



— Collections. Spaces. People. —

Oshawa Historical Society **Managing the** **Oshawa Museum** **2019 Business Plan**

Introduction

The Oshawa Museum (OM) has engaged visitors by telling the stories of Oshawa's history since 1960. As the only community museum in Oshawa we take great pride in showcasing the history of our city from the earliest First Nations settlements to the end of WWII. This business plan presents four strategic objectives representing key areas of focus for the OM in 2019. The plan will guide and build on our ongoing activities to develop and manage the collection, undertake research, work collaboratively with our colleagues and stakeholders, present compelling experiences to the public and plan for our future. The objectives, along with related strategies and actions outlined in the Action Plan, will ensure that the OM continues to play a central role in the cultural life of Oshawa and:

- Is visitor oriented;
- Is accessible and engaging to a diverse audience;
- Is financially responsible;
- Is connected with the community;
- Supports the City's tourism initiative.

The four strategic objectives will help us shape the work we do in the next year to realize our mission. In practice, many of the activities and targets will meet more than one of the strategic objectives.

1. Mission Statement

The OM preserves and actively promotes awareness and appreciation of Oshawa's history for the education, enrichment and enjoyment of a diverse audience

Our Values

The OM will be guided in all its activities by the following values:

- Respect: being trustworthy, professional, accurate, informed, dependable
- Pro-active outreach: being collaborative, creative, connected with community
- Inclusive: being accessible, open, welcoming
- Education: being engaging, original, imaginative, diverse

- Presentation: our collection helps us to understand and connect with our City both past and present
- Diligence: being accomplished, consistent, mindful

2. Service Description and Client Identification

The Oshawa Museum is:

- The only community museum in Oshawa
- Comprised of three designated heritage houses and the Anniversary Drive Shed
- Supported by five regular full time staff, one part time staff, seasonal/temporary staff
- Home to 50 000 objects and photographs covering social history, science, technology, indigenous history
- The authoritative source of information on Oshawa's history.

The Oshawa Historical Society (OHS) is a not for profit charitable institution and maintains the OM as a repository for artifacts and written records of historical interest to Oshawa. The Museum is operated by an elected Board of Directors, as an external agency of the City of Oshawa. As outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws (2005) the Board is responsible for making all decisions relating to the operation of the Museum. The Board consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary to the Membership, Standing Committee Chairpersons and Directors at Large. Each Board position is assigned specific responsibilities as are the committees. Currently there are five regular full time positions (Executive Director, Curator, Visitor Experience Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator and Archivist) and one regular part-time position (Maintenance). We supplement our core staff with seasonal and temporary staff hired with employment grants, as well as interns and co-op students.

Our Collections

The OHS recognizes the stewardship of the collections and structures as a public trust. We value the trust placed with us to safeguard the collection and we recognize our responsibility to strategically develop the collection for future generations. The OM preserves and actively promotes awareness and appreciation of Oshawa's history for the education, enrichment and enjoyment of a diverse audience. Our collection is diverse, just like Oshawa's history, and we are committed to expanding the narratives we share. We care for over 50 000 artifacts and will continue to strategically manage and develop the collection as a growing resource for education and research.

Our Spaces

The three historically designated buildings, Guy (GH), Henry (HH) and Robinson (RH) houses, as well as the Anniversary Drive Shed, include public spaces, offices/workspace, artifact storage and exhibition space. The buildings are owned by the City of Oshawa and in 2010 a 20 year occupancy license was signed between the OHS and the Corporation of the City of Oshawa. The Anniversary Drive Shed was opened in 2009 as an additional area of exhibition. The OM will continue to

promote our spaces as an asset to the community, to engage our visitors and raise the visibility of the Museum. The OHS has plans to expand our facilities to improve spaces and amenities to support the efficient and sustainable operation of the OM moving forward.

