



Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Prepared by



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Land Acknowledgement

Dufferin County and the MoD resides within the traditional territory and ancestral lands of the Tionontati (Petun), Attawandaron (Neutral), Haudenosaunee (Six Nations), and Anishinaabe peoples. Various surrounding municipalities within the County reside within the treaty lands named under the Haldimand Deed of 1784 and two of the Williams Treaties of 1818: Treaty 18: the Nottawasaga Purchase, and Treaty 19: The Ajetance Treaty.

These traditional territories upon which we live and learn, are steeped in rich Indigenous history and traditions. It is with this statement that we declare to honour and respect the past and present connection of Indigenous peoples with this land, its waterways and resources.

This area continues to be home to many Indigenous people today. We recognize the sovereignty of all Indigenous nations and are grateful for the opportunity to learn, live, and work on this land. We acknowledge that the MoD is in treaty land, and respect our collective responsibility to protect and nurture the land. We also recognize the continuing impacts of colonialism and our responsibilities to redress the ways this has helped shape our organization. We are committed to working to address structural inequities and continuing to learn and unlearn in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.



*Chief Lady Bird (Nancy King),
Rama First Nations/Moosedeer Point First Nations*

Introduction

The MoD Strategic Plan sets a new vision, mission, and strategic directions for the museum over the next three to five years.

Since its inception the MoD — once the Shelburne Pioneer Museum (operated by the Dufferin County Historical Society) and then the Dufferin County Museum and Archives (DCMA) — has continued to grow, change and evolve.

A changing and growing County demographic, the impacts of COVID-19 and social and societal shifts have seen cultural institutions reflecting on their role. The MoD has seen the need to better understand and reflect its community and their diverse histories, culture, stories, experiences and perspectives, and chart a path forward.

The MoD embarked on a strategic planning process in 2022 to set a new vision and mission for the institution, re-examining and clarifying its values, priorities, and goals, to improve and enhance its role in the County of Dufferin and beyond. A new focus on storytelling sets the MoD on a path to build connected communities through shared experiences and narratives.

This plan aims to build on the MoD's incredible past in imagining its bright future.

The strategic plan will aim to:

- Strengthen the MoD as a storyteller, better reflecting the stories of a changing and evolving community.
- Expand the appeal to and engagement from the community by reaching out, forging new connections and improving the visitor experience.
- Ensure equity, inclusion, decolonization and anti-oppression are a priority across the institution.

Context

Founding + History

The Museum of Dufferin sits amongst the rolling hills of Mulmur. Formerly known as the Dufferin County Museum and Archives (DCMA), it's current purpose-built bank-barn style building was constructed (with a traditional community barn raising) in 1994 to reflect the rural and agricultural heritage of the region. Its origins date back to 1963 when the Shelburne Pioneer Museum was established by the Dufferin County Historical Society and its artifact collection was donated to the County in 1988. The museum property and facility includes gardens, a gallery in the silo, and several historic buildings and log-cabin structure inside that act as display spaces and are artifacts themselves—and more.

The last strategic plan, created in 2011 saw the then Dufferin County Museum and Archives as a “collection of precious artifacts and archival material that, individually and collectively, tell the story of Dufferin County; its people and its places.” Staff endeavoured to achieve a "community centre" museum model that would be all things to the community, suggesting that it owed some of its early success to this approach.



In actuality, DCMA struggled with this approach and failed to maintain its initial lead and meet the evolving needs and demands from a growing and diverse community.

In 2018, after a winter-long closure for its largest renovation since opening, the DCMA rebranded itself as the MoD (Museum of Dufferin), with a new look. Along with the name change came a new look to communicate that contemporary, community life happens here. This modernization was met with mixed reactions as a strong legacy community of supporters were saddened to see what was perceived as a shift from its roots.

2018 also saw the opening of the Corn Flower Glass Gallery, to highlight their collection — the world's largest — of this iconic Canadian glass.

MoD Today

Though the MoD has been growing and changing over the years, the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns provided an opportunity for the team to increase online and digital services through virtual exhibitions, downloadable teaching and learning resources, and making collections available for distance research.

During the pandemic the MoD released a number of new digital initiatives which included: the British Home Child database project; the Lanterns of Hope kit program; Dufferin House digital escape room; Music of the First World War virtual program; “Solidarity in My Community” online art show. Other downloadable games and activities provided fun and entertaining learning opportunities for people to engage with local history.

The MoD team have also been working on ‘Collecting the Community’, an initiative established to focus on and actively engage with, collect, preserve and interpret the past, present and future of historically underrepresented people and communities in Dufferin County. Residents, especially those who identify as racialized or marginalized, are being invited to bring meaningful items to be donated to the collection.



This initiative is but one approach to acknowledge and address gaps in the largely settler, colonial and agricultural based collection and ensure that the museum is inclusive and can represent their increasingly diverse community.

The MoD’s collection is home to fine art, glassware, housewares and everyday items, textiles, vintage toys and games — and much more — capturing the historic experiences of Dufferin County. The archive is home to photographs, documents and cultural ephemera, with research tools and supports available to the public. Educational programming and events see the MoD branching out into the community and inviting the public through its doors for talks, tours and more.

