



## **Pender Islands Museum Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023**

*Adopted by Pender Islands Museum Society  
July 16, 2018*

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## Preface

In November 2016, Board Member Simone Marler wrote this introduction to a discussion paper about the need for Strategic Planning:

“The 2005 official opening of the Pender Islands Museum in the restored, historic Roe House was the culmination of years of dedicated effort to find a permanent home to preserve the history and development of our community. It was simply and unequivocally a huge achievement.

Now it's time to honour and sustain that remarkable effort. After 12 years in operation, the museum faces changing demographics, community and visitor expectations, and technologies that present challenges and opportunities.”

As the Pender Islands Museum approaches the halfway mark in its 30-year lease with Parks Canada, it seems opportune that a Strategic Plan be developed.

This Strategic Plan grows from the desire of the museum's Board to take an active hand in shaping the future of the museum and realizing its potential.

In many ways the Pender Islands Museum is well positioned to become a “great little museum.”

# 1. Introduction

**Small museums face myriad challenges.** The best response, if the museum is to thrive, is clarity. The Board needs a clear vision, a clear sense of priorities and a clear set of actions required to be successful.

This Strategic Plan is the result of work accomplished in April 2018 when Board members of the Pender Islands Museum, along with some invited stakeholders, met for two days to discuss, debate and agree on a path for the museum's future.

The Plan describes a renewed vision for the organization as well as principles that will guide its actions over the next five years. It also lays out a series of goals and actions that the organization will focus upon.

The best plans are not static. Nor are they lengthy. They are tools that are easy to use. This Plan can - and should - be read and regularly updated.

## 2. A Renewed Direction

The museum has a renewed articulation of purpose and direction.

### **A New Mission**

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Our new Mission Statement helps to establish the purpose of our museum. Here is our new Pender Islands Museum Mission Statement:

**We love our Islands' stories**, so we:

- **Preserve** Pender's history
- **Tell** the community's story
- **Collect** Pender's heritage
- **Show** things worth seeing
- **Celebrate** what make our Islands unique

## A New Vision

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Our new Vision statement captures our aspirations. It is intended to be a “stretch.”

**Our Vision** is to be a great little museum.

The following messages amplify our Vision:

- We are “the” place to discover Penders’ stories.
- We are a special museum about a special island
- We are valued and enjoyed by residents and visitors.

## Values

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Six important values guide the work of the Pender Islands Museum:

**1. Relevant**

This is not a stuffy museum. It does not stand on a pedestal and lecture. It gives a real sense of the people who live(d) on the Penders.

**2. Visitor-centred**

When we make decisions, we keep the visitor’s needs and interests as a primary concern.

**3. Collaborative**

We invite and enjoy working with others - other people, other organizations.

**4. Trusted**

We responsibly care for the heritage resources entrusted to us. We are a trusted source of information about the Islands’ history.

**5. Educational**

We are passionate about sharing our knowledge about the heritage of the Penders.

**6. Welcoming**

We are hospitable and invite exploration and participation by everyone.

## **Audience**

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Everyone is welcome at our Museum. However our exhibitions and programs will be created with two particular audiences in mind:

**1. Penderites**

Residents, weekenders, our guests and their families

**2. Off-Islanders**

Visitors and tourists

## **3. The Strategic Plan (2018 - 2023)**

Our Plan for the next five years has five Strategic Goals.

**1. Improve and enrich the visitor experience**

The visitor's experience at the Pender Islands Museum will be welcoming, accessible and engaging throughout. Improvements will be made in stages. Each one will be a deliberate step in support of the Vision.

**2. Improve care and knowledge of the collection**

Collections will be well managed, records will be comprehensive, collections information will be accessible to all, and risk to collections will be substantially reduced.

**3. Strengthen the Museum's sustainability**

The museum will have diverse sources of revenue including grants and sponsorship. It is financially stable. The volunteer force is growing. The Board is engaged and is active.

**4. Increase awareness of the Museum and what it offers**

The museum will take bold steps to renew its identity, actively raise its profile and increase public awareness to what it offers.

