



**ARNPRIOR**  
• WHERE THE RIVERS MEET •

# Arnprior + District Museum

## Strategic Plan 2026-2030

# Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Arnprior recognizes that the land on which we work and gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Anishinaabe People. This Algonquin Nation has lived on this land for thousands of years, long before the arrival of the European settlers, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to be present in this territory.

# About the Museum

Arnprior + District Museum is redefining what a community museum can be. Building on our strong exhibits and local involvement, we're becoming a lively, community-driven space where people explore ideas, spark conversations, and help shape the future.

Inspired by the connections our historic building generates, we explore history, art, and science experiences that encourage learning, imagination, and problem-solving. Exhibits and programs are co-created with local partners and are hands-on, interactive, and welcoming for all ages.

We work closely with residents to share diverse stories—drawing on physical belongings and lived experiences—so our work reflects the full range of regional voices. By using simple, everyday materials, we make participation easy and accessible.

At our core is a commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and meaningful community engagement. The museum isn't just a place to visit: it's where we create our belonging together.

# Arnprior + District Museum's Theory of Change

After three years of experimentation as a community cultural hub, we saw a significant rise in visitation. Our current plan builds on these growing connections, based on the idea that our cultural hub can foster deeper collaboration to support inclusive social change and strengthen community self-determination. This strategic plan outlines actions to reinforce our role as a cultural hub, connects those actions to social impacts, and introduces experimental approaches to assess and communicate our work.

# Listening to the Community

Our strategic planning team:

**Gail Brant-Terry**, Senior Advisor and Co-Founder, Ridge Road Training & Consulting

**Ro Nwosu**, Wildroga Community Wellness & Impact Consultant

**Anya Gansterer**, Artistic Director, Ottawa Valley Community Arts

**Emily Stovel**, Manager of Culture and Curator, Arnprior + District Museum

We asked our community how the museum could serve most relevantly as a cultural hub through:

- Interviews and focus groups with staff, municipal employees, volunteers, and community leaders
- Arts-based conversations with community members at large events

# The Strategic Planning Process

## Step 1

Research Design

July 2025

## Step 2

Engagement

August - October  
2025

## Step 3

Visioning and  
Analysis

November 2025

## Step 4

Plan  
Development

November -  
December 2025

# Hearing the Community

We heard that we should continue what we have been doing:

## **Staff Engagement Said:**

- Change within the museum must come at the community's pace.
- Seek community trust and partnership.
- Programs to highlight connections among people, bridging cultures, backgrounds, and lived experiences.

## **Community Conversations Said:**

- Engaged, hands-on, accessible activities for all
- A network of cultural institutions in Arnprior that avoids overlap.
- More stories focused on the lives of everyday people in the region in collaboration with local communities.

# Arnprior + District Museum

## Mission

Our museum welcomes the community broadly, creating clear opportunities where all participate meaningfully in each collaborative process.



## Vision

Our museum is a vital room of people working together toward meaningful change, committing to mutual support, and imaginative solutions.



We will implement our mission and vision by leveraging stories with community belongings to serve year-round as:

- A regional site for engaging, hands-on programming toward cooperative problem-solving of identified community needs.
- An educational collaborator for civic engagement and innovation.
- A tourism hub that connects visitors to the community.
- A conduit that supports municipal services to the community by amplifying information sharing for everyone.

# Arnprior + District Museum as Cultural Hub

# The Core Values that guide our work



# Relationship- Fueled

We are committed to nurturing and sustaining relationships at all levels. We grow with our partners to provide services in a way that works for them. Once our relationships are long-standing and based in mutual trust, we help transform local ideas and activities into social change.

# Responsive and Reflective

We listen and take thoughtful action to remove organizational barriers so everyone feels welcomed and included. With curiosity, we use open-ended questions to deepen our understanding. Each collaboration opens up new possibilities.





# Unexpectedly Innovative

We are a regionally-recognized space for experimentation and civic engagement. We use ingenious methods and tools to build solutions that inspire. We bring new possibilities to meaningful change.

