



General Recommendations

General recommendations help set the Interpretive Master Plan in motion. A list of prioritized strategies and actions indicates which projects or initiatives should be developed over the next few years. These projects will help build momentum and excitement for the Master Plan, as well as for staff and visitors.



5.1 Implementation Plan General Recommendations

This section provides broad recommendations that Heritage Division management and staff should consider if the plan is to thrive and survive as a working document. These recommendations should act in support of all the strategies proposed in the plan, not just those that have been prioritized. However, reference to the prioritized strategies has been included to inform next steps.

MANAGING THE RENEWAL STRATEGIES

An Interpretive Master Plan Team

An Interpretive Master Plan team (IMP Team) will be required to manage and steward the Interpretive Master Plan over time. This is different than a project team related to a particular site or project (as defined in the strategies). This team may be based on the Interpretation Working Group model and it should include a cross-section of qualified individuals who are properly resourced and supported.

Implementing the strategies must function at two levels. A central, long-term outlook will be provided by the IMP Team. This team will steward strategies that require higher levels of decision-making and managerial support, and that will have impact across the system. Site-based renewal will combine individual effort and inspiration from each site with support from the Heritage Division. Sites should not wait for the Division to take the initiative; the plan is there for them to draw from as they see fit and as relates to their mandates.

Periodic Review of Strategies

The shortlisted strategies included in Section 5.2 are the first attempt at selecting priorities. In order for the Museum to continue to adapt to renewal needs, this exercise **should be repeated at least every three years** to refine and restate new strategies that can be acted upon. This does not preclude strategies from being acted upon sooner (either by the central NSM or by individual sites), but it does ensure that the many aspects of the Plan are consistently reviewed and renewed as part of operational planning and budgeting.

The Master Plan: Online

An internal web initiative is key to sharing and receiving information about the Master Plan internally, and to the public in certain instances. In addition to printed materials, briefings, and training, there must be a clear resource for NSM site staff to access that provides them with the opportunity to learn about the Plan, revisit strategies and actions, and, most importantly, share their experiences and successes.

A dedicated website, possibly as an adjunct to the new NSM website, would focus on the Master Plan and actual renewal work taking place. It would also involve a web-based Master Plan document with features designed to help sites access and share information related to the Plan.

123RF Stock





Features of an internal IMP web initiative might include:

- » Online Master Plan components with active links to various sections, charts, etc.
- » Downloadable sections of the report (perhaps featuring more detail than the online pages).
- » Downloadable site mandate sheets (sites can access their content, and view others).
- » Downloadable content distribution matrix (updated by the NSM over time, i.e., 2009 edition).
- » Site discussion area (blog): sites can share project examples, progress, or photos related to IMP initiatives. Best practices, as well as other sites/museums, can also be shared. Tips, tricks, photo albums, and the like, could also be included.
- » Mandate assignments and content within a central discussion area, as new stories, research, artifacts, etc., are brought to light.
- » Standards (such as the Interpretation Policy and staff guidelines) that the museum wants to see as part of their operations (may also be accessed and downloaded).

- » Resources Area: listings of publications, links, audio, people, skills, etc., to assist with planning, design, fabrication, marketing, architecture, etc., related to projects.
- » Community Forum: a place where community groups or other heritage bodies could interact with museum initiatives (e.g., story collection, artifact/information research, shared projects on and off-line, etc.). This may differ from central NSM dialogue and could be localized if desired. Designated staff within the NSM would be responsible for vetting this information and managing the site.
- » Editorial Section: discussions of the year in review, recent successes, lessons learned, and messages from the Executive Director or other management groups.

Digitizing the Master Plan will require coordination with graphic design work to ensure that parts can be linked or made “active” (e.g., goal tabs actively linked to a list of objectives; best practices linked to other sites or agencies). Operational costs would also be a consideration, with some dedicated server space (or a provider) required. Scotland has developed similar resources for its sites and staff in the past. Interestingly, most of this information is also accessible by the public, providing additional visibility for the Museum and its renewal efforts.