Strategic Planning Process

Overview + Approach

The MoD's strategic planning process took a collaborative approach and incorporated insights from the staff, the County Council's Community Development and Tourism Committee, community partners, local organizations, museum supporters and the public. Here we provide an overview on the guiding questions and approach.

Guiding Questions

What make the MoD unique and what are its strengths?

What role does the MoD play—or should it play—in the community?

What are the MoD's challenges?

Who are the MoD's current and future users, and how to we plan with and for them?

Process + Plan



Research + Discovery

January - April, 2022

Project Set-Up
Kick-Off Meeting
Equity Workshop
Desk Research
Site Visit

Engagement

March- June, 2022

Public Survey
Stakeholder Survey
Interviews
Focus Groups

Visioning + Analysis

June - August, 2022

MoD Team
Workshop

Plan Development

August - September,
2022

Strategic Priorities
approved by the
Community
Development and
Tourism Committee

Draft + Finalizes Strat
Plan

Who Engaged?

Including a diversity of perspectives in the process is incredibly important, to ensure the strategic plan considers all community members. Stakeholder mapping activities, in collaboration with the MoD team helped to identify large user groups as well as specific individuals to seek input. In total, almost 200 people and stakeholders engaged in the process.

Community members from the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association, the County DEI committee, The Hills Magazine, Theatre Orangeville, EarlyOn, Orangeville BIA, Maple Grove Farm, Shelburne Multicultural Committee, STREAMS Hub, local schools and the Dufferin County Multicultural Foundation were engaged throughout the process. The Development and Tourism Committee that oversees the MoD was also engaged, as well as additional County Council and staff.

9 MoD Staff

through workshops and interviews

141 Public

Survey Responses from members + visitors

5 Volunteers

donors + visitors through in-depth interviews

19 County Staff + Councillors

through a survey, interviews and a focus group.

8 Local Organizations

and community groups through focus groups and interviews

Equity in the Process

At the onset of the process, the MoD and PROCESS team prioritized critically thinking about how equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice could be incorporated within both the planning process and the final plan. The following steps were taken:

Equity & Anti-Oppression Workshop

To commence the strategic planning process, PROCESS team member and Indigenous facilitator Trina Moyan Bell and Shannon Holness, Black facilitator who shared her lived experience, led cultural competency training to discuss equity, anti-oppression and decolonization with the MoD staff. This session was intended to help the MoD team better understand and consider the nuanced challenges public and historical institutions face and to inform continued research and the development of the strategic plan.

Acknowledging Gaps

The PROCESS team sought advising from our diverse team and collaborators throughout the project. We also acknowledge gaps and missing voices in our process. Of note, an Indigenous voice was missing from local engagement. Indigenous team members were consulted throughout the strategic planning process, but the MoD is currently working on making connections with local Indigenous groups. Youth were also identified as a missing perspective. The MoD will continue to work to create an inclusive space that welcomes, represents and listens to its community. Including representing diverse perspectives is ongoing work.

Disaggregating Data

The PROCESS team prioritized collecting demographic data in our engagements to understand what people are saying about the MoD, how they experience it, who this feedback is coming from and who is missing from the MoD community.

Vision, Mission Values



Our vision, mission and values capture who we are and what we are trying to achieve. Our vision sets our direction and aspiration, guiding us in everything that we do. Our mission tells us what to do in order to work towards our vision. Our values operate as our core belief system, telling the world who we are and what we stand for.

Aligning around the new shared direction allows us to prioritize our efforts, resources and capacity and move together in the same direction.

Vision

All Dufferin County residents and visitors are immersed in the stories and history of Dufferin County's people, places and culture

Mission

The MoD collects and preserves the stories of the people, places and culture of Dufferin County — past and present — and shares them through engaging and inclusive experiences.

Values

Local Heritage

We are committed to collecting, preserving, uncovering and sharing the tangible and intangible heritage of Dufferin County.

Innovative and Engaging

We are dedicated to creating engaging programming and experiences, exploring innovative tools and approaches.

Integrity and Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions and collections, operating with transparency to create a safe work and community environment.

Accessible and Inclusive

We strive to provide welcoming, accessible and inclusive experiences for a diversity of people.

People-focused and Collaborative

We prioritize people and aim to bring together multiple perspectives and invite opportunities for relationship building and collaboration.

Strategic Priority Areas

The MoD's strategic priority areas see the MoD focusing on becoming a storyteller, centering the visitor experience, reaching out into the community, safeguarding our collection and building capacity to foster resiliency.

The development of the priority areas, objectives and actions, laid out on the following pages, emerged from what we heard throughout the engagement, and what was learned through research, and industry trends. Key takeaways from community members in engagement can be found in the Appendix.

Perhaps the biggest and most relevant finding was the increasing shift museums are taking, as many increasingly strive to move away from being object-oriented, and instead look to be experience-oriented. This is a new way to think about and approach museum practices. Historically, the object has been the center of the museum and its main focus but this new perspective asks museums to rethink the “collect-preserve-interpret” paradigm in order to better engage visitors and redefine their role in communities.

This approach serves to allow museums to be agile, flexible, adaptable and resilient to changing circumstances and contexts, as was made clear by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift is also deeply rooted in and aligned with visitor and consumer demands that increasingly value engaging and exciting experiences over things.