Our People

The OHS has a professional, committed and highly educated staff. Our knowledge is what gives meaning to our collection and we strive to share these unique stories with the public through various means including exhibitions, podcasts, newsletters, presentations, publications, social media and our virtual collection. We will continue to promote the OM as the authoritative source on the history of Oshawa and extend the ways in which our community can connect with the collection. Our staff share their knowledge with the community and our colleagues through appointments on boards, publications and conference presentations

3. 2018 Accomplishments by Objective

3.1 Objective: To be vibrant and vital

The OM is part of a vibrant cultural community in Oshawa. We continued to provide meaningful experiences for our audience and to make valuable contributions to the community through our programs, events, research and stewardship. The OM realizes the importance of generating meaningful experiences for our community, stakeholders and the public. We continued to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and spaces for a wide range of public services and activities. We continued our active role in Heritage Oshawa and the Cultural Leadership Council as well as other community groups. The OM advanced our brand profile as essential and a leader in preserving and presenting Oshawa's history.

Some of the year's highlights included;

- New outdoor signage – large Oshawa Museum sign erected at the parking lot and feather flags to increase visibility
- CLOCA partnership for March Break saw highest number of participants in 6 years
- Connected with over 17,500 followers in the 52 Museums Instagram Project
- Staff presented at the Ontario Museum Association annual conference on the topic of community partnerships
- Launched the "Adopt a School" program
- Signs posted advertising "safe space"

3.2 Objective: Relevant and meaningful collections

The OHS collection is a significant asset for the city and as the only organization collecting the history of Oshawa, it differentiates us from our peers. Our focus is to develop and sustain the collection to the highest standards as outlined by the Operating Standards for Community Museums developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. We are committed to telling great stories and expanding the narrative of Oshawa's history to include stories not as well

known. To support this, staff continued to refine and develop the exhibition and collection strategy to broaden our reach, appeal to a broad audience and to share new stories. We continued to explore ways for increasing awareness and improving access to our research and collections using our web site, publications, special events, permanent galleries and temporary exhibits.

In cooperation with our partners we presented temporary exhibits and programming at several locations during the year including Union Cemetery (Doors Open), the Legislative Assembly of Ontario Community Exhibit Program and the Oshawa Public Libraries. Several new events held throughout the year focused on staff and visitors engaging more directly with the collection and these proved to be popular with visitors.

Some of the year's highlights included;

- Released a new publication: *To Cast A Reflection: The Henry Family In Their Own Words*
- 12 Sunday Fundays and 9 Tea & Talks hosted throughout year
- +83% increase in Christmas programming, +31% in Mother Day's teas
- Partnered with OPL, schools and special interest groups to host 10 events during Black History Month
- Hosted 6 staff training sessions to ensure our staff are responsive to visitors needs and questions
- Successfully opened 2 exhibits - Oshawa's Indigenous history and History of the Steel Pan in partnership with Club Carib

3.3 Objective: Continue to be strong and successful

The OHS continued to operate the OM with sound management and financial policies designed to ensure resources are used in the most responsible and efficient way. We continued to work closely with the City of Oshawa and our cultural partners to support the delivery of current and future cultural strategies. Good governance is ensured with a strong commitment to reviewing board and organizational policies and transparency between Board and staff. All staff and board members understand their roles in relation to the OHS Business/Action Plans and we developed and revised policies as necessary to guide our work. The Board ensures our policies and operations are at the highest standards as outlined in the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.

Some of the year's highlights included;

- Third year presenting the successful Scenes From the Cemetery event
- Collaborations with Durham College, Trent University, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, University of Toronto and Fleming College
- Grants successfully applied for included Young Canada Works Internship, Young Canada Works Summer Employment, Community Museum Operating Grant, Walmart Community Grant

- Monthly accountability reports provided to board by staff tracking financials, activities and performance targets

3.4 Objective: strong and collaborative staff

The OM has a committed, professional staff and ongoing skills development is encouraged. Throughout the year, the OM was proud to continue partnerships and alliances with the Cultural Leadership Council, Art and History Committee, York-Durham Association of Museums and Archives, Donald H. Wilson Secondary School, Oshawa Senior Citizen Centres, Durham College, University of Toronto, Trent University and Oshawa Public Libraries.