**5. Improve the quality of the building and its site**

A maintenance and development plan will address the facility's need for repair, renovation and expansion over the short, medium and long term. Significant improvements will be made in way-finding and collections care and storage.

**Let's describe each Strategic Goal in turn and describe the actions required to reach our goals.**

## 1. Improve and enrich the visitor experience

The visitor's experience will be welcoming, accessible and engaging. The story will be clearly organized.

There will be key moments in the experience that are memorable.

All improvements to the visitor experience will be deliberate steps in support of the museum's Vision. Each improvement will be developed with the visitor as a central consideration.

### Actions

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#### *New Way-Finding Signage*

Work with Parks Canada to develop and install new way-finding signage that provides directional signage to the museum location. The museum will develop, fund and install signage that clearly marks the site entrance.

#### *An Exhibition Plan*

Develop a simple exhibition plan that identifies:

- a. A series of low or no-cost exhibit improvements.
- b. The key themes of the exhibitions and their sequence of presentation
- c. The improvements to be made over 5 years and the resources needed to accomplish them.

#### *Exhibition Interventions*

Implement exhibit interventions that significantly enhance the visitor experience:

- a. Simplify the exhibitions by removing exhibition clutter;
- b. Introduce new signage to introduce the overall story and each main theme;
- c. Introduce a few simple but memorable interactive experiences;
- d. Highlight a few key objects in the exhibitions.

#### *An Appealing Predictable Program*

Develop and deliver an attractive and predictable calendar of programs (events, presentations, workshops).

### Outcomes

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Exhibition and program choices are strategic: they support a plan that in turn supports the Vision.

There is an ongoing schedule of exhibition improvements.

The visitor experience is of consistently high quality from start to finish.

Visitors report a high level of satisfaction (more than 95% report that they are very or entirely satisfied by their visit).

Attendance increases by 50% - from **1569** in 2017 to **2300** by 2023.

## **2. Improve the care of - and knowledge about - the collection**

All museum collections and archival holdings will be catalogued; documents and photographs will be digitized and accessible.

There will be significant improvements in collection storage standards and risk to the collections will be reduced.

Also, a long-term solution for storage needs will be in development.

### **Actions**

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#### *Develop a Plan*

Conduct an assessment of current gaps in the collection and create a clear strategy or policy that will guide future collecting activities including acquisitions and de-accessioning.

#### *Catalogue the Collection*

Complete cataloguing the collection to standard museum practice.

#### *Address Collections Storage Future*

Assess and make improvements to collections storage to achieve a higher standard of care for museum and archival collections; begin the search for collection storage expansion space.

#### *Online Access to Collections*

Profile a select number of important objects on the museum's web site. Provide a better, more user-friendly portal to search the museum's collections.

#### *A Focus on Digitization*

Improve scanning capacity and digitize archival holdings.

### **Outcomes**

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All objects are catalogued in the museum's collection management systems.

All archival photographs are scanned and have a digital file.

Risk to collections is reduced.

### **3. Strengthen the Museum's sustainability**

The museum has diverse sources of revenue including grants and sponsorship.

The museum is financially stable, produces an annual budget, and has discretionary funds for important projects. It actively researches and secures new sources of money.

Volunteer force is growing. The Board is engaged and is active in ensuring new board members are recruited.

#### **Actions**

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##### *Grants and More*

Research available granting sources and secure sources of business support.

##### *Planned Giving*

Research *planned giving* programs at other museums of similar scale and launch a modest program of *planned giving* (donation or bequests).

##### *Promote and Build Membership*

Promote the opportunities and benefits of volunteering.

##### *Develop the Board*

Keep the Board invested and engaged in the museum's future with regular planning sessions. Pay particular attention to recruitment of new board members with key skills.

##### *Reaching Out to Partners*

Seek corporate support for important projects.

#### **Outcomes**

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The museum organization is financially stable and has funds to accomplish some important projects.

The museum is "tuned into" potential funding opportunities.

The volunteer contingent is well supported and is expanding in numbers.

The Board is engaged, active and aligned.