Centering stories is about future-proofing museums. It sees them embracing equity, access and inclusion, weaving it into their very fabric. A focus on stories and experiences can alleviate the pressure when a story, without an object, needs to be told and offers an approach that prioritizes the human experience. It supports the ability of vitally important institutions like the MoD to grow and meet new challenges—bringing the past along with us while we look to the future.

1

Become a Storyteller

The MoD will shift its focus to capturing, documenting and sharing the stories and history of Dufferin County's people, places and culture. This means the collections and objects become an important tool to tell stories, but are no longer the core of the MoD's focus moving forward.

The traditional museum exists to collect, preserve, interpret, and display objects of artistic, cultural, or scientific significance for the study and education of the public. This often requires the public to visit a specific location and has limited ability to wholesomely capture the social and cultural fabric of a society. Stories, not objects, are often the most compelling, memorable and interesting part of history. An approach that prioritizes stories and experiences over objects provides greater flexibility to be inclusive, adaptive and engaging in the presentation of history and local contemporary life.

Objectives

- Tell more compelling and inclusive stories of local heritage.
- Explore new tools, technologies, approaches and methods to tell and interpret stories.
- Promote the MoD's refined role, vision and presence as a storyteller to introduce (and re-introduce) the MoD to a broad audience.
- Understand and measure our marketing impacts to refine and improve our approach.



Become a Storyteller

Objective 1.1

Tell more compelling and inclusive stories of local heritage.

Action 1.1.1 Create a new role of "Historian" who supports the collecting, interpretation, and telling of local stories across collections, exhibitions and programs, and can act as a community liaison.	Year 1-2
Action 1.1.2 Develop a system and process to collect, maintain and share stories, which includes oral histories and stories. This system includes user and community-generated content.	Year 1-2
Action 1.1.3 Collect and digitally retain at least 20 new stories per year that are substantially relevant to Dufferin County's people, places or culture. This includes past and present people, places and culture.	Year 1-2
Action 1.1.4 Collect and digitally retain at least 20 new nonmaterial items (<i>for example: songs, poems, art, photographs, video</i>) per year that are substantially relevant and significant to Dufferin County's people, places or culture. This includes past and present people, places and culture.	Year 2-3
Action 1.1.5 Implement a way of displaying and celebrating the Corn Flower Collection such that it significantly reduces the amount of space used in the gallery.	Year 2-3
Action 1.1.6 Develop a land acknowledgement and anti-oppression statement specific for the MoD and include it on the website and within the building.	Year 1-2
Action 1.1.7 Review the MoD land acknowledgement and anti-oppression statement every 3 years, or sooner as required or directed.	Year 4+

1

Become a Storyteller

Objective 1.2

Explore new tools, technologies, approaches and methods to tell and interpret stories.

Action 1.2.1

Create a 'digitization and technology utilization plan' to support, enhance and supplement the artifacts and archives collection. This may include new ways of collecting, displaying and maintaining digital content and include the consideration of virtual or augmented reality, and/or immersive installations and storytelling displays.

Year 1-2

Action 1.2.2

Develop a guide/toolkit for MoD staff and volunteers to use when sharing stories to ensure they are as engaging, compelling, and as memorable as possible.

Year 2-3

Action 1.2.3

Integrate a digital-preferred approach into the archives and collections policies when considering adding items to either the artifact collection or archives. *(For example; taking a photograph of an object we may have otherwise needed to collect but didn't have space.)*

Year 4+

1

Become a Storyteller

Objective 1.3

Promote the MoD's refined role, vision and presence as a storyteller to introduce (and re-introduce) the MoD to a broader audience.

Action 1.3.1

Ensure all future marketing, social media posts, communications, promotions and advertising are clearly connected to a story in the MoD's physical or digital archive or collections.

Year 1-2

Action 1.3.2

Create a brand style guide to establish a consistent visual look and feel, and tone of voice across all channels which includes social media, websites, and printed collateral.

Year 1-2

Action 1.3.3

Develop a marketing strategy that directly supports and focuses on the MoD's vision, mission, priorities and objectives.

Year 1-2

Action 1.3.4

Partner with other County divisions and community/tourism partners for cross-promotional initiatives and shared marketing and advertising investments whenever possible.

Year 2-3

Action 1.3.5

Develop an annual marketing plan that includes new, innovative and creative marketing approaches to reach new audiences and generate excitement. *(For Example: billboards, creative road signage pointing to the MoD or historic sites of relevance, shop-window pop-ups, MoD branded merchandise, social media competitions, etc.)*

Year 1-2

Action 1.3.6

Prioritize promoting revenue generating opportunities for the MoD which includes research services, rentals events and programs.

Year 4+

1

Become a Storyteller

Objective 1.4

Understand and measure our marketing impacts to refine and improve our approach.

Action 1.4.1

Establish marketing targets and evaluate each marketing effort for impact, effectiveness and efficiency. This includes collecting, tracking and reviewing analytics and other established metrics for website, social media, mailing lists, earned media, etc. on a regular basis.

Year 1-2

Action 1.4.2

Develop and maintain a MoD visitor and user research plan to understand who visits and why, and evaluate challenges and opportunities.

Year 1-2

Action 1.4.3

Implement a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) to effectively capture and maintain contacts and relationships including members, donors, volunteers, partners, visitors, potential donors and other key stakeholders.

Year 3-4

Action 1.4.4

Use data from the CRM to inform and update the annual marketing and communications strategy to customize marketing approaches to key target segments/audience groups.