Some of the year's highlights included;

- Staff continued to publish original research on a variety of historical topics. Research appeared in journals, newsletters, on-line forums and in conference presentations.
- Post-secondary collaborations – new Durham College architecture program initiative, Trent University Durham Historical Archaeological Field School
- New partnerships with Myseum Toronto and the Oshawa BIA to present exhibit “From the Main Street to the Mall” and Lovell Drugs and Charles H Best Centre for the exhibit “Community Health in the 20th Century: An Oshawa Perspective.”
- 3 students hired for summer employment
- Hosted 3 co-op students from Mohawk College and Durham College's Library and Information Technology Program as well as 1 co-op student

3.5 Objective: Provide adequate space and facilities

The three historically designated buildings are the most important artifacts in our collection however, as museum buildings, they do present some challenges. The physical limitations of adapting heritage buildings to support museum functions are reflected most acutely in two areas: a serious lack of programming space and insufficient exhibit space. In 2017, after carefully considering the 1996 Feasibility Study and the Canadian Conservation Institute's Facility Assessment, the Board of Directors decided to move forward with plans for improving museum space and facilities to support efficient and sustainable preservation and interpretation of the Museum's collection. In 2018, the OHS moved forward with this plan with several initiatives

Some of the year's highlights included;

- Producing and publicizing a Museum Expansion publication
- Met with senior City staff and members of Council to discuss the future plans for museum expansion
- Requested and was granted the use of a portion of Lakeview Park for museum expansion
- Engaged the services of an architect for a concept design feasibility study.
- Met with CLOCA representative to discuss expansion plans

4. SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

Strengths:

- The OM is a cultural leader in Oshawa as the city's only community museum and recognized as the authoritative source for Oshawa history
- Extensive archival and artifact collections representing Oshawa's history
- Great location in Lakeview Park to optimize on City's waterfront development plans
- Good relationship with members of Council, City Staff and OHS
- Highly skilled, respected and committed staff, board and volunteers
- Broad thematic scope of programs that engages the audience
- Respected by the public
- Positive public interactions by the public with staff

Challenges (Weaknesses)

- Difficult to increase self-generated revenue with spatial limitations and lack of programming and exhibit space
- Difficult to apply for many major grants due to lack of matching funds
- Self-generated revenue is contingent on external factors such as weather, adequate space for events and external events happening in Lakeview Park.
- Vulnerable to vandalism, environmental factors due to location
- Adapting historic homes for museum functions leads to Infrastructure challenges
- Insufficient funds for artifact purchases to address gaps in the collection
- Low public profile for the Oshawa Historical Society and lack of awareness for heritage locally

Opportunities:

- City's future plans for waterfront development
- Upcoming Oshawa 2024 celebration will be an opportunity to highlight and celebrate Oshawa's history
- Proposed facility expansion project to address several challenges
- Connecting with our audience through digital media to increase profile
- Partnerships and collaborations with post-secondary institutions and community groups maximizes the reach of the OM
- Good working relationships with Council members and senior City staff
- Location in Lakeview Park allows for maximum visibility for museum programs and events, especially during the summer months
- Participation in Cultural Leadership Council

Threats:

- Potential cuts to operating budget from all levels of funders – Federal, Provincial and Municipal
- Uncertain seasonal staffing levels
- Increase of non-discretionary, fixed costs
- Uncertainty in local economy
- Challenged to recruit volunteers, OHS members and Board members
- Increasing budget pressure from aging infrastructure and related maintenance costs
- Regular and special event activity impacted by events held in Lakeview Park (Autofest, Ribfest etc.)

5. 2019 Agency Objectives

The OHS recognizes the need for responsible action that will ensure the sustainability of the agency on behalf of Oshawa in the future. For the upcoming fiscal year the OHS has adopted reasonable assumptions in budget planning while continuing to create efficiencies, avoiding unnecessary costs and generating revenue where applicable. The OHS believes a strong commitment to the arts and culture community contributes to the overall vision of the Oshawa Strategic Plan (OSP) and the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan (ACHP) as well as the strategic plan, *Ontario Museums 2025*, from the Ontario Museum Association. We have identified four strategic objectives for 2019 that contribute to all five of the OSP goals, the six strategic directions identified in the ACHP and the four themes presented in *Ontario Museums 2025*.

