

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre 2021-2026 Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

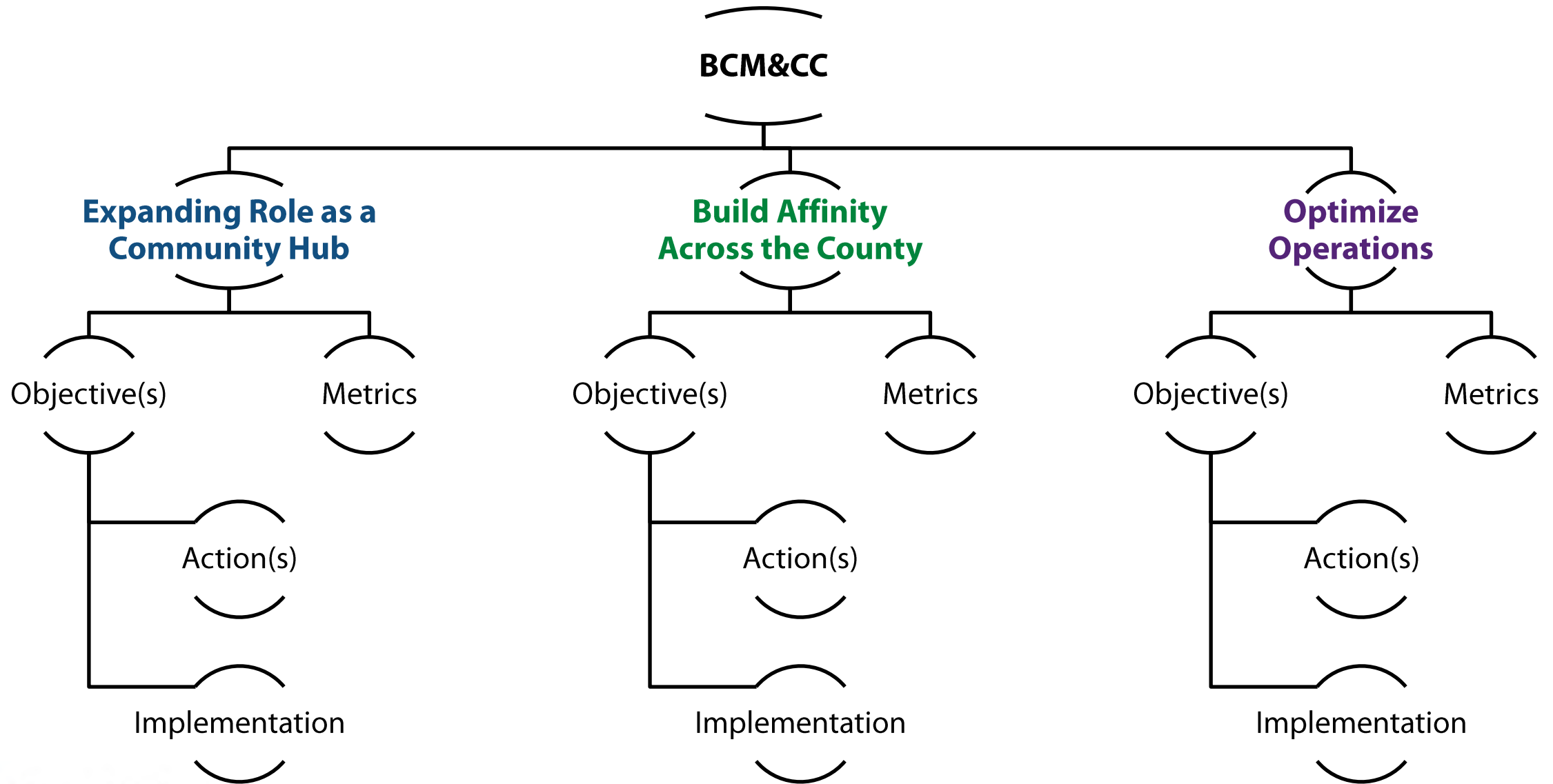
A Strategic Plan for the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

This strategy builds on the excellent advancements the museum made with the implementation of the previous 2015 Strategic Plan. This 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will guide the museum forward, building on an excellent foundation to reach the organizational goals and vision for the future of the BCM&CC. This strategy was developed through a series of stages, outlined below:

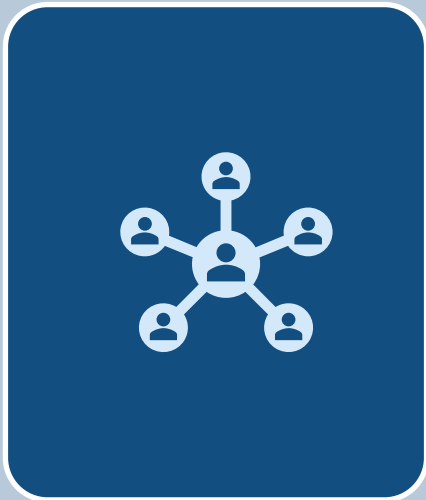
- Situational Assessment, including a review of internal documentation, research on the broader context in Bruce county and sector trends, and a review of BCM&CC's digital maturity and readiness;
- Stakeholder Engagement, including consultation with staff, external partners and stakeholders, and the wider community; and
- Strategy Development.

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre recognizes and respects the heritage, culture and artistic expressions of Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and is committed to continuing ongoing consultation and collaboration. Due to several unforeseen circumstances SON was unable to directly participate in the development of this Strategy. However, SON will continue to be engaged to advise and consult with BCM&CC on any future mutually collaborative work.

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Pillar 1 | Expanding BCM&CC's role as a Community Hub for the entire County

- **Objective 1.1 | Prioritize the use of space for enhanced community engagement.**
 - **Action a:** Develop a facility rental and community usage plan.
 - **Action b:** Explore feasibility of including (additional) retail and/or food options on site.
 - **Action c:** Continue efforts to realize a new/expanded facility.
- **Objective 1.2: Establish BCM&CC as a centre of Cultural activity.**
 - **Action a:** Continue nurturing joint programming action plans with partner organizations across the county.
 - **Action b:** Revise the programming plan to include expanded arts and culture programming.
 - **Action c:** Develop a robust volunteer engagement strategy.
- **Objective 1.3 | Build profile as a core tourism destination.**
 - **Action a:** Develop programming that aligns with special tourism events or interest groups.
 - **Action b:** Explore opportunities to co-develop tourism experiences with partners across the local tourism sector.

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Pillar 2 | Building affinity across the County



- **Objective 2.1 | Engage underserved audiences.**
 - **Action a:** Develop pop-up experiences that bring the museum to the community across the county.
 - **Action b:** Develop advisory committees or working groups that represent target underserved communities.
 - **Action c:** Revise the collecting mandate to include “recent history” and “hidden history”.
 - **Action d:** Explore additional opportunities for new and diverse story-telling through exhibition and programming.
- **Objective 2.2 | Deepen relationships with communities across the County.**
 - **Action a:** Develop new digital educational outreach programming to expand reach to K-12 students.
 - **Action b:** Explore opportunities to formalize and expand co-op and volunteer programs in partnership with educational institutions.
 - **Action c:** Expand evening, adult programming strategically to engage Millennials and older Gen Z audiences.
 - **Action d:** Activate the archive to drive audiences from across the county.
 - **Action e:** Continue to engage community expertise in the development of exhibitions and programming.
- **Objective 2.3 | Enhance digital outreach and engagement.**
 - **Action a:** Develop a digital content strategy.
 - **Action b:** Undertake a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and discoverability audit.

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Pillar 3 | Optimizing Operations

- **Objective 3.1 | Establish evidence-based decision-making as a standard of practice**
 - **Action a:** Explore additional opportunities to collect audience data and feedback.
 - **Action b:** Leverage Client Relationship Management (CRM) System to engage in proactive visitor journey mapping.
 - **Action c:** Explore opportunities to enhance data literacy and evidence-based decision-making skills.
- **Objective 3.2 | Integrate and streamline systems and processes**
 - **Action a:** Conduct a systems audit.
 - **Action b:** Conduct an information management audit.
 - **Action c:** Explore solutions for addressing BCM&CC's Digital Asset Management needs.



Strategic Planning in the context of the COVID-19 crisis

- This strategy was developed with recognition that the COVID-19 crisis will likely continue to impact BCM&CC's operations to some degree throughout the period covered by the Strategic Plan, and more significantly at the beginning.
 - There is still much uncertainty around what post-COVID recovery will look like or how long certain social distancing measures and public gathering restrictions will remain in place.
 - There will continue to be lasting economic impacts from the COVID-19 shutdowns in Spring 2020 and as a result of the phased re-opening of the economy. It is unclear what economic recovery will look like, how long it will take, or how it will impact visitor behaviour and museum operations.
 - It is unclear how audience behaviours will change, even after cultural institutions and other attractions are able to re-open.
 - It is unclear how museum operations will change, even once they are able to re-open.
 - Digital engagement will likely play an even more important role for cultural organizations in the future.
- These factors may impact BCM&CC's ability to undertake certain activities outlined in this Strategic Plan, the capacity of certain partners to participate in some of the outlined actions, and the timelines under which activities can reasonably be achieved.

