

SUNSHINE COAST MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2028

At the centre of this idea of a museum, lie not things but people.

Hugues de Varine, museologist



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# 1.0 THE INTRODUCTION

# Small museums can be great

Today, museums are finding new ways to serve their communities - online, through inventive programming and intriguing co-created exhibitions.

Peoples' expectations of a museum are changing too. They expect to be welcomed, to encounter diverse stories. They seek engagement and interactivity. And, they expect to have a voice.

This is a perfect time to renew the Strategic Plan. The Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives' (SCMA) first Strategic Plan was completed in 2018. It has served the organization well, providing a foundation upon which to build.

Now, a new Strategic Plan takes over to guide the SCMA for the next five years as it matures as a museum and archives in the 21st century.

This Plan is informed by many people living along the Sunshine Coast.

An extensive community stakeholder survey yielded a wealth of opinions and ideas. Heritage colleagues in the region also provided their thoughts about their future relationship with SCMA. A two-day workshop with board members and staff used all of this intelligence to inform their discussion of the future priorities and actions.



# 2.0 OUR **DIRECTION**

Detail from Howe Sound United School Music Club, 1940-41

# 2.0 OUR DIRECTION

#### Since the last Plan, we have achieved a lot.

Our collections are now housed in climate-controlled conditions. And, thanks to the new air conditioning, our visitors are more comfortable too.

The visitor's experience is more accessible, easier to navigate, and more diverse in the stories it reveals.

We have strengthened our relationship with Indigenous communities and have taken a greater leadership role in supporting our fellow heritage organizations.

#### There is more to do.

Over the next five years, our greatest challenge will be to build our capacity (our financial and human resources) so that we can meet our goals.

We must raise our profile and ensure the Museum and Archives is more appealing to our key audiences.

We will enrich the visitor experience making it more memorable and interactive, especially for children. We will broaden the narrative to weave in the stories of other cultures that are connected to this region. And we will invite those communities to partner with us, to share their stories.

Our collection storage is full. We need to solve the question of off-site storage, to allow us room to rotate collections on display and to accept future acquisitions.

# Relationships will be a particular focus for us.

We hope to build upon our existing relationships with Skwxwú7mesh and shíshálh Nations, looking for new opportunities to work together and support one another.

As the regional heritage museum, we are no longer simply a pioneer and maritime museum. We have a responsibility to operate on a higher level, setting a standard of practice and develop our leadership role in regional heritage.



# 3.0 OUR **FOUNDATION**

Detail from a postcard photograph of two Jackson Brothers Logging Company fallers, 1935.

# 3.0 OUR FOUNDATION

A foundation to build on.

The foundation of our new Strategic Plan is expressed in four parts: our Mission, Vision, Values and Key Audiences. These cornerstones express who we are, what we believe in, what we aspire to.

#### **OUR MISSION**

Our Mission statement expresses what we do and why we do it.

The Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives Society is committed to preserving, promoting, and presenting the vibrant and diverse history of the Sunshine Coast.

#### **OUR VISION**

Our Vision statement expresses our aspiration. It speaks to what and where we want to be.

We intend to be the best destination to discover the story of the Sunshine Coast, striving to be the best community museum in Canada.

#### **OUR VALUES**

Six important values will help to guide our work.

#### Honesty and diversity

We believe in honest and accurate representation of our diverse history.

#### Stewardship

We value best professional practice in the care of our collections.

#### Storytelling

We tell stories well to connect with our audience.

#### Responsiveness

We are responsive to the needs of our visitors and community.

#### Cooperation

We value cooperation and partnership with regional heritage colleagues and other partners.

#### Respect

We respect and value collaboration with the Skwxwú7mesh and shíshálh Nations, including our practices of co-curation, repatriation and event programming.

#### **OUR KEY AUDIENCES**

While SCMA welcomes everyone, our two primary audiences are:

Our Community: people living on the Sunshine Coast

**Our Visitors**: tourists and visiting family and friends

And, over the next five years, we will place particular focus on developing two specific audiences:

- 1. Families and children
- 2. People and communities who do not traditionally see themselves in SCMA.



# 4.0 OUR **PRIORITIES**

Detail from a Helen McCall photograph of a school field trip to Roberts Creek, 1937

# 4.0 PRIORITIES

Our focus for the future.

We have identified five Strategic Priorities for the organization over the next five years.

- 1. Developing our capacity and resources
- 2. Enriching the visitor experience
- 3. Improving our infrastructure
- 4. Raising our profile
- 5. Building relations with Indigenous communities

For each Priority, the Plan describes a series of significant actions.

## 1. DEVELOPING OUR CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

Building the organization's financial and human resources.

#### **KEY ACTIONS:**

#### Build board capacity

Increase board engagement (more in-person meetings); recruit special expertise where it is needed, as well as younger board members.

### Build human resource capacity

Increase staff at the museum by introducing a third permanent staff position.

#### Develop our grant writing capacity

Research more diverse granting sources, including federal funding.

#### Build our fundraising capability

Develop a plan for fundraising and explore the establishment of a "Friends of the Museum" to advance significant fundraising.

## Create the case for increased base funding

Develop an effective "case" for under-funded heritage; seek an increase in SCRD funding.

### Build the volunteer program

Create a simple volunteer development plan to recruit more volunteers. Explore recruiting a volunteer with special expertise who will coordinate this initiative and manage volunteer training.

#### Leverage the partnership with heritage colleagues

Leverage collaborative efforts through joint events and other initiatives involving all the regional heritage partners.

# 2. ENRICHING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Incrementally improving the visitor's experience.

#### **KEY ACTIONS:**

Develop an Exhibition Master Plan

This will include an overall Interpretive Plan (thematic structure), a renewal action plan, and a sequence of improvement.

