



Strategic Plan for the Sutter County Museum

The Sutter County Museum (formerly the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County), established in 1975 as a department of Sutter County, California, is a place for the people of Sutter County and its visitors to discover and celebrate the county's rich history. Through exhibits, programs, archives and collections, the museum explores the many stories that define the heritage and character of the region.

The Museum is supported financially by both the County and the Museum Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The County supports basic operations, funding staff salaries and benefits, building maintenance, utilities, and basic operational overhead (materials and supplies). The Association funds temporary exhibits, educational programs, the Museum Store, membership program, publications, fundraising events, advertising, and miscellaneous charges not covered by the County. The Museum Director works very closely with the leadership of Sutter County and the officers of the Association to ensure that all efforts undertaken on behalf of the Museum are cooperative. Due to the funding structure of the Museum, all critical operations and planning must be governed by this cooperative relationship.

Amidst demographic changes and growth, the Sutter County Museum has initiated a strategic planning process to assure that it remains relevant and responsive in a changing time. This plan will be supported by an annual work plan, written specifically to support the objectives listed for that particular year.

Change begins with a new mission statement, more outwardly focused than in the past.

Mission Statement: *The Sutter County Museum shares local stories to strengthen community bonds, to inspire people to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage, and to teach the public that to be prepared for the future, we need to understand the past.*

The plan should also include an aspirational vision for the future.

Vision: *The Sutter County Museum will serve its region as a gathering place where the public will discover their shared heritage and build on its stories to understand the present and create a vision for the future.*

Reflecting the responsibility of the museum to serve its public, the plan will also address the following **Audience Goals**.

Cognitive Goals

- Visitors will understand how the unique geological history and geographic conditions of Sutter County helped shaped its history.
- Visitors will be able to trace settlement and immigration patterns, understand what drew a diverse population to Sutter County, and discover how each group has contributed to the region's character.
- Visitors will explore the role of agriculture in establishing the early and continuing history of Sutter County and will understand how it has changed over the years through technology and innovation.
- Visitors will be able to connect the individual stories of Sutter County to the changing events of America's story – including the 19th century impact of the railroads, the engagement in international events (war), the patterns of population change, migration, etc.
- Visitors will recognize that history is an ongoing and dynamic process that will continue to mold the character of Sutter County.

Affective Goals

- Visitors will be impressed by the many stories reflected in the collections and programs of the museum.
- Visitors will be moved by the stories of suffering and tragedy experienced by specific groups of people connected to Sutter County's past.
- Visitors will take pride in seeing how diversity is acknowledged and celebrated in Sutter County.
- Visitors will be impressed with evidence of resilience, innovation, and responsiveness seen in the many stories of Sutter County's past.
- Visitors will be curious about how the past will shape the County's present and will impact its residents and the future of the County.
- Visitors will be excited to share their observations and discoveries with friends and family.

Behavioral Goals

- Visitors will reflect on the impacts of prejudice and discrimination and will be moved to prevent such actions in the future.
- Visitors will seek to make connections between the lessons of past and the important decisions of the present and will be involved in public dialogue.
- Visitors will look for other places and resources for exploring local and family history.
- Visitors will become advocates for teaching local history in the region's schools.
- Visitors will return to the Community Memorial Museum of Sutter County and become members, supporters and volunteers to assure its future.
- Visitors will share their experiences with others.

Strategic Plan

2018 – 2023

Finance and Development

Goal One: Develop a comprehensive business plan to support all facility and operational needs.

Objectives:

- A. Review annually all sources of income: shop sales, membership, annual funds, fundraisers, etc. and set targets for their expansion. 2018, annual
- B. Review all core operational expenses. 2018, annual
- C. Project a long-range list of projects, exhibits, and programs that will need funding and match to the funders' priorities (see Goal 2 Objective A). 2019
- D. Based on MAP* and CAP* recommendations, create a priority list for necessary facility and staffing needs (see Appendix A). 2018

Goal Two: Develop a comprehensive development plan to identify and initiate ongoing fundraising operations.

Objectives:

- A. Identify and list all potential corporate, foundation, and government sources of grants and gifts and research the funding priorities, history, and potential of each. 2019
- B. Create a Staff/Association strategy to cultivate potential donors through invitations, visits, and opportunities to become acquainted with the museum and its mission. 2019
- C. Initiate an Annual Giving campaign. 2020
- D. Review and expand membership opportunities and support. 2020

*MAP- Museum Assessment Program <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/MAP>

*CAP- Collections Assessment for Preservation <http://www.conservation-us.org/grants/cap/about/process>

Administration and Governance

Goal One: Continue to strengthen leadership through strong Association and County relationships.

Objectives:

- A. Continue to nurture a strong and active Association through a thoughtful recruitment plan. 2020
- B. Formally articulate the roles and responsibilities of the Association and adopt an Institutional Code of Ethics, as approved by the AAM. 2018
- C. Establish a clear understanding of the relationship between the Association and County and how best to assure its effectiveness, particularly in terms of finances. Review annually. 2018

Goal Two: Continue to build staff to meet growing institutional needs.

Objectives:

- A. Assure ongoing support and funding for a full-time museum director and assistant curator, maintaining strong communications with County. 2018
- B. Identify current and future staffing needs and create a long-range hiring plan. 2018
- C. Continue to support staff with recruiting, training, and supporting an active Volunteer corps and internship program. annual
- D. Build greater diversity among volunteers, interns, Association members, and community partners. 2019

Facilities

Goal One: Initiate a plan for ongoing improvements to the Museum's facilities, including both interior and exterior upgrades.