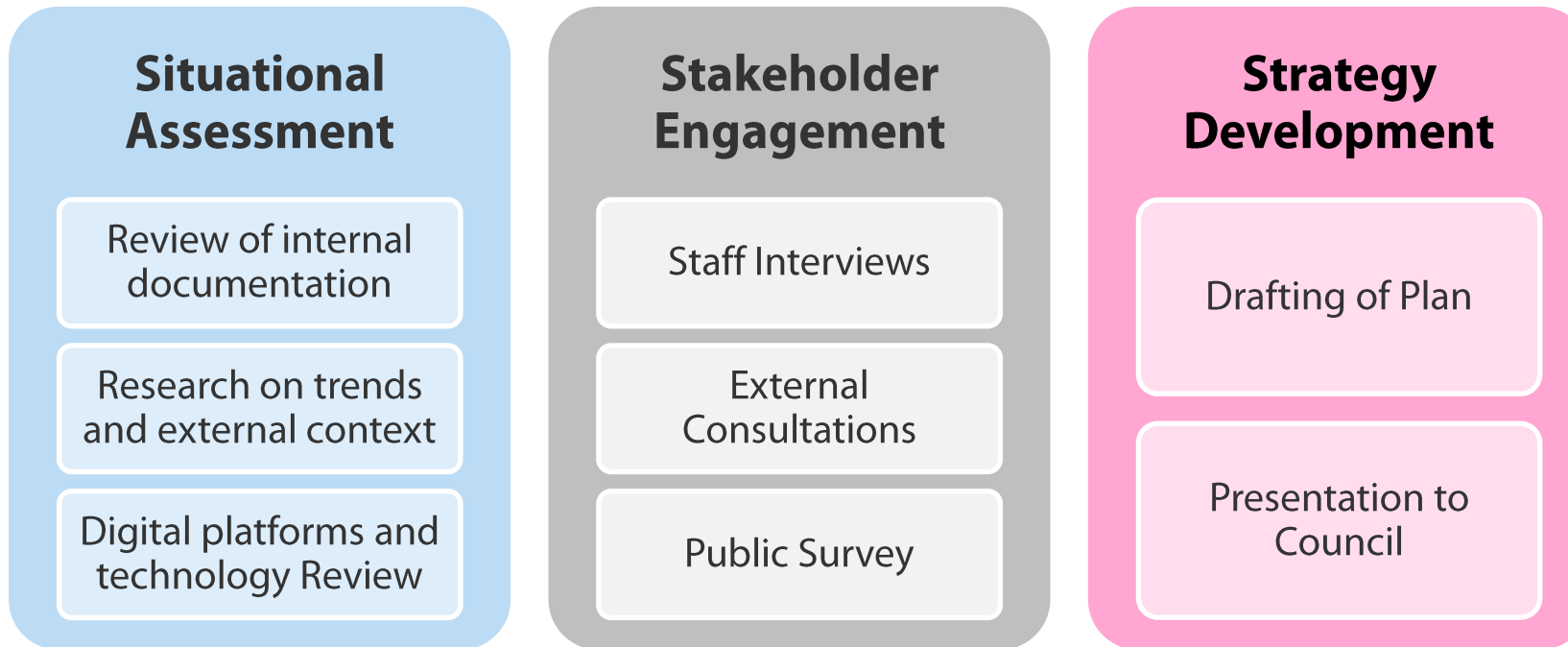
Introduction and Context

Introduction

- This 2020-2025 Strategic Plan will guide the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC) forward through the next five years of operations.
- This strategy builds on the excellent advancements resulting from the implementation of the previous 2015 Strategic Plan. The BCM&CC has made significant progress against the goals outlined in the previous plan. As such, the recommended actions outlined in this plan are designed to help BCM&CC build off that success to reach its organizational goals and vision for the future of BCM&CC.
- The actions recommended in the plan also reflect changes in the environment in which BCM&CC operates since the previous plan was drafted in 2015, in particular the technological environment and a more pervasively digital world.
- This plan was developed with consideration for alignment and synergies with the wider policy context in Bruce County. Namely, it positions BCM&CC and its strategy in the context of the County's current Economic Development Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and the Bruce County Cultural Action Plan and Archeology Management Plan (both currently under development). In addition, the strategy is positioned to further the County's "Explorer" brand as the guiding vision for BCM&CC.
- This strategic plan also recognizes the strong relationship, built through mutual collaboration, with Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON). BCM&CC greatly values the relationship it has built with SON, and nurturing that relationship remains a top priority for BCM&CC. BCM&CC will continue to work collaboratively with SON and involve local Indigenous and First Nations voices in the organization's planning and activities.
- While the process for developing this plan was put in place well before the situation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic reached critical levels, this plan needs to be considered within the context of a new reality as the BCM&CC heads into a post-pandemic recovery period. Recovery will likely be phased, slow and gradual, and it is unclear how the effects of COVID-19 will continue to impact the operations of BCM&CC. Factors such as lasting economic impacts and ongoing strict social distancing practices could have a material impact on how the museum operates over the next five years.

The Strategic Planning Process

This strategy was developed from a process that emphasized community input, building off of previous success from working in partnership key community stakeholders (e.g. Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), Bruce County Historical Society, Marine Heritage Society, etc.) and setting the stage for ongoing partnership building with these and other stakeholders. The strategy was developed through a three-stage process, outlined in the graphic below:



Bruce County Context

- In developing a successful plan for BCM&CC, it is vital to understand its unique context as a museum and cultural centre in Bruce County.
- As a county museum, an archive, cultural centre and a rental facility, the BCM&CC serves a wide variety of audiences, with different needs and demands. However, its multi-faceted role also creates opportunities for reaching a variety of audiences in different ways.
- The BCM&CC's patrons are quite disparate, consisting of long-term permanent residents, new/recent permanent residents, seasonal residents, and tourists.
- In addition, BCM&CC serves a community spread across a vast region and three distinct geographic areas: The Peninsula, The Lakeshore and the Interior Region.
- The three main economic pillars of Bruce County are:
 - Tourism & Service
 - Agriculture
 - Energy
- Fundamental to its role as a museum, BCM&CC honours and preserves the important and diverse stories of the region – such as that of maritime innovation, Indigenous peoples, and settler history.

Bruce County Context | Demographics

- Bruce County has a population of 68,147 (2016 census) that is spread out over eight municipalities and the population growth rate was 0.62% per year from 2011 to 2016.
- According to most recent census data, there were 1,805 residents who identified as visible minorities, around 2% of the population.
 - Largest visible minority population is South Asian (650), followed by Black (315) and Chinese (250).
- About 5% of Bruce County's population identifies as Aboriginal (according to Statistics Canada), which is higher than the provincial average.
 - 2405 persons identify as First Nations, while 685 identify as Metis.
 - The Saugeen Ojibway Nations (SON) is located along the shores of Lake Huron in Bruce County and has an active partnership with BCM&CC. The County is considered to be a part of the Saugeen Ojibway traditional territories.
- The median age (48.5) is higher than the rest of Ontario (42.4), with almost a quarter (23.6%) of the population being over the age of 65.
 - The number of those between the ages of 25-44 grew by 845 from 2011 to 2016. The size of this age range is expected to continue to grow with increased economic development initiatives that will create a need for labour and drive young families into Bruce County.
- The average household size, meaning the number of individuals living in a household, is 2.3.
 - 61% of the population are married or common law.
 - There are more couples without children than with children.
- A strategic plan that will allow the museum to adapt to upcoming changes to Bruce County's demographics and to capitalize in an effective way is necessary at this juncture.

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 census – Bruce County Profile.

Bruce County Context | Migration

- According to 2016 census data, Bruce County saw 3,765 migrants, including those from other regions within Canada and those from outside of Canada.
- As a result of Bruce Power's "Life Extension Program" it is projected that approximately 23,000 jobs will be created over the lifespan of the project, driving an increase in newcomers to Bruce County and the surrounding areas.
- Additionally, the Economic Development Innovation Partnership will also be a major driver of employment and migration to Bruce County over the course of the next 20+ years.
- Therefore in the coming years Bruce County will see an influx in migrants and newcomers, and as a result BCM&CC will need to establish the infrastructure and programming to attract and sustain new visitors and patrons.

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 census – Bruce County Profile.

Bruce County Context | Visitors & Tourism

- Bruce County sees an average of 2.5 million visitors per year.
- The total economic impact of tourism in the county is \$299.1 million.
 - Visitors to Bruce County in 2018 spent an average of \$31 million on recreation and entertainment.
- According to the results of the Online Panel Visitor Survey for the Bruce County Economic Impact of Tourism Report (2018):
 - The average of age of a Bruce County visitor is 55+ (45%) and they are typically visiting from the GTA (43%) or South Western Ontario (42%).
 - 69% of visitors to Bruce County do not have any children under the age of 18.
 - 52% of Bruce County visitors are employed full time, 28% are retired.
 - Peak season in Bruce County begins in June-July and ends August-September.



