



**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD
COUNTY, INC.**

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026

INTRODUCTION

The following Strategic Plan was adopted by the Historical Society's Board of Trustees to provide a guide for the Society over the next several years and to assist the Society as it attempts to meet a series of goals and objectives identified by members during the past year. While it is not possible to address all issues in a single document, the Plan is intended to provide broad guidelines and specific actions needed to address the challenges and seize the opportunities available to the Society as it seeks to fulfill its Mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walden', is positioned above the name of the signatory.

William Walden – President

Approved and Adopted: May 3, 2021

Vision:

The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. seeks to be the preeminent and most user-friendly source for an individual to obtain historical information about the county and genealogical information about its inhabitants.

Mission:

The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. collects, preserves, promotes, and interprets the rich and diverse history of the Harford County area in its regional context from prehistoric origins to the present for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Values:

The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. fosters an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and those seeking information are provided a rewarding and educational experience. Material in the possession of the Society will be preserved with care. The Society embraces technology to further these values.

The Board of Trustees developed and approved the aforementioned Vision, Mission and Values statements and the following Strategies to ensure the long-term viability of The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. (Society) and to identify the steps necessary to accomplish the identified strategies.

Goal 1: Building Restoration – Complete the ongoing renovations to provide an attractive, informative, and welcoming museum space and continue restoration activities on the Society Headquarters and Hays House Museum to enhance their safety, efficiency, accessibility, and preservation.

Objective:

Provide well maintained facilities (Headquarters and Hays House Museum) to display, store and protect the archives and artifacts that tell the story of Harford County and its people and assure accessible meeting and research space for members and visitors.

Tasks:

- Continue seeking funding to address Headquarters building deficiencies and improvements to the Hays House Museum
- Complete planned restoration projects including:
 - Raise funds to repair metal overhang in the rear of building.
 - Raise funds for repairs at the Hays House Museum, including analysis of cause of rot on siding, repair/replacement of siding, painting, and a new roof.
- Continue restructuring and organizing the Society basement for storage and archive materials.
- Complete installation of museum space
- Develop a Master Plan for the renovation of the Headquarters building.
- Retain the services of appropriate professionals, i.e., architects, engineers, etc., to develop a tentative plan for future renovations of the first floor and basement area of the Headquarters building, including but not limited to location for an elevator system, restrooms, similar support facilities and potential additions to the existing building.
- Identify and seek potential funding sources to complete projects identified in the Master Plan.

Responsibility:

Facilities, Building Restoration, Finance and Fundraising Committees

Timeframe:

The following projects are to be completed by the end of June 2022: Hays House roof and siding repair, museum space installation and reorganization of the Headquarters basement. Raise funds for elevator and metal overhang by Dec. 2023. Other projects will be an ongoing activity of the Society.

Goal 2: Building Maintenance – Continue the preservation and enhancement of the Society’s facilities and equipment to create a safe and secure environment for storage of the Society’s collections.

Objective:

Maintain Society’s facilities to protect the long-term viability of the properties, assure protection of the Society’s collections and to provide safe, attractive facilities for members and visitors.

Tasks:

- Maintain an ongoing list of routine and annual maintenance projects and assign responsibilities to individuals with specified completion timeframe.
- Coordinate with department chairs to identify building maintenance issues.
- Work with volunteer gardeners to assure necessary garden maintenance.
- Oversee lawn maintenance and snow removal contracts.
- Submit written request for larger repair projects as identified to President for assignment to the Finance, Fundraising and Building Restoration Committees

Responsibility:

Director/Building Maintenance, and Finance Committees, Hays House Chair

Timeframe:

These are ongoing tasks. The Building Maintenance Committee should work with the Director to develop the maintenance list for the year in January of each year. The Director should assure that any maintenance concerns of the departments are immediately brought to the committee’s attention.

Goal 3: Fundraising Initiatives – Assure funds are available to meet Society’s needs for facilities and programs by an expanded mix of government, foundation, corporate and individual grants, donations, fundraising events and expanded gift shop offerings and publications.

Objective:

Increase funds available for use by the Society both for operating and capital projects.

Tasks:

- Establish corporate donor/sponsorship program and acknowledge donors on the Society’s website.
- Continue to develop donor program and follow up procedures.
- Identify potential corporate donors and potential individual/foundation donors.
- Distribute marketing materials packet to potential major donors.
- Review annual giving process.
- Continue active grant writing program seeking additional funding for ongoing capital projects, special projects, and operational activities where applicable.
- Review current events for appropriateness and develop ideas for new fundraising events.

Responsibility:

Membership Committee/Fundraising Committee/Website Management Committee/Director

Timeframe:

The review of the annual giving process should be completed by October 2021. The corporate donor/sponsorship program should be implemented by spring 2021. All tasks will be ongoing.

Goal 4: Budget and Finance - Provide budget and financial records that are accurate, transparent, and adequate to meet the needs of the organization's financial requirements.

Objective:

Create an efficient financial system that includes an easily understood budget process and investment plan that will provide the information needed to maintain the sustainability of the organization.

