

HENNEPIN HISTORY MUSEUM

Strategic Plan 2020-22

Our Mission

We collect, preserve and share Hennepin County history to educate, enlighten and inspire.

Our Vision

We are a place where Hennepin County history is preserved, appreciated, accessible, and inspirational.

Our Values

We are committed to being:

- Inclusive across everything we do
- Innovative in our approach to connecting people to our past
- Intimate in experience
- Relevant by connecting our history with the experience of today
- Responsible for stewarding all that is entrusted to us

Our promise to the community

Hennepin History Museum brings the diverse history of people in Hennepin County to life. We help people understand their world through an exploration of local history with exhibits, public programs, a magazine, and a public research library.

We promise to:

- do this work by creating a vibrant and preeminent county-wide organization, to give our stories the exposure and celebration they so richly deserve, and bring them to audiences in a way that helps shine light on the present.
- Create a space that will be welcoming and accessible to all, that will attract a more diverse audience, and that uses innovative approaches to deliver an engaging experience.
- showcase our amazing collection, to be stewards of it and the other resources that are entrusted to us, so that we are able to serve our community for future generations.

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS AND KEY OBJECTIVES

To fully realize our vision, values, and promise, we need to build a stronger organization with increased capacity. This plan will begin that work, through a sustainable and thriving operation in the present and a building plan for the future.

Over the next three years HHM will focus on two strategic goals and four key objectives.

Goal One: Expand Our Constituency

Sustainability, stability and continued growth is only possible with an expanding number of people who join us in our mission. To better engage the community in the stories of the County in a relevant and meaningful way will require a solid base of community support-- from visitors, members, donors, volunteers, and partners.

HHM will apply four objectives to attract more people and partners to our work. Leveraging the current collections, HHM will craft engaging exhibits and supporting programs. It will strengthen its external communications tools to better serve our existing audience while also attracting new ones. HHM will build a membership and donor program to provide supporters with an opportunity to support our work financially.

Objective One: Well-maintained and Accessible Collections

Rationale:

Fundamental to our mission is a responsibility to enhance and maintain HHM's collections, including archival materials. Control and care of the collection is our highest responsibility, followed closely by our responsibility to share them with the community.

Three-year success measure:

HHM will achieve comprehensive intellectual and physical control of its collections, with a Collections Plan that actively guides the growth and maintenance of them.

Guiding approach:

The collections – and their associated stories—are HHM's main attractions. We will use them to tell the stories of the County in our galleries, in community venues, and online.

Objective Two: Engaging Exhibits and Programs

Rationale:

Our unique exhibits and programs draw visitors to the museum. They are a key way for HHM to tell the stories of the people who have lived and worked here in an engaging and intimate format. We will continue this by producing innovative, relevant, and high quality exhibits and programs to attract targeted audiences.

Three-year success measure:

Annual visitation grows by 20% each year.

Guiding approach:

HHM's programs and exhibits are often the reason why people come to visit for the first time. High quality programs and exhibits will be offered both at HHM and at offsite locations throughout the community. We will build partnerships with our community and continually evaluate our programs to improve upon what we do.

Objective Three: Messaging That Informs and Attracts

Rationale:

Constituent surveys continually show that we are considered a "hidden gem," but for those who know us they are attracted to our unique and intimate way of telling the stories of Hennepin County. Through better targeted and integrated messaging, more people will know us for our unique and intimate storytelling, and we will be able to remove the "hidden" from our description.

Three-year success measure:

HHM will be a must see attraction for out of-town visitors, local history fans, neighborhood and community explorers. Our brand identity will reflect this value, and present a fresh and vibrant look for the organization.

Guiding approach:

HHM will strategically integrate its marketing and communications campaigns to inform our audiences and the larger community about our activities and offerings. Understanding the world of communications is rapidly changing, we will allow ourselves to be innovative and inventive in our approaches and the tools we employ.

Objective Four: A Growing and Loyal Group of Financial Supporters

Rationale:

Stable, sustainable funding is the most obvious symptom of our need for an expanded constituency. We need a healthy mix of individual, corporate, and foundation support, and a balanced portfolio of small, medium, and large gifts.

Three-year success measure:

The number of members doubles, the number of Hiawatha Circle members increases by 50%, and we will have completed a capital campaign feasibility study.

Guiding approach:

Specific attention will be given to increasing our circle of major donors and cultivating relationships with those who can be lead givers in a capital campaign. As important as growing the overall numbers is the retention of individuals; we want them to feel appreciated and valued and see the impact of their support.

Goal Two: A Plan for Our Home

Our existing facility cannot meet our current needs or future growth, and it constrains us in fulfilling our mission. Creating an exciting and inspirational vision for new facilities is critical for the museum's long-term success.

HHM will thoroughly and thoughtfully study all options for our facility: improving and expanding on-site, moving to a different site, or adopting a hybrid, multiple-site option. We will test building aspirations with funding capacity. Planning will also include how to approach near term improvements necessary for attractiveness, comfort, and functionality to meet present needs.

Objective One: Visioning Our Long-Term Needs

Rationale:

It is futile to try to create a building plan without first understanding the organization's present reality and future ideal state. We need clear and prioritized standards to judge future ideas against.

Three Year Success Measures:

By early 2021, board and staff will have a consensus understanding of where they think the organization is heading and what it needs to thrive. Specifically, we will have a better understanding of collections, program, and staff space needs.

Guiding Approach:

Inspirational visioning is needed, and it must be tested with community supporters and leaders. We should strike the right balance between pragmatism and idealism, avoiding overly limited or fantastic visions.

Objective Two: Determine Our Best Location

Rationale:

Our building has inherent strengths and weaknesses; the former can be enhanced and the latter minimized as necessary. So ultimately, the decision will rest in large part on whether this is the part of the county that is best for HHM to call home, and whether this building can project the image the organization we want to be.

Three Year Success Measures:

We understand the market and organizational value of our current property, using data to drive decisions whenever possible.

Guiding Approach:

This analysis must be externally focused, with an attempt to understand how our building is perceived in the community—financially, aesthetically, and functionally.

Objective Three: Complete Predesign Phase of Capital Planning

Rationale:

Predesign is an essential step for good project planning (and for successfully getting public bond funds). The idea is to ground the design process in a good building program, a thorough analysis of how different building functions need to work together, and preliminary cost estimates that can be used for effective fundraising.

Three Year Success Measures:

Completion of a predesign document by the end of 2022.

Guiding Approach:

This work will need to be done with the assistance of experienced architects and planners. We will pursue open-market options as well as possible support from Hennepin County staff.