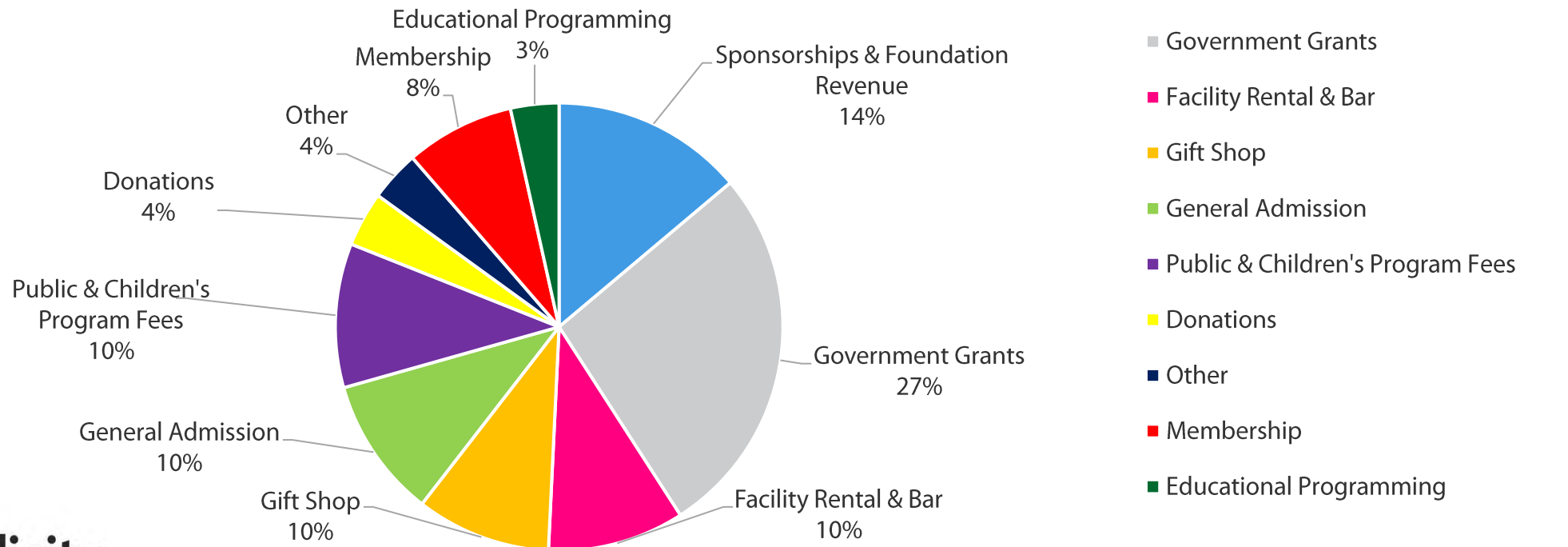
Source: [Bruce County Economic Impact of Tourism Report \(2018\)](#)

Organizational Overview

Current Operations at a Glance

- BCM&CC is a County Department, with a substantial portion of their operating budget coming from the County.
- The museum also earns revenue from a variety of sources – the largest being **government grants (27%)**, **sponsorship & foundational revenue (14%)**. **Facility rentals**, **gift shop**, **admission** and **public program fees** each accounted for the third highest percentage of revenues, at 10% (2019 Operating Revenue):

BCM&CC Operating Revenue Breakdown



Current Operations at a Glance

- There are dedicated staff departments for: revenue development, business operations, exhibitions, collections, archives, programming, education and outreach, and facilities.
- The museum's operating hours vary by season:
 - From November to April, the museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm
 - From April to November, the museum is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sundays from noon until 5pm.
- The majority of facility rentals take place during normal operating business hours, with some programming and event rentals taking place during evening hours.
- In 2019, BCM&CC had a total of 23, 323 visitors, a slight decline over the two previous years that had between 25,000-27,000 visitors annually.
 - Approximately 70% of annual visitors are from paid attendance, including: paid admissions, facility rental visits, school groups, children's program attendance, and special event attendance (paid programs). The other 30% of annual attendance is from unpaid attendance, which includes: members, reciprocal member visits, explorer pass visits, cultural access pass, coupons, comp visits, volunteer and staff visits, etc. These proportions have been relatively consistent from 2017-2019, despite the slight decline in overall attendance.
 - About 1/3 of total annual visit in 2019 occurred in the summer months (July and August), in previous years that figure has been closer to 40%.

Strengths

- Strong support from active community members and loyal volunteers.
- Knowledgeable, helpful staff.
- Supportive and welcoming environment.
- Excellent at developing partnerships and tapping into community knowledge to develop exhibitions.
- Strong partnership with local First Nations via a sustained, collaborative relationship with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) – which includes the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation.
- Archives are a unique asset, with a rich collection of records not available anywhere else.
- Evening events/mixers fill a gap in the community for evening entertainment.
- The museum is the repository for the unique history of the county and a great educational resource.
- Educational programming around local history is something that no other facility can offer.
- The physical spaces that are available for rent – meeting rooms and the theatre – are ones that are not available elsewhere in the community.

Challenges

- Leveraging the space for event rentals and community use, without over taxing the BCM&CC's limited resources, and still remaining open to the public for general admission.
- Lack enough resources to rapidly digitize the archives or the collection.
- Lack enough physical space for adequate care and storage of the growing collections.
- Strategic audience development is hampered by challenges related to collecting audience data.
- Reaching and engaging audiences from across the geographically spread-out County (outside of Southampton/Saugeen Shores).
- Attracting and engaging visitors during the "off-season" (shoulder and winter seasons) when seasonal tourism decreases and seasonal residents depart.
- Engaging younger audiences is a challenge. BCM&CC has a robust audience of young families, but teens and youth are harder to engage.
- Many of the partner organizations BCM&CC works with are volunteer-run and have limited capacity to lead the planning and development of any co-developed exhibitions, programs or events.

Opportunities

- Increased partnerships with community groups, particularly from underserved communities (while being mindful of the limited capacity of these organizations and the demands on BCM&CC resources).
- Increased partnerships with other attractions and institutions across the county (particularly organizations with paid staff who have the resources and capacity to lead or co-lead program development).
- Activating the archive in a more strategic way (leverage archival assets to attract and engage audiences).
- Deepening engagement with high school students (e.g. through more formalized co-op/volunteer programs).
- New or expanded earned revenue streams (e.g. optimizing space rentals, expanding evening adult programming, retail and food retail options, etc.)

Key Priorities

- Address space issues - e.g. For collections care and storage, exhibition & programming, and community use.
- Expand role as a community hub.
- Expand ownership/connection/affinity with BCM&CC across the county (not just in the Southampton/Saugeen Shores community)
- Audience development - targeting younger local audiences, audiences from across the county, tourists and underserved communities (e.g. equity-seeking groups who may be underrepresented at the BCM&CC).
- Optimize operations through systems improvements and integration (builds off of existing efforts to improve efficiency of operations with initiatives such as LEAN training).
- Revenue development - both through fundraising and earned revenue opportunities (to support other recommended actions in the Strategic Plan)

Strategic Plan for Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

Introduction

- The following strategic plan is intended to build on the previous Strategic Plan (2015) by expanding on efforts prioritized in that plan and adding new objectives that respond to the current context and needs of BCM&CC.
- The present Strategic Planning process did not seek to update the institution's vision, mandate or core values, but is grounded in the existing guiding principles that BCM&CC has been operating under successfully.
 - **County Brand:** *be an explorer*
 - **BCM&CC Tagline:** *Where Imagination is Timeless*
 - **BCM&CC Core Values:** Relationships, Professionalism, Education
 - **Mandate:** Community, Stewardship, Education
- That said, this Strategic Plan does seek to respond to a set of Key Strategic Goals based on the key needs and priorities that were identified during the strategic planning process. These include:
 - Establish BCM&CC as the county's cultural and community hub.
 - Build affinity for BCM&CC in the hearts and minds of residents and visitors across the county.
 - Strive for excellence in the delivery of exhibitions, programming and digital experiences that deepen engagement and tell new and unique stories about the County's history.

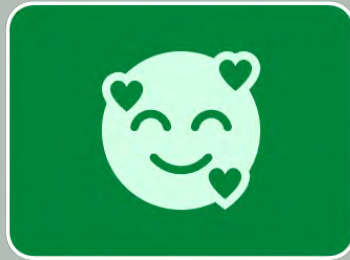
Strategic Pillars

The Strategic Plan is structured into three (3) **Strategic Pillars**, which collectively comprise **eight strategic objectives** (outlined in the following figure). The Strategic Plan also contains a number of actions under each strategic objective, which are described in more detail in the following sections.



Pillar 1 | Expanding BCM&CC's role as a Community Hub for the entire County

- Objective 1.1 | Prioritize the use of space for enhanced community engagement.
- Objective 1.2: Establish BCM&CC as a centre of Cultural activity.
- Objective 1.3 | Build profile as a core tourism destination.



Pillar 2 | Building affinity across the county

- Objective 2.1 | Engage underserved audiences
- Objective 2.2 | Deepen relationships with communities across the County
- Objective 2.3 | Enhance digital outreach/engagement



Pillar 3 | Optimizing operations

- Objective 3.1 | Establish evidence-based decision-making as a standard of practice
- Objective 3.2 | Integrate and streamline systems and processes

Pillar 1 | Expanding BCM&CC's role as a Community Hub for the entire County



Pillar 1 | Expanding BCM&CC's role as a Community Hub for the entire County

As a County department, the BCM&CC's mandate is to serve residents, community members and stakeholders across the County. The BCM&CC's collections are the source of knowledge and records that bear witness to the County's history and natural heritage.

