

# **SKA-NAH-DOHT VILLAGE AND MUSEUM**

## **5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026**



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**DRAFT**

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## MISSION, VISION, VALUES

### Our Mission Statement

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum is an interactive museum that engages the public in the preservation and presentation of local First Nation history, through experiences both on-site and in the community.

### Our Vision Statement

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum is a community leader in collecting and preserving local history, while faithfully interpreting the Haudenosaunee - People of the Longhouse.

### Our Values

- Innovation: We are leaders in heritage interpretation through research and experimentation.
- Inclusivity: Our museum is for the whole community; families, educators, researchers, visitors both local and through tourism.
- Stewardship: We are committed to preserving important cultural resources.
- Excellence: We strive to meet the highest standards of the cultural heritage profession.

## GOVERNANCE

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum (SND) is owned and operated by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA). The Village Advisory Committee is comprised of LTVCA Board members, community stakeholders, and staff. They meet, discuss, and make recommendations to the LTVCA Board based on the mission and values of Ska-Nah-Doht and the Authority. The Board may then approve and direct staff to act on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, thereby supporting and directing the staff on actions to further the goals of the Strategic Plan.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The purpose of the 5 Year Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 (hereafter 'the plan') is to guide the work done at SND. It will act to align this work with the Mission, Vision, and Values of SND and the LTVCA. The strategic goals of our 10 member municipalities<sup>1</sup> were also taken into consideration during the development of the plan.

The 5 Year Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 will be used to guide community consultation on our strategic priorities and inform the creation of a Strategic Implementation Plan, with defined goals and checkpoints.

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<sup>1</sup> Chatham-Kent, Dutton Dunwich, Lakeshore, Leamington, London, Middlesex Centre, Southwest Middlesex, Southwold, Strathroy-Caradoc, West Elgin

## DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

A draft of the plan was created by examining the previous 5 Year Strategic Plan 2017-2021 as well as the results of the Longwoods Road Conservation Area (LRCA) Visioning Project and Longwoods Feasibility Study. The SND Village Advisory Committee and the LTVCA Board of Directors were consulted and asked to provide feedback.

If requested, the Curator will present the plan to any of the municipal councils of the communities within the LTVCA watershed.

A final draft of the plan will be submitted for approval to the LTVCA Board of Directors.

## VALUE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND OPERATING STANDARDS

A Strategic Plan is a requirement for museums that receive Community Museum Operating Grant support. It is also a valuable supporting document when applying for other funding opportunities. Further, Community Museum Operating Standards are looked to by heritage and culture funders. It is important that SND continues to meet these benchmarks.

The plan will enable staff to prioritize efforts, effectively allocate resources, align with stakeholder values, and set goals that are backed by data.

The aim of the **5 Year Strategic Plan, 2022-2026** is to strengthen the position of SND to ensure it can continue to act as a steward for local heritage and a proponent of the mission and values of the LTVCA. The majority of the efforts will focus on developing community engagement, raising awareness of the organization, the completion of capital projects, and the building of stable funding operations.

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum and LTVCA will undertake this work in consultation with member municipalities (staff and council), local First Nations Communities, local residents, and members of the public.

## CONSIDERATIONS

With the completion of the **5 Year Strategic Plan, 2017-2021**, the recruitment of new a Curator, and the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SND there are many opportunities to assess the direction of the organization, strengthen partnerships, raise awareness of SND, and create new opportunities for community involvement.

As we review SND's **5 Year Strategic Plan, 2017-2021** we can celebrate the success of the Strategic Goals identified in the plan:

- ✓ Community input through the feasibility study
- ✓ Complete Heritage Build Project in 2017
  - The Celebration of Canada 150 featuring the projects success
- ✓ Investing in Staff development
- ✓ Implementation of Social Media Plan
- ✓ Pursuit of diverse funding opportunities

At the same time, we recognize that there are areas where work must continue to be done to meet our goals and the needs of those we serve. It is important that the new plan focus on fostering connections. As such, the implementation plan should be developed in consultation with our communities.

The work begun in the past 5 year plan will continue and additional areas of attention have been identified to include the following:

- Recovery from COVID-19
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Revitalize public visitation and booked programs
- Infrastructure and structural improvements
- Space use at the museum
- Funding diversification
- Community consultation and engagement

## STRATEGIC GOALS

### 1. Community Engagement

- ☐ Consult with First Nations community members regarding how they would like to participate within the organization.
- ☐ Assess the make-up and needs for the Village Advisory Committee and sub-committees.
- ☐ Assess ways to include the heritage and culture of Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, and Munsee-Delaware Nation in collaboration with these communities and ensure provisions are in place to support this work.
  - Edit the Vision Statement of SND in relation to this process.
- ☐ Conduct a public survey regarding the use and public vision for Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum.
- ☐ Respond to community desire for access to Heritage Cabins through the development of a space use, interpretation, and opening plan.
- ☐ Assessment of education and public program offerings. Implementation of a strategy to reach community members in other areas of the LTVCA watershed in collaboration with the

Communications, Outreach, and Education and Administration Departments.

