

Carnegie Museum
City of Houghton
Strategic Plan 2010 – 2016
June 2010

In 2006, the City of Houghton established a Museum in the former Portage Lake District Library building. The City is progressive in recognizing the benefits that a museum will bring to the City's quality of life, cultural development, economic development and tourism, and a vibrant and desirable downtown. Marketing studies conducted under the direction of the City in 2005 and 2010 confirmed the importance of a museum to the City's goals and to its residents.

Any museum should meet the needs and desires of its community. To that end, a written public survey and interviews were conducted by a museum planner and consultant. Interviewees included members of the City's business community, City officials, volunteers, and area residents. From these interviews and survey results, the goals of this plan were developed. Twenty-five respondents to the survey (representing about 20 percent of the total) indicated they would like to continue to be involved in planning the process, and they have been invited to meet with the planner on June 16, 2010 to consider the name of the Museum in more depth and to learn about the elements of this plan. The meeting will also give the Executive Director an opportunity to initiate a formal volunteer program.

Among the public, there is a strong emotional connection with the idea of a museum in Houghton. There is a feeling that the Museum should establish a mission and an identity that complements the other cultural organizations in the region; that it should become the "real deal;" that if it's going to be done, "do it right;" and that the Museum should present a professional image in its building, exhibitions, and programs to the public. There is a sense that the Museum has the potential to become a core institution in the community, filling an evident and large gap, and that the city's investment in the Museum was ingenious. Many see the Museum as a wonderful opportunity for students of all ages to learn and to display their work. Organizations, schools, and public agencies are eager to collaborate with the Museum for programs and exhibitions, and to use and enjoy the public space.

Generally, the public feels that the Museum should be regional in its focus and could serve as a gateway to the Keweenaw Peninsula, a place that people would visit before they head to Calumet and other historical sites and attractions to learn about copper mining. There is an interest in exhibitions about the region's rich history and the people who came here from around the world, and in providing hands-on exhibitions and activities for children. Natural history is also important to the Museum's audience, with many people expressing the view that the Keweenaw is a special place that draws people here.

Concern has been expressed about the seemingly low number of visitors to the Museum and its programs and events. This is not fully supported by the head counts. Additionally, visitation numbers are only one indicator of a Museum's success. Most professional museums carry out program and exhibition evaluations among their visitors to measure the effectiveness of the organization in reaching its mission. The number of visitors would be of minor importance in evaluating the success of the Museum as a whole. The Museum should continue to count visitors and program participants, and implement some of the formal evaluation methods that are commonly used in the field to build a more robust picture of its success.

To strengthen the credibility and viability of the Museum; to build on the support that has been provided and expressed by the City Manager, City Council, and Planning Commission; to build on the momentum that has been generated by the success of the programs and exhibitions in the past three years and by the survey and planning process, the Museum and City should do everything possible to initiate the recommendations, goals and objectives of this plan and the desires of the community in a short amount of time. The public and other stakeholders are watching and waiting to see what will happen, and they are also willing to help however they can. The Museum should get the policies, procedures and systems in place that are in accord with a professionally-organized museum, with an eye to becoming accredited in the future.

In light of the above, the Museum’s mission is:

The Carnegie Museum [**Museum of the Keweenaw**] connects people to the cultural and environmental heritage of the Keweenaw Peninsula, and to science and technology. The Museum seeks to inspire people of all ages to think critically and creatively about the social, natural, and artistic forces that characterize and have shaped the region. It is the Museum's role and responsibility to enhance the quality of life experienced by all members of its community.

Mission and Institutional Planning

Strategy: The Museum should meaningfully differentiate itself from its competition. The name of a museum creates its own imagery, and should be reflective of the region and people. It is important for the community to feel that they “own” the Museum. By using a focus group comprised of people who responded to the survey and Museum volunteers, a name can be determined that will meet these needs.

		Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Determine the name of the Museum.		June 2010	Consultant and volunteer group	
	Work with a focus group derived from survey volunteers and Museum volunteers.	June 17, 2010	Consultant	\$20 for refreshments
	Outcome: Twenty community members considered the Museum’s mission and a new name for the Museum. Museum of the Keweenaw was chosen as a name that reflects the Museum’s mission and purpose. In addition, the group thought it would be helpful to have a second line of text that is more specific about what is to be found inside the Museum, to be determined on by the Museum’s board. Suggestions included culture, history, science, arts, technology, and nature.			

2. Formally adopt a mission statement.		Board of Directors	
3. Become a member of the American Association of Museums (AAM), the Midwest Museums Association, and the Michigan Museum Association.			
These organizations offer resources and information that will be helpful to the Museum's growth and professionalism.			
4. Establish a memorandum of understanding with the Houghton-Keweenaw County Genealogical Society.			
The Museum enjoys a congenial relationship with the members of the Houghton-Keweenaw County Genealogical Society. The Society occupies an office in the basement of the Museum where they store documents; visitors may make an appointment to use the materials on site. In exchange for the use of space, the Society provides volunteers and exhibitions. The working relationship between the City, the Museum and the Society should be clear.			
5. Plan for accreditation by the American Association of Museums.			
Professional accreditation will bring both opportunities for funding and recognition to the Museum. The Museum can use an accreditation checklist to help develop its policies, procedures, and other activities.			
6. Explore the possibility of becoming a Heritage Site within the Keweenaw National Historical Park.			
7. Provide a professional resource library for staff and volunteers.			
8. Monitor progress toward the goals of this plan.	Ongoing	Board and Executive Director	
9. Initiate strategic planning.	2014	Board of Directors	

Governance

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Define the Museum's relationship to the City of Houghton and formalize it via an appropriate legal document. The preferred structure for the Museum and its relationship to the City is shown below.			
2. Obtain 501(c)3 nonprofit status for the Museum. This includes developing articles of incorporation, bylaws, and obtaining exemption from sales tax.			
4. Develop a policy for the Board of Directors that establishes the size of the board, recruitment and selection procedures, terms of service, and other guidelines. Form a board of directors and provide a job description, training, and a board manual. Develop an organizational chart.			

Organizational Structure

Museum, Inc.

City of Houghton

The Museum is incorporated as a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be established between the nonprofit museum and the City.

A separate nonprofit board is established, to govern the Museum; it includes (according to the by-laws) the City Manager or his/her appointee.

City owns and maintains the building for ten years, at which time it turns over the building to the nonprofit. If the nonprofit folds, fails, or moves any time in the future, the building would return to the City.

The nonprofit board works with the Executive Director to meet annual budget goals.

City funds building maintenance and utilities for ten years, working with the Nonprofit to obtain grants and other funding sources when appropriate.

The Executive Director reports to the Nonprofit Board of Directors.

City funds Executive Director's salary in diminishing amounts over ten years, allowing time for the Nonprofit to become fully established and fiscally sound.

Human Resources

Strategy: The Museum has a part-time Executive Director; in the early stages of the Museum's growth, an active corps of volunteers, including a working board, will be important.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Keep job descriptions up to date for staff and volunteers.			
2. Implement a formal volunteer program, with recruitment, training, rewards, and recognition. Keep an ongoing list of volunteer tasks and record volunteer activities and work hours.			
3. Provide professional development opportunities for staff.			
4. Expand staff using paid and unpaid internships.			

Collections

Strategy: The Museum will be a non-collecting organization, relying instead on borrowed collections from other organizations and individuals. The City owns the Rafaelli Collection of historic photographs, and the Museum may choose to conserve, maintain, and build that collection along with historic postcards as space permits. The Museum should be prepared to respond to inquiries about donations so the public has a clear understanding of the Museum's function in the community.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Develop a policy for the Museum that reflects in non-collecting status outside			

the areas of photographs and postcards.			
2. Prepare a list of the region’s collecting organizations that may be given to donors who inquire about contributing historical collections.			
3. Document the Museum’s history in a small archives.	Ongoing		