Within that context, the facility itself acts as both a centre for county history, as well as a space for community connections– *Where Imagination is Timeless*. Great strides have been made to increase county-wide awareness of the BCM&CC, and now there is an opportunity over the next five years to build on that awareness to create deeper, more lasting, meaningful connections with the community.

This Pillar is about further expanding BCM&CC's role as a community hub for the entire County, expanding that sense of connection to the communities that do not benefit from having the BCM&CC physically located in their communities. This pillar is also about enhancing the role BCM&CC plays as a destination for the community and for visitors to explore and as a centre of the County's cultural activity.

Enhancing and expanding the BCM&CC's role as a community hub is a theme that runs through the two previous Strategic Plans (2009 and 2015) and continues through the 2020 Plan. The community continues to express the importance of the BCM&CC as a community hub and this strategy directs the organization to deepen and expand that role.

Objective 1.1 | Prioritize the use of space for enhanced community engagement.

- BCM&CC uses its space for community engagement in two key ways: i) The meeting rooms, theatre and programming spaces provide vital space for community use for events and functions the rental program; ii) The space is also used for BCM&CC-hosted programs and events. However, community members and stakeholders indicated a need and demand for increased access and use of the space by community members.
- However, the existing space has some limitations and resources are already stretched on existing programming and facility rental activities, which impedes the BCM&CC's ability to expand programming activities in the space.
- The Feasibility Study (2017) and Financial Feasibility (2017) outline recommendations for the renovation and expansion of the facility to allow for more programming and community gathering space (as well as new archives and expanded collections space).
- However, in the interim (prior to a renovation or expansion), there are opportunities to leverage the existing space for expanded community use.
- This objective outlines strategic actions that will support BCM&CC in prioritizing and expanding the use of space for enhanced community use and engagement.

Actions

- a. Develop a facility rental and community usage plan.
- b. Explore opportunities for (additional) retail and/or food offerings on site.
- c. Continue efforts to realize a new/expanded facility.

Action a: Develop a facility rental and community usage plan.

BCM&CC currently provides access to space for private and community use through a rental program for its meeting/programming rooms and the theatre. Programming brings people in the door and is an excellent strength for the museum to increasingly capitalize on. Indeed, the consultation survey revealed that the majority of respondents had visited the BCM&CC for a museum-led or a private event. Consultations also revealed that there is demand among the community and stakeholders for the BCM&CC to expand and increase access to the space for community use.

However, existing space for community use is limited and BCM&CC's resources are already stretched across the existing rental and programming activities. As such, there is a balancing of resources that needs to take place in order to be able to feasibly expand access to the space for facility rentals and partner-delivered programming. This action therefore recommends that BCM&CC develop a facility rental and community usage plan in order to establish facility usage objectives and priorities, revise facility usage policies (e.g. charging other county departments for use of BCM&CC spaces), and outline options for expanding facility rentals and partner delivery of programming in a sustainable way. A facility rental and community usage plan would act as a companion piece to other plans, such as the programming plan, focusing on rentals and partner-delivered programming rather than BCM&CC-led programming. The plan could include the following components:

- Review current balance between internal use of meeting spaces (e.g. BCM&CC staff meetings), use of the spaces by other county departments (currently about 4% of space bookings are from other County departments), and external use of space (e.g. rentals and partner-delivered programming), to prioritize community usage.
- Establish a balance between providing access to the space for partner-led programming that includes some type of broader community engagement (e.g. a lecture in the theatre), revenue-generating rentals for private events, and general public access to the facility and exhibition spaces.

Action a: Develop a facility rental and community usage plan. (Cont'd)

- Examine capacity and establish service guidelines to allow for more rentals and community use of space while mitigating the burden on BCM&CC resources (e.g. by limiting facility rental services to only providing access and security without additional set-up and tear-down or event-planning services).
- Perfect Mind has “calendar and online booking software” and “facility management” capabilities – take advantage of this digital solution to streamline the community rental process, to lighten up resources from phone bookings or manual reservations. Through this software, blocks of time could be allocated for certain types of events (e.g. meetings, vs. community gatherings, etc.).

Purpose:

- To further solidify BCM&CC as a community space.
- To expand the arts, culture and community programming in the space (without leading the planning and development)

Action b: Explore opportunities for (additional) retail and/or food offerings on site.

In the community survey, respondents indicated a desire for more food and/or drink options on site, as well as increased animation of the outdoor spaces at BCM&CC, and offerings that cater to the “after work” crowd. The location of the BCM&CC provides an ideal opportunity to draw visitors to explore BCM&CC for more than just the exhibitions or programming offered by the museum, and also to encourage people to stay and to congregate.

The BCM&CC has previously experimented with food retail on-site and faced some challenges related to the limitations of the existing kitchen facilities, finding local businesses with the capacity to operate a satellite businesses on-site at BCM&CC, and competition from other local businesses in the nearby downtown area of Southampton. However, persistent demand expressed by community members in the context of developing this strategy indicates that it may be time to revisit the topic of adding food retail or food-oriented programming offers on-site at BCM&CC. In addition, recent success with evening programming such as mixers and wine and beer tastings has confirmed that there is a sustainable demand in the community for these types of offerings at BCM&CC.

Being mindful that past attempts have met with mixed success, this action recommends that BCM&CC explore additional opportunities for food retail offerings on-site using an experimentation approach. By approaching this action as an opportunity to test and experiment with different options, BCM&CC mitigates some of the risks and challenges associated with embarking on implementing a more permanent food retail operation at the BCM&CC. It also allows the organization to test different models to see which ones offer the best chances of sustainable success. Some options for experimenting with animating the outdoor spaces and offering additional retail and food options for the community could include:

- Pop-ups in partnership with local businesses would provide an opportunity to offer unique experiences for defined periods of time, and provides exposure for local businesses while mitigating the challenges and risks for either party of a more permanent commitment. BCM&CC could explore a pop-up pilot program that either invites multiple businesses to each offer one-time pop-ups in a series of weekly or monthly Pop-ups over either the summer or winter season. Or BCM&CC could explore a partnership with one or two businesses to provide a series of monthly or quarterly pop-ups (e.g. Thursday evenings) over a defined period (e.g. 6 months-one year).

Action b: Explore opportunities for (additional) retail and/or food offerings on site. (Cont'd)

- BCM&CC could pilot additional food-related programming (e.g. Wine Wednesdays), building off the success the Museum Mixers and Wine and Beer tasting programs.

When identifying pilot programs, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- Consider hospitality only at times of the day where there are peaks of visitors who might want hospitality (e.g. over lunch), or where there might be an opportunity to capture a specific market (e.g. happy hour/post-work cocktail hour);
- Consider access to hospitality options for people who have not paid for admission (e.g. can people just access the patio);
- Keep in mind that a balance between resources and impact should be met, that the offerings should be visible to visitors, and that an inviting setting to sit is also a critical piece of food/drink offerings.

This action also ties into building BCM&CC's profile as a core tourism destination in the region (Objective 1.3). Offering drinks and snacks for people on the local tours that stop at the museum (e.g. the Saugeen Shores Trolley tours) could draw people in who may not otherwise stop.

Purpose:

- To animate the public spaces at BCM&CC.
- To promote the facility as a community gathering place.
- To entice people to come through the door or extend their stay (e.g. drinks on the patio overlooking the lake).

Action c: Continue efforts to realize a new/expanded facility.

In order to expand its role as a community hub, the BCM&CC needs additional programming space. While there are many uncertainties at this time around what an expanded space for BCM&CC will look like due to challenges regarding the plans for a redevelopment and expansion, the need for a solution remains. The Feasibility Study and Financial Feasibility Study for the BCM&CC redevelopment (both completed in 2017) point to two primary space needs: i) additional programming space, and ii) additional storage space for both the Archives and Collections. In addition, the Financial Feasibility study underlines the need for a servery and storage space to support/facilitate events and catered functions in a renovated/expanded facility scenario as well as additional circulation space (stairs, elevators, corridors, etc.). These needs continue to be a priority for the BCM&CC, its stakeholders and the community it serves.

This action calls for the BCM&CC to continue its work to advance a solution to the ongoing space needs, including :

- Continue community engagement efforts to maintain awareness of the museum and build goodwill in the community;
- Continue relationship building with potential donors and sponsors to lay the groundwork for an eventual capital campaign; and
- Maintain ongoing discussions with County Council regarding expansion needs and plans.

Although there was already a space challenge, considerations for the future of the post-COVID museum should be taken into account in any future action on a redevelopment. For example, there may be a need to rethink the way space is used, increase flexibility in the space, and possibly increase available space within the exhibition galleries should social distancing measures continue to be an ongoing consideration in the long term.

Purpose:

- To maintain momentum in finding a solution for an expanded space for BCM&CC
- To create additional space for community use.