ONGOING CONSIDERATIONS

Operations Related to Renewal

While it is not within the scope of the Master Plan to define operational or managerial recommendations for the Heritage Division, careful consideration of operational resources (staff and funding) will need to take place so that resources can be directed strategically in support of the stated goals and objectives contained herein. This will also reinforce positive actions the Division has recently undertaken with regard to new projects. In some cases, this may require rethinking how staff and funding are used (e.g., ensuring curatorial input on projects). Increased programming requirements at sites will also require more resources (e.g., staff or volunteers) or the redirecting of resources from other areas.

Allocating Strategic Resources on a Project-by-Project Basis

As new projects and renewal efforts are envisioned and implemented, the need to allocate resources to support these initiatives will become a necessity. This may involve adding collections staff to project teams, performing marketing/business planning, or addressing structural/architectural or landscape design issues where interpretive renewal implicates buildings and sites.

» Ensuring curatorial input on project teams allows collections and interpretation to unite, especially when collections must be rationalized and display requirements identified. Sites with significant collections (e.g., Firefighters' Museum, Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, etc) will require significant input if renewal involves new exhibits that affect their collections.

» One of the major thrusts of this Master Plan involves understanding markets locally, regionally, provincially, and even nationally and internationally. As new Museum projects are introduced – whether they are multi-million dollar expansions in urban areas, moderate exhibit renewal projects at local sites, or a program offered anywhere – it will become important to build into the process resources for contracting/retaining consultants that can provide this market knowledge and business planning expertise. Specialists with specific experience in marketing museums or tourism attractions, or destination marketing, are essential; sites should not hesitate to look outside the local area, or region, to secure a consultant with this expertise.

Each project will have different needs and involve a different process featuring the right mix of talents that may, or may not, require the types of resources highlighted above. Other specialty resources may become necessary where a particular situation warrants, introducing other consultants to the process. These might include interior design specialists, educational programmers, or web/multimedia designers to name a few. Furthermore, both Heritage Promotion and Development, as well as the Tourism Division, have significant marketing expertise that can, and should, be drawn upon.

» In many locations, interpretive renewal will impact the physical setting of a site – indoors or outside. In cases where interpretation implicates the structural or landscape aspects of a site and exceeds the available resources of NSM staff or Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR), it may be necessary to involve consultants. Specialists with specific experience in built or landscape architecture are essential; again, sites should not hesitate to look outside the local area, or region, to secure a consultant with this expertise.



Form:Media



5.2 Prioritized Strategies

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES

The strategies described in Section 4.1 are numerous, and respond to a wide variety of challenges. In order for the Heritage Division to move ahead with the plan in a meaningful and actionable manner, key strategies were prioritized within each of the 15 objectives that form the backbone of the Master Plan. These priorities were identified during the consultation process by a workshop group composed of NSM staff, directors and the consultant team. Collectively, they reviewed each objective and prioritized one strategy. In some cases, two strategies were prioritized within a given objective. Priorities were arrived at through group discussion and a consensus that they must:

- » **Be achievable in the next 1-2 years**
- » **Raise awareness with the public**
- » **Be able to have a real impact and motivate others in the system**
- » **Be cost effective and financially sustainable**

COMBINING THE STRATEGIES

The workshop participants stated that many of the prioritized strategies (and their respective actions) have similar thrusts, and could potentially be combined to maximize time and resources. If approached in a holistic manner, these shared actions will bring about more effective change with greater impact overall. They also ensure a more integrated result when actions are implemented across a wider field.

The consultant team has identified five areas of effort for consideration: **staff training and involvement, content renewal, public engagement, public relations, and policies.** Prioritized strategies selected by the NSM (coloured beige) have been grouped within these five areas of effort, and should help focus the IMP Team's efforts in the short-term.

