



Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Clarence-Rockland Museum

October 1, 2024

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1. How We Got Here

Introduction

The Clarence-Rockland Museum was established in 2010 in a residential neighbourhood of the bilingual community of Clarence-Rockland, situated on a wide curve of the beautiful Ottawa River 40 km east of the capital. A community resource, the Museum shares space with the Rockland United Soccer Club.

The designated heritage site was constructed in 1909 as the Sainte-Famille School to educate the children of European settlers. The Catholic District School Board subsequently sold the schoolhouse to the City of Clarence-Rockland, and the school closed and found new purpose as a cultural centre which offered courses in the arts in 1968.

In 2010, the two-storey building became a Museum thanks to the volunteering spirit of Gilles Chartrand who noted an opportunity presented by vacant rooms to contribute to Clarence-Rockland's memory and pride. He brought on site a selection of personal antiques, vintage objects and historical materials, thus beginning a collection which has since grown.

The Museum is reinventing itself and pursuing initiatives to better support the fast-growing city's objectives of community cohesion. In 2024, the City engaged Lord Cultural Resources, a specialist



The Clarence-Rockland Museum

cultural planning firm, to develop a five-year strategic plan, which the Museum has never had before. The planning process called for a robust analysis of current Museum practice and operations, an online public engagement initiative, key informant consultations, and a review of proposed governance systems and recommendations.

The City of Clarence-Rockland's Vision and Mission

The City's vision as outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan is that *"Clarence-Rockland will continue to be a growing and prosperous community with an enduring small-town feel."* The Museum has an important role to play in fostering this vision through engaging exhibitions and programming that bring residents together to explore and discover their history. Defining these foundational statements is important – successful museums have strong and coherent visions and missions or mandates which drive collections policy, interpretive focus, and overall operations. This 2025-2030 Strategic Plan for the Museum includes draft vision and mandate statements that complement the City's strategic goals and integrate the Museum's aspirations into the larger community context.

What Went into This Strategic Plan?

The planning process took six months. Key milestones and input to the report included:

- **A day visit to Clarence-Rockland** - M. Gilles Chartrand gave a tour of the Clarence-Rockland Museum and its collection. Martin Irwin gave a tour of the waterfront near Parc du Moulin and the Clarence-Rockland Public Library.
- **Interviews with key external stakeholders** - A series of confidential, one-on-one interviews was held with 8 key opinion leaders and stakeholders in the public sector, the arts, education, politics and civil society.
- **A public survey** - To understand residents' priorities and needs a survey was prepared by the consultant team and hosted by the City's digital community consultation platform, Cocoriko. One in-person event also yielded several responses on paper. A total of 70 participants completed the survey.
- **Working Group sessions** - The Working Group engaged in three review and discussion sessions facilitated by the consultant team. In the strategic planning session, two additional members from the community came together to discuss the key issues and goals.

KEY MILESTONES



1 Site Visit



8 Interviews



70 Responses to
bilingual public
survey



3 Workshops

2. What We Found

This section outlines the findings of the assessment and consultation process and articulates six critical issues. These key issues were discussed with the Working Group and shape the goals of the Strategic Plan:

1. Establishing a governance and management framework

The most pressing challenge is that the Museum, owned and operated by the City, has no municipal oversight. Run by a long-standing and dedicated volunteer, there is no formal relationship with the City or lines of communication in terms of staffing, policies, and day-to-day operations. The Clarence-Rockland Public Library might be an opportunity in terms of management of the Museum.

2. Professionalization of staff and operations

A collections strategy, policy and professional procedures manual is missing. Most objects have little relevance to the City, provenance is often unclear, and documentation does not follow standard museum practice. As a result, the collection has grown opportunistically without the benefit of a development framework or plan for future accommodation and care. A succession plan is also needed to recruit staff and volunteers with a background in museums or the cultural sector more broadly.

3. Improving physical access

Located in a residential neighbourhood, the Museum feels disconnected from other cultural and recreational activities. The halls and rooms are overcrowded with collections materials, posing a potential safety hazard to people and objects. Accessibility is also a consideration (no wheelchair ramp, elevator, and a single washroom without assistive access). A 2023 City-commissioned building report noted water leakage and the presence of pests, which also pose a risk to the collection. As such, the building either needs to be upgraded or the Museum relocated to a more suitable and accessible space.

What We Found

4. Increasing presence and awareness

The public survey showed that few residents were aware of what the Museum offered, or if they were aware, the exhibits and programs did not interest them. This is exacerbated by the lack of an engaging website, or marketing campaigns to raise its public profile.