Objective 1.2 | Establish BCM&CC as a centre of cultural activity in Bruce County

- The BCM&CC has an excellent reputation as a museum - a keeper of the County's history and an excellent educational centre.
- Community members also referred to BCM&CC's role as that of a Community Hub.
- Community members (survey) and stakeholders (consultations) identified a need for expanded arts and cultural programming at BCM&CC; enhancing the "cultural centre" side of the institution.
- This objective includes actions that will help BCM&CC expand the services it provides as a cultural centre (as well as a museum and archives).
- This objective aligns with the BCM&CC's marketing plan, which indicates there is a need to grow the brand identity of the museum as a cultural centre, and not just a museum.

Actions

- a. Continue nurturing joint programming action plans with partner organizations across the county.
- b. Revise the programming plan to include expanded arts and culture programming.
- c. Develop a robust volunteer engagement strategy.

Action a: Continue nurturing joint programming action plans with partner organizations across the county.

This action builds on the existing joint programming strategies that the BCM&CC has developed with partners such as the Library and the Marine Heritage Society (e.g. regarding joint programming for the Marine Heritage Festival). The joint library programming plan aims to “define where the Museum and Library will combine their resources, align program offerings, streamline processes for working together to provide programs that enhance the offerings available to visitors and residents of Bruce County.” In addition, BCM&CC already offers programming space within the galleries where it already hosts partner-led programming.

This action calls on BCM&CC to build on its successful partnerships with the Library and other partners, exploring new partnerships and further formalizing existing partnerships through the creation of joint programming action plans. By expanding partnerships to leverage space for partner-led programming and/or jointly developed programming, the BCM&CC will be able to share resources in order to animate its spaces and expand its programming. As a result, community use of the space will increase. This approach could also help draw new audiences to the BCM&CC.

These partnerships could also be leveraged in both directions, providing space for BCM&CC to have a presence in other locations across the County (see Objective 2.1, Action a).

Purpose:

- To animate BCM&CC’s space as a centre of community activity.
- To optimize BCM&CC’s resources by leveraging shared resources.
- To expand and diversify the programming offer at BCM&CC.

Action b: Revise programming plan to include expanded arts and culture programming.

The museum already has an established daytime programming schedule, with a successful focus on educational and family programming. BCM&CC's marketing plan speaks to building out the "cultural centre" aspect of the BCM&CC's offering, noting that the institution is still primarily recognized as a museum or museum and archives. The public survey deployed during this strategic planning process also revealed an interest from the community for more variety in the arts and cultural programming offered by BCM&CC. In addition, the culinary programming offered by BCM&CC has already been very successful.

This action challenges BCM&CC to further expand its programming plan beyond exhibition-based programming to include an increased variety of programming across a broad range of cultural disciplines (e.g. lectures on a variety of topics, multicultural events, food tastings, mixers, performing arts, etc.)

Expanded programming plan should also focus on key underserved target audiences (e.g. teens, younger adults without children, local ethnic communities, etc.)

BCM&CC should identify community partners with whom to develop expanded arts and cultural programming hosted at the facility in order to benefit from shared resources and partner expertise in disciplines that are not BCM&CC's primary practice.

Purpose:

- To solidify the facility as a space for all people from the community to gather.
- To grow awareness of the museum as a cultural centre.
- To expand the variety of arts and cultural programming on offer at BCM&CC.
- To serve the needs of the community for increased arts and cultural programming.

Action c: Develop a robust volunteer engagement strategy.

Volunteerism promotes civic engagement and community building. As a community hub, BCM&CC should also be a volunteer hub for community members looking to get involved and who want to support the promotion of heritage and other cultural activity.

BCM&CC currently has a very dedicated core group of volunteers, but there is a need to expand the pool, as well as to use digital tools to make recruitment, registering and promoting the volunteer program more streamlined. This action is about developing a robust and successful volunteer engagement strategy in order to expand its volunteer base. The engagement strategy may include the following components:

- Identify groups that are the least engaged in volunteerism at BCM&CC (e.g. teens, young adults).
- Review the BCM&CC's volunteer support needs and consider additional volunteer roles that might increase accessibility of volunteer opportunities – For example, roles that allow volunteers to contribute from home and/or during more flexible hours (e.g. data entry, Wikipedia edit-a-thons, website content updates, social media “takeovers”, etc.).
- Develop job descriptions for the common types of volunteer opportunities (e.g. event support, archive support, administrative support, etc.)
- Promote volunteer opportunities strategically by: Promoting volunteer opportunities at pop-up exhibitions and programs across the county; putting out open calls for volunteers promoted through on social media and through the schools and school boards; and by expanding the volunteer landing page on the website with full job descriptions and making it easy to access from the home page.
- Consider an incentive program to encourage volunteer retention and loyalty (e.g. for X hours receive X reward).
- Explore platforms such as Volgistics to make it easy to assign volunteers to specific jobs or opportunities and manage volunteer scheduling.

Action c: Develop a robust volunteer engagement strategy. (Cont'd)

Purpose:

- To expand the BCM&CC's volunteer base.
- To create connections between the community and BCM&CC through volunteerism.
- To contribute to BCM&CC's role as a community hub through volunteerism-led community building.
- Supports all aspects of museum operations, creating capacity for expanded operations.

Objective 1.3 | Build BCM&CC's profile as a core tourism destination in the region

- Bruce County is a major tourism destination in Ontario, drawing more than 2.5 million visitors per year.
- Tourists represent a significant opportunity for the BCM&CC to engage new audiences. While this influx of people is highly seasonal, there is an opportunity to create loyalty among people who come to the County year after year.
- This objective is about developing BCM&CC as a core tourism destination within the County, contributing to broader tourism attraction and product development goals outlined in the County's Economic Development Strategy (2017-2021).
- This objective also supports BCM&CC in establishing itself as a cultural destination in the County to be discovered (and re-discovered) by visitors and residents alike.

Actions

- a. Develop programming that aligns with special tourism events or interest groups.
- b. Explore opportunities to co-develop tourism experiences with partners across the local tourism sector.

Action a: Develop programming that aligns with special tourism events or interest groups.

Tourists come to Bruce County for a wide range of reasons and interests. The Bruce County Economic Development Plan identifies the County's five target tourism audiences as: Nature Lovers; Memory Makers; Knowledge Seekers; Mellow Vacationers; and New Canadians.

In addition, stakeholders indicated that there is a certain amount of tourism attracted to the county due to niche special interests (e.g., marine heritage, diving around shipwrecks, lighthouse heritage, etc.). There is an opportunity to develop programming that aligns with patterns in tourism traffic as well as the interests and motivations of those tourists.

This action recommends that BCM&CC identify local tourism events and other groups or organizations that offer tourism experiences to specific communities of interest and work with them to develop and promote exhibitions and programming aimed at those specific tourism audiences. This action will encourage tourists to discover BCM&CC by providing experiences that speak to their interests and motivations for visiting Bruce County.

BCM&CC could also partner with Explore the Bruce to promote these experiences alongside related tourism products or attractions as a way to encourage visitors to expand their experience of the Bruce and extend their stay with a visit to the BCM&CC.

Purpose:

- To create a destination for tourists based on interests and motivations for visiting the County.
- To engage new audiences by tapping into Bruce County's large tourism population.

Action b: Explore opportunities to co-develop tourism experiences with partners across the local tourism sector.

As outlined in the BCM&CC marketing plan, the museum is “striving to be an experiential tourism destination.” This action is an extension of Action a. Rather than creating experiences at the museum, however, this action recommends that BCM&CC seek partnerships with tourism operation companies and organizations across the tourism sector in Bruce County to co-develop multi-faceted tourism experiences. Some examples of tourism experiences could include:

- Connecting with local hotels, rentals and shared homes (e.g. Airbnb) to curate experience packages or bundles for visitors.
- Developing tours for visitors to local heritage or natural heritage sites throughout the county; or establish the BCM&CC as a starting point for partner-led tours (e.g. Marine Heritage Society tours to Chantry Island).
- Becoming a pick-up location for Geocaching (note: the library already is, so there potential for additional cross promotion) and developing related experiences at the museum.
- Co-developing scavenger hunts around key locations (e.g. the Provincial or National Parks, Town of Saugeen Shores, etc.)
- Producing audio tours in partnership with other tourist destinations (this ties into the development of audio tours or walking tours outlined in Objective 2.1, Action a, and aligns with preliminary recommendations in the Cultural Action Plan around developing technology enabled, self-guided tours promoted and shared on the Explore the Bruce platform).

In this way, BCM&CC will also position itself as a core tourism asset and partner in the context of the County’s tourism development objectives in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Purpose:

- To create memorable experiences for tourists in the County.
- To draw people in to have an experience with BCM&CC beyond the traditional museum experience.
- To build the image of the BCM&CC as a cultural destination for people of all ages and interests.

Pillar 2 | Building affinity across the county



Pillar 2 | Building affinity across the county

BCM&CC benefits from the strong support of a dedicated core audience. This Pillar builds on that strength to outline actions for the organization that will help deepen engagement and connection to build stronger affinity with existing audiences. It also directs the BCM&CC to expand its reach and uncover new community stories to build affinity with underserved communities across the county.

The previous Strategic Plan (2015) prioritized building county-wide awareness of the BCM&CC. This Strategic Plan goes beyond awareness to building county-wide **affinity** for the BCM&CC. Building affinity will ensure that BCM&CC always benefits from a strong core audience and community support.