Year 4+

2

Centre the Visitor Experience.

Prioritize the visitor experience by creating and changing displays, programming and events to be interactive, engaging and fun. Educate through multi-sensory storytelling experiences.

In order to realize its purpose of sharing and making accessible the history of Dufferin County's people, places and culture, the MoD needs to offer enticing experiences that better reflects the diverse community. What visitors are looking for has changed and the MoD has fallen behind in adapting to the new reality of visitor expectations, contributing to its low visitation numbers. Increasingly, the visitors and consumers have moved away from object focused "sightseeing" and towards destinations and experiences.

Objectives

- **Implement a user-centered approach to break from traditional exhibition practices to improve the visitor experience.**
- **Become a major Dufferin County tourist destination by drawing in new audiences and enhance offerings.**
- **Evaluate and enhance the MoD's physical assets to support our mission and improve the complete user experience.**
- **Evaluate and enhance the MoD's physical assets to support our mission and improve the complete user experience.**



Centre the Visitor Experience.

Objective 2.1

Implement a user-centered approach to break from traditional exhibition practices to improve the visitor experience.

Action 2.1.1

Develop and implement a plan to improve the visitor experience at the MoD. Ensure the environment is comfortable and contains a welcoming and approachable atmosphere for all visitors.

Year 3-4

Action 2.1.2

Establish a process to ensure collaboration internally to align and connect stories across every touchpoint in the visitor experience: collections, exhibitions, programming, events and marketing, to create connected and cohesive experiences and extend storytelling beyond the traditional exhibitions.

Year 1-2

Action 2.1.3

Produce engaging and award-winning media content, including visual and audio stories to improve the MoD's reputation in storytelling excellence.

Year 4+

Action 2.1.4

Develop an annual exhibition plan that increases the number and rotation of exhibits from traditional norms. Annual exhibition plan includes exhibits and installations located at partner locations (*For Example; events in the County, Municipal partners, libraries, schools, community centres*).

Year 1-2

Action 2.1.5

Develop an annual events plan that focuses on achieving the MoD's vision and mission.

Year 1-2

Action 2.1.6

Develop a plan to convert existing exhibitions and displays to be more hands-on or include multi-sensory experiences.

Year 3-4

Action 2.1.7

Ensure all new programs, events and exhibits include hands-on activities and/or multi-sensory experiences. (*For Example; recreation experiences, moments or stories with immersive installations, or learn-a-skill programs*.)

Year 1-2



Centre the Visitor Experience.

Objective 2.1 (...continued)

Implement a user-centered approach to break from traditional exhibition approaches to improve the visitor experience.

<p>Action 2.1.8 Develop an annual user and community engagement plan that; includes digital and in-person strategies; incorporates fun and unique ways of engaging different audiences; utilizes local stories and exhibitions that reflect and represent various groups and community members; and utilizes social media and online tools. <i>(For Example; night at the museum sleepover, ghost stories, cemetery tours, presence at major community festivals/events, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Year 3-4</p>
<p>Action 2.1.9 Offer behind-the-scenes experiences (in-person and/or virtually) including installation, curation and archival processes to include the community in a holistic museum experience.</p>	<p>Year 4+</p>
<p>Action 2.1.10 Spark an interest in history by offering sneak peaks, previews, and behind-the-scenes experiences including tours and/or visible storage cases to include the public in the complete storytelling process.</p>	<p>Year 4+</p>
<p>Action 2.1.11 Evaluate the gift shop and adjust contents on an ongoing basis to ensure financial viability, promoting local businesses where possible, and offering a variety of items for different user groups.</p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>
<p>Action 2.1.12 Implement the collection of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) to measure the visitor's experience and satisfaction. <i>(Note: The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a commonly used metric as it provides a core measurement for customer and visitor experiences. NPS is calculated using the answer to a key question, using a 0-10 scale: How likely is it that you would recommend the MoD to a friend or colleague? This question and resulting score can be included onsite and in annual surveys and data collection, and can offer insight into which experiences best resonate with visitors.)</i></p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>



Centre the Visitor Experience.

Objective 2.2

Become a major Dufferin County tourist destination by drawing in new audiences and enhance offerings.

Action 2.2.1

Create a substantive and informative tourism information hub with a robust display of promotional materials from tourism destinations across the County, including a community event calendar and/or a map displaying routes and locations.

Year 3-4

Action 2.2.2

Develop and provide training to all staff and volunteers to be informed about upcoming local events and activities.

Year 4+

Action 2.2.3

Develop a new partnerships plan with nearby tourism destinations with the goal of creating packages and experiences for various audience segments. *(For Example; art/culture/history bus tours, public-private partnerships, date night at the museum, school field trip packages, culture and recreation pass programs, etc.)*

Year 4+

Action 2.2.4

Develop an annual programming plan that increases the number of program participants by a minimum of 10% each year (year-over-year) and considers maximizing the utilization of spaces within the MoD property.

Year 3-4

Action 2.2.5

Better promote existing historic road-trip guides as a tourism asset, connecting the MoD to other County destinations, programming and initiative.

Year 1-2

Action 2.2.6

Develop a plan to increase utilization of the kitchen to, where possible and appropriate, increase food and beverage offerings during regular visits, events, and programming.