5. Improving intellectual access and the overall visitor experience

Made up of six towns and villages, Clarence-Rockland has an interesting story to tell. A community museum is best placed to tell it, but the artefacts associated with the origins story are difficult to discern because they are crowded out by unrelated items. Furthermore, there is no distinction between display and storage - everything the Museum has is on view. A carefully curated exhibition revitalized with graphics, interactives, and supplemented by a teaching/handling collection would be beneficial in bringing the Museum up to contemporary visitor experience standards.

6. Connecting and integrating with the community

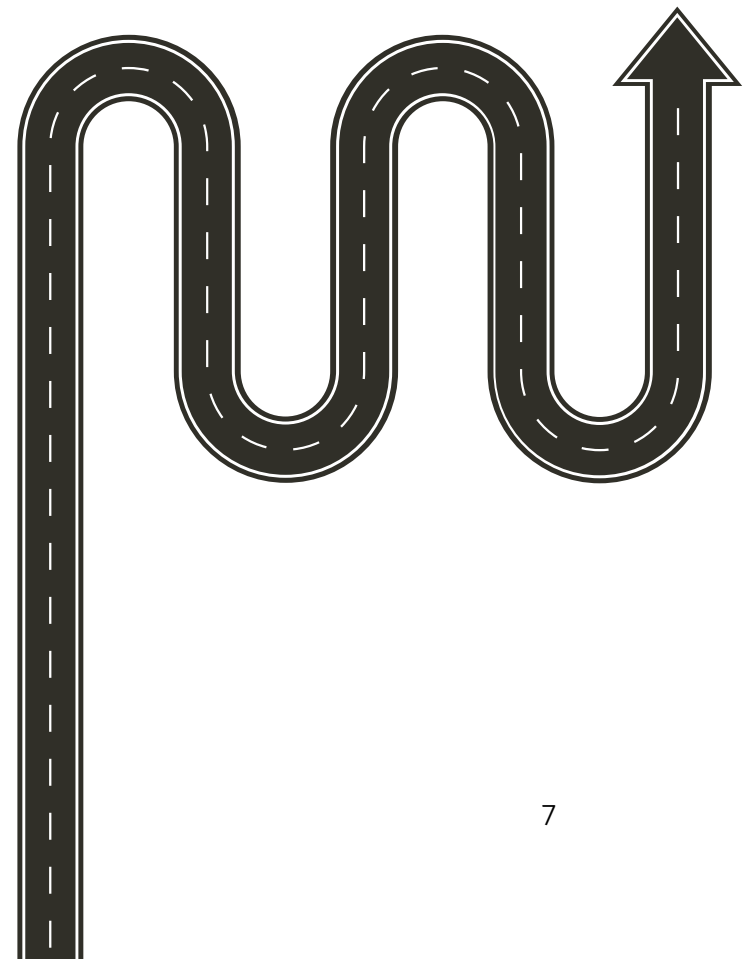
The City's vision for Clarence-Rockland is that of a growing community with an "enduring small-town feel" which has a strong sense of social cohesion. This vision addresses the demographic and linguistic shifts underway: the English-only speaking population is growing, more residents are commuting far distances, to Ottawa, for example, and new families are moving to Clarence-Rockland. Change can present challenges, but also new opportunities. Using the City's vision as a jumping off point, the Museum can position itself as a place for cohesion and connection. Relationships with other local cultural institutions could also be expanded through programming and on-site activities. Another possibility is a networked model whereby interpretive nodes (exhibits, graphic panels, plaques, etc.) could be spread across the villages and towns that make up Clarence-Rockland.

3. The Road Ahead: Our Goals 2025-2030

Goals

This section outlines the strategic goals which are at the heart of the plan and represent the recommended directions over the next five years.

- 01** Establish a governance and management framework for the Museum’s operation
- 02** Professionalize the Museum’s practice
- 03** Reconceive function of the existing Museum building as a service “hub”
- 04** Improve access to and awareness of the Museum’s collections and programs
- 05** Connect and integrate the Museum with Clarence-Rockland’s communities



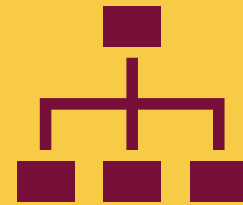
Clarence-Rockland Museum

GOAL #1

Establish a governance and management framework for the Museum's operation

The most important first step in the Museum's evolution is to resolve where it sits as an entity. The Clarence-Rockland Public Library and the Public Library Board have indicated that they are ready to explore taking on governance and management of the Museum and should be assigned oversight accordingly. Whether that is a long-term solution or a temporary stopgap will be determined in part by a Transition Task Force under the guidance of the Library- and City-designated leadership. This group would be involved in determining the long-term solution – amalgamation with the Library and/or the establishment of a separate charitable organization such as a non-profit, a charity, and/or a "friends of" group to support fundraising.