Tasks:

- Create a Budget planning system to identify annual operational needs and associated costs.
- Establish a timeline for periodic reviews of the current budget and how that relates to upcoming budgets.
- Review investments quarterly to determine if they are adhering to the financial policies of the Society.
- Review the Investment Accounts on a monthly basis, to determine if they are continuing to perform to stated budget needs.

Responsibility:

Budget and Finance Committee

Timeframe:

This is an ongoing effort.

Goal 5: Technological Facilities and Services - Purchase and maintain technological equipment and services consistent with the needs of Society members and visitors.

Objective:

Ensure the Society keeps pace with the technological needs of its members and visitors.

Tasks:

- Establish needs for upgrades, improvements, new equipment and prioritize.
- Identify individuals for technological responsibilities.
- Continue to use website to raise funds through donations, membership drives, genealogical resources, etc.
- Routinely review and update Society website.
- Optimize use of Social Media to generate interest in Society and its resources.
- Add Microsoft packages to staff and library computers.

Responsibility:

Technology Oversight Committee including Webmasters, Past Perfect Coordinator and Website Management Committees.

Timeframe:

This is an ongoing effort.

Goal 6: Community Visibility and Marketing – Enhance awareness of the Historical Society and its programs in the business, civic and broader community of Harford County through broadcast, print and social media.

Objective:

Ensure the long-term viability and visibility of the Society. Create and share relevant and valuable information that attracts, educates, motivates, and inspires members/supporters so that they can help achieve the Society's mission.

Tasks:

- Assign responsibility for dissemination and coordination of publicity of materials.
- Provide Press releases to media on monthly basis highlighting upcoming events.
- Update media contact list annually
- Develop a strong publicity program ensuring that all events and exhibits are broadcast to the widest audience possible.
- Include publicity materials on the Society's website.
- Add names and pictures of Board of Trustees and staff to the website.
- Circulate donor/sponsorship information materials, highlighting donor benefits.
- Use the quarterly bulletin and bi-monthly newsletters to highlight the Society's accomplishments and to satisfy its goal of improving programs and services.
- Send monthly bulletins to members with updates on Society activities.
- Produce a quarterly podcast to promote the Society.
- Seek sponsorship for each major event/activity.
- Work with area school systems to offer programs on local history.
- Identify kid-friendly activities for the Society and Hays House Museum Event calendar

Responsibility:

Event and Website Committees/Staff

Timeframe:

The search for corporate donors/sponsors will begin immediately. This is an ongoing effort.

Goal 7: Day to Day Operations and Administration – Adopt and enforce efficient, competent, and welcoming administrative procedures and policies that meet the needs of Society members and visitors.

Objective:

Ensure the daily operations of the Society run smoothly, creating a pleasant and inviting environment for members, volunteers and patrons of the community. Evaluate and develop procedures to maximize operational efficiency of the organization.

Tasks:

- Director will prepare a detailed monthly report with projects and responsibilities for the Board of Trustees.
- Routinely update the Board of Trustees Manual and develop an Employee Manual.
- Schedule Board orientation for new members in November of each year
- Continue to develop comprehensive inventory of collection.
- Offer unwanted items to other societies or put online for sale, as appropriate, after accessioning and deaccessioning procedures are completed.
- Designate a location for storage of sale items.
- Explore possibility of expanding hours of operation especially providing more evening hours.
- Evaluate Bylaws for necessary updates annually.
- Monitor progress on the Strategic Plan recommendations quarterly.
- Maintain spreadsheets on each event, grant, etc. as a checks and balance function on finances and to determine effectiveness of events and fundraising efforts.
- Clearly establish responsibilities of the Director, Administrative Assistant and volunteers
- Develop year-round exhibit program at Hays House and Headquarters
- Continue update of Procedures and Policies Manual as needed
- Appoint Board members and volunteers to all established committees based on interest and time availability.
- Evaluate staffing and compensation annually.
- Establish security procedures and provide security training for staff and volunteers on an annual basis.

Responsibility:

Director/Executive Committee, Artifacts, Archives, Textiles, Library-Genealogy, Arts, Gift Shop and Hays House Museum Committees

Timeframe:

These efforts will begin immediately and become ongoing projects.

Goal 8: Volunteers and Interns - Capitalize on the talents and time that volunteers and interns bring to the Society and ensure their experience is pleasurable and acknowledged.

Objective:

Attract and maintain a strong, well-trained volunteer pool for both the society Headquarters and the Hays House Museum. (strong listed twice/remove second one)

Tasks:

- Develop basic job descriptions for volunteer positions to share with potential volunteers.
- Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator to contact potential volunteers, provide a tour of the facility, initial orientation and training.
- Conduct an orientation with each new volunteer, providing background about the Society and the department or activity they are to take on as a volunteer.
- Share the Society's volunteer handbook with each volunteer at time of orientation.
- Provide new volunteers with adequate training and specifications to feel their time is well spent and their contribution is valuable to the Society.
- Increase number of volunteers and times available for volunteer participation.
- Conduct regularly scheduled meetings with volunteers and Society President to discuss issues, needs and recommendations.
- Provide specific location for volunteers to store project materials between visits.
- Develop a young adult social arm of the Society - similar to the Young Defenders group at the Maryland Historical Society
- Conduct an annual volunteer event/open house to showcase volunteer opportunities and attract new volunteers.
- Provide a welcoming environment for visitors and a nurturing environment for volunteers.
- Organize an annual program recognizing volunteers for their efforts.
- Expand recruitment of volunteers, including contacting local schools, teen volunteer programs and senior centers.
- Contact local colleges and universities with notices of potential intern or volunteer opportunities.
- Develop an efficient method of calculating volunteer hours.

