



OLIVER AND DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

REPOSITIONING AND RECOVERY

5 YEAR STRATEGIC WORK PLAN - 2023

Background

Two high level goals have guided the planning actions of the Board of the Oliver and District Heritage Society and staff in the last dozen years; Re-organization and Rejuvenation.

The Oliver and District Heritage Society (ODHS) is nearing the natural end of the above focus, and is now looking towards a new emphasis, that of Visible Responsible Stewardship.

BC is slowly emerging from the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, against a backdrop of social change, environmental concerns, new economic realities, and cultural shifts.

History-keeping organizations including ODHS are not immune to these impacts, and expect to face new realities as a result. To proceed and develop further in this environment ODHS must plan sensitively, paying close attention to community priorities and its own mandate within that community.

The mandate of ODHS is to preserve the heritage of the community of Oliver and surrounding area in a holistic way, and make it as widely accessible as possible. Three core functions have informed ODHS activities and planning; managing its collection of artefacts, managing its collection of archival materials, and providing both direct and indirect support for built heritage. To these functions ODHS now adds a fourth to guide its future activities; being strong, responsible and highly visible stewards of our community's historical assets, including through the preservation and management of, and improved access to the irreplaceable links to the community's past, artifacts, archival material, and historic buildings and regional sites of significance. Thus the theme of Visible, Responsible Stewardship emerged to influence this our latest strategic work plan.

Much of the activity of ODHS is carried on in partnership with local governments including The Osoyoos Indian Band, as well as Oliver Parks and Recreation, Oliver Tourism, local services and other clubs. Inside the last year ODHS engaged successfully with the Osoyoos Indian Band in a shared venture to celebrate 100 years of Oliver and 10,000 years of the Okanagan sylix Nation, with the publication of the 100 X 100 Book.

While the pandemic curtailed what ODHS was able to do and how it does those things, it also presented new opportunities including in terms of newly available grant funding, and IT solutions for the communication of its programming.

Consistent with its now four functions, as ODHS concentrates on its approach to “Repositioning and Recovery,” it seeks to expand its reach into its local community, including First Nations. This means going beyond the space limiting walls of ODHS’ own facilities, and most significantly this may include looking to advance vital projects linked to the preservation of, and access to its historically important former community of Fairview, and its historically vital yet contemporarily important irrigation artery of “The Ditch.”

Strategic Actions and Direction Over the Coming Five Years

Such actions are defined by the following terms:

Short term goals – completed in one year or less.

Long term goals – completed in 1 – 5 years or more.

1) FINANCE AND FUNDING:

i. Short Term Goals:

- a) Streamline the budget reporting process for the Board and synchronize it with local government requirements.
- b) Monitor and work to achieve optimal staffing numbers for the organization, to include managing staff numbers seasonally and support retention of permanent professional staff. Prepare a report analysing staffing need, and should there be an identified need to increase staffing, develop a supporting explanatory rationale.

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Apply to funders in support of growing our existing public programming offering, collection access, exhibits, and focused learning opportunities.

- b) Ongoing exploration of means to grow the existing small endowment fund, and Managed Funds.
- c) Continue annually to demonstrate good fiscal management to Town Council and to RDOS Rural Area C Director.
- d) Ongoing attention to opportunities to further rationalize and demonstrate prudence regarding the standing operating expenses of running ODHS; including cell phones, internet, IT costs, accounting, office supplies, insurance, security alarm monitoring and utilities.

2) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

i. Short Term Goals:

- a) Expand use of social media and website to share information, in addition to traditional sources in the community.
- b) Implement use of Virtual online method of communicating ODHS learning and information programs, via the VR Voyage Online Portal or otherwise.
- c) Monitor website and social media to statistically demonstrate extent of community online usage of the services provided by ODHS.

ii. Long Term Goals:

- a) Monitor for opportunities to expand use of social media and website to share information, in addition to traditional sources in the community.
- b) Continue digitization of artefact and archival collections as time and funding allows; and seek further funding opportunities to enable the expansion of this process, with digitized media made available via ODHS website.

3) PROGRAMMING:

i. Short Term Goals

- a) Use exhibits and the dedicated outside programming space to deliver a wider variety of interesting human and natural heritage in-person offerings for people of different ages.
- b) Increase offering of curriculum based school programs and reminiscence based programs for seniors.
- c) Identify opportunities to maximize the use of Summer Student Programs, and Interns in the face of local housing challenges and wage levels eg. promoting job opportunities for candidates from the resident OIB population.
- d) Upgrade the existing Historic Walking Tour program.

- e) Increase local visibility and relevance by participating as widely as possible in local community events.

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Propose a visible and attractive community wide interpretive sign that recognises the 100th Anniversary of Oliver in 2021 as well as local buildings or sites with heritage importance, including Fairview.
- b) Undertake a feasibility study with a subsequent planning, fund raising and implementation strategy for each or any of the following:
 - An exhibit and / informative tour to educate residents of and visitors to Oliver about The Ditch Project.
 - An exhibit and / informative tour to educate residents of and visitors to Oliver about the Fairview Townsite and perhaps Camp McKinney.
 - Explore the opportunities to celebrate the Kettle Valley Railway in concert with the RDOS.
 - Explore the opportunities to tell the natural and human heritage story of the Okanagan River.
- c) Encourage the Town of Oliver to include a historic theme in the creation of all new parks, gardens, and community facilities.

4) PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

i. Short Term Goals

- a) Ensure ODHS possesses an effective Emergency Preparedness Plan, for the preservation in an emergency situation, of priority elements of the archival and artifact collections.
- b) Complete the Oliver Chronicle Digitization Project in collaboration with UBC Okanagan, and hold a celebratory live launch to recognise all individuals, agencies and funders who contributed to this undertaking.
- c) Secure advice from the Association of BC Archivists on how to best create a comprehensive archival management plan for the longer term, and take opportunities to learn from other heritage institutions.
- d) Conclude the current project to raise awareness of the importance of the existing 102-year-old irrigation canal (known as "The Ditch") in making Canada's largest desert an agricultural powerhouse.
- e) Collaborate with appropriate partners (Oliver Tourism, Town of Oliver and RDOS Rural Area C etc) to resolve existing management issues relating to the

historic Fairview Townsite, and develop a stable, sustainable management plan.

- f) Ensure good and timely communication with the Town of Oliver regarding possible changes to sites listed on the Heritage Register.

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Secure expertise to assess the existing archival management system, identify areas of strengths and weakness in terms of current conservation plus digital or other forms of access, and prepare a realistic implementation strategy.
- b) Secure training and/or resources needed to begin implementation of the archival management plan.
- c) Explore how best to offer temporary exhibits within our own premises, and outdoors or indoors around the community.
- d) Prioritize and continue addressing shortcomings / gaps in the storage, accessioning, conservation and indexing of all collections, their location and condition; including creating a definitive record of processes used so as to ensure consistency of approach over time.
- e) Explore funding opportunities with the potential to continue digitization of archival and artefact collections.
- f) Through associations with other heritage facilities seek to learn from, and where appropriate implement best and emerging archival, collections, and technology use practices.

5) PHYSICAL PLANT AND OTHER CAPITAL ASSETS

i. Short Term Goals

- a) Design and cost out fire safety egress from Archives vault, and second story of the museum; paying particular attention to designated heritage building impacts.
- b) Update Capital Asset Management Plan to assist in prediction of ongoing costs of maintenance and equipment renewal.
- c) Complete a maintenance manual for each facility, and /or an annual "Wishlist" for facilities upgrades and repairs across the 3 ODHS buildings.
- d) Ensure good communication with the Town of Oliver regarding its future local government facility planning, especially where it relates to the current archives facility, and the need for off-site storage (TecPak).

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Create a more durable and serviceable surface for the external programming space at the Museum, preferably with some form of weather protection, and sensitive to the impact of such on the heritage building adjacent.
- b) Explore how the internal environment at the museum can be significantly improved to deal with cold winter and hot summer working and conservation conditions.
- c) Create a master plan for museum space and storage facilities.

6) PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MARKETING

i. Short Term Goals

- a) Publish at least 3 Lamplighters per year for circulation in hard copy and electronically, as appropriate.
- b) Continue to publish twice monthly articles in the Times Chronicle.
- c) Publish frequent social media and linked website updates.
- d) Have the most regular presence possible at local festivals and events, including selling merchandise, and educating participants on the history of Oliver and its historical assets.
- e) Seek ongoing growth in ODHS public programming events.
- f) Ensure successful conclusion of The Ditch Project including research with documentation of outcomes and the production of a "Then and Now" type video.

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Seek to increase relevance of ODHS within the community by contributing through ODHS led programming and activities to the tourism sector.
- b) Build awareness of the economic and social value of heritage to the community, including in terms of grants secured and their employment, social, and other impacts.
- c) Collaborate with Oliver Tourism and The Town of Oliver as and when a currently proposed Way Finding initiative is developed.

7) ADMINISTRATION

i. Short Term Goals

- a) Develop a strategy to grow the active membership of the Society.
- b) Resume orientations of changing key town staff as to the role of the ODHS and the services it provides in partnership with both the Town and RDOS.
- c) Encourage informed communications between the ODHS, Town of Oliver and RDOS staff in relation to managing built heritage assets, especially those properties on their respective Heritage Registers, and ensure a protocol for flagging when changes are raised.
- d) Develop and diarize a standard approach to ensuring ODHS staff performance reviews, both by the Board and the ED.

ii. Long Term Goals

- a) Review the Board Manual to ensure relevance.
- b) Continue to seek opportunities for meaningful First Nations collaboration.
- c) Explore how to secure meaningful, responsive public input that will shape future activities of the Society, and then prepare a course of action that can be pursued.
- d) Explore how best to influence local and regional government to cooperatively grow its commitment to protecting, managing and celebrating the heritage assets of the community including buildings, sites, and other types of resources.
- e) Re-visit the Oliver and District Community Heritage Strategic Plan prepared by D Luxton and Associates, and do so in concert with the Oliver Town Planner to explore opportunities for actions that support the preservation of built heritage assets.
- f) Develop a strategy for succession planning within the board of ODHS having regard to maintaining the necessary broad skillset.
- g) Remain cognisant of the need to refresh the ODHS Five Year Strategy as each strategy nears satisfaction.