In the meantime, the City should commit to formal ownership of the collection. Overseen by Library staff, and guided by the Transition Task Force, prioritized collections-related tasks could begin immediately – specifically inventorying, cataloguing, assessment and photography. The road to achieving this goal will be long as there are many inter-related issues; however, a series of actions should act as a roadmap.



ACTIONS

- **Formally assign oversight of the Museum** to the Clarence-Rockland Library and the Public Library Board or other non-profit.
- **Establish, empower and activate a Museum Transition Task Force** comprising volunteers overseen by the Library director.
- **Commit to formal ownership of the collection** (the City) or identify alternative long-term strategy (i.e., ownership by partner institution), and **provide the seed funding** needed to support implementation of this development process.
- **Prioritize collections policy and management related tasks** as a first step towards professionalization, ensuring that issues of ownership and fiduciary responsibility to the collection can be resolved.
- **Initiate a staff succession plan** and consider hiring staff and actively recruit volunteers from the high schools, colleges and universities, as well as other community sources.

GOAL #2

Professionalize the Museum's Practice

Professionalizing the Museum's practices is an enormous undertaking and critical to its future success. The Transition Task Force and the Library's management should consider recruiting staff and volunteers to support this immediate effort and to train/develop resources for the future. Additional financial commitments will be required to bring museum staff on board.

The team would begin by drawing up policies and procedures for collections. While the actions outlined on this page are going on, public access to the Museum would need to be restricted to allow for adequate space in which to work and to safeguard collection materials. Space could be created on the ground floor (e.g., the office) and/or in the upstairs community room (see Goal #3).

The hard work begins in earnest with the physical assessment and documentation of the existing materials, matching up existing provenance and related data records, and considering appropriate use of the materials within the mandate framework. The conceptual development of an exhibition and programs strategy also guides collections sorting, processing and disposition.



ACTIONS

Collections management practices

- **Codify collections policies** and procedures guided by a mandate (see below in this report for the draft mandate): acquisition, accessioning, and deaccessioning, loans and limitations.
- **Initiate the inventory** and documentation process and begin to assess collections materials relative to the mandate articulated.
- **Identify** potential collections **objects** for **specific exhibitions** and teaching purposes (i.e., for off-site exhibitions, school "kits", etc.)

Program development and implementation

(exhibitions, school programs, archival research, etc.)

- **Articulate a strategy** and process for the **development of exhibitions and programs in local institutions** or venues and programming for camps, schools and public events.

Clarence-Rockland Museum

GOAL #3

Reconceive function of the existing Museum building as a “service hub”

The City is currently conducting a municipal facilities rationalization study to better understand its options, including for the Museum. Until a suitable, accessible, temperature- and humidity-controlled storage facility is identified, the City should utilize the existing Museum building for processing, logistics, storage, and archival purposes. Since there is almost no available storage in the city, the Museum is the best place for the collection to remain for the time being.

As the building finds new purpose, the needs of other stakeholders who depend on it should be considered. The soccer club which has been renting a room on the second floor for many years through an arrangement with the City is one. The other is the monthly drumming group that uses the community room at no cost.



ACTIONS

- **Limit access to the existing building** (temporarily – access by appointment only) and utilize the building exclusively for processing, logistics, storage and archival research purposes (for students or other researchers).
- **Consider existing agreements** with the soccer club and drumming group, and logistics.
- **Adapt suitable space** in the building designated **for collection storage**.
- **Designate workspaces** in the building (e.g., ground floor office, upstairs community room) for processing and staging exhibitions elsewhere.
- **Plan and test inaugural exhibitions** and programs in the building and create a longer-term strategy based on outcomes and learnings.

GOAL #4

Improve access to and awareness of the Museum's collections and programs

Relocating any “permanent” exhibitions, possibly temporary exhibitions, and programs to appropriate underutilized locations closer to the downtown core (or in other locations throughout the six villages/towns) would vault the Museum to a much more visible address and expose it to more foot traffic. In the long-term, as the Museum evolves, it may consider dedicating resources towards an archive accessible to the public and researchers.

