



# HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2025



## **Introduction**

Historic Saranac Lake was founded in 1980 with a mission to preserve and present area history and architecture to build a stronger community. This organization's programs and strategies are multifaceted and include:

- ✓ Interpreting Saranac Lake's unique role in history as a world-famous center for the fresh air treatment of tuberculosis;
- ✓ Advocating for the Restoration and preservation of historic buildings;
- ✓ Collecting oral histories; and
- ✓ Collecting, interpreting, and displaying artifacts, photos and documents pertaining to Saranac Lake's history as a center for science and patient care and the history of the Saranac Lake region.

Historic Saranac Lake last engaged in a strategic planning in 2019 and made significant progress on many of its strategic priorities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization was a vital resource for research and strengthened local and world-wide partnerships. Because regular programming and exhibits were paused, Historic Saranac Lake made significant progress digitizing archives, fundraising, and preparing for the Trudeau building renovation and museum expansion.

As Historic Saranac Lake moves into the next phase of its development, it will need to build new and stronger relationships with members, donors, and community partners in order to maximize its impact and grow its organizational capacity to successfully lead a growing and sustainable organization. This plan lays the foundation for building on the organization's strengths and positioning it further as a vital local, national, and international resource.

## **Overview of the Planning Process**

Historic Saranac Lake embarked on a strategic planning process During the fall of 2022 and winter of 2023. The planning process was spearheaded by a Strategic Planning Committee and included a survey of board and staff members as well as a half day planning session on January 5, 2023.

Support for the planning process was provided by the Documentary Heritage and Preservation Society of New York (DHPSNY) program with consulting from Susan Weinrich at the New York Council of Nonprofits.

The plan was approved by the Board of Directors on February 20, 2023.

## **Mission & Vision**

### **Current Mission**

Historic Saranac Lake's mission is to preserve and present area history and architecture to build a stronger community.

### **Vision**

Historic Saranac Lake's vision is of a thriving community that embraces history and acknowledges its cultural and economic impact. We strive to provide exceptional exhibits and programs and to be recognized as expert partners in preserving our history and built environment and in connecting Saranac Lake's story to the rest of the world.

### **Next Steps**

- Recommendation: Review and revise mission, vision, and values as part of the rebranding project in the near future.

## **Key Elements of our Strategic Vision/Strategic Positioning Statement**

- Historic Saranac Lake will serve as a valued community resource for stimulating interest in and knowledge of local history, culture, and architecture- including Saranac Lake's unique sense of place.
- The expansion into the Trudeau building will enable the organization to create more engaging and dynamic exhibits, enhance collections care and management, and reach new audiences.
- Our active and engaged board of directors and staff will develop relationships with members, donors, and volunteers to build a strong and sustainable organization.
- Our community outreach, engagement, and strategic partnerships will ensure the diversity of our programming and audiences.

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of personal stories</li> <li>• Strong programming</li> <li>• Strong leadership and staff</li> <li>• Connection with local community</li> <li>• Fundraising for museum expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing capacity and branding limits ability to recruit volunteers, donors, and audience members.</li> <li>• Better engagement of existing membership</li> <li>• More proactive fundraising beyond members</li> <li>• Limited capacity to build relationships with other organizations, further challenged by pandemic.</li> <li>• Lack of year-round visitation and repeat visits</li> <li>• Branding focused on being a “TB Museum”</li> <li>• The organization does a lot with a small staff and limited capacity- need to better communicate and align expectations with capacity.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach, engagement, and partnerships with other organizations</li> <li>• Furthering efforts to preserve the 230 buildings on the National Register</li> <li>• Museum expansion at Trudeau building will increase our visibility and branding</li> <li>• Build on success of capital campaign to diversify funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not staying relevant to audience interests and keeping history current</li> <li>• Funding and financing for ongoing operational needs and growing costs</li> <li>• Ongoing pandemic concerns</li> </ul>

# Strategic Issues and Goals

## Strategic Issue #1: Museum and Collections

**Goal:** HSL will preserve and enhance its historic museum buildings, collections, and community programming to creatively engage audiences and tell the story of the unique history of the Saranac Lake region.

**Strategies:**

1. Complete the renovation of the expanded museum campus.
2. Expand access to and versatility of collections for research and exhibits.
3. Operate diverse public programs at the museum and throughout the community.

## Strategic Issue #2: Community and Architectural Preservation

**Goal:** Work to preserve the history and architecture of the region through advocacy and education

**Strategies:**

4. Develop a renewed strategy to educate property owners on the importance of architectural preservation and support them in these efforts.
5. Advocate for preservation of historic buildings.

## Strategic Issue #3: Fundraising and Community Engagement

**Goal:** HSL will build the relationships needed to grow revenue and engage diverse audiences and constituencies.

**Strategies:**

6. Develop a holistic fundraising plan and strategy for engaging and diversifying our members, donors, and friends.
7. Implement a strategic marketing plan to promote and engage diverse audiences in programming and fundraising initiatives.
8. Better utilize data and stakeholder input for planning and decision making.

## Strategic Issue #4: Organizational Capacity & Sustainability

**Goal:** HSL will develop the human resources and other capacity to sustain a growing organization.

**Strategies:**

9. Utilize the strategic plan for budgeting, priority-setting, and monitoring organizational accomplishments.
10. Equip board members with the information, tools, and guidance needed to be strong fiduciaries, leaders, and community ambassadors.
11. Establish an active and appropriate committee structure to engage board members and carry out the board's work.
12. Ensure the organization has the systems, policies and practices to drive organizational decision making and sustainability.
13. Invest in staff capacity and succession planning.