Facilities

Strategy: The Museum should present itself as a professional, well-cared for institution that makes people proud. The building is sound with minor exterior maintenance needs. The interior is well-worn, and needs professional lighting, upgrading, and a well thought out traffic flow and space allocation.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Conduct a facility assessment.			
John Haro has completed a partial assessment of the facility. Needs include tuckpointing, carpeting, fireplace restoration, removal of the temporary office space, tile repair, restroom renovation, and removal of library shelves. He is willing to continue with this project.	2010		
2. Establish a schedule and budget for the above.			
3. Evaluate the Museum’s need for signs and sign placement, including parking.			
4. Seek a professional space planner to evaluate the Museum and make recommendations. Carry out those recommendations.			

Exhibitions

Strategy: The Museum should be new and different, unlike the other historical venues in the region in both the topics that are selected for exhibitions and in its interpretive methods. The Museum should strive to “wow” people. The Museum should incorporate information and

activities for children within all exhibition subjects. This will make the exhibitions relevant to visitors of all ages, and provide a broader range of appeal to young people. Every effort should be made to build the staff and cultivate volunteers in the area of exhibition development until the Museum can afford to bring an exhibition designer on its staff.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Establish a written exhibition policy.			
Include an evaluation component as policy.			
2. Establish five-year plan for temporary exhibitions.			
Include a reasonable rotation schedule within the capabilities of the staff.			
3. Develop and install a permanent exhibition about Houghton’s history.			
4. Explore the possibility of using an MTU Enterprise Team to develop an exhibition for the Museum.			
5. Explore the possibility of providing a community exhibition program, in which interested groups and individuals could submit proposals to install an exhibit at the Museum.			

Education & Outreach

Strategy: The Museum is open all year (other museums and historic attractions in the region are seasonal), and has an opportunity to engage residents and tourists, and to work closely with schools to supplement school curriculum and help meet state education standards.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Establish a written education policy.			
Samples are available from other museums.			
2. Produce an annual calendar of events, to include a creative mix of lectures, walking tours, children’s events and activities, exhibition openings, and other activities.			
Whenever possible, partner with other organizations to provide programs for the Museum (the National Park Service, for example). Include program evaluation.			

3. Establish a monthly electronic newsletter for members.			
	It may include events, a feature about an exhibition, news of staff professional activity, board activities, volunteer achievements, and other information that creates a personal connection between the membership with the Museum, its staff, and Board.		\$200 for Constant Contact program
4. Establish relationships and programming with the area's schools.			
	Include program evaluation.		
5. Establish a lecture series, partnering with other organizations whenever possible.			
6. Reconfigure the monthly "Science Saturdays" to "Family Saturdays," to include a broader range of topics.			

Financial Stability

Strategy: The Museum, through the activities of its Board and the guidance of the Executive Director, should seek to establish a broad base of support as soon as possible.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Establish a written financial agreement with the City of Houghton with clear obligations, benchmarks, and expectations.			
2. Establish an annual budget.			
3. Prepare an annual fundraising plan.			
4. Establish a membership program.			
5. Conduct a local campaign to build an immediate source of cash flow.			

6. Promote the Museum's endowment at the Keweenaw Community Foundation through the Museum's newsletter and other means.			
7. Establish a small museum shop that meets the Museum's mission of inspiring and educating visitors to the area about region.			
8. Research and develop an annual schedule for grant applications and carry it out.			
9. Plan and carry out an annual year-end fundraising campaign.			
10. Develop one annual fundraising event, such as an historical ball, with a high financial goal.			

Marketing and Communication

Strategy: The Museum must become relentless in working with the media to promote its goals, events, and activities.

	Target Date	Responsibility	Budget & Source
1. Develop unique, compelling, and professional visual image for the Museum			
A logo, signs, letterhead, newsletter, website, and exhibition graphics should be included.			
2. Develop a list of media outlets, with contacts, addresses, deadlines, submission schedules, and other relevant information.			
3. Establish beneficial partnerships with organizations that will help the Museum achieve its mission and goals.			
4. Promote the Museum's events on a professionally designed and installed marquee on Montezuma Avenue.			

