

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF FREDERICK COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN



2007-2010

In our second century of service

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Historical Society of Frederick County, Inc. is a non-profit educational organization, dedicated to increasing public understanding and appreciation of the history of Frederick County, Maryland. The Society collects and preserves artifacts and documents related to Frederick County, Maryland for study and education and welcomes the participation of people of all ages in sharing informative and engaging experiences that will encourage them to discover and appreciate their heritage

A MESSAGE FROM THE CORE PLANNING TEAM

We are very pleased to share with you the *Historical Society of Frederick County's Strategic Plan*. This document is the culmination of nearly eighteen months of discussion, community involvement and introspection. These efforts began in early 2005, with the formation of a Core Planning Team consisting of members of the Board of Directors and senior staff members.

Early efforts centered upon defining what we wanted the plan to be and considering who we should involve in the process. In April of 2005, we engaged Jay Graybeal, former director of the Carroll County Historical Society, to serve as the facilitator for a series of community focus groups. The first group consisted of representatives from other heritage organizations in the county; the second group included civic, business and governmental leaders; the third group was educators. Participants were provided background information to acquaint them with the Historical Society's history, programs and services. During these forums, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions that yielded a vast amount of feedback – both positive and negative – that has been invaluable in the preparation of this *Strategic Plan*.

In conjunction with the Society's annual membership renewal, members were offered the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Society's programs and provide feedback on a questionnaire that was mailed to the full membership. The response was extraordinary, with 123 members responding, from the total membership of about 900. Again, the information derived from these surveys were reviewed carefully by the Core Planning Team and incorporated into the plan whenever possible.

We also looked at Strategic Plans from similar organizations for ideas on general content, format and presentation. The Core Planning Team is proud of their efforts and are pleased to present a *Strategic Plan* that will guide the Historical Society of Frederick County into the next decade. We wish to extend our thanks to everyone who joined us in this process. We deeply appreciate the ideas and involvement from our membership and the entire community.

CORE PLANNING TEAM

Ethel Lee "Pepper" Scotto, Chair

Julie Bryan

Heidi Campbell-Shoaf

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Colleen M. Remsberg

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OUR VISION

The Historical Society of Frederick County will be widely recognized as one of the premiere county historical societies in the country through incomparable collections, dynamic programs, imaginative leadership and a general commitment to excellence.

OUR VALUES

Integrity: Through an unflinching commitment to truth in interpretation and inscrutable management principles, the Historical Society of Frederick County is an organization that is worthy of the public's trust.

Ingenuity: Through creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit, the Historical Society of Frederick County continues to innovate and inspire.

Stewardship: Through responsible collections management practices and the adequate provision of resources, the Historical Society of Frederick County assures that materials documenting our heritage will be saved for generations to come.

Inclusion: Through the development of diverse public programs and a willingness to be accessible to all, the Historical Society of Frederick County shares our heritage with people of all ages, ethnicities and economic backgrounds.

Leadership: Through a demonstrated commitment to excellence and the development of respectful partnerships, the Historical Society of Frederick County serves as a leader among the heritage organizations in the county, state, region and nation.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

CREATE A UNIFIED AND IDENTIFIABLE ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE

In an effort to advance community awareness, unify the appearance of communication products, and establish a unique organizational brand, the Historical Society of Frederick County will create a single identifiable organizational image. This will be accomplished through the attainment of the following objectives:

Develop a unified graphic design/logos

Providing all Historical Society publications and advertisements a common appearance will make these items more recognizable and effective. Working with qualified artists, designers and marketing personnel, the Historical Society will establish common graphic design elements (fonts, colors, icons) that will be used consistently in organizational communication media, including newsletters, brochures, letterhead, flyers, posters, website and other online presentations.

Create recognizable signage

Visitors to the Historical Society's public facilities must navigate through a myriad of signs and images. Utilizing the common design elements, the Historical Society will create exterior signage that will be recognizable to visitors.

Designate distinct facility identities

In order to establish unique identities for all Historical Society facilities, each will be named in a manner that is distinguishing and that describes the programs and activities that take place within.

Goal **MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE**

Adequate facilities and technical infrastructure are vital to the successful attainment of the Historical Society's mission. To assure that current and future infrastructure needs are met, the Historical Society of Frederick County will promote the following objectives:

Maintenance of buildings

To promote optimal systems operations and general maintenance of each of the facilities, the Historical Society will conduct an annual condition assessment in conjunction with the annual budgeting process. An ongoing program of capital improvements will be established with adequate financial support included in each year's budget.

Development of adequate space for a research center, offices, and exhibits

As the Society's programs, collections and staffing increase, the development of additional space is crucial to the organization's operations and advancement. Toward meeting these growing space needs the Historical Society will identify, acquire and develop appropriate space for the relocation of the library and administrative offices, as well as for the creation of additional exhibition space.

Utilization of technology

The incorporation of proven technology that advance the dissemination of information and maximize operational efficiency are vital to the success of the organization in the twenty-first century. In an effort to assure the organization is best utilizing technology, the Society will conduct an annual analysis of its technical systems as part of the annual budgeting process, with adequate financial support for upgrades and new systems included in each budget.