In addition to those prioritized by the Museum, the consultant team was asked to identify any *additional* strategies they felt should also be considered in the short-term. These selections support what the Museum has already defined and **are listed below the Museum's selections** (coloured purple). They may highlight work that is already underway, or work that should be emphasized in the short-term. Prioritized strategies are repeated in the next section, *Actions Identified by the Museum*, where actions identified for the NSM's prioritized strategies are presented. A complete chart illustrating the goals, objectives, and strategies (highlighting both those prioritized by the NSM and the consultant team) has been included as Appendix B.

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES: GROUPED BY AREAS OF EFFORT

Staff Training and Involvement

A focus on human resources, training and staff involvement that includes the following prioritized strategies:

NSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Facilitate staff to give creative input on a regular basis. » Enhance and support staff training and professional development within the Heritage Division and other government departments (i.e., develop programs that can be attended by interpretive staff across all government departments). » Develop clear succession planning to build corporate memory. » Develop project teams (for example, a “swot team”) to assess interpretive opportunities, and research, design, implement, and promote interpretive products. » Increase curatorial involvement in designing interpretive exhibits and programs.
CONSULTANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase staff attendance at out-of-house conferences and professional development courses. » Support the development of university and college programs in museology and interpretation. » Develop a needs assessment and professional development tool for the Museum sites that will evaluate the skill set, staffing requirements, and interpretive products in order to assist them.

This implies a clear need for staff to be involved, and for the NSM to involve staff in as many aspects of projects as possible for short and long-term gains. The IMP Team may be able to help support these efforts, and to capture shared knowledge through workshops and training seminars, etc. To ensure long-term viability of the NSM, training and grooming qualified museum workers for the future are an important part of this process. Having the knowledgeable people will make all the difference.

Content Renewal

A focus on content related to cultural and natural history, including research, that includes the following prioritized strategies:

NSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase emphasis on natural history. » Reduce redundancies in cultural history interpretation. » Encourage applied research in all projects. » Link exhibits and programs with the Nova Scotia school curriculum. » Allow interpretation to help define (in addition to science and collections research) collecting needs.
CONSULTANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Where possible, integrate natural and cultural history stories. » Ensure that interpretation at NSM sites is connected to the “big picture,” using the interpretive master plan themes and provincially significant stories outlined in the Content Framework. » Monitor, update and evaluate the content framework regularly. » Research and interpret new stories that are inclusive. » Collect and present contemporary objects that are familiar to visitors. » Facilitate staff to give creative input on a regular basis.



Public Engagement

A focus on renewing the relationship between the public and the Museum that includes the following prioritized strategies:

Defining the provincial content (and bringing about changes as a result) is emphasized here, as has been discussed many times during the planning process. A comprehensive look at content can be found in Section Six. The IMP Team should devote time and allocate staff to manage the content and how it is applied at the sites, and to ensure that it is stewarded over time.

NSM

- » Create opportunities for the public to co-produce museum interpretation.
- » Build relationships with the community and encourage community use of Museum sites, including non-traditional uses that are related to the mandate of the sites.
- » Develop programs that encourage a long-term relationship (e.g., Nature Exchange program).
- » Experiment: encourage test projects and risk taking.
- » Increase the Museum's presence in the media with respect to current public issues (e.g., promote museum exhibits).

CONSULTANTS

- » Develop a vision for and implement "The Museum Online," an online extension of the NSM that is a vital component of the Heritage Division.
- » Do market research (utilize tourism product development models) when developing interpretive products.
- » Provide a gateway experience in urban centres that links visitors to the sites.

The need to engage visitors over the long term by capturing their interest now is paramount. The Visitor Engagement Model illustrated in Section Three reinforces this. **The IMP Team must promote best practices and experimentation for all projects, aided by the Master Plan as well as the experience and inspiration of staff at the sites, to ensure that every opportunity to connect with the public is taken.** Short and long term programs must also become central to the interpretive process at the sites, beyond any investment in core exhibits or temporary displays. The online presence of the Museum must transcend web site improvements taking place, and push boundaries to become a social network that involves both the Museum and the public as owners.