Year 4+

2

Centre the Visitor Experience.

Objective 2.3

Evaluate and enhance the MoD's physical assets to support our mission and improve the complete user experience.

Action 2.3.1

Develop and implement a new floor plan for the MoD to increase the flexibility for new exhibits, displays, interactive experiences, and events. This may include the reducing, altering, or removing some display cases, buildings or artifacts in the gallery.

Year 1-2

Action 2.3.2

Conduct a property/facility improvement and optimization study to understand how to better utilize the buildings, grounds, and spaces in the future. This includes a needs assessment required to fully implement this strategy and achieve the objectives outlined within. This may also include considerations for additional charging stations, increased parking, and additional structures (*For Example; garden shed, green house, share structure, multi-purpose concrete pad, and outdoor furniture/amenities*).

Year 3-4

3

Reach Out into the Community.

Provide more storytelling and museum experiences in the community that are linked but not tied to the physical location of the MoD.

The MoD is not located along the County’s busiest thoroughfare or in a central hub—and as such, it can’t (and shouldn’t) take on the role of the cultural hub. Pre-pandemic, the MoD offered more services in the community and there is a desire to provide this again in the future. Location, community presence and awareness were identified during the consultation process as challenges for the MoD to overcome. Providing more storytelling and museum programming and experiences in the communities themselves would better ensure fair and equitable access to museum services—and draw more people back to it’s homebase.

Objectives

- Lower barriers to accessing and engaging with the MoD to increase participation.
- Increase engagement with the MoD by offering off-site experiences out in the community.
- Turn local residents into MoD ambassadors through revitalized volunteer and membership programs.



Reach Out into the Community.

Objective 3.1 Lower barriers to accessing and engaging with the MoD to increase participation.	
Action 3.1.1 Create a MoD ambassadors group which includes demographic and socio-economically diverse local residents and community leaders to advise, support and advocate on behalf of the MoD and connect it to a broader public and new audiences.	Year 1-2
Action 3.1.2 Investigate sponsorships to offer transportation to and from the MoD and report back to Council.	Year 1-2
Action 3.1.3 Introduce and maintain new community outreach programming, with specific intent to expand the MoD presence within the local community in support of the MoD mission. Leverage partnerships, institutional collaboration and representation within the Museum's programming.	Year 4+
Action 3.1.4 Continue to enhance and grow virtual and online education, event and programming opportunities.	Year 3-4
Action 3.1.5 Expand public programming and learning opportunities with offerings targeted to diverse audiences and age groups. Offer extended or special hours on evenings and weekends to accommodate a broader public.	Year 3-4
Action 3.1.6 Introduce the MoD through marketing, advertising and communications and provide new audiences with an inside or behind-the-scenes look, to increase comfort and familiarity with institutional spaces.	Year 4+



Reach Out into the Community.

Objective 3.2

Increase engagement with the MoD by offering off-site experiences out in the community.

Action 3.2.1

Develop an annual plan to increase the number of temporary satellite locations, pop-up displays and mobile exhibitions from the MoD.

Year 3-4

Action 3.2.2

Build new, and strengthen existing connections with—and offerings for—local schools

Year 1-2

Action 3.2.3

Develop an annual plan to be present during major community events with pop-up displays, hands-on experiences, and immersive or multisensory experiences.

Year 3-4

Action 3.2.4

Create an annual plan to attend community events with tools to capture local stories. (*For Example; video interview series, suggestion box, and audio stories.*)

Year 1-2

Action 3.2.5

Develop kits, programming, and/or pre-packaged experiences that can be loaned to support the creation and maintenance of a MoD presence off-site.

Year 1-2

Action 3.2.6

Train volunteers to represent the MoD off-site and support the distribution, set-up and staffing of satellite locations, pop-up displays and programming.

Year 3-4



Reach Out into the Community.

Objective 3.3 Turn local residents into MoD ambassadors through revitalized volunteer and membership programs.	
Action 3.3.1 Develop a revitalized and robust membership program that: focuses on creating MoD ambassadors and advocates, offers a variety of options for a diversity of age groups, and offers greater financial support opportunities to patrons.	Year 1-2
Action 3.3.2 Develop a membership communication and engagement plan to maximize membership retention rates, increase volunteerism, and increase awareness of opportunities to financially support the MoD.	Year 3-4
Action 3.3.3 Position membership more prominently on the Museum website and promotional materials. Regularly promote and market MoD membership across multiple channels.	Year 3-4
Action 3.3.4 Build community and create social opportunities and connection for and amongst partners, members, volunteers and donors.	Year 3-4
Action 3.3.5 Engage local residents in the heritage museum experience through volunteerism, creating MoD ambassadors that can support the growth and strengthening of community connections, and enhance the MoD's human resources on and off-site.	Year 1-2
Action 3.3.6 Develop clear policies, guidelines and job descriptions for volunteer opportunities to better communicate and manage expectations, and clarify outreach and recruitment. Provide regular onboarding and training of volunteers.	Year 1-2
Action 3.3.7 Reach out to underrepresented and diverse communities to fill volunteer positions, including youth and high school students.	Year 3-4



Safeguard our Collections.

