

LINCOLN MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTRE
PLANNING FOR IMPACT



MARCH 4, 2026
ONTARIO MUSEUM ASSOCIATION



Lincoln
Museum & Cultural Centre



**OLIVIA
ROZEMA**

SENIOR CURATOR
MUSEUM OPERATION & EVENTS



**ADAM
MONTGOMERY**

CURATOR
COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITIONS

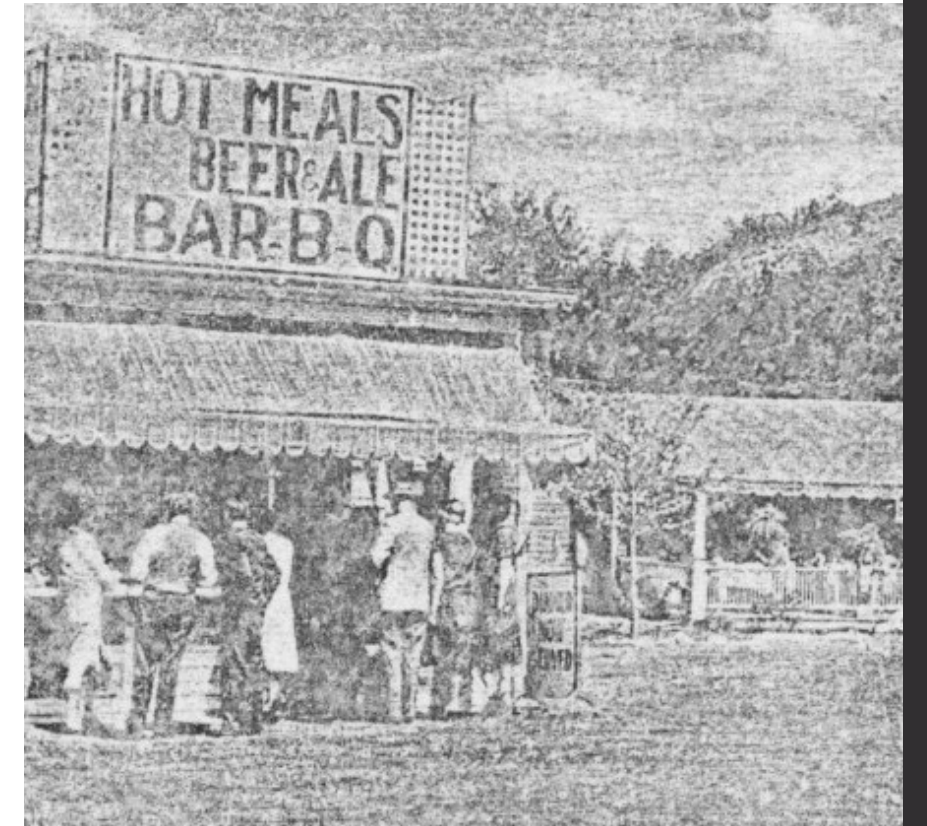


**COURTNEY
CORBEIL**

CURATOR
EDUCATION, VISITOR
ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

1953 TO 2026

OUR ROOTS AND BRANCHES





WHY THIS MATTERS

- Tighter municipal budgets
- Smaller teams
- Service consolidation
- Culture is seen as discretionary

We must rethink how we plan and report and be “strategic” about how we make our value legible to our non-museum decision makers.



PLANNING FOR STORYTELLING

- ✗ Buzzwords
- ✗ Theoretical or aspirational
- ✗ Lives at the management level and trickles down
- ✓ Built for everyday use
- ✓ Staff-driven: embedded in workplans
- ✓ Designed for impact reporting





SUSTAINING THE LEGACY, SECURING THE FUTURE

59

Miss Welstead in the Schoolhouse, 2025

SUSTAINING THE LEGACY, SECURING THE FUTURE

Financial Resilience, Risk Management, and Site Stewardship

GOAL

Strengthen the museum's long-term sustainability through proactive planning, diversified funding, responsible site stewardship, and institutional resilience. This includes maintaining the integrity of the museum's collection and buildings and investing in digital infrastructure.