Develop a Children's Discovery Area Create an exploratory space, just for children.

Continue exhibition improvements

Introduce more interactive experiences; design a graphic template to coordinate the "look and feel" of all new interpretive signage; incrementally replace old exhibit signage with more effective signage (more engaging in its language and graphically coordinated).

Create an annual temporary exhibition

Aim to open one temporary exhibition per annum. Always include a launch event with each exhibition opening.

Enrich the public program offering

Enrich the program of events and activities with more workshops (see Priority 5), film screenings, walking tours.

Improve the Museum Shop product line Introduce more museum-branded products and products unique to the Museum Shop.

## 3. IMPROVING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing plans and implementing changes to improve our physical infrastructure.

#### **KEY ACTIONS:**

#### Solve off-site collection storage needs

Seek an acceptable solution (sufficient space, security and conditions) for offsite collection storage. The solution should include an exhibit decanting space ("swing room" to hold objects coming off display).

#### Explore building expansion

Raise awareness of the need for expansion for additional exhibition and on-site collection storage space.

#### Improve the building's appearance

Develop a plan and design for new exterior identification signage and wayfinding signage leading to the site (this is linked to the branding initiative in Priority 4).

#### Strengthen security

Install more cameras monitoring exhibit display cases with important objects; consider conducting a risk audit of the exhibitions.

#### Increase building efficiency

Explore ways to increase the museum's energy efficiency.

## 4. RAISING OUR PROFILE

Strengthen SCMA's brand and work to build our profile.

#### **KEY ACTIONS:**

#### Develop a brand

Create a new brand (word mark, colour palette, typography, messaging); update print materials with the new brand whenever a reprinting opportunity occurs; ensure that exterior and way-finding signage follows the brand guidelines.

#### Renew the web site

Renew the web site with the new brand "look and feel;" place more emphasis on images that show the visitor experience; improve user navigation.

#### Generate more publicity

Actively seek positive coverage; generate articles for local publications.

#### Build membership

Develop a plan and begin implementation to increase membership and its benefits: also initiate more frequent communication with members.

#### Promote education programs

Actively build the school program offering. Increase communication with educators (including an annual Teacher PD Day at the Museum).

### 5. BUILDING RELATIONS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Strengthening our relationship with the Skwxwú7mesh and shíshálh Nations.

#### **KEY ACTIONS:**

Co-create an exhibition

Within the next three years, open a new co-created exhibition and commence planning for another.

Formalize a collaborative relationship

Create an agreement with the Skwxwú7mesh and shíshálh communities that includes a commitment to co-create exhibitions, and explores the role of cultural ambassadors.

Offer artist and storytelling workshops

Plan and host workshops and other events featuring Indigenous artists, speaker and storytellers.

Include more indigenous perspectives

Commit to including Indigenous perspective and voice in all new exhibitions about stories in which Indigenous communities have played a part. Find opportunities to promote *tems swiya* in SCMA publications and communications.

Invite closer connection to our board

Invite a representative of local Indigenous communities to liaise with the board.



# APPENDIX **IDEAS**

## APPENDIX: IDFAS

In the course of developing this Plan, a number of good ideas arose.

#### **WEB SITE**

Drone footage on our web site

Commission a short flyover drone film swooping over the waterfront and ending at the Museum. This could be prominently featured on the web site home page.

#### **VISITOR ARRIVAL**

Street presence

Create a more colourful arrival experience with banners leading visitors from Gower Point Road and up Winn Street to the SCMA building.

Our mission

As part of a branding initiative create a version of the Mission statement as a first impression for visitors.

#### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Faces of the Sunshine Coast

Create an installation of revolving portraits of diverse people past and present. Could be a portrait on the front, a short bio on the reverse. This installation can change over time to include more people.

Selfie opportunity

Create a high quality selfie opportunity setting.

Improve visitor comfort

Install more visitor seating in the Museum space that are interesting in their own right, i.e. more experiential than simply a bench.

Dressing up

Trying on equipment and clothing has universal appeal. A dress-up experience could be part of a new Children's Discovery Area.

#### Hearing our visitors

Create a permanent installation for visitor feedback. As part of this initiative include description of improvements made that are a response to visitor input.

#### Community spirit

Create a Community Spirit installation: photography (past and present) that illustrates the nature of living here.

#### **EVENTS AND PROGRAMS**

#### Regional Heritage Event

Establish an annual regional heritage event that is produced in partnership with regional heritage colleagues.

#### Indigenous storytelling

Introduce storytelling by Indigenous people as a regular feature. Some sessions could take place in outdoor locations.

#### Concert in the park

Establish an annual concert in the park with local musicians in mini-festival format with seating, food service.

#### Virtual programming

With our "Museum at Home" digital education portal, we were able to make important connections with our community despite closure. Explore other options for digital delivery of educational programs.

#### Film festival

There is a considerable public appetite for films. Consider a mini film festival of historical and contemporary films.

#### MARKETING AND PROMOTION

#### Ranking on Tripadvisor

The museum is 3# on *Tripadvisor* of "things to do" in Gibsons. However, it received only one review in 2022. Encouraging visitors to review the Museum would rapidly elevate it in the ranking.

Annual General Meeting rejuvenation

Think of the next AGM as a branding opportunity. Ensure the key messages of the Strategic Plan are communicated and ensure that is not boring.

#### INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

An Indigenous Working Group

Creation of a Truth and Reconciliation working group/committee to inform and educate on ways forward as the regional museum, consisting of board members, staff, cultural liaison from Skwxwú7mesh and/or shíshálh Nations.