Objective 2.1 | Engage underserved audiences

- When describing underserved audiences, this objective is really looking at two broad categories:
 - Geographic communities – many of the town and regions in Bruce County are geographically distant from Saugeen Shores/Southampton; and
 - Equity-seeking communities – which includes ethnic and/or visible minorities, religious communities, LGBTQ2, and other communities found across the different axes of diversity and inclusion.
- The actions under this objective address ways in which the BCM&CC can better engage with underserved audiences across both of the above categories.
- The 2019 marketing strategy includes a year-three objective to “continue to build county pride”. This objective in the Strategic Plan aligns with that recommendation, by not only supporting actions that build county pride, but actions that build county pride and affinity for the BCM&CC across a number of underserved communities.

Actions

- a. Develop pop-up experiences that bring the museum to the community across the county.
- b. Develop advisory committees or working groups that represent target underserved communities.
- c. Revise the collecting mandate to include “recent history” and “hidden history”.
- d. Explore additional opportunities for new and diverse story-telling through exhibition and programming.

Action a: Develop pop-up experiences that bring the museum to the community across the county.

BCM&CC is already going out to community events in each of the eight municipalities in an effort build awareness (which was a recommendation in the 2015 Strategic Plan). And the mobile museum outreach program already brings the museum to underserved communities. This action builds on that work by extending these efforts beyond having a presence and building awareness to bringing meaningful experiences from the museum out to the community.

One of the barriers to visiting the museum cited by survey respondents and by stakeholders during consultations was distance, travel and mobility. For many community members, particularly those in the regions of the county farthest away from Southampton/Saugeen Shores. This action brings BCM&CC to community members, rather than relying entirely on community members coming to the BCM&CC. In turn, this provides underserved communities located further from BCM&CC with more access to the museum and its offerings.

The action will also help ensure a more continuous presence from the BCM&CC in communities across the county that do not benefit from having the institution and facility located right in their own communities. This presence, in turn, will help to build stronger affinity across the county.

There are two potential avenues for action:

- 1) Develop pop-up exhibitions and/or programs** that can be hosted at locations or site (e.g. Visitor centres at National and Provincial parks, community libraries, historic sites, community centres, etc.) for extended periods of time. These can be BCM&CC branded and can either be developed (and delivered in the case of programming) by BCM&CC staff or they can be co-developed with the hosting partner institution (creating an opportunity to leverage shared resources).

Action a: Develop pop-up experiences that bring the museum to the community across the county. (Cont'd)

- 2) **Develop digital programming** in connection with sites and attractions across the county. These could include mobile-enabled experiences such as audio tours; multi-media guided walking tours; or “points of interest” that can be accessed by users on mobile devices using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) or Near Field Communication (NFC), or other technologies. These experiences provide a more-self-guided experience. Developing digital programming also creates an opportunity to offer a more permanent and sustained presence across the county. It would also allow the county to have a meaningful presence in a wider variety of locations, reducing barriers and challenges related to staffing programming and ensuring adequate environmental conditions for collections that might be exhibited. The content could be developed in-house or in partnership with other organizations and sites that would feature the digital programming. Developing technology-enabled self-guided tours is also a preliminary recommendation under the developing Cultural Action Plan, indicating an opportunity for synergies between the actions recommended in the CAP and the BCM&CC Strategic Plan.

Purpose:

- To increase access to BCM&CC and its museum and archival collections across the county.
- To build a more sustained and enriching presence for BCM&CC in communities across the county.
- To build and deepen connections with community members across the county, contributing to building affinity.
- To breakdown barriers or preconceived notions that people might have about the museum and its collection

Action b: Develop advisory committees or working groups that represent target underserved communities.

Following on the work that BCM&CC has done to build a stronger relationship with youth audiences (through the creation of the Teen Advisory Group), this action calls on BCM&CC to extend its engagement and partnership efforts with other underserved communities across the county, especially equity-seeking communities (e.g. LGBTQ2S, new Canadians, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.).

BCM&CC should identify 1-3 underserved communities and form an Advisory Committee pertaining to each with representatives from those respective underserved communities. These committees would operate in a similar manner to the Teen Advisory Group that BCM&CC put in place in 2020. Consideration should also be given to synergies that might exist between the BCM&CC's Advisory Committees and existing broader advisory committees that report to the County on similar topics.

Purpose:

- To create a sense of belonging and connection between specific underserved communities and the BCM&CC.
- To better respond to the needs and interests of underserved communities across the County.
- To bring diverse voices and perspectives into the museum's exhibition and program planning and development.

Action c: Revise the collecting mandate to include “recent history” and “hidden history”.

The BCM&CC’s Collection and Archives collecting plans currently place an emphasis on pre-20th century historical objects and records. Revising the collecting practices (in both the museum and archive) to include specific materials from the latter 20th century and 21st century, will ensure that the collection can bear witness to more recent socio-economic changes in the community and represents the stories and history of those currently living in the community for the sake of future generations.

In addition, any historical collection carries the legacy of the biases that existed when the collection was being amassed. Many collections represent the histories that past curators prioritized and chose to preserve based on the socio-political contexts in which they were operating. Revisiting the collection and considering what gaps might exist as a result of past collecting biases would create an opportunity to represent previously hidden histories from the County.

When community members feel represented, they feel recognized, welcome and more engaged and are more likely to build affinity with an institution like BCM&CC. This action also aligns with the preliminary strategic direction in the County’s Cultural Action Plan to “Promote diverse cultural representation by sharing lesser known stories...”

In order to curtail challenges related to collecting mass-produced objects typical of life in more contemporary history, BCM&CC could explore certain restrictions on collecting practices related to more contemporary history. For example, there could be an emphasis on collecting digital artefacts and records rather or an emphasis on collecting items related to specific historical events, rather than on collecting artefacts of daily life. A recent collecting campaign launched by the BCM&CC to collect objects and records that bear witness to the Spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns is an illustration of a very specific collecting effort related to contemporary history.

Purpose:

- To improve representation in the collection of under-represented communities and histories.
- To build deeper connections with underserved communities through representation.

Action d: Explore additional opportunities for new and diverse storytelling through exhibition and programming.

In tandem with Action c, BCM&CC should seek to represent more diverse stories in its exhibition and programming plans. These could include stories that explore how the community has changed due to socio-economic and other factors, including patterns of migration from other parts of the province and country as well as patterns of migration from outside of Canada (e.g. New Canadians). It could also include telling stories that relate to the histories of under-represented groups and communities in the County (e.g. LGBTQ2, new Canadians, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, women, etc.)

The survey and consultations also revealed that community members would like to see more stories that relate to the region's natural heritage. These audience needs should also be considered when exploring what stories to emphasize in BCM&CC's exhibitions and programming.

BCM&CC should also consider leveraging digital engagement as a lower-risk, lower-cost means of telling a wider range of diverse stories.

Purpose:

- To address gaps and opportunities for diversification in the BCM&CC's storytelling.
- To improve representation of under-represented communities and histories.
- To build deeper connections with underserved communities through representation.

Objective 2.2 | Deepen relationships with communities across the County

- The focus of the previous strategic plan was to grow awareness of BCM&CC across the County.
- This objective points to a need to grow that awareness into deepened engagement over the next five years.
- Consultations revealed that while there have been improvements in building awareness of BCM&CC, affinity remains strongest among community members in proximity to the institution (i.e. in Saugeen Shores/Southampton).
- Increased opportunities for meaningful engagement can lead to stronger affinity, which can contribute to a wider base of interested parties to become members, donors, or to support the museum in some other way.

Actions

- a. Develop new digital educational outreach programming to expand reach to K-12 students.
- b. Explore opportunities to formalize and expand co-op and volunteer programs in partnership with educational institutions.
- c. Expand evening, adult programming strategically to engage Millennials and older Gen Z audiences.
- d. Activate the archive to drive audiences from across the county.
- e. Continue to engage community expertise in the development of exhibitions and programming.

Action a: Develop new digital educational outreach programming to expand reach to K-12 students.

Building off the on-site outreach programming that BCM&CC is already delivering in schools across the county, this action refers to developing digital educational outreach programming.

This programming could include things such as e-learning modules, streamed or recorded videos that take students behind-the-scenes to explore the collections, or innovative digital-first experiences that teachers and students can use in the classroom. The benefit of expanding educational outreach digitally means that the BCM&CC can expand its reach and increase the number of touchpoints it has with students throughout the year with a relatively low cost-barrier for the BCM&CC (after initial investment in the content development). BCM&CC can visit more schools, more frequently digitally than through on-site visits.

Digital outreach also support increasing access to students and schools who face barriers to visiting the museum such as geographical distance (and transportation) and costs associated with bringing outreach programming into the school.

This digital programming should be developed in close consultation with the BCM&CC's Educational Advisory Group (EAG).

Purpose:

- To expand reach to K-12 schools and students.
- To increase the number of touchpoints with K-12 students all across the county
- To engage K-12 students that might not otherwise have an opportunity to engage with museum.

Action b: Explore opportunities to formalize and expand co-op and volunteer programs in partnership with educational institutions.

One of the target audiences that BCM&CC struggles to engage is youth and teenagers. While the BCM&CC has recently made efforts to further engage this audience by convening a Teen Advisory Group in 2020, further efforts to engage youth remain a priority for the organization.