Though there needs to be a shift towards stories and away from objects, the safeguarding and preservation of the archive and collections needs to be maintained. Without archives a community's historical information and documents would be lost or poorly maintained and difficult to access by the public. The preservation of objects (curatorial) is also important for the preservation of our history. It's nearly impossible to recover lost or destroyed objects that are unique and/or historical.

Single and upper-tier Municipal governments in Ontario are required to provide archive services. Even if this weren't the case, without this central service, many of our community's historical information and documents would be lost or poorly maintained and difficult to access by the public. We have an obligation and responsibility to act as stewards for the preservation of our collections and archives, and intend to maintain access to historical objects and information while we continue to capture and share the local history.

Objectives

- Continue to be responsible stewards of archival and artifact collections.
- Ensure an equity-based and decolonial lens informs the expansion, interpretation, preservation and stewardship of the collection.



Safeguard our Collections.

Objective 4.1

Continue to be responsible stewards of archival and artifact collections.

Action 4.1.1

Prioritize addressing the backlog of artifacts before addressing new initiatives. Invest in resources to streamline acquisitions.

Year 3-4**Action 4.1.2**

Enact the collections management strategy that includes a deaccessioning plan to address similar items, and to make space for increasingly diverse and culturally relevant collections.

Year 1-2**Action 4.1.3**

Triannually review systems that protect and preserve the museums' artifact and archival collections and ensure they are maintained to industry standards. Strengthen preventative conservation measures where appropriate.

Year 4+**Action 4.1.4**

Create tools and/or guides that clearly communicate the collection policies for donors and potential donors, to support staff in accepting and refusing donations.

Year 3-4**Action 4.1.5**

Invest in storage and capacity needs to safeguard objects. Consider open/visible storage that might be accessible and/or visible at times to the public.

Year 4+**Action 4.1.6**

Continue to collect objects from the growing, changing and diverse local community.

Year 4+



Safeguard our Collections.

Objective 4.2

Ensure an equity-based and decolonial lens informs the expansion, interpretation, preservation and stewardship of the collection.

Action 4.2.1

Annually review collections strategies, policies, stories, artifacts and interpretation through an informed equity decolonial lens and continue to collect objects from the growing, changing and diverse local community.

Year 4+

Action 4.2.2

Continue to identify, catalogue and review Indigenous objects with the support of Indigenous partners and experts.

Year 3-4

Action 4.2.3

Decolonize the MoD through the repatriation of Indigenous objects to the rightful owners, where applicable and possible. Continue to seek opportunities for learning and collaboration with Indigenous partners, to share and support truth, healing and the authentic representation of Indigenous voices.

Year 3-4

5

Build Capacity and Foster Resiliency.

Our goal is to build an organization that considers financial and human capacity and resources, internally and externally. We also intend to foster a positive workplace culture and, through extending our network, build a more sustainable financial future and resilient organization.

We intend to support the investments needed to realize this strategic plan by exploring new, and enhancing existing, relationships with philanthropic donors and potential sponsors. We aim to deepen and grow our fundraising capacity in support of a more sustainable and resilient future and as a tool to foster MoD ambassadors across all of our relationships. The connections, relationships and partnerships we will forge can also extend our reach out into the County and support the expansion of our offerings to better serve our community. The MoD can become a destination, including for the staff that work so diligently to realize all the potential this integral community place has to offer.

Objectives

- **Increase financial sustainability, including through creating opportunities for donation and sponsorship.**
- **Improve internal staff capacity and alignment to support the implementation and ongoing management of a visitor centered experience.**
- **Build and foster community connections and partnerships.**



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Objective 5.1

Increase financial sustainability, including through creating opportunities for donation and sponsorship.

<p>Action 5.1.1 Begin strategically building a strong network of supporters and a donor base to support the MoD. Consider a fundraising campaign and/or outreach strategy.</p>	<p>Year 3-4</p>
<p>Action 5.1.2 Develop a fundraising and philanthropic plan and set goals that support the MoD mission. Include policies and/or a vetting process to ensure values with potential funders, sponsors and donors are aligned with the MoD.</p>	<p>Year 3-4</p>
<p>Action 5.1.3 Implement a donor-centred stewardship plan and engagement strategy that includes communication and events <i>(For Example; small lunches, afternoon tea, previews and behind-the-scenes access, special exhibitions tours, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Year 4+</p>
<p>Action 5.1.4 Pursue donor and patron models with businesses, sponsors and corporate partners that consider benefits, gift programmes and recognition. <i>(For Example; plaques or donor recognition installation, brand and marketing partnerships, etc)</i></p>	<p>Year 3-4</p>
<p>Action 5.1.5 Develop a sponsorship package and engage potential businesses for financial support, sponsorships, or in-kind donations for large exhibitions and events.</p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>
<p>Action 5.1.6 Regularly promote opportunities for financial donation <i>(For Example: donation button on the website, signage at events, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>
<p>Action 5.1.7 Establish new rental policies. Where possible, increase fees. Review and adjust fees regularly. Increase fees annually in keeping with inflation.</p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>
<p>Action 5.1.8 Establish a new services policy and adjust fees for service (ie: research services) to better recover costs. Review and adjust fees regularly. Increase fees annually in keeping with inflation.</p>	<p>Year 1-2</p>



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Objective 5.2

Improve internal staff capacity and alignment to support the implementation and ongoing management of a visitor centered experience.