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

The museum currently lacks long-term operational plans to guide site care, collections growth, and institutional development.

Strategic Action 19:

Build financial resilience through a diversified and strategic fundraising program that includes major gifts, annual giving, and targeted campaigns.

Strategic Action 20:

Prioritize and complete critical restoration work to safeguard the structural integrity and visitor accessibility of the museum's historic buildings.

Strategic Action 21:

Implement proactive building management practices to ensure the long-term preservation and interpretive use of heritage assets.

Strategic Action 22:

Develop a comprehensive management framework to protect, maintain, and enhance Town-owned public art and cultural objects located off-site.

Strategic Action 23:

Align collections development with visitor experience goals to enhance engagement and ensure cohesion across the museum's holdings.

Strategic Action 24:

Ensure that museum operations meet evolving provincial standards and demonstrate public accountability through transparent reporting and evaluation.

ACTION AREAS

Our new plan is built around four functional areas:

- On-site experience
- Community belonging
- Reach and visibility
- Sustainability and stewardship

Each area answers a concrete operational challenge.

60

STRATEGIC ACTION 19:

Build financial resilience through a diversified and strategic fundraising program that includes major gifts, annual giving, and targeted campaigns.

INITIATIVES

45. Create a five-year fundraising plan to guide annual targets, campaign timing, donor stewardship, and resource allocation.
46. Develop and implement a legacy giving campaign to encourage long-term investment and bequests. Include recognition options beyond the donor wall.
47. Determine the cost of core museum activities and assets (e.g., collections care, weekend tours, camp programs) to inform targeted fundraising appeals. Use this data to launch initiatives like “Adopt an Artifact”.
48. Negotiate and secure a new five-year venue agreement for the Deep Roots Dinner.

STRATEGIC ACTION 20:

Prioritize and complete critical restoration work to safeguard the structural integrity and visitor accessibility of the museum’s historic buildings.

INITIATIVES

49. Identify and prioritize critical repairs for the Fry Family House and Schoolhouse, based on structural assessments and safety requirements.
50. Apply for relevant grants to support restoration efforts, including federal, provincial, and heritage-specific funding streams.
51. Design and launch a targeted fundraising campaign supporting the preservation of the historic buildings. Include storytelling, visuals, and tangible giving levels (e.g., “Fund a Window” or “Restore a Room”) to drive contributions.

STRATEGIC ACTION 21:

Implement proactive building management practices to ensure the long-term preservation and interpretive use of heritage assets.

INITIATIVES

52. Develop a Historic Building Management Plan, including a maintenance calendar to guide and track short- and long-term tasks such as floor resurfacing, window glazing, pest management, and seasonal upkeep.
53. Complete a full inventory of all objects housed in the historic buildings. Rehome objects requiring stable environmental conditions to the collections vault for preservation. Reclassify remaining objects as educational to reflect their interpretive purpose and acknowledge environmental limitations like humidity, temperature fluctuations, and public handling.

*SUSTAINING THE LEGACY, SECURING THE FUTURE***STRATEGIC ACTION 22:**

Develop a comprehensive management framework to protect, maintain, and enhance Town-owned public art and cultural objects located off-site.

INITIATIVES

54. Identify and document all Town-owned cultural assets located outside the museum, including public art and historical furnishings. Assess whether any items require relocation to the museum vault for preservation.
55. Develop an asset management plan for public art and off-site cultural objects, including protocols for tracking, routine in-person assessments, and maintenance schedules.
56. Investigate the creation of a fund or budget line for public art maintenance to ensure long-term care, conservation, and community value.

STRATEGIC ACTION 23:

Align collections development with visitor experience goals to enhance engagement and ensure cohesion across the museum’s holdings.

INITIATIVES

57. Develop and implement a Collection Development Plan to guide future acquisitions and ensure alignment with interpretive priorities.
58. Complete a full collections audit to assess current holdings and identify gaps, redundancies, and growth opportunities. Expand the collection to better reflect underrepresented histories and to increase the narrative strength of exhibits.
59. Increase digital access by photographing and updating records for two shelving units annually and publishing at least 50 new records online each year.