# Open and Honest



We are vulnerable and open to learning together. We strive to be transparent in our communication. We speak openly about decision-making and seek understanding about our work processes and goals. We support how important it is for others to experiment and evolve, to test ideas, and to rebuild collaboration.

# Strategic Directions and Objectives

## **Deepening Relationships with Community through Museum Practices**

- Rethinking care of belongings in partnership.
- Co-created, inclusive, responsive programming

## **Commit to Operational Clarity and Better Share Our Story**

- Building capacity in staff and volunteers.
- Develop and implement measurement tools.
- Develop and implement communication plan.

## **Facilitate Continued Support**

- Generating revenue
- Develop and implement Marketing Plan

# Deepening Relationships with Community through Museum Practice

Objective 1a	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<p><b>Rethinking care of belongings in partnership</b></p>	<p>The museum is working with local Indigenous consultants, hosting staff training in Indigenous relations, and connecting with First Nations communities about belongings cared for in Arnprior. We now call collections “Belongings” as an act of reconciliation and in recognition of a duty of shared care and stewardship.</p>	<p>Continue training of staff in Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Prepare for Nation-to-Nation diplomacy.</p>	<p>Host leadership from our community’s host First Nation and identify goals or priorities they might have toward our organization.</p>	<p>Reach out and begin reciprocal relationships with other Indigenous communities and First Nations.</p>	<p>Engage a consultant to help deepen our cultural services to the Municipality and residents of Arnprior.</p>

# Deepening Relationships with Community through Museum Practice

Objective 1b	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<p><b>Rethinking care of belongings in partnership</b></p>	<p>Over the last three years, we have digitized more than 7000 belongings and organized three storage locations, one for long-term storage, another for textile care, and a third for exhibit and connecting with the community. We have opened collections to the community through an online portal on our website and visits with community belongings.</p>	<p>Begin including more community belongings in public programs and school tours. Build volunteer collections team. Evaluate our collections policy and brainstorm how to include more communities in collections care.</p>	<p>Research collections policies, deaccessioning, and Rematriation. Continue building an education collection with support of the volunteer team.</p>	<p>Create a new Collections Policy in partnership with community members and representatives from First Nation partners .</p>	<p>Engage a consultant to help deepen our cultural services to the Municipality and residents of Arnprior.</p>

# Deepening Relationships with Community through Museum Practice

Objective 2	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<b>Co-created, inclusive, responsive, programming</b>	Our growth in visitation is a reflection of co-created, community programming. The museum regularly co-hosts events with partner organizations and builds exhibits with local groups to tell local stories. This will continue and is the heart of our work.	Implement current school tours, which were requested by and developed with community organizations and schools.	Collect neighbourhood interviews for the Arrival Exhibit and develop an exhibit proposal for submission as a grant.	Submit grant for Arrival Exhibit	Installation and marketing of new permanent community exhibit: Arrival.

# Commit to Operational Clarity to Better Share Our Story

Objectives 1 & 2	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<b>Building capacity in staff and volunteers</b>	We have grown to a museum staffed by four permanent employees and five fixed-term positions. Volunteer hours have grown, as has the age range of volunteers.	Implement Volunteer Plan and Staff Onboarding	Evaluate Volunteer Plan and Staff Onboarding	Complete SOPs and continue annual training	Plan staffing and volunteer support to serve as a regional cultural hub and expand cultural activities.
<b>Develop and implement measurement tools</b>	Museum staff developed a new visitation counting system to capture all the ways we work in community. We also worked with a local arts organization to develop engagement tools as part of our strategic planning process.	Research arts-based data collection and impact measurement	Test and evaluate impact assessment tools	Develop and implement data collection system that recognizes social, economic, and educational impact, including events	Plan and test community-based evaluation strategies.

