada (Counterfeit Exhibit)
Historical Review of Wright Family Businesses
The Influence of Dutch Immigration
History of Credit Unions
Forestry Industry / Saw Mills
Early Settlement Period (Maps/Census Info)
Farm Implement Manufacturing
Flour Mill Industries/Wheat Production
1983: A Snapshot from the Age Dispatch Negative Collection
Stanley Cup Visits
Centennial of Canadian Women's Suffrage
History of Museum Strathroy-Caradoc

# Conclusions & Recommendations

This five year Strategic Plan for Museum Strathroy-Caradoc is developed to optimize opportunities, drive community engagement, enhance and develop the Museum's services, and ensure its long term viability. It is also intended to support the priorities of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, and to promote and preserve the community's heritage.

Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will strive to achieve the above noted Strategic Directions as part of an overall plan for the future of the Museum. The recommendations of this Strategic Plan will serve as the guiding work plan for staff, volunteers, Museum Advisory Committee and Council.

**Appendix A: Exhibit Plan** also provides a draft exhibit plan for 2016-2020 to plan for opportunities associated with significant anniversaries and determine travelling exhibit availability.

# Monitoring Progress

Moving forward, the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Strategic Plan is to be included as an ongoing unfinished business item on the Museum Advisory Committee regular meeting agenda for 2016 through to the end of 2020.

Further, the Strategic Plan accomplishments will be evaluated at the end of the year, and priorities for the following year will be determined as part of the annual budget planning process.

Decisions regarding the implementation of tasks will be determined based on the availability of resources and grant opportunities.



History (CONTD)												
Future Exhibits	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
James Shotwell/Treaty of Versailles												
Travelling Exhibit												
<b>2020</b>												
Stephen Leacock/Seth Exhibit												
Local Carnivals, Fairs, Circuses												
Travelling Exhibit												

*Museum Strathroy-Caradoc will aim to display curriculum-based exhibits during school months (exhibition periods of January – April and September – December) to capitalize on potential school tours. General interest/community-based exhibits will be scheduled during the summer exhibition period (May - August).*