STRATEGIC ACTION 24:

Ensure that museum operations meet evolving provincial standards and demonstrate public accountability through transparent reporting and evaluation.

INITIATIVES

60. Conduct an internal review of current policies to identify gaps and ensure alignment with evolving provincial museum standards.
61. Track and implement new compliance and reporting requirements proactively to maintain eligibility for operating funding.
62. Use the museum’s Annual Report to publicly communicate progress, highlight institutional impact, and demonstrate accountability to funders and the community.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Every action must be:

1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Time-bound

If it doesn’t meet all three, it doesn’t go in the plan.

Each action is supported by several initiatives. The initiatives double as reporting metrics and are how we demonstrate success in our annual report.

THE PLAN = OUR JOB DESCRIPTION

- Every task maps to a strategic action
Strategic Action → Staff Goal → Calendar
- Nothing abstract, nothing extra
- We measure outcomes, not activity

The plan isn't abstract, it's literally our job description.



APPENDIX B: ACTION TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

| # | INITIATIVE | YEAR 1 (2025) | YEAR 2 (2026) | YEAR 3 (2027) | YEAR 4 (2028) | YEAR 5 (2029) | BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS |
|--|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Action 19: Strengthen fundraising and donor engagement. | | | | | | | |
| 45 | Five-Year Fundraising Plan | | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | NO INCREASE |
| 46 | Legacy Giving Campaign | | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | NO INCREASE |
| 47 | Cost Analysis for Core Activities | | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | NO INCREASE |
| 48 | Deep Roots Dinner Agreement | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| Action 20: Complete urgent building restoration work. | | | | | | | |
| 49 | Critical Repairs Plan | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | REFLECTED IN CAPITAL BUDGET |
| 50 | Restoration Grant Applications | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| 51 | Restoration Fundraising Campaign | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| Action 21: Maintain historic buildings proactively. | | | | | | | |
| 52 | Historic Building Management Plan | | | | INITIATE | IMP. | NO INCREASE |
| 53 | Historic Object Inventory | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | | NO INCREASE |
| Action 22: Manage public art and off-site assets. | | | | | | | |
| 54 | Offsite Cultural Asset Inventory | | | | INITIATE | IMP. | NO INCREASE |
| 55 | Public Art Management Plan | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| 56 | Public Art Maintenance Budget or Fund | | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | POTENTIAL FUTURE BUDGET IMPLICATIONS |
| Action 23: Align collections with inclusive storytelling. | | | | | | | |
| 57 | Collection Development Plan | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | | NO INCREASE |
| 58 | Collections Audit | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| 59 | Increased Digital Access to Collection | INITIATE | ONGOING | | | | NO INCREASE |
| Action 24: Meet standards through transparent reporting. | | | | | | | |
| 60 | Internal Policy Review | | INITIATE | IMPLEMENT | | | NO INCREASE |
| 61 | Ministry Compliance Tracking | INITIATE | ONGOING | | | | NO INCREASE |
| 62 | Annual Report and Public Accountability | INITIATE | ONGOING | | | | NO INCREASE |

SUSTAINING THE LEGACY, SECURING THE FUTURE

PRIORITIZATION AND “SAYING NO”

- Every idea sounds good
- We can't do everything
- Ask: Does this align with a strategic action?
 - Yes → prioritize
 - Not yet → next cycle



TELLING YOUR STORY

Measurable actions = simple reporting

- Annual report presented directly to Council
- Plan sets commitments, and the report shows results

What does Council's investment in us mean for the community?

Thank you so much Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre staff, volunteers and donors who made the time so enjoyable and meaningful. Well done, local government for supporting such a treasure in your community.

Such a great place to go with a young family. Our son also attends the PA day camps which have been nothing short of incredible!

Our tour guide, Kat, was the best! She was very knowledgeable, funny, and clearly enjoys giving tours.

I recently went to this museum to support an exhibit they had 'Unmasking Brain Injury' June is brain injury awareness month... a must see exhibit if you can get there!

It was a perfect evening and there were so many people there! My husband and I walked through with my daughter's little family and we thoroughly enjoyed it!