Involving youth in the BCM&CC's operations through formalized co-op, internship and volunteer programs will help build deeper connections with the museum that go beyond the experience as a visitor, teaching youth the value of the institution, their collections and the work that they do to serve the community. It can also help students develop specialized skills. Hopefully the affinity built through these programs will not only create a new generation of connected visitors, but could also help grow the future base of BCM&CC members and donors.

The BCM&CC already engages co-op students occasionally and does offer volunteer positions to high school students. However, these activities have not been formalized and participation levels have been somewhat inconsistent due to a number of challenges related to distance and transportation, particularly for students located outside of the Saugeen shores/Southampton community. Awareness is also likely a contributing factor to inconsistent levels of student participation year-over-year.

This action calls for BCM&CC to expand youth engagement by formalizing co-op, volunteer and internship programs (e.g. through the Specialist High Skills Major program) and proactively promoting those opportunities. In order to do so, BCM&CC should seek to build a stronger relationship with the Bluewater District School Board, Grey Bruce Catholic District School Board and local County high schools (e.g. by expanding the Education Advisory Group to include high schools) as well as nearby post-secondary institutions (PSI) that serve the Bruce County community (e.g. Georgian College, Owen Sound campus).

Purpose:

- To deepen engagement with teens and youth.
- To establish connections with the next generation of visitors.
- To support succession planning for the member and donor base.

Action c: Expand evening, adult programming strategically to engage Millennials and older Gen Z audiences.

Consultations revealed that the BCM&CC's evening and adult programming (e.g. Wine and Beer tastings) is among its most successful programming. Survey results also revealed that community members highly value and appreciate these programs. Survey feedback also revealed demand for additional programming targeted at adults, especially during hours that accommodate a typical daytime working schedule.

In addition, creating unique participatory experiences has been proven as a successful way to engage audiences in the hard-to-reach Millennial and older Gen Z audience segments. Indeed, BCM&CC finds that engaging adults is a challenge (unless they have young families).

This action calls on BCM&CC to build off of the success of the evening programs and expand the offering in this area of programming to continue to nurture and deepen the relationship with adults through expanded evening programming.

Purpose:

- To continue to build the BCM&CC's hard-to-reach Millennial and Gen Z audiences.
- To deepen the engagement of with Millennial and Gen Z audiences.

Action d: Activate the archive to drive audiences from across the county.

The quality, breadth and depth of BCM&CC's archival collection is one of the organization's key strengths. The archives are also a key community asset, drawing a significant portion of visitors to the BCM&CC who are researching family history and genealogy, or local history of general interest related to military, marine, organization, and/or business history.

There is an opportunity to further leverage the rich archival collection, using it as a basis for programming (public and education), exhibitions, and digital engagement. The archival collection bears witness to different stories, often more personalized ones, than the museum collection. Further activating the archives both on-site and digitally would leverage the growing interest in archival collections and creates an opportunity to tell stories that will resonate and deepen connections with the community.

Purpose:

- To tell unique, personalized stories that resonate with community members.
- To deepen connections with community members.
- To showcase the BCM&CC's rich archival collection.

Action e: Continue to engage community expertise in the development of exhibitions and programming.

Bruce County and the BCM&CC are blessed with strong local experts and patrons who are willing partners. The BCM&CC already “actively seeks partnerships in achieving our mission”, and have demonstrated experience of the success that comes from working closely with the community in developing exhibitions (e.g. the partnership with SON to develop the “Where We Live” Exhibition in the Anishnaabwe Endaat Gallery, and the partnership with a local rail history enthusiast in developing the Riding the Rails exhibit).

Building on this strength of partnering with local experts, this action calls on BCM&CC to continue to engage local community expertise in the development of exhibitions and programming. By doing so, the BCM&CC can support efforts to expand exhibitions and programming that represent underserved communities or tell new stories.

Purpose:

- To increase representation of local stories and histories.
- To build affinity for with community groups, including those that may not already engage with BCM&CC.
- To build ownership among the community of the BCM&CC and the stories it tells.
- To support efforts to expand and diversify the BCM&CC’s storytelling by providing access to external expertise in a variety of subjects.

Objective 2.3 | Enhance digital outreach and engagement

- This objective focuses on enhancing BCM&CC's digital presence to expand reach (through discoverability) and deepen engagement.
- Where the 2019 marketing plan focuses on creating inviting and enticing digital spaces and presence as a key marketing tool, this objective is about deepening online engagement with visitors.
- Enhanced online engagement provides an opportunity to deepen engagement with audiences across the County, offering an extension or an alternative to in-person visits. As such, it will support more sustained and deeper engagement with:
 - Residents across the county, especially those located furthest from BCM&CC; and
 - Seasonal residents during the "off season"
- An enhanced digital presence will also support efforts to engage tourist communities related to specific communities of interest, by boosting BCM&CC's profile as a centre of expertise and destination for those seeking certain experiences.
- This objective also aligns with the preliminary strategic direction in the Bruce County Cultural Action Plan to "Leverage Bruce County media and social media platforms to facilitate access to digital content."

Actions

- a. Develop a digital content strategy.
- b. Undertake a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and discoverability audit.

Action a: Develop a digital content strategy.

A digital content strategy is the guiding document that outlines specific digital engagement objectives and the types of content that are needed to achieve them. It plays the same role as a programming or exhibition plan, but for BCM&CC's digital spaces (this includes the website as well as any social media platforms where BCM&CC has a presence). The digital content strategy should include the following elements:

- Identify the content objectives – is the objective conversion or is it purely engagement? Is it discovery (teasers) or deeper engagement? (Hint: You can have a mix of objectives but identify which types of content you will use for each).
- Identify the audiences you are trying to reach.
- Identify which platforms are best-suited to your objectives.
- Identify the type of content suited to the objectives, target audience and platform. Format the content to each specific platform and purpose (e.g. short video clips vs. long-form video; quick, limited-life engagement vs. content that lasts longer; etc.)
- Identify opportunities for content integration across platforms and for leveraging the same content in different ways across platforms.
- Indicate what digital assets (images, videos, etc.) that already exist and how they can be re-used and identify any new content that needs to be developed.

Action a: Develop a digital content strategy. (Cont'd)

The content strategy should apply to both the archival and museum collections and should integrate with objectives outlined in both the programming and exhibition plans. It should also be a living document that is revised and updated regularly based on which strategies are working well and which are not. Digital engagement differs from other types of programming in that relevance and freshness of content need to be continually assessed. As such, digital content and programming development needs to be an iterative process, based on experimentation and regular course correction.

Purpose:

- To set clear directions for the development of digital content.
- To provide guidelines for integrated digital content and programming across different channels.
- To expand reach and deepen engagement with audiences across the County.
- To expand reach and deepen engagement with audiences outside the County.

Action b: Undertake a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and discoverability audit.

In addition to creating compelling digital content, successful digital engagement also requires that the content be discoverable by audiences. Without a robust Search Engine Optimization (SEO) approach in place, even the best content strategies will struggle to successfully achieve target engagement levels. They are two sides of a coin.

Updating the SEO was among the recommendations in the 2019 Marketing Plan and BCM&CC has already been working with the IT department to enhance its SEO. Building from that, this action recommends that BCM&CC undertake a robust optimization audit that covers the website as well as all content-sharing platforms used by the institution (e.g. social media platforms) in order to ensure optimal discoverability of existing and future digital content. The audit should cover the following areas:

- Ensure a clear semantic (structured data and metadata) markup and hierarchy on the website;
- Make use of keywords that align with the common secondary and “like” interests of target audiences (i.e. topics that are related or adjacent to what BCM&CC presents);
- Make use of keywords that align audiences’ common search terms (as recommended in the Marketing Plan);
- Consider accessibility – e.g. use natural language to optimize against voice-activated searches, include detailed Alt Text for all non-textual assets, etc.)
- Include third-party content-sharing platforms (e.g. social media) in the optimization audit to examine how search optimization could be improved within those platforms as well.
- Identify opportunities to integrate content between the website and other platforms, which can help boost general SEO as well.

Purpose:

- To increase BCM&CC’s SEO across the website and content-sharing platforms
- To boost discoverability of digital content produced by BCM&CC.

Pillar 3 | Optimize Operations



Pillar 3 | Optimize Operations

One of BCM&CC's core strengths is the staff's ability to do a lot with the available resources. The organization benefits from a dedicated and skilled staff. And while BCM&CC has benefited from County efforts to build efficiency through LEAN training, some of the staff's work could be further optimized through strategic investment in systems and processes that further enable the optimization of time and resources.

This pillar is about actions and solutions that will help BCM&CC optimize its operations in a way that allows staff to focus more time and energy on core activities and furthering the objectives of this Strategic Plan.

Objective 3.1 | Establish evidence-based decision-making as a standard of practice

- Evidence based decision making is about not only collecting data, but also knowing what to do with that data.
- This objective addresses a need for the BCM&CC to understand its audience more in order to more strategically allocate resources and develop programming.
- In the BCM&CC's marketing plan one recommendation was to "Get to know your visitors better - collect great data" – this objective not only aligns with that recommendation but will also allow the museum to action that data.