Public Relations

A focus on attracting and retaining the goodwill and support of various groups as allies that includes the following prioritized strategies:

NSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Work to achieve greater support by various levels of government.» Encourage partnerships with groups within and outside of the Heritage Division.
CONSULTANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Acknowledge and provide orientation to the Nova Scotia Museum at every site, including connecting visitors to other sites and resources.» Develop a partnership plan to formalize networks and synergies within the Heritage Division and with outside agencies (e.g., meet with Parks Canada and the Department of Natural Resources to develop shared initiatives with respect to species at risk).» Support new initiatives with promotion and marketing.

The ongoing task of targeting future funding, partnerships and support by outside organizations for the Museum must be tackled as aggressively as interpretive efforts will be. The IMP Team must become advocates of partnerships and funding opportunities, and will need to assist the sites in navigating these waters in the future. They can do this by becoming the experts in this field, and sharing their expertise with NSM sites. A partnership plan that can be managed over time will be central to this effort. Furthermore, it is critical that all future initiatives undertaken by the NSM should be pursued in close collaboration with marketing efforts.

Policies

A focus on the underlying principles and policies that form the Museum's work that includes the following prioritized strategies:

NSM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Introduce and maintain environmentally sustainable operating practices.» Develop an interpretation policy based on the principles outlined in the Interpretive Master Plan.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Where appropriate, use Museum sites to promote sustainable lifestyles and skills.

As has been evident in the Interpretation Working Group's efforts over the past years, clear policies that define what the Museum stands for will be vital for success and must be managed and maintained as the Museum evolves in the future.



ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE MUSEUM

Further to this process, the workshop group developed actions related to the prioritized strategies identified. **Actions have not, however, been developed for those additional strategies proposed by the consultant team**, although this would not be difficult to do. It will be the responsibility of the NSM to regularly revisit the full scope of strategies to define further actions and reprioritize where required. Specific timelines, responsibilities and resource requirements for the prioritized strategies and actions must be developed to move these forward.

Staff Training and Involvement

A focus on human resources, training and staff involvement that includes the following prioritized strategies and relevant actions:

NSM

- » Facilitate staff to give creative input on a regular basis.
 - Ask the staff! Solicit new ideas during the pre-season**
 - Form creative teams**
 - Develop a process/context/guidelines for receiving input**
 - Capture creativity during debriefing, not just during development**
- » Enhance and support staff training and professional development within the Heritage Division and other government departments (i.e., develop programs that can be attended by interpretive staff across all government departments).
 - Do a skills inventory of staff**
 - Develop a training conference to be held once a year**
 - Heritage Forum: share skills and report back to each other**
 - Develop mentorship across departments**
 - Share training tools and resources across the system**
- » Develop project teams (for example, a “swat team”) to assess interpretive opportunities, and research, design, implement, and promote interpretive products.
 - Identify qualified people to form the team**
 - Properly resource the team with time to take on this new role and resources**

- » Develop clear succession planning to build corporate memory.
 - Develop a formal debriefing process for retirees to make sure their knowledge is captured**
 - Modify the human resources strategy to overlap retirees and new hires**
 - Work with a records manager to sort and save information**
 - Develop an accountability mechanism**
 - Be realistic about the five year turnover – plan for workforce rotation**

NSM PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES: WITH ACTIONS

Content Renewal

A focus on content related to cultural and natural history, including research, that includes the following prioritized strategies and relevant actions:

- » Increase emphasis on natural history.

Assess where natural history can be increased

Identify content experts

Assess stories and themes in other departments (i.e., provincial protected areas)

Identify one way at each NSM site that natural history can be incorporated in their interpretation.