- Conduct programming at other Conservation Areas.
  - i.e. Young Family programs (“mom and tots”), public safety programs, heritage activities
- In-Class and virtual education programs
- ☐ Assess and develop programming, events, and outreach calendars in collaboration with other members of the Communications, Outreach, and Education and Administration Departments.
- ☐ Execute the **3 Year Exhibit Plan, 2022-2024** (Appendix A).
  - Review and draft continuation of the plan for 2025-2027.
- ☐ Develop visitor experience strategy in relation to technology use within the conservation area and from home options.
- ☐ Expansion of the volunteer program and formalization of a volunteer information package and intake process.

## 2. Raise Awareness

- ☐ Commemorate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum.
- ☐ Work towards the commemoration of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authorities 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- ☐ Continue on the path of Truth and Reconciliation.
  - Further development of professional and training opportunities.
- ☐ Inclusion of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge alongside conservation information.
- ☐ Development of strategic partnerships with community groups, organizations, and businesses in order to expand program and event offerings and reach other audiences.
  - i.e. Althouse College, community schools, Newcomer Groups, philanthropic clubs, interest groups
- ☐ Participate in community events and outreach activities to amplify the voice of LTVCA.
  - i.e. West Lorne Kiwanis Club Safe Kids program
- ☐ Operate the Community Exhibition Program (Pop-Up Exhibits and Collaborative Exhibits), included in the **3 Year Exhibit Plan**, throughout the watershed.
- ☐ Revitalize the marketing endeavours of the museum.
  - Assess the Marketing Strategy.
  - Pursue in-kind and free marketing opportunities.
  - Execute the **Marketing Plan** (Appendix B).
- ☐ Invest in staff development through internal and external training opportunities. Promote the use of Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum, and Longwoods Road Conservation Area as a film location.
- ☐ Invest in staff development through internal and external training opportunities.

### 3. Infrastructure Projects

- ☐ Improve outdoor programming spaces for enhanced learning and community gathering opportunities.
- ☐ Assess accessibility standards and development of accessibility strategy.
- ☐ Introduction of and integration with the LTVCA Asset Management Plan.
- ☐ Infrastructure improvements and structural repairs to the Heritage Log Cabins and Village.
  - Replacement of lower logs at Oneida and Munsee Cabins.
  - Installation of accessibility ramps.
  - Roof work and eavestrough installation at all three cabins.
  - Installation of woodstove at Chippewa Cabin.
- ☐ Improvement to the Information Technology and digital capabilities of the Resource Centre and Longwoods Road Conservation Area.
  - Required for online programming and community connectivity.
- ☐ Resource Centre / Museum Improvements
  - Invite the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation<sup>2</sup> to collaborate on a Capital Campaign
    - Elevator
  - Renovations and/or extension to the Resource Centre / Museum
    - Redevelopment of exhibit spaces and the development of adaptive space use strategies.
- ☐ Address the challenges of collection storage and update collections management system.
  - Development of collections care practices in collaboration with local nations.
- ☐ Improvements to exhibit furniture and hands-on opportunities.

### 4. Stable Funding Operations

- ☐ Continue to build the financial stability of the museum by aggressively pursuing funding programs and grants.
- ☐ Invite the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation to collaborate on the creation of a Donor Recognition and Sponsorship program.
- ☐ Develop a revenue generating event in collaboration with the Communications, Outreach, and Education Department of LTVCA.
- ☐ Increase revenues through greater paid attendance and program bookings.

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<sup>2</sup> The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Foundation works in partnership with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, helping to raise funds to encourage wise management of our renewable natural resources. The Conservation Foundation was created to cultivate and enhance all aspects of conservation, helping to provide present and future generations with a safe and healthy environment which includes our natural and cultural heritage resources. The Foundation also provides ongoing funding support for Education, Events, and Watershed Conservation Projects.

**STEPS**

- ☐ Submission of the first draft of the **5 Year Strategic Plan, 2022-2026**
- ☐ Input from the LTVCA Board of Directors and Village Advisory Committee
- ☐ Updates to the plan
- ☐ TBD: Presentation of the plan to municipal councils
- ☐ Approval of final draft of the plan
- ☐ Community consultation
- ☐ Development of the implementation plan



## APPENDIX A: EXHIBIT PLAN

In order to enhance visitor experience SND currently offers self-guided exploration of Ska-Nah-Doht Village and indoor exhibits within the LRCA Resource Centre / Ska-Nah-Doht Museum. To guide the work of staff, and encourage repeat visitation to SND and LRCA, the following **3 Year Exhibit Plan, 2022-2024**.

Staff will actively reflect upon, and adhere to SND's Mission and Vision Statements, Values, and policies at all stages of the exhibit process and the development and delivery of associated programs. As a public facing member of the LTVCA, the museum must also provide a positive impression of the organization, adhere to the policies of the Authority and be guided by its mission, vision, and values. Further, being located within LRCA the museum must follow all conservation area rules and regulations.