Actions

- a. Explore additional opportunities to collect audience data and feedback.
- b. Leverage Client Relationship Management (CRM) System to engage in proactive visitor journey mapping.
- c. Explore opportunities to enhance data literacy and evidence-based decision-making skills.

Action a: Explore additional opportunities to collect audience data and feedback.

Following the recommendations in the 2019 Marketing plan, BCM&CC has been bolstering its collection of audience feedback through visitor, program and event audience surveys. This more systematic and periodic collection of audience feedback is critical in informing future program development. However, there is an additional need to also collect audience analytics that will provide insights on audience motivations and behaviours which would enable BCM&CC to further fine tune its communications (and programming) to different segments of its audiences.

As BCM&CC has a touchpoint with visitors at the entry of the museum, the museum should explore approaches to acquiring audience feedback and demographic information at the point of sale (POS); this could be as simple as collecting postal codes at first. In addition, the BCM&CC should make efforts to leverage to basic audience analytics from web traffic. Other opportunities include:

- Exploring third-party solutions such as Environics Analytics' PRIZM tool or similar solutions from other vendors, being mindful that these audience insight tools may not be as accurate in rural locations like Bruce County;
- Through the implementation of Perfect Mind BCM&CC is also implementing an e-commerce POS platform for ticket sales, program and event registrations, and membership purchases and renewals (a feature of the Perfect Mind CRM system). BCM&CC should continue to explore the cross-marketing opportunities that will result from Perfect Mind as well as the opportunities created by a digital POS to collect (voluntary) demographic information as part of the check-out process.

Now that BCM&CC is in the process of implementing a new CRM system (Perfect Mind), it is the right time for a more strategic data collection process.

Purpose:

- To understand audience desires and digital habits more clearly.
- To inform programming and marketing/communications decisions.

Action b: Leverage Client Relationship Management (CRM) System to engage in proactive visitor journey mapping.

An audience journey map helps identify where the critical touchpoints are for your audiences and visitors and what opportunities exist for better and deeper engagement, whether by taking better advantage of existing touchpoints or by adding new touchpoints. An audience journey map has a number of functions:

- It identifies all the critical (and potential) touch points (i.e. all the different avenues through which people engage with the museum).
- It can help identify opportunities for conversion. Journey maps can help identify behaviours and engagement patterns that are associated with high likelihood of conversion into members or donors, which can help BCM&CC be more proactive in pursuing deeper engagement with individuals that have a higher likelihood of conversion (e.g. from a children's program registrant to an adult event attendee).

A CRM is a critical asset for tracking this visitor journey and this action builds directly on the ongoing implementation of Perfect Mind.

Purpose:

- To support conversion (e.g. from single-ticket buyer to member, etc.)
- To identify opportunities for extending and enriching the audience experience.
- To build relationships with audiences beyond the point of sale.

Action c: Explore opportunities to enhance data literacy and evidence-based decision-making skills.

Following recommendations from the 2019 Marketing Plan to “collect great data” and “enhance visitor surveys”, BCM&CC has been deploying more regular visitor, program and event feedback surveys and the data is centralized in Survey Monkey for efficient collation and analysis across the data sets. However, it is not enough to simply collect meaningful data, it also needs to be used. As such, building capacity and skills within BCM&CC to effectively leverage any audience and visitor data being collected is a critical companion action to Action a. Ensuring that staff are trained on effective data analysis and data use will ensure that the data can be leveraged to their full potential to inform decision-making around marketing and programming decisions. Improving data literacy will also allow for data-based decision-making to become normalized throughout the organization.

In order to build capacity, the following steps should be taken:

- Identify formal training opportunities/courses around data literacy (e.g. Brainstation).
- Identify informal training opportunities such as webinars that staff can participate in and report back/share learnings for collective knowledge building.
- Carve out time for ongoing training for staff within regular workflows.
- Ensure learnings are not siloed by creating formalized sharing of learnings, such as conducting “lunch and learns” every so often to share knowledge (e.g. a staff member who is very familiar with website design does a tutorial for the rest of the staff).

Purpose:

- Build capacity and create readiness for leveraging audience data and feedback in decision-making.

Objective 3.2 | Integrate and streamline systems and processes

- BCM&CC will be implementing CRM practices with the implementation of Perfect Mind, and this platform is an excellent asset for increased efficiencies. However, there are still gaps, such as how audience data and feedback is being collected.
- This objective is about integrating systems so that processes can be streamlined to increase both effectiveness and efficiency of operations.
- Overall audits – of both the systems used and the information management processes that the museum uses – will allow BCM&CC to identify gaps and set standards of practice that will allow staff to work more effectively.

Actions

- a. Conduct a systems audit.
- b. Conduct an information management audit.
- c. Explore solutions for addressing BCM&CC's Digital Asset Management needs.

Action a: Conduct a systems audit.

Conducting a systems audit will allow BCM&CC to identify all the systems it uses, identify any gaps or weaknesses, and assess opportunities for further integration between them. An audit will also help identify system and process duplications (and opportunities for eliminating them) as well as opportunities to reduce manual processes.

The audit should include an assessment of the new CRM and related systems, Collections Management, and any other systems.

The audit should also include the identification of any additional systems that may support gaps or other recommended actions from this strategy (e.g. volunteer management system, event room booking platform, etc.).

Better systems and processes lead to more effective use of resources.

Purpose:

- To understand where there may be process gaps and/or lack of system integration.
- To integrate digital tools and platforms across the organization for increased efficiencies.

Action b: Conduct an information management audit.

In parallel with the systems audit, BCM&CC should consider conducting an information management audit. This audit will allow the organization to identify what information/data it has stored, where, and how (e.g. digitally, hard copy).

It will also allow the museum to understand more holistically what information is being captured across the whole organization and evaluate current file structures and naming conventions to streamline and standardize them, as well as to determine gaps in compliance. Some of BCM&CC's file management and access challenges are already being addressed through the adoption of SharePoint (SP), however a more complete audit would still be beneficial. Types of information to review would include (but not be limited to):

- Audience data and feedback – visitors, people who have attended an event at the museum, engaged with an educational program, etc.);
- Collections data;
- Education and programming files;
- Exhibition files (including any installation photos);
- Marketing files and assets;
- Curatorial files;
- Enriched content related collections (audio-video content related to collections);
- Installation photos; and
- Metadata associated with digital files and assets

Purpose:

- To facilitate more efficient and strategic use of information.
- To put in place updated information management processes that support standardized information management across the organization.
- To ensure that information is being stored in an accessible and standardized fashion, for efficiency and succession planning purposes

Action c: Explore solutions for addressing BCM&CC's Digital Asset Management needs.

BCM&CC does not currently have a specialized Digital Asset Management (DAM) system in place which results in lost efficiencies and other challenges for the organization. The recent implementation and adoption of SharePoint (SP) has addressed some of BCM&CC's file management and access challenges. However, a more specialized DAM system may be required to ensure integration between information, data and assets stored in the Collections Management System and other digital assets produced by the BCM&CC such as: enriched content (video and media files); curatorial, exhibition and installation files and images; educational and programming assets; marketing and communications assets; etc.

This action complements the preceding actions in that it supports bolstering BCM&CC's systems and information management to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. Some factors to considering which DAM system to procure include:

- Conduct an audit of BCM&CC's digital asset management needs – what types of assets does BCM&CC have, who should have access and editing permission for assets in the DAMs, how does BCM&CC use different assets, how might they be used in the future, etc.
- Review and assess all of the systems features and functions based on current and potential future needs.
- Consider integration with Past Perfect, the website, and other systems. Engaging an expert, either from the DAM system vendor or an external expert, to support preparation, integration implementation of the DAM system will increase the chances of success.

This action will likely require corporate-level consideration of County-wide information and asset management needs, but BCM&CC should actively assess and communicate its own departmental needs regarding a DAM system to the IT department.

Purpose:

- To improve digital asset management.
- To facilitate more efficient and strategic use of digital assets.
- To support more effective use of staff time and effort.

Appendix A | BCM&CC Mandate and Core Values

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre Mission, Core Values and Mandate

Mission: BCM&CC has moved away from its previous mission of “Unforgettable” and instead has adopted the County’s “**Explorer**” brand and its own tagline of “**Imagination is Timeless**” in lieu of a mission statement.

Mandate

Mandate	
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We actively serve the community through partnerships and meaningful programs.
Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We facilitate the growth and preservation of the collections of the BCM&CC and those of our heritage partners.
Arts and Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are a unique venue where a variety of entertaining and artistic experiences are offered.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide educational resources, programs and activities to enhance the knowledge and understanding of our unique heritage and to support the Ontario Curriculum.

Core Values

Values	
Relationships	<p>The BCM&CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively seeks partnerships in achieving our mission practices effective communication promotes fun and accessibility actively seeks and recognizes the contributions of our supporters
Professionalism	<p>The BCM&CC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is accountable and demonstrates best professional practice in all operations and relationships takes a client centred and interactive approach in our programs in a friendly and welcoming environment believes in the importance of staff development in its efforts to be an effective resource to the community and a leader in the province
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotes the depth and diversity of our heritage offers many activities that encourage meaningful reflection on the past in order to better understand the present and thus plan for the future promotes the value of its collection and archives as a prime resource for research at all levels of learning

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