Enhanced accessibility

The Historical Society is committed to providing maximum access to its programs and facilities. Toward removing barriers to access and attaining full compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Historical Society will conduct an accessibility survey of its facilities and programs and make the needed structural and programmatic changes required.

Goal **CREATE INNOVATIVE PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITIONS**

Exhibitions and public programs are the primary means by which the Historical Society engages the public. In order to invite new patrons and encourage return visitation, the Society must continue to create engaging exhibitions that explore distinct aspects of the county's history. The Society's public programs should be developed in a manner that best addresses the needs and interests of its members and patrons.

Create museum exhibits

The Historical Society's ongoing program of temporary exhibitions should be maintained with at least a three year schedule of upcoming exhibitions in development. Enhancements to permanent exhibitions also should continue with at least one exhibition unit upgraded annually. The Society also should explore the development of additional space for Museum exhibitions.

Create Taney House exhibits

The challenges associated with the interpretation of the site, as well as the limitations of its associated collections necessitate the development of a Master Plan for the site that will include a revised interpretive plan, furnishings plan and a plan for grounds and environs. A continued program of temporary exhibitions will allow for explorations on specific topics related to Taney and the site, while also offering visitors a compelling reason to return.

Develop public programming

Programmatic vitality is essential to the development of new audiences and the retention of existing ones. The Historical Society should continue to respond to the needs of its members and patrons through innovative programs that offer information and experiences that are unique to the organization. Existing programs must be permitted to evolve and change. Public programs that no longer serve the public in a meaningful way or that have fallen below the performance standards of the organization should be discontinued.

Perform community outreach

Beyond the confines of the Historical Society's facilities exist vast opportunities for public service and public programming. In an effort to find new audiences and serve those who cannot be served on-site, the Historical Society should continue its efforts at community outreach, while developing new vehicles for extending its programs and services into the community. Speakers bureau, classroom programs, traveling exhibits, community event booths and related activities all offer effective ways of promoting and delivering public programs outside the Society's "four walls."

Goal **PROMOTE RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION**

The pursuit of new scholarship on the history of Frederick County is essential to the Historical Society's vitality. Endeavors that promote access to the Society's collections and create new documentation of aspects of life in Frederick County should be advanced.

Provide online access to research materials (library and museum catalogs)

Increasingly historians, genealogists and others who will potentially utilize the research materials of the Historical Society are employing the World Wide Web and other online tools. To accompany ongoing efforts at creating digital records of all collections, the Society should provide access to the Library's InMagic catalog by way of the organization's website (www.hsfcinfo.org). Options for promoting access to the Museum's Past Perfect catalog also should be explored.

Create a union catalog of collections in Frederick County

The community heritage organizations and other local repositories possess unique historical resources that contribute significantly to the documentation of the history of Frederick County. In order to promote the preservation of these collections and to enhance access to them, the Historical Society should initiate and encourage the development of a union catalog that will include the holdings of all heritage organizations in the county.

Sponsor rural and industrial documentation projects

As the demographics and economics of Frederick County evolve, it becomes essential to document aspects of life in the county that are vanishing. Projects that document the county's rural and agricultural traditions should be advanced. Similarly, documentary projects that will preserve the early industries of Frederick County also should be promoted.

Goal **PROMOTE COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION OF COLLECTIONS**

The Historical Society's collections provide the foundation for its educational programs, research services and exhibitions. Assuring that the collections are preserved and accessible are paramount concerns for the Society.

Engage in specific collecting initiatives

The enhancement and diversification of both Library and Museum collections will strengthen all aspects of Historical Society programming. In order to promote the continued development of collections, the Historical Society should engage in initiatives that will promote the acquisition of specific types of collections. Such initiatives may include collecting information and objects relating to agriculture, industry, and African Americans in Frederick County.

Establish an endowment fund for collections acquisitions

Adequate funding to support the acquisition of objects for the collection will allow for the Society to preserve many of the county's historical treasures that are currently passing into private hands. The creation of an endowment fund designated for collections acquisitions, will promote the development of financial resources adequate to make substantial and meaningful purchases on the open market.

Provide adequate staffing for archives and museum registration

Assuring that all collections are registered, cataloged and stored properly is an essential part of the Historical Society's stewardship of collections. As the Society's collections continue to grow through collecting initiatives, additional purchases and other means, the provision of adequate staffing for archival processing and museum registration will be vital. To assure that the organization meets its stewardship obligations, the position of archivist should be expanded to a permanent full time position. Likewise, a museum registrar position should be created as a permanent position.

Goal **ADVANCEMENT OF FISCAL DEVELOPMENT & MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

The attainment of all of the Historical Society's goals, will depend upon the development of adequate financial resources. Toward meeting this challenge, the Historical Society should enlarge its efforts at generating significant and renewable sources of operating revenue.

Establish business membership initiatives

The ongoing support of businesses in Frederick County has the potential to be an important form of renewable financial support. Through initiatives that allow businesses to become aware of the valuable contribution the Historical Society makes to the quality of life in our community, the Society will encourage their ongoing support through the annual Business Membership program.

Create a planned giving program

Activities that will encourage Historical Society members and friends to consider the Society in their estate planning will yield lasting benefits. To promote these activities, the Society should create a Planned Giving Program that will include consideration for informing, inviting, responding and recognizing.

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