### Permanent / Long-Term Exhibits

At the moment Ska-Nah-Doht Museum features displays on the archaeological work completed within the conservation area, a large model of a longhouse, a four seasons environmental diorama, an ice age exhibit, and art installation. These exhibits have recently been "refreshed" but further alterations could be made over time, including:

- Rotation of exhibit panel content for permanent installations (i.e. diorama and longhouse model)
- Rotating of archaeology content / focus
- Redevelopment of 'Day in the Life' diorama case
- Introduction of new long-term exhibits
  - Treaties Exhibit
- Integrate conservation and heritage content when possible

Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic the majority of Ska-Nah-Doht Museum's hands-on items and activities were housed in the basement. This does not allow for equal access. Upon the return of hands-on items, it is recommended that these be integrated into other areas of the museum to allow all visitors access to some of these opportunities.

Further, the internal organization of the museum may need to be reconsidered should grant applications for an extension to the Resource Centre be approved by funding sources.

Infrastructure enhancements and repairs to the Heritage Log Cabins will need to take place over the next few years, and regular maintenance to Ska-Nah-Doht Village is planned in collaboration with the Eastern District Supervisor. Accessibility and use of the Heritage Log

Cabins will need to be assessed over the next few years in order to maintain their integrity and increase public access.

#### Anniversary Exhibit

A temporary exhibit on the history of SND will be installed along the stairwell for the duration of 2023, making use of table top display cases for the display of associated archival material and artifacts.

#### Community Exhibition Program

This two-pronged program includes traveling pop-up exhibits designed by SND staff and community exhibitions created in collaboration with members of the community:

- In order to increase awareness of SND and the LTVCA within the communities of the watershed a pop-up exhibit program was initiated in 2021 for implementation in 2022 and beyond. Three small mobile exhibits will be created and installed at local businesses and organizations on a temporary, rotating, basis.
- To help foster relationships with local community members and organizations a community exhibition program is proposed. This program will involve the development and installation of a temporary exhibit in collaboration with partner groups. These exhibits can be displayed in full at SND and on a smaller scale at the partners location, thereby increasing the accessibility of these exhibits. Possible partner groups may include:
  - School groups
  - Educational organizations
  - Community organizations
  - Other museums

The content of these exhibits will be decided upon through discussion with the partner and will be based on the availability of resources to support the project.

## APPENDIX B: MARKETING PLAN

### Marketing Strategy

SND currently operates a Facebook and Instagram account managed by the Curator, and has a web page hosted on the LTVCA website which is administrated by the Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Education. These platforms provide us with the opportunity to engage with community members, partners, and stakeholders. They also serve to amplify the on-site voice of the organization, support other community organizations, and garner interest in the work that is being done here.

In regards to advertising, in-kind, free, and high value-low cost strategies will be favoured (i.e. event calendars, participation in community events, Facebook/Instagram, community newsletters, tourism partnerships, etc.).

### Facebook and Instagram

#### Social Media

Social media is one of the first places that people go to find information in today's world. The effort put into the management of these platforms is directly related to the response you receive and reach of your content. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain a consistent presence on these channels and ensure the information they provide is up-to-date.

#### Topics of Interest and Tagging

Photos, videos, and reels garner the most engagement—given the picturesque atmosphere offered by SND and LRCA this aspect of our site should be taken advantage of. Other areas of interest are site updates, event and programming information, and current issues or news.

Auto-responses have been set up for Facebook and Instagram have been set-up and the Curator will turn on their out-of-office message when away for more than a day. These responses will include topical information about upcoming programs and events, site information, and hours of operation. This will enable some time-sensitive questions to be answered right away.

Support should be offered to the Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Education through the cross-promotion of LTVCA and SND activities, and sharing of one another's posts. Topical content created by other organizations should also be shared in order to amplify the voices of partners and friends.

#### Facebook Tagging

- @LowerThamesVCA
- Other appropriate organizations or groups

**Instagram Tagging and Hashtags**

- @LTVCA
- @visitmiddlesex
- Other appropriate organizations or groups
- Topical hashtags
- #SkaNahDoht
- #TheVillageStandsAgain
- #Longwoods
- #LongwoodsRoadConservationArea
- #LowerThamesRiver
- #AntlerRiver
- #ThamesRiver
- #heritage
- #HistoryMuseum
- #Museumstagram
- #RuralOntario
- #RuralTourism
- #InvestInMiddlesex
- #VisitMiddlesex

**Metrics and Audience**

With the recent changes to Facebook Business Suite, analytics for both Facebook and Instagram are now easily accessible. It is recommended that statistical information be kept for reporting purposes and comparison year-over-year going forward. Areas of reporting will include audience demographic information, as well as reach and engagement for posts, stories, and ads.

**Other Communication**

Updates regarding SND for the website will be communicated in a timely fashion to the Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Education for their inclusion online.

SND's public hours of operation will be provided to the Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Education and Clerk for their information should they receive questions.

Reviews of SND posted on Facebook will receive a thank you message or response from staff as appropriate.

Requests for information will be responded to in a prompt manner.

Media inquiries related to other areas of LTVCA will be directed to the Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Education.