The Museum's digital footprint should also be increased with a website while the Transition Task Force would spearhead communications campaigns to keep the public updated on the Museum's ongoing progress as it establishes itself as a potent presence in the community.



ACTIONS

- **Relocate exhibitions, programs, and teaching collection** to more visible and accessible locations.
- Conceptualize, **organize, and promote an inaugural exhibition** e.g., “the communities that make up Clarence-Rockland”.
- **Organize communications campaign** around strategic plan actions (e.g., recruitment of volunteers) and the Museum's ongoing progress (Transition Task Force).
- **Plan and implement digital strategy** including online access to significant collection items, exhibitions, and programs all hosted on a dedicated website or the Library's excellent website.
- Direct the Transition Task Force and **community engagement** towards raising awareness of opportunities that will drive the Museum's future development.

GOAL #5

Connect and integrate the Museum with Clarence-Rockland's communities

As an anchor institution, the Museum has an important role to play in furthering the City's vision for a connected community (which is also the Library's first strategic goal). A networked museum model could be developed whereby the villages and towns host exhibits (permanent or temporary) and/or programs which would spread the Museum's social benefits far and wide.

Partnerships with schools and other institutions including Indigenous organizations would also elevate the Museum's role as a leading voice. At the same time, a web of engaged citizens could be encouraged by the Transition Task Force to join sub-groups within the Task Force based on abilities and needs such as collections, organizing exhibitions, and promotion. In this way, an enduring, grassroots base would emerge to support the Museum in the years ahead.



ACTIONS

- **Engage members of the community** in the Transition Task Force and advisory roles as this Strategic Plan progresses and report back to the Task Force.
- **Plan and implement a networked model** to develop temporary and/or permanent exhibitions and programs across the six villages and towns (e.g., in Bourget library branch, small exhibits in civic buildings, plaques, graphic panels, etc.)
- Continue to **strengthen and develop partnerships** to deliver programs and services with local institutions, particularly schools.

Strategic Plan 2025–2030 Goals and Actions

01

Establish a governance and management framework for the Museum’s operation

ACTIONS

- Formally assign Museum oversight
- Establish Museum Transition Task Force
- Commit to collection ownership
- Prioritize collections policy & procedures
- Initiate staff succession plan

02

Professionalize the Museum’s practice

ACTIONS

- Codify collections policies
- Initiate inventory
- Identify objects for exhibitions and programs
- Articulate strategy for exhibitions in local institution

03

Reconceive function of the existing Museum building as a “service hub”

ACTIONS

- Phase out public access
- Make space for collection storage
- Designate workspaces
- Plan inaugural exhibitions

04

Improve access to and awareness of the Museum’s collections and programs

ACTIONS

- Relocate exhibitions, programs & teaching collection
- Organize & promote inaugural exhibition
- Organize communications campaign
- Plan & implement digital strategy

05

Connect and integrate the Museum with Clarence-Rockland’s communities

ACTIONS

- Engage citizens
- Plan & implement network model
- Strengthen partnerships

4. Towards A Vision and Mandate

As noted in this report, the Museum currently does not have a vision or mandate.

A **vision statement** is aspirational and clarifies the impact a museum wishes to have on its community and beyond. Effective vision statements are short and succinct. They are easy to understand and adoptable by staff.

A **mandate statement** establishes what a museum is going to collect and why it collects what it does. Informed by the vision, a mandate statement can also establish parameters of time and geography. It helps rationalize what is in the museum's collection now and in the future.

Based on all the research, analysis and discussion with the Working Group to date, we propose the following draft vision and mandate statements for the Clarence-Rockland Museum:

Draft Vision

The Clarence-Rockland Museum is a network of vibrant, interactive spaces where our communities are inspired to learn about and connect with our past and each other.

Draft Mandate

The Clarence-Rockland Museum's mandate is to collect, preserve and present in-person and online the rural origins, agricultural and heritage traditions, cultural practices, and diverse perspectives of our towns and villages from the settler era to today.

Acknowledgements

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- Denis Vaillancourt, Board Member, United Way
- Gilles Chartrand, Museum Volunteer
- Helen Pace, Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee Member, City of Clarence-Rockland
- Josee Bouchard, High School Teacher
- Julian Lenhart, Community Development Director, City of Clarence-Rockland
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Lord Cultural Resources

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