- » Reduce redundancies in cultural history interpretation.

Establish priorities for interpreting some stories and de-emphasizing others.

- » Encourage applied research in all projects.

Identify appropriate expertise (in-house initially, then out of house); identify secondment opportunities

Share the research reports within the system/sites

Identify research needs as part of specific project planning

Create a “research atlas” (use the Provincial Department of Environment model)

Ask the Board of Governors to adjust their criteria to help address current needs

- » Link exhibits and programs with the Nova Scotia school curriculum.

Tie-in with university education programs to promote educators as interpreters – teach the teachers!

Be present at teachers’ conferences (i.e., perform skill based exhibit and programming talks; market museums for PD days).

Identify curriculum links for all levels of education

- » Allow interpretation to help define (in addition to science and collections research) collecting needs.

Develop collection strategy that identifies gaps and redundancies, based on the content framework

Public Engagement

A focus on renewing the relationship between the public and the Museum that includes the following prioritized strategies and relevant actions:

- » Create opportunities for the public to co-produce museum interpretation.

Develop the “museum online”

Develop community engagement projects

Communicate with CMAP museums to see where exhibits can be co-produced

Ask for (from the community) and offer help (i.e., atlas of research projects).

- » Build relationships with the community and encourage community use of museum sites, including non-traditional uses that are related to the mandate of the sites.

Assemble and share success related to site use

Define criteria and screening for standards and guidelines

Do needs assessments in communities to determine what they might want to use the site for



NSM

- » Develop programs that encourage a long-term relationship (e.g., Nature Exchange program)
 - Review and define audiences to identify their demands/needs for specialty programs and products**
 - Develop series based programs**
 - Develop linkages to other places**
 - Assess existing programs and offerings**
 - Find extensions to stakeholders from the base of your programming**
- » Experiment: encourage test projects and risk taking.
 - Look at test cases/comparables elsewhere**
 - Create opportunities to share failures – give permission to talk about them**
 - Create a mechanism for sharing, collecting and evaluating failures and successes**
 - Identify “risky” projects for the future and develop a mechanism for dealing with sensitive topics/issues**
- » Increase the Museum’s presence in the media with respect to current public issues (e.g., promote museum exhibits).
 - Assemble and share success stories related to site use**
 - Identify expertise**
 - Define criteria/guidelines as a screening tool for deciding which events are appropriate**
 - Develop a media-relations strategy**

Public Relations

A focus on attracting and retaining the goodwill and support of various groups as allies that includes the following prioritized strategies and relevant actions:

NSM

- » Work to achieve greater support by various levels of government.
 - Identify opportunities within the Heritage Strategy and Volunteer Planning Process in which to position the Museum**
 - Identify ways that the Museum already serves various levels of government and share it**
- » Encourage partnerships with groups within and outside of the Heritage Division.
 - Identify potential groups and linkages**
 - Develop a partnerships strategy**
 - Become involved in community groups/ initiatives (non-project specific) to ensure a dialogue with community networks**
 - Diversify workforce and volunteers. Where are we currently drawing from?**

Policies

A focus on the underlying principles and policies that form the Museum’s work that includes the following prioritized strategies and relevant actions:

NSM

- » Introduce and maintain environmentally sustainable operating practices.
 - Consider carbon offsetting programs**
 - Do an environmental audit of sites (use the template developed by the Department of Environment)**
 - Review operations to help develop a policy and implementation plan**
 - Work with TIR to increase energy efficiency at the sites**
 - Develop a green meeting policy**
 - Green facility rentals**
 - Do lifecycle costing for facility management**
 - Increase public awareness of their ecological footprint**
 - Create environmentally responsible exhibits**
 - Model the province’s Sustainable Prosperity Act**
- » Develop an interpretation policy based on the principles outlined in the Interpretive Master Plan.
 - Review and approve an interpretive policy**
 - Develop implications of implementing the policy**
 - Work within the policy**