This program never gets old. The memories made and the things the students learn are incredible. They enjoyed every moment, and it's an experience they will not forget.

My son attended the "day in the life of a kid in the 1900s". He had an amazing time. And learned so much. I seriously haven't heard him talk so much about everything that he learned. He definitely wants to go back. Thanks for a wonderful experience.

Fascinating museum with stellar people working there. Adam, who came over to chat with us as we were viewing the beautiful fractur artwork clearly loved his job and was incredibly knowledgeable about the history and stories of the area.

My daughter has attended camp at the museum multiple times and we have nothing but positive things to say about it. She enjoys every minute - the activities are exciting, the leaders foster a supportive and engaging atmosphere, and the curriculum encourages exploration and learning through art and science.

It's such a lovely facility. I love the tranquil scene from the windows of the back room where our Bob Ross painting classes take place.

My children loved the camp. They couldn't wait to tell us what they did and show us what they had made. When I told them they were going back the next PA day they were so excited.

The program was instrumental in allowing students to experience school in a different era. Experiential learning is so valuable, and the role play and hands-on activities were amazing.

We had such a lovely experience at the museum today, Katarina was enthusiastic and informative, an asset to the facility! Well done went above and beyond, will return in September for Pioneer Days.

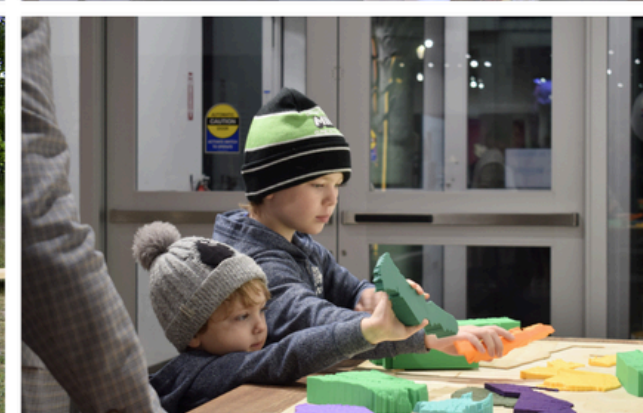
Our son loves going to the museum Saturday mornings and craft/make whatever it is they're working on that morning. It's such a highlight of the week for him. Please keep doing what you're doing :)

The Camp is exceptionally well-organized, with creative programs that keep children engaged and inspired. Our kids came home each day excited to share new crafts, ideas, and skills. We are very satisfied with our experience and will gladly return for future camps.

There is no other program in the Niagara Region that educates Grade 3 students in such an immersive and engaging way.

This museum is a very special place, nestled in the heart of Jordan Village. We learned so much about the region's rich history. Touring the Fry house and the old schoolhouse helped to bring that history to life. The people here are so friendly and eager to share their knowledge with you.

Students always talk about this experience for weeks afterwards. It is a highlight of their Grade 3 year.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

15,918
TOTAL VISITORS

33% INCREASE FROM 2024

7,859
EXHIBIT VISITORS

3,667
HISTORIC
BUILDING TOURS

9,962
PROGRAM/EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

90+
VOLUNTEERS
WORKING 1700+
HOURS

78
PUBLIC
PROGRAMS

30
EVENTS

2,271
STUDENTS FROM
85 CLASSROOMS

5,198
ENGAGED VIA
OUTREACH

110+
UNIQUE DONORS &
SUPPORTERS

135
OBJECTS DONATED

6,051
OBJECTS LISTED IN
ONLINE DATABASE

18,312
COLLECTIONS
RECORDS

1,993
NEWSLETTER
READERS

3,051
UNIQUE ONLINE
EXHIBIT VIEWERS

3,765
SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

**BY THE
NUMBERS**

STRATEGIC ACTION 11:

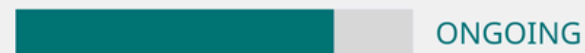
Strengthen the museum's presence across Lincoln and Niagara through active participation in community events, cultural initiatives, and regional networks.