5.1 To be vibrant and vital

We continue to demonstrate our utility to the community by offering on-site, online and outreach services and facilities to develop knowledge and understanding in our users.

5.2 To present relevant and meaningful collections

The OM continues to explore alternate and relevant strategies to broaden reach, appeal to new audiences and capture diverse stories.

5.3 Continue to be strong and successful

The OM cultivates strong partnerships and will continue to initiate new relationships in support of our mandate and offer new opportunities.

5.4 Provide space and facilities that are aesthetically pleasing and effective in preserving and interpreting Museum collections.

The OHS will continue to further the case for improved spaces and amenities to support the efficient and sustainable operation of the OM.

6. Resource Requirements

The OHS appreciates the support from members of Oshawa City Council and City staff for the work we do and we recognize the need for responsible action that ensures the sustainability of the agency on behalf of Oshawa going forward. With this in mind the OHS has produced a responsible operating budget that controls expenses and aligns resources consistent with the

direction provided by the Oshawa Strategic Plan **Our Focus, Our Future** and the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan, **Culture Counts**.

Budget changes are the result of:

- a) Unavoidable increases related to professional services including insurance, audit and payroll services and Human Resources outsourcing.
- b) Increase in cost of utilities including fuel oil for Robinson House and pumping services for holding tanks
- c) Increase in personnel costs (staff and benefits) relating to increase in minimum wage and unavoidable costs for benefits. Staffing levels and compensation rates are reviewed annually. Our external review indicates our salaries are much lower than similar positions in comparable institutions.

7. Conclusion

The OHS gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Oshawa for the OM and our efforts to preserve and promote awareness and appreciation for the history of Oshawa. The OM is an important component in the cultural landscape of the City of Oshawa. As the only community museum in Oshawa, the three heritage homes and the drive shed that comprise the Museum are ideally situated to tell the story of Oshawa from the earliest First Nations settlements to present times. We help communicate community identity, spark interest and engagement, enhance public knowledge and contribute public value to the City. We believe in telling great stories and expanding the historical narratives to be more inclusive of how we tell our history.

Our strength lies in our collections, our spaces and our people and our mandate directs our activities and the connections we make. Oshawa's citizens tell us they feel a sense of ownership and pride in our collections and the three museum buildings. History organizations make their communities more attractive places in which to live, work, learn and play. With astute leadership, compelling vision, and partners and resources sufficient to the task, the OHS will continue to be a leader in the arts, culture and heritage community of Oshawa.

**The Corporation of the City of Oshawa
2019 Operating Budget
Oshawa Historical Society**

Description	2018 Projected Actuals	2018 Approved Budget	2019 Proposed Budget	2019-2018 Variance \$'s	2019-2018 Variance %
Personnel Costs	380,600	374,000	388,200	14,200	3.8
Program and Office Supplies	24,400	24,400	24,400	-	-
Professional Services	37,400	37,400	38,600	1,200	3.2
Maintenance and Repairs	31,600	31,600	31,600	-	-
Utilities	29,550	28,900	30,000	1,100	3.8
Agency Generated Revenue	(69,000)	(69,000)	(65,000)	4,000	(5.8)
City of Oshawa Grants	(427,300)	(427,300)	(447,800)	(20,500)	4.8
Total Oshawa Historical Society	7,250	-	-	-	

Variance Explanations:

Unavoidable increases related to professional services including insurance, audit and payroll services and Human Resources outsourcing.

Increase in cost of utilities including fuel oil for Robinson House and pumping services for holding tanks

Increase in personnel costs (staff and benefits) relating to increase in minimum wage and unavoidable costs for benefits. Staffing levels and compensation rates are reviewed annually. Our external review indicates our salaries are much lower than similar positions in comparable institutions.