# Commit to Operational Clarity to Better Share Our Story

Objectives 3	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<p><b>Develop and implement communication plan</b></p>	<p>Our museum curator presents at least twice a year at Arnprior Town Council Meetings and has given talks at local, regional, and National meetings, in order to engage as many people as possible in our transformation into a cultural hub.</p>	<p>Begin communicating what a museum-led cultural hub is and how our museum reflects this. Finalize photo and video file management procedures to help communicate best how we do what we do. Develop an internal communication plan so staff feel confident that they are informed of organizational activities.</p>	<p>Collect videos, photos, and data to help communicate our mission and community contributions. Identify external data sources and visualization methods that can help us tell this story.</p>	<p>Propose a new museum brand that leverages our role as cultural hub to support local tourism.</p>	<p>Explore the museum's role as space for community problem-solving (i.e., host first citizen lab, explore Community Foundation/Community Council, etc.)</p>

# Facilitate Continued Support

Objectives 1 & 2	Current Practice	2026: Testing	2027: Debrief	2028: New Practice	2029-2030: Cultural Plan Preparation
<b>Generating revenue</b>	The museum has developed a successful full-day, full-week summer camp that has increased our revenue. Additional revenue streams will support pilot projects in the future.	Reform the Friends of the Museum and identify pilot revenue streams: e.g., events, gift shop, grants.	Develop business plans for pilot projects.	Hire consultant(s) to help build prioritized revenue streams.	Contribute to the Town’s Destination Management activities and tourism strategy, invest in the long-term sustainability of the Friends of the Museum.
<b>Develop and implement marketing plan</b>	Our museum has explored new marketing practices on social media, partnering with community members to co-create posts and showcase community stories.	In partnership with Town Marketing staff and community partners, develop marketing approaches designed for specific audiences.	Implement and test marketing strategies to determine which receives the most engagement.	Invest time and human resources in strategies that build the most engagement online and on-site.	Consolidate community-based, inclusive marketing approaches.

# Measuring the Social Impact of our Cultural Hub

This strategic plan focuses on how Arnprior + District Museum can meet the needs of the community as a cultural hub. As the plan is implemented, we will move beyond traditional quantitative indicators and key performance metrics and use diverse engagement tools to capture our social impact. Assessment will be ongoing and will inform and guide future strategic planning efforts.

# Because we are a Cultural Hub, we

## Increase Community Well-being and Belonging

The Museum encourages an engaged, connected, diverse and, mutually-supportive community. We create a welcoming environment for both new and established members of the community. There's laughter and curiosity in the building.

### Measurement:

- Track the number of exhibits/programs that reflect underrepresented stories each year.
- Track recurrent participation at events and programs and report annually.
- Launch one non-English marketing campaign per year. Track engagement on social platforms.
- Explore the definition of “welcome” with visitors and partners, then work with staff to adopt diverse effective welcoming practices.
- Conducting a ‘Belonging Survey’ using arts engagement in years 2 and 5.
- Work with the Local Immigration Partnership in their developing efforts to measure welcoming communities.

# Because we are a Cultural Hub, we

## **Build Capacity Within Arnprior's Social Sector**

The Museum works with local institutions, businesses, schools, volunteers, and other partners in collaborative problem-solving. The Museum facilitates links among partners and moves toward a networked approach to the social sector.

### **Measurement:**

- Record the number of events/programs/exhibits that are co-hosted each year.
- Record the number of businesses and organizations the Museum partners with annually; maintain a Community Partner List.
- Collect volunteer reflections once a year.
- Host local social sector volunteers and staff in arts-engaged reflection work to track gaps in services once during the strategic planning period.

# Because we are a Cultural Hub, we

## Connect the Larger Region to Arnprior

The Museum is a regional hub for culture and tourism, echoing Arnprior's reputation as a creative and vital community. We communicate and exchange ideas and techniques with institutions beyond our municipality to better share our story.

### Measurement:

- Track and report on visitor origins and numbers annually.
- Identify and report on the number and types of collaborations with institutions outside of Arnprior and how these relationships change over time.
- Ask visitors “How did you hear about this event/program/museum?” and report annually.
- Invite visitors from outside Arnprior to reflect on their experience with the Museum and Town through summer arts-based stations at one public event per year. Track variation in these perceptions over the strategic planning period.