Responsibility:

Volunteer, Hays House Museum and Events Committees

Timeframe:

Job descriptions for volunteers should be available by March 2022. Other efforts are ongoing.

Goal 9: Gift Shop – Provide a well – stocked, attractive gift shop both physically and on-line focused on sharing county history and providing a source of income for the Society.

Objective:

Enhance the current gift shop with more resources and collectibles for members and visitors that will encourage increased sales and attract people to the Society.

Tasks:

- Develop procedures for gift shop operations.
- Create an attractive, well maintained and regularly updated collection in the gift shop.
- Identify items and resources to be added to the gift shop.
- Include more works by local authors and artists.
- Include mementoes with local connections for visitors to the County.
- Identify and create items produced by the Society.
- Develop a marketing strategy for the gift shop, including internet access for purchases of books and memorabilia.
- Include combination of books, maps, artwork and memorabilia in a comprehensive inventory of county related items.

Responsibility:

Gift Shop and Hays House Museum Committees/Staff

Timeframe:

Procedures to be defined by fall 2021. This is an ongoing effort.

**GOAL 10: PROGRAMMING, EVENTS and COMMUNITY
OUTREACH & EDUCATION – Develop annual programs that
share the County’s rich history with the general public through
events, exhibits and general public outreach.**

Objective:

Coordinate activities and events to implement the Society’s Vision and Mission and assure maximum event attendance.

Tasks:

- Identify and enact strategies to increase membership.
- Provide the general public with information about the county’s history in inventive ways that will entertain and educate, to include live interviews, workshops, exhibits and presentations.
- Develop educational programs for various demographics.
- Identify and create events that highlight Harford’s history and are of interest to a wide-ranging audience and attract members of various ages.
- Coordinate more fully with other organizations, i.e., state and local historical societies and programs, local museums, County Main Street programs, Chamber of Commerce, Service organizations, local cultural arts groups, etc.
- Expand and promote the Society Speakers Bureau’s availability to give presentations at area schools, libraries and community organizations .
- Identify and implement activities and events that help fund the Society’s operations.
- Evaluate inclusion of storytelling and theatrical productions on county history at appropriate locations throughout the county.
- Explore possibility of developing ongoing clubs related to specific interests, i.e., genealogy, history and research, similar to coffeehouse or open mic programs that meet once a month to share their interests and maximize access to the society’s collections. Possibly a “Saturday Night at the Society”

Responsibility:

Events, Membership and Fundraising Committees

Timeframe:

All efforts are ongoing.

GOAL 11: Museum Development and Exhibits – Create a Museum that tells the story of Harford County, in terms of its people, places and history and inspires an interest in local history.

Objective:

Showcase the County’s history using the Society’s collections to create an attractive, informative, and fascinating visual story for visitors and members.

Tasks:

- Implement “Unboxing the Collections” plan for the museum.
- Establish area for revolving exhibits.
- Determine timing, themes and exhibit material to be highlighted for displays.
- Assemble well designed, informative displays.
- Advertise displays and museum programs as they evolve.

Responsibility:

Museum Committee/Staff

Timeframe:

Initial opening of museum scheduled for 2022. All efforts are ongoing.

GOAL 12: Departmental Management and Operations – Coordinate departmental activities in an efficient and professional manner.

Objective:

Maintain Society archives, artifacts, library, art collection, textile collection, maps, photographs and other materials entrusted to the Society in a professional manner, making sure they are catalogued, retrievable, preserved and available for viewing by members and visitors.

Tasks:

- Develop training procedures for each department.
- Departmental chairs or their representatives will meet monthly with the Director to provide update on “successes”, needs, issues or concerns. This information will be reported to the Board at its regularly scheduled meeting.
- Department chairs shall be included in all reorganization plans impacting their departments.
- Complete donation forms within one week of receipt of items
- Add acquisition information to online catalog within one month of donation acceptance, specifying what has been received, where it is stored, and any conditions of donation.
- Store donated items in secure locations assuring documentation is recorded for easy access in future.
- Identify each donation’s condition, specifying restoration needs.
- Schedule restoration projects based on funding availability and established priorities.
- Regularly identify personnel needs of each department and seek volunteers or interns based on those needs.
- Create a Volunteer Opportunity section on the Society website describing specific volunteer opportunities in each department.

Responsibility:

Departmental Chairpersons, Director

Timeframe:

Monthly meetings to occur weekly prior to Board meeting. All other tasks ongoing.