Objectives:

- A. Work closely with the County facilities team to create a comprehensive plan for exterior improvements, including better access, painting and cleaning, pathways, and signage. 2018
- B. Assess all public interior spaces, focusing on potential for reconfiguration of galleries and considering flooring, paint, lighting, and general ambiance. 2019
- C. Assess all back-of-house interior spaces for functionality. 2019

Goal Two: Address recommendations for improved collections care as detailed in CAP report.

Objectives:

- A. Collections Committee with staff to review and prioritize recommendations for storage upgrades and submit a plan for implementation. 2018
- B. Assess gallery upgrades, including, lighting and develop plan for funding and implementation. 2019
- C. Write a Disaster Preparedness Plan, working with the County. 2019

Collections:

Goal One: Continue the active collections management work underway and further recommended by MAP and CAP.

Objectives:

- A. Consolidate all collections policies, procedures and worksheets into a comprehensive Collections Management Policy. 2018
- B. Create additional collections care staff position, part time or volunteer, and add to long range staffing plan. 2021
- C. As outlined above, develop priority plan for improving collections storage and safety (See Facilities Goal 2 Objective A). 2018

Goal Two: Develop a Collection Plan to control collections development and identify most significant additions to the collections.

Objectives:

- A. Develop a prioritized collecting plan, focusing on artifacts and documents perhaps prioritizing late 20th and early 21st century and new resident ethnic groups. 2022
- B. Incorporate collections storage needs into the plan to maintain balance between growth and proper care. 2022
- C. Create and implement a strategy for communicating collecting priorities to potential donors, visitors, and the public. 2023

Exhibits

Goal One: Review all exhibits, assessing relevance, redesign opportunities, and audience appeal.

Objectives:

- A. Develop an evaluation plan to survey audience interests and ideas for exhibit content updates. 2020
- B. Review and rewrite labels as necessary to meet current guidelines for length and focus. 2019, annual
- C. Replace worn or outdated materials or artifacts. annual

Goal Two: Consider ways to refresh exhibits with relevant and contemporary subject matter.

Objectives:

- A. Identify ways to appeal to more ages, incorporating interactive opportunities and integration of technology. 2020/2021
- B. Build on diversity elements, introducing the history of different ethnic and cultural groups throughout all exhibits. 2020/2021
- C. Review ways for exhibits to include more contemporary information that reflects changing times and audiences. 2020/2021
- D. Develop a multiyear temporary exhibit calendar to add new and timely subject matter. 2018, annual

Audience Development and Programming

Goal One: Develop a multistep approach to reaching and building new audiences, setting goals, targeting programming to specific groups, and extending marketing range.

Objectives:

- A. Create more programming and exhibit-related activities for people age 20s through 50s, and minority groups prevalent in the local community. 2019
- B. Consider adding evening hours. 2018
- C. Reexamine the Membership program: levels, benefits, special initiatives for such groups as seniors, families, online members, and young professionals. 2020
- D. Maintain a fresh and lively online presence – consider a teen advisory board to help. annual
- E. Develop programming around current and relevant topics. 2019/2020

Goal Two: Increase marketing and visibility through a comprehensive approach

Objectives:

- A. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan, noting all marketing outlets, and collaboration opportunities. 2018
- B. Continue and expand social media marketing. annual
- C. Invite audience feedback via social media as possible. 2019
- D. Review and consolidate printed materials, determining varied uses such as fundraising, marketing, grant application enclosures. 2020

Goal Three: Continue to seek and development new opportunities for community outreach and joint marketing.

Objectives:

- A. Maintain membership and engagement with all regional tourism organizations. 2021
- B. Continue collaborative work with Middle Mountain Interpretive Hikes. annual
- C. Create a list of potential partnership organizations and appoint a committee to review and report on which of their activities intersect with the Museum’s mission. 2019
- D. Explore partnership activities that can take place on museum grounds. 2020
- E. Participate in community-wide festivals and events. annual
- F. Convene community conversations toward the goal of creating a cultural and educational network in Sutter County. 2021
- G. Direct marketing efforts and programming to outlying areas such as Chico, Live Oak, Beale AFB, Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Sacramento. 2022

School Partnerships

Goal One: Work closely with regional schools, teachers and administrators to identify opportunities and processes for creating dynamic learning partnerships.

Objectives:

- A. Create a teacher/administrator advisory board. 2021
- B. Review how current programs fit into curriculum needs. 2021
- C. With teacher advisors, begin to build school programs relevant to curricula, grade level, and museum exhibits and materials. 2022

Goal Two: Develop programming that can support learning in the classroom when field trips are not feasible.

Objectives:

- A. Determine topics that lend themselves to outreach programs. 2021
- B. Create teacher/museum staff teams to develop traveling materials, such as primary source packets, trunks of artifacts, and discussion guides. 2022
- C. Create student internships for upper grades and college level, engaging students in research and discovery. 2022

Appendix A

Facility Priorities:

- High Density Mobile Shelving in all collections storage areas
- Flooring replaced with commercial-grade hard-surface flooring
- New HVAC in storage building
- Survey HVAC in museum building with an eye towards efficiency
- Lighting survey to identify issues
- Reconfigure landscaping in front of building for curb appeal, visibility of building, reduced maintenance, and reduced water usage
- Reconfigure foyer of museum to have double entry system, forced interaction with volunteers/staff, reduced natural light in galleries
- Reconfigure office/resource library to accommodate additional staff members
- Full removal of covered skylights in middle and back galleries

Staffing Priorities:

- Development Officer
- Education Specialist
- Collections Manager