- 30 Participate in cultural events across Lincoln and Niagara by setting up outreach tables at festivals, heritage events, and public gatherings. Strengthen the museum's presence across all local communities. Participate in at least two large-scale community events annually.



In 2025, the museum strengthened its presence across Lincoln and the Niagara region by participating in three large-scale community events: the International Plowing Match, Canal Days, and the Battle of Stoney Creek Re-enactment. Attendance at major festivals will be ongoing in perpetuity.

- 31 Enhance the museum's outreach booth by developing a portable, visually engaging pop-up display. Include a durable, easy-to-set-up timeline of the region's history to support consistent storytelling and increase public recognition of the museum.

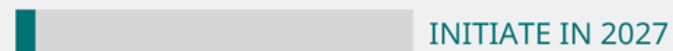


A branded outreach tent was purchased and a portable historical timeline was created to support consistent storytelling. The pop-up display will be trialed at upcoming community events to assess effectiveness and refined as needed.

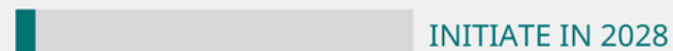
STRATEGIC ACTION 12:

Evaluate, align, and strengthen community partnerships to advance the museum's goals, broaden audience reach, and reflect the diversity of the community it serves.

- 32 Select and adapt one LMCC-designed exhibition for circulation to another museum or cultural venue. Develop a pilot distribution plan, including exhibit loan logistics, promotional materials, and fee structure. Use this pilot to test feasibility, generate revenue, and increase the museum's professional visibility across the region.



- 33 Apply to the Digital Museums of Canada for funding to support the creation of an online Fraktur exhibition. If successful, develop the exhibit in both French and English and publish it on the DMC accessible platform.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

The Museum marked Samuel Fry's 213th birthday with a special evening celebrating community. Donors, members, and dedicated volunteers came together to reflect on their shared contributions to the Museum. **The Deep Roots Award for Volunteer Service was awarded to Anna Chiota,**

in recognition of her contributions to the Museum and the community. Her legacy was commemorated with two leaves added to the Museum Tree, one donated by her friends on the Museum Advisory Committee and another by her friends from the Heritage Gift Shop.

"The spirit of volunteerism and community involvement we see here is truly inspiring. From preserving our history to creating vibrant community spaces, the collective efforts of our volunteers, donors, and members have been pivotal in sustaining and advancing the museum's mission. It is an honour to recognize and celebrate their exceptional dedication and hard work." - Mayor Sandra Easton

RED DRESS PROJECT

A Red Dress installation was installed on the museum site on May 5 for Red Dress Day, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people. The installation served as a powerful visual call for justice and remembrance, prompting reflection and meaningful community response.

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

SPRING PROGRAMS

The Museum hosted a tasting with Rosewood Winery, guiding visitors through a sensory honey experience. Spring also brought hands-on programs exploring traditional crafts like broom making and pysanka.

UNMASKING INSTALLATION

In partnership with the Ontario Brain Injury Association, the Museum hosted the UnMasking exhibit. The outdoor installation raised awareness of acquired brain injury and invisible disabilities. The event saw the unveiling of OBJA's new flag.

"Seeing this in my own community, especially as someone with a family member who has an ABI (acquired brain injury), is extremely meaningful. I think this is great!"

BRIDGING HISTORIES

The Museum partnered with the NRNC to deliver Bridging Histories, a community program for the Mennonite Central Committee focused on Mennonite history in Jordan and the history of Canadian Residential Schools, including a virtual tour of the Woodland Cultural Centre.

"I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for all of your work in organizing today's event. It was very humbling and I really appreciated all of the work that went into organizing the event."



REFRAMING THE MUSEUM

This approach works because decision makers see:

- More Clarity
- Visible impact
- Accountable reporting

It reframes the museum from “a nice cultural amenity” to “active community infrastructure” like a road or an arena.



TAKEAWAYS

- Build plans around functions, not aspirations
- Make every action measurable and dated
- Tie staff work directly to actions
- Report on your outcomes, and make your work visible
- Treat planning and reporting as marketing tools

For municipal museums especially, these documents may be the only time decision-makers truly see your work.



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