

Strengthening Connections

MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM



Strategic Plan 2015-2020



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Design Lab 2013, Engaging Children in Ottawa's History

Introduction

Sharing Our Vision for the Future

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is pleased to share with the public our vision for the future, *Strengthening Connections*, which provides the foundation for the next five years of development.

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is Ottawa's museum of local history, dedicated to the city's material and cultural heritage. Each year, the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM welcomes tens of thousands of visitors through its doors.



Canada Day 2014

We recognize that the public today seeks new ways to interact with museums and their collections. Young adults born twenty years ago have grown up with the Internet. They have lived through the creation of the app economy and the ubiquitous adoption of smart phones and tablets. Today's youth expect digital value, access, usability and cross-platform compatibility.

Older adults too have adopted digital innovation, experiencing the evolution of digital culture as moments of profound personal and cultural transformation. Our job is to meet the changing expectations of our visitors to the best of our abilities.

We aim to undertake an ambitious program of digitization to provide patrons of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM with unprecedented access to our collection online and on social platforms. We aim to augment the onsite museum experience and will explore ways to create more opportunities for visitors to engage with and extend their interaction with our exhibits. We will seek to enhance WIFI access throughout our museum to make visiting the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM even more enjoyable for patrons who like to stay connected wherever they are.



Winterlude Ice Sulpture at the Museum in 2013

A New Era Of Community Engagement, Participation and Partnership

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is Ottawa’s museum – the only museum dedicated to the city’s local history. Nestled amidst Canada’s Parliament buildings and national museums, the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is unique. Our collection and programming are focused on the people and material culture that tell the many stories of Ottawa’s past.

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM understands the changing role of museums in the lives of communities and individuals: as a steward of artifacts and stories of the past to be sure, but also as co-creators of contemporary meanings, and as partners in improving our society and working together for greater social impact.



Members of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM Youth Council (YoCo)

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is proud to be a leader in engaging our youth through our innovative Youth Council and reaching out to diverse communities through our Community Gallery. We will continue to provide meaningful programming sought by our communities by engaging with them and providing valued services.

With this plan, the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM renews its commitment to providing the communities we serve with opportunities to join us in creating together new perspectives and new understandings of other times and the people who lived in them. The proportion of new Canadians is growing rapidly in Ottawa. We will continue to reach out to the diverse communities that make up central Ottawa. We will continue to serve our francophone communities and work with Indigenous partners. We have updated our mandate to reflect the multicultural and diverse history of Ottawa.

We will build on our strong partnerships with Ottawa cultural organizations, and businesses to bring heightened awareness to our collection in ways that are relevant and exciting to our downtown public. We will use social media and knowledge-based programming to engage in authentic exchanges and two-way discussion, facilitating timely dialogue and deep reflection about important issues.

By strengthening our connection to our local communities, we will be better able to respond to what citizens care about and continue to develop exhibitions and programs that make a meaningful difference in their lives. In so doing, we will become a catalyst for ideas and conversations, fostering debate and critical thinking.

Our Mission

The BYTOWN MUSEUM is Ottawa's museum and explores the stories and values of an evolving city and its residents from its first inhabitants and the early days as Bytown to present day Ottawa. The Museum is committed to engaging our visitors and community in discovery and dialogue as we aim to deepen the many connections within and between our communities.

Our Mandate

The BYTOWN MUSEUM'S mandate is to collect, preserve, study and make accessible the material and cultural heritage of the Ottawa region's multicultural and diverse history.

Our Vision

The BYTOWN MUSEUM will provide the residents of Ottawa and visitors from abroad with a sense of identity and pride in Ottawa's rich story. Through its collections and programs, the Museum aspires to be a model of excellence in furthering knowledge and pride of place among diverse visitors of all ages.

The MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM has been lodged in the Commissariat Building on the historic Rideau Canal since 1952 thanks to the strategic foresight of the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa in generous partnership with the federal department of Public Works. Our location affords further opportunities to promote Ottawa's local history with the city's communities and tourists. The Rideau Canal was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007. Thanks to its longstanding arrangement with Parks Canada, which has responsibility for the Rideau Canal, the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM is the privileged interpreter of an exhibition created by Parks Canada relating to the building of the Canal, as well as the museum's collections reflecting the history of Ottawa. Of great importance to the future of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM will be an enhanced level of collaboration with Parks Canada to realise the vision for the Canal by adding value to the site through our programming and outreach activities.

As we implement the strategies of this plan, we will work with our valued partners to explore ways to provide visitors with an even more memorable experience of the highest quality.



The Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa founded the Museum in 1917

A Community Museum for the 21st Century

Strengthening Connections will usher in the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM's second century of existence, as the museum celebrates its hundredth anniversary in 2017. This strategic plan will capitalize on our existing strengths while setting the stage for our next century of development, based on our vision for what we believe our museum should be in the 21st century.



Face of Our Future: BYTOWN MUSEUM's Youth Council (YoCo)

A key pillar of our plan will be the modernization of our systems to better serve our public. Our focus on increased digital capacity will enable us to modernize communications, marketing and outreach, public engagement and fundraising. Using contemporary digital tools and a solid understanding of the public's needs and interests, we will build our brand and communicate our value to more powerfully connect with local communities, national and international visitors and other stakeholders.

The exhibition *100 Years of Community*, celebrating our centenary anniversary, will be the Museum's major contribution to the celebrations planned throughout

Ottawa and the Rideau Canal for Canada’s 150th birthday in 2017. As a partner of choice, the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM will leverage the heightened visibility afforded by 2017 celebrations to increase awareness of the Museum and enhance our visibility within our city and beyond.

To support our renowned presentation of exhibitions and programs beyond 2017, we will continue to diversify our sources of revenues and leverage our partnerships to ensure the Museum’s sustainability and viability. The revenue streams allow us to provide the services that our visitors want.

The recently created MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM Foundation will support our efforts through its commitment to fundraising on behalf of the Museum. We aim to offer new supporters unique opportunities to connect with our communities and visitors through carefully targeted sponsorships and donor gifts. We will also continue to work with our longstanding and supportive public funders. The ongoing generosity of our benefactors will enable the creation of new community-focused programs and the preservation and sharing of our heritage for future generations.



Youth Activity Area designed by YoCo

Goals And Strategies



Canadian Soldiers returning from First World War, Ottawa Train Station, 1918

1. Strengthen Programs and Exhibitions with Local Communities

We will strengthen our programming by developing projects of high relevance to the communities we serve to engage the public in our shared stories. In doing so, we will maximize opportunities afforded by strategic partnerships, particularly around 2017 celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary, which coincides with the Museum's centennial anniversary, as well as with the 10th anniversary of the declaration of the Rideau Canada as an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Strategies:

1. Develop programming in conjunction with the exhibition *100 Years of Community*, celebrating the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM'S centenary anniversary.
2. Use partnerships and audience research to make programming and exhibitions as relevant as possible to the local community.
 - a) Build on the strengths of current programming and social media outreach to connect with audiences.
 - b) Produce edgy, multidisciplinary programming.
 - c) Continue applying critical lens in exhibitions to increase relevance and attract local urban audiences.
3. Build on the success of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM'S Youth Council to develop other youth engagement initiatives.
4. Continue to offer curriculum-based programming for schools.
 - a) Create packages for schools and youth groups which may entail partnering with other museums and youth activities and programs.
5. Continue to align long-term planning of exhibitions and programs to partnership, community development, promotion and communications strategies.



Visitors of All Ages Welcome the Use of Technology at the Museum

2. Modernize the Visitor Experience

We will enhance our visitor experience by deepening our understanding of our users. We know that a key component of our work will involve upgrading our technology and creating compelling narratives that educate, entertain and inspire.