## 4. Increase awareness of the Museum and what it offers

The organization will take steps to raise its profile, shape a renewed identity, and increase public awareness of its role, its value, what it offers and what it does.

### Actions

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#### *A Renewed Brand*

Develop an Identity Branding Plan that results in a strong, consistent visual brand and consistent communications messaging.

#### *A Communication Plan*

Develop and deliver an annual communications plan.

#### *Promotional Pieces*

Develop a set of consistent promotional pieces for programs.

#### *A Renewed Web Site*

Design a new visitor-centred web site with visual appeal using a strong set of professionally shot images (see below).

#### *Beautiful Photography*

Commission a professional photographic shoot to capture the “magic” of the site and the highlights of the visitor experience.

#### *Social Media Action*

Encourage positive reviews of the museum on sites such as *TripAdvisor*.

#### *Community Outreach*

Develop and deliver an annual community outreach plan.

### Outcomes

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The residents of Pender know about and are proud of the museum; it has a strong reputation and there is greater awareness of its role.

The Museum is on the must-see list for visitors to Pender.

Over the next five years, attendance increases by 50% - from 1569 in 2017 to 2300 by 2023. Increased repeat attendance.

The museum rises to the top three *TripAdvisor* “things to do on Pender Islands.”

## 5. Improve the quality of the building and its site

Over the next five years, the organization will commence a series of logical steps to address the quality and functionality of its building and site.

### Actions

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#### *Looking After What's Below and Around*

Clear and renew the crawl space as a functional storage space; clear the perimeter of the building of objects and other detritus.

#### *Dealing with Maintenance*

Develop a multi-year maintenance schedule.

#### *Planning for Renewal*

Develop an infrastructure upgrade plan including potential funding sources.

#### *A Future for Collections Storage*

Resolve long term storage and programming storage needs.

#### *Recreating Roesland*

Explore and secure support to re-create a Roesland Resort Cottage.

### Outcomes

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The museum has a capital improvement/expansion plan and cost estimates for building and site improvements.

Risk to collections is reduced.

Collections are stored and displayed with improved environmental conditions.

Key functions (Collections, Programs, Exhibits) have adequate storage and preparation space.

## 4. Ten Quick Wins

10 inexpensive, relatively simple actions that will make a difference short term:

- 1. The Ten Best:** Create a simple, single-sheet guide to the 10 top objects on display. Each object has an image and a 25-word caption. Do a different version for children. These profiles can also appear on the renewed web site.
- 2. TripAdvisor Ranking:** Print a business card with the *TripAdvisor* brand and give it to visitors to ask them to write a positive review. Get 10 good reviews and you'll likely rise to the top 5 things to do on Pender.
- 3. De-Clutter:** Take a hard look at your exhibits and remove signage and artifacts that are not helping - either because they are not directly relevant, or because they are taking away from more important assets.
- 4. Great Images:** Have a pro take a series of images of the Museum, the site, key best objects. They will be invaluable to your marketing on-line and in any promotional literature you produce. Take the exterior images on a sunny summer's day.
- 5. A New Web Site:** Develop a new web site. Use a contemporary format that is "big on images." Use the suite of professional images to convey the visitor experience.
- 6. Complete the Entry Simplification:** Remove the surplus path and make the entrance clear.
- 7. Learn Basic Fabrication Skills:** If there is someone with a practical bent in your orbit, send her/him to the UVIC exhibit fabrication workshop and learn how best to make signage, object mounts, create replicas and so on.
- 8. Get Your Digital Feet Wet:** Develop a simple touch screen interactive. You'll find it's not hard to tell a story with images, sound, and video using a basic tablet.
- 9. Get Interactive:** Create a series of simple, memorable interactives: a chance to get something to work, cool things to touch, a few well-chosen smells.
- 10. Events That Get You Noticed**  
Develop - over 3 years - two unique annual events that get you noticed in the community, that people begin to anticipate, that "sell out" or reach capacity.



***Penderite***

*Noun:* a resident of the Pender Islands.

***Penderitis***

*Noun:* the condition of loving life on Pender Island