Action 5.2.1 Create a Manager position at the MoD to oversee operations, staff and resources and strategic initiatives. The Manager will also develop a detailed strategic plan implementation approach which including estimated costs, who is responsible, clearer timelines and outlines additional metrics for evaluation.	Year 1-2
Action 5.2.2 Strategically align and define programming and events through planning and collaboration.	Year 1-2
Action 5.2.3 Create internal alignment and enhanced collaboration amongst staff through cross-departmental meetings to ensure an appropriate level of coordination, collaboration and planning to achieve goals.	Year 2-3
Action 5.2.4 Conduct ongoing reviews and evaluate staff performance and capacity. Provide avenues for staff to offer critical feedback to ensure a healthy work culture.	Year 1-2
Action 5.2.5 Conduct regular internal staff check-ins on the strategic plan implementation process.	Year 1-2
Action 5.2.6 Implement a process to reflect upon, review and apply learnings from various initiatives to the future of MoD and celebrate milestones and accomplishments.	Year 2-3
Action 5.2.7 Review organizational staff capacity and requirements, including the organizational chart, to better understand hiring, skill sets, professional development and resources needs.	Year 1-2
Action 5.2.8 Ensure the management of volunteers, members, donors and partnerships are clearly outlined in appropriate staff role(s) to better leverage these supporters as MoD ambassadors.	Year 1-2



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Objective 5.3

Build and foster community connections and partnerships.

Action 5.3.1

Develop definitions and policies that aid in communicating and managing expectations and allow for effective, mutually beneficial and meaningful partnership opportunities that support the MoD's mission and priorities. Include a process for vetting partners to ensure alignment with MoD's values and develop a partnership agreement to outline and clarify the intention, scope and expectations of the partnership.

Year 1-2

Action 5.3.2

List local partners on our website and, where appropriate, on-site.

Year 1-2

Action 5.3.3

Collaboratively and actively promote partnerships to build awareness amongst new audiences.

Year 1-2

Action 5.3.4

Propose to Council, for their consideration, the development of a Cultural Development Officer position who would be responsible for the strategic direction of County cultural assets and resources and would work to connect and align cultural institutions, initiatives and organizations across the County.

Year 3-4

Measuring Impacts

Museums and cultural institutions across North America are looking at how to improve how they evaluate and measure success, looking beyond traditional quantitative measurements and key performance indicators.

This Strategic Plan focuses on how the MoD can better serve the community within a clarified capacity. The implementation of the plan will include developing metrics that consider measurable and unmeasurable aspects of the value of culture, history and the human experience will be ongoing work throughout the implementation of this plan (see Action 5.2.1). These will then serve as strong benchmarks in future strategic plans.

Annual number of visitors, community members engaged, average duration of visitor stay, visitor satisfaction, number of schools visited and of community events attended, and marketing, social and online analytics may all serve as useful starting points for measuring and evaluating success. But qualitative data should not be overlooked, considering the reach and depth of engagement between the MoD and the people it serves. The harder to measure—like the depth and success of relationships with members, donors, volunteers, visitors and partners—should be not be overlooked in the development and evaluation of success.

Appendix

Key Research Takeaways

Our research, engagement and analysis of our findings has brought some key takeaways that informed the development of the strategic plan. These takeaways represent challenges, gaps and opportunities that the MoD can learn from in developing a new vision and path forward.

Takeaway 1

The MoD is expected be everything to everyone—and as a result, has lost focus.

Recognizing that the it holds a special place in the community's heart and plays a vital role in the community, the MoD works to meet every request or demand levied by the community. As a result, their resources are spread too thin and without a focus, struggle to prioritize their actions and initiatives. This is further compounded by tension amongst visitors and patrons; some would see the MoD frozen in time, while others want to see it evolve.

Initial Consideration

The MoD needs to clarify—and then communicate—its role, mandate and purpose, in order to better serve the community.

“Disengaged from its community, and seriously underused.”

—Survey Response

“The MoD is lovely. You have implemented more inclusivity, more community involvement and that is wonderful. All the people there I have ever dealt with have been warm and welcoming.”

—Survey Response

“I love the incorporation of all of Dufferin's rich diversity. And this is something that should be celebrated even more. All this rich history past and present is interesting, educational, innovative and refreshing.”

—Survey Response

“Unlike most rural museums, purpose built and visionary in its scope.”

—Survey Response

“Changing from Dufferin County Museum and Archives to MoD lost something in the shift. It was familiar, self explanatory - MoD needs to be explained. New displays were focused, somewhat trendy but narrow and reflected in some cases less the history and tone of the past and more temporal and potentially quickly passe.”

—Donor

“MoD has the great unfulfilled promise of a leading rural museum.”

—Survey Response

Takeaway 2

The MoD's location poses a challenge—and an opportunity. The MoD's stunning vistas and iconic structure hold a special place in the heart and memory of many community members. But access is a barrier and in isolation it can feel disconnected from its neighbours. It also serves a community beyond that of Dufferin County—these boundaries don't define local history.

Initial Consideration

The MoD must continue to consider how to provide access to their space and resources. Transit, pop-up events, experts on the road and partnership program continue to be excellent tools and approaches to reach out into the community.

Takeaway 3

The community is often unaware of what's happening at the MoD. The MoD can be a bit of mystery to those who aren't familiar with it—a landmark building many drive right past. While some community members have never doubted their collective ownership over this space, others don't understand what the MoD has to offer them, are unaware of new events and initiatives and lack clarity on the MoD's role and purpose.