Strategies:

1. Tailor experiences that engage all visitors and provide value.
 - a) Upgrade IT infrastructure to enhance visitor experience.
 - b) Tailor compelling interpretive narratives that provide inspiring experiences for target audiences.
2. Update technology for audiovisual guides.
3. Continue to encourage visitor interaction with staff and volunteers.
4. Conduct entry surveys with visitors to better understand their motivations for visiting the museum and how they discover it.
 - a) Use knowledge gained to enhance programming, experience design, and communications.



Algonquin College Students, Conservation Partnership with Applied Museum Studies, 2014

3. Increase Access to the Collection

New digital technologies are at the heart of our plan to increase access to our unique and compelling collection of artifacts. We aim to extend our reach by having a presence everywhere our users are. We will share our collection with our partners online and in other museums.

Strategies:

1. Curate more of the collection online.
 - a) Upload digitized collection to MINISIS.
 - b) Extend digitization program to other parts of the collection.
2. Connect and engage with the public online:
 - a) Share more of the collection through social media.
 - b) Create participatory opportunities for the public online.
3. Continue to make loans to partner museums and galleries.



Promotion at Work, MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM brochures ready to go

4. Promote, Promote, Promote

We will connect with people throughout local communities who feel as passionately as we do about the many stories that make our local history so fascinating. We will do so by partnering strategically around celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary, working with skilled marketers and equipping ourselves with up-to-date digital tools to get the word out about the unparalleled opportunities for engaging with Ottawa's past.

Past the remarkable planning for 2017 to celebrate the Museum's 100th Anniversary and Ottawa's 150 Anniversary as the Capital of Canada, the Museum will plan exhibitions, programs, retail services, communications, partnerships and promotion opportunities. It is essential for the Museum to continue its long-term planning of all activities beyond 2017 and into the next decade.

Of great importance is planning and acting on an ever enhanced relationship and partnership with Parks Canada and additional stakeholders. The Museum's new reality is a business partnership with Parks Canada. This entails 'promotion' of the Rideau Canal and an increased promotion of the Museum as part of the Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site and partner of Parks Canada.

Strategies:

1. Develop new website.
2. Leverage 2017 celebrations (150th and 100th) to create partnerships that will bring visibility to the Museum's collection and programming.
3. Develop a marketing and brand strategy that leverages digital channels to successfully position the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM with our users and stakeholders.



MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM Boutique

5. Increase and Diversify Sources of Revenue

With the support of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM's Foundation, we will increase and diversify our sources of funding. We will strengthen our relationships with our esteemed sponsors, private donors and public funders.

Strategies:

1. Demonstrate the value of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM to our funders and partners to maintain current levels of public funding.
2. Develop a long-term fundraising strategy for the Foundation on behalf of the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM aimed at increasing private sector funding, sponsorships and planned giving.
3. Fine-tune the diversified self-generated and earned revenue opportunities, as well as Museum based sponsorships of receptions and museum activities.
4. Work with Parks Canada to develop a viable and long-term operational agreement that provides revenue generating opportunities of benefit to the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM and to Parks Canada.

Conclusion

Roadmap to Success

This strategic plan provides us with a realistic roadmap to guide our choices and direct our resources that will ensure our continued development towards our vision for a responsive community museum. It builds on our current strengths and positions us for greater community impact.

Our transformation into a 21st century museum will see increased engagement, participation and dialogue with our public, ensuring the Museum's continued relevance and vibrancy well into the future.

We envision the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM of 2020 as solidly anchored in the community and responsive to the diverse needs of the many constituencies of Ottawa. Our stimulating educational programming, thoughtful exhibitions and accessible collections will spur inquiring minds and inspire greater curiosity and engagement with Ottawa's rich and multi-cultural history.

Our reputation will continue to grow with visitors from our local communities and elsewhere who will come to the MUSÉE BYTOWN MUSEUM to enjoy a unique cultural heritage experience. We will be a trusted partner and collaborative organization, increasing our reach and impact for the benefit of all communities in Ottawa urban centre and larger region.



View of the Bytown Museum as seen from Colonel By's Perspective on Major's Hill