



## **Oshawa Historical Society**

### **Managing the**

## **Oshawa Museum**

## **2020 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 2020. 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 a 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. Our collection is diverse, just like Oshawa's history, and we are committed to expanding the narratives we share to be more inclusive towards underrepresented communities. We care for over 50 000 artifacts and will continue to strategically manage and develop the collection as a resource for education and research.

### **Our Spaces**

The three historically designated buildings, Guy (GH), 1846, Henry (HH), 1840 and Robinson (RH), 1854 houses, as well as the Anniversary Drive Shed (2009), 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 OM promotes our spaces as an asset to the community, to engage our visitors and raise the visibility of the Museum. Future plans include

the construction of a new visitor center designed to deliver an enhanced and engaging museum experience.

### **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 explore new ways to create and present our knowledge to the community. Our staff share their expertise with the community and colleagues through appointments on boards, publications and conference presentations

## **3. 2019 Accomplishments by Objective**

### **3.1 Objective: To be vibrant and vital**

We continued to demonstrate our relevance to the community by offering on-site, online and outreach programs and facilities to facilitate a deeper understanding of Oshawa's history. The OM is part of a vibrant cultural community in Oshawa and we make valuable contributions to the community through our programs, events, research, stewardship and service. 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;

- E-publication section of website was re-designed and updated to include new publications such as past exhibit booklets and a new publication about Demill Ladies College
- Museum staff was invited to write a monthly column for Oshawa this Week
- Hosted placement students from Nipissing University and Durham College
- New resources from the archival collection were digitized and made available on website
- Hosted another successful summer of *Yoga in the Garden*
- Staff member elected to board of the Ontario Historical Society

### **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 and communities that may have been marginalized in the past. To support this, staff continued to refine and develop the exhibition and collection strategy to broaden our reach, appeal to new audiences and to share new stories. We continued to utilize web based tools to improve and increase access to our research, collections and publications.

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;

- Smith Potteries Exhibit installed at Legislative Assembly of Ontario
- Opened *Vintage Catwalk* display in June. Produced in partnership with The Costume People, this exhibit looks at historic fashion and the stories that clothes tell.
- Continued to promote a more inclusive approach to Oshawa history. Black History Month was a focus and we attended Club Carib Black History Event and spoke with 11 schools and community groups about Black history and the importance of including diverse perspectives.
- Continued to present original research through podcasts, blog posts, newsletters and our Facebook page

### **3.3 Objective: strong and successful**

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, Durham Storytellers, York-Durham Association of Museums and Archives, Women's Herstory Connection Durham Region, Durham Region Area Archives Group, Ontario Regiment Museum, 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;

- New partnerships with Durham Storytellers to celebrate World Storytelling Day and Durham museums to create a travelling exhibit recognizing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Williams Treaty
- HR consultant reviewed and updated all museum policies

- Hosting 2 interns from the Trent University Child and Youth Services Program starting in Fall 2019. Students will work with our community engagement staff member to re-vamp the youth program O-MY
- Successfully applied for Community Museum Operating Grant, Heritage Organization Development Grant, Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works
- Participated in DDSB and Ontario Regiment Museum History Day as a workshop presenter. Taught Remembering Rationing Program to 100 kids from 7 different high schools in Durham Region
- Staff participated in a number of committees and boards including The Ontario Historical Society board, grant adjudicator for Young Canada Works, Program Advisory Committees at Fleming College and Durham College and as an instructor in the Cultural Heritage, Conservation and Management Program at Fleming College

### **3.4 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 the construction of a new purpose built museum facility to support the efficient and sustainable preservation and interpretation of the Museum's collection. In 2019, the OHS presented plans to the City of Oshawa Development Services Committee and is awaiting a staff report on the matter.

Some of the year's highlights included;

- Concept design feasibility study was completed and results presented to the Development Services Committee
- Continued to garner support for the museum expansion project. Presented plan at OHS meeting
- Continued to update senior City staff and members of Council on developments
- Developed a presentation to be used as a promotional/informational tool

## **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
- Most 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
- Flexible and responsive to change as required
- Broad thematic scope of programs that engages visitors in Oshawa's history
- Respected and sought out by the public
- Known for our positive interactions with the public

#### 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
- Lakeview Park's 100th anniversary and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of HH as a museum in 2020
- Upcoming Oshawa 2024 celebration will bring a greater recognition for Oshawa's history
- Proposed facility expansion project to address several challenges
- Use of web based tools helps us to increase profile, broaden reach and connect with our audience
- 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
- Annual 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

- External events in Lakeview Park negatively impact museum operations during the busy summer months (Autofest, Ribfest etc.)

## 5. 2020 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 2020 budget 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 2020 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, inclusive and vital to the community and cultural life in Oshawa

We continue to create knowledge and public information that increases the understanding of Oshawa's history. We demonstrate our importance 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 our reach, appeal to new audiences and capture diverse stories. Upcoming anniversaries in 2020 (60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of opening of HH and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lakeview Park) and 2024 (100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Oshawa becoming City) offer opportunities to engage the public in history and promote the OM's importance to the community.

### 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 to 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. In 2019 we were able to keep most of our expenses within the approved budget amounts with the exception of personnel costs (staff and benefits). For 2020 the OHS has produced what we feel is 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**.

Specifically budget increases are the result of personnel costs (staff and benefits) relating to an increase in minimum wage, a decrease in employment grant funding and unavoidable increases in costs for benefits. Our staffing levels and compensation rates were reviewed once again by the Board of Directors. 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. This was a challenging year in some respects for the OM. Water main replacement and budget pressures resulted in some disruptions to our operations. 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, expanding the historical narratives and sparking interest in our local 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  
2020 Operating Budget  
Oshawa Historical Society**

Description	2019 Projected Actuals	2019 Approved Budget	2020 Proposed Budget	2020-2019 Variance \$'s	2020-2019 Variance %
Personnel Costs	384,500	374,000	392,700	18,700	5.0
Program and Office Supplies	24,400	24,400	24,400	-	-
Professional Services	37,400	37,400	35,700	(1,700)	(4.5)
Maintenance and Repairs	31,600	31,600	27,700	(3,900)	(12.3)
Utilities	28,900	28,900	24,600	(4,300)	(14.9)
Agency Generated Revenue	(69,000)	(69,000)	(69,000)	-	-
City of Oshawa Grants	(427,300)	(427,300)	(436,100)	(8,800)	2.1
<b>Total Oshawa Historical Society</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	

Variance Explanations:

Increase in personnel costs (staff and benefits) relating to increase in minimum wage, decrease in employment grant funding and unavoidable costs for benefits.