Initial Consideration

The MoD should consider marketing planning that serves to promote the space beyond specific events or exhibition, instead considering how to tell the MoD's story.

22% of survey respondents indicated that the location (too far, difficult to get too, etc.) prevented them from visiting.

36% of survey respondents indicated that the location and the barn building make the MoD unique. They describe it as a landmark and point to the stunning views from inside.

72% of survey respondents indicated they lived in the County of Dufferin, while 10% are from the GTA. Many others are from Simcoe and Bruce County.

"I think the museum is a gem, yet it is probably less known because it sits outside of any town or village."

—Survey Response

29% of survey respondents say they find out about what's going on at the MoD through word of mouth.

55% of survey respondents have want to see greater awareness of events, programs and activities at the MoD.

43% of survey respondents have never been a Member, with 29% reporting they didn't know the MoD had a membership program.

When asked what prevented community members from visiting the MoD at all or more frequently, 24% indicated they never hear about what's happening at the MoD.

Takeaway 4

There are missing histories and stories the MoD struggles to tell. Many community members recognize the efforts to-date to include diverse communities and recognized overlooked stories—but there is also a desire to see more work in creating an inclusive space. The challenge of telling stories that don't centre around objects, which are often missing, may require some innovation to better reflect and include the people of the region.

Initial Consideration

The MoD should continue to fill gaps in their collection, but consider focusing on the act of storytelling first, and leverage objects as well as a diversity of other tools, to support the story telling efforts, rather than remaining object focused in their approach.

Takeaway 5

The MoD isn't a destination—people come when they are invited. With exhibitions changing infrequently, many indicated that what drives them to the space are special events. Festivals, talks and markets act as a catalyst to bring the community together. Without offering a full-days itinerary, and isolated from other nearby adventures, community members find it difficult to make the MoD a priority.

Initial Consideration

The MoD should consider how their offerings (exhibitions, programs, etc) can better engage audiences for a longer duration. Partnerships with nearby destinations and facilitated experiences may also support this drive to become a destination.

6% of survey respondents indicated that they didn't attend the MoD because they their history wasn't included or represented.
—Survey Response

In 2019 the MoD saw 3088 visitors, roughly 5% of the population of the County of Dufferin. In 2018 the MoD received a total of 4250 visitors.

44% of survey respondents were over the age of 55 and 67% were women. Meanwhile, demographics indicate the County has a larger percentage of young people than Ontario at 27% and a smaller percentage of seniors than Ontario at 12%.

"It is important that the community can see themselves when they arrive. I believe the Museum can do more in promoting new cultural items that are reflective of the community."
—Survey Response

42% of survey respondents report they visit the MoD for Special Events.

"The destination is something that interests you. It may not be the most convenient but there's something there that makes it worth overcoming the challenge, commute, coordination to get there."
—Member of Dufferin County DEI Committee

"Field trips are expensive and they need to take the full day."
—Educator

"I wish it were a bus day trip destination I would come more often from Toronto"
—Survey Response

Takeaway 6

Cornflower is controversial.

The permanent Corn Flower glass gallery, funded by a Canada 150 grant and opened in 2018, is beautiful and loved by many. This Corn Flower community feels a sense of ownership and has high expectations—but this niche collection doesn't serve the whole community.

Initial Consideration

The MoD should consider repurposes the Corn Flower gallery for other exhibitions, and instead celebrating the corn flower collection in other ways; an annual festival, a traveling exhibition, or an open and visible collection storage space.

Takeaway 7

The County of Dufferin needs a cultural hub and a cultural strategy—one that the MoD can support. The MoD is described by many as a community gathering space and cultural hub. However, this description has emerged largely in response to a need identified by the community and by default. The MoD is not adequately equipped to provide for the community as this hub, and it's attempts to meet this need may in fact jeopardize its other offerings and role as historic museum.

Initial Consideration

The MoD should advocate to the Council for investment into the cultural landscape of the County, through high-level strategic planning or the development of a position responsible for culture and/or community outreach.

6 survey respondents reported that Corn Flower glass makes the MoD unique. Corn Flower glass was mentioned 46 times across survey responses.

"My interest is the Corn Flower, Corn Flower seems to be a forgotten collection"
—Survey Response

"I don't get the Corn Flower thing. The connection doesn't seem strong."
—Survey Response

When asked to identify the most important role the MoD plays, the lowest ranked option amongst survey respondents was "A community hub that brings people together" which was selected by only 5%, which is interestingly at odds with how people describe the MoD and in conflict with why they report visiting the MoD. This tension is a reflection of a broader need in the community, further identified throughout stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

Takeaway 8

The youth in the County of Dufferin are entirely missing from the conversation. The MoD serves largely an aging population, and a small one at that. Though representatives from some local Youth groups were invited to participate in focus groups, unfortunately no youth were engaged and no youth responded to the survey. The MoD will need the engagement and support of younger audiences in the coming years.

Consideration

The MoD should reach out to its young residents and invite feedback, in order to develop programming that suits their wants and needs.

With the exception of a single respondent who was 12 or younger and reported never visiting the MoD, there were 0 respondents between the ages of 13-24 and only 8% ages 25 to 34.

