



PRESERVATION
PARTNERS of the
FOX VALLEY



STRATEGIC PLAN

August 2021





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in the early 1970s, Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley (PPFV) has grown from a small group of volunteers dedicated to preserving the Durant House at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve to an organization that oversees historic sites, advocates for historic preservation, and engages the community in discussions about local history. PPFV has embraced change and is building on this momentum to reevaluate our mission, vision, and values and make greater strides towards a brighter future.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was established as Restorations of Kane County (RKC) in 1974 “to foster an awareness and appreciation of landmarks, buildings, monuments, documents, and property of historical importance to Kane County, Illinois, and to engage in and seek the preservation, authentic restoration, and protection of these, and to promote their use for educational purposes” (*RKC’s Articles of Incorporation, filed with the State of Illinois on March 29, 1974*).

Since that time, Preservation Partners, a name officially assumed in 1993 to better reflect the functionality and membership of the organization, has grown from a group of impassioned citizens and volunteers to an organization that owns one historic site and four separate museum collections, manages four publicly owned historic sites, advocates for historic preservation in the Tri-Cities (St. Charles, Geneva, and Batavia, Illinois) and educates all ages on the importance of local history. Consisting of a handful of part-time staff, a small board, and dozens of members and volunteers, PPFV works hard to perpetuate its mission and vision to ensure a future for all that is safely rooted in its past.

MISSION: What we’re doing

The mission of Preservation Partners is to offer heritage education and to promote the appreciation and preservation of the Fox Valley’s rich architectural and historical resources.

VISION: What we want to do

To strengthen the passion for history and historic preservation in the Tri-Cities.

VALUES

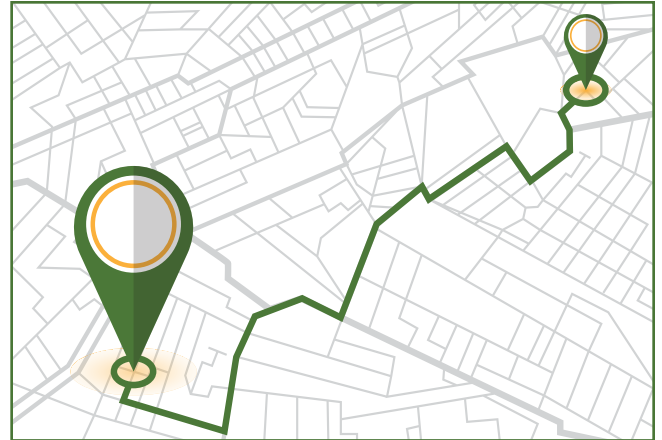
- INTEGRITY
- RESILIENCY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- PASSION



PLAN USE AND FUNCTIONALITY

Rather than using a Strategic Plan as a static, shiny document, PPFV intends to reference, revise, and polish our Plan. The document will serve as a road map to guide us on current and future efforts. We will use it to ask ourselves:

- Is what we're doing in alignment with our Mission and Vision?
- How are our efforts changing the needs of PPFV?
- How is our community changing and how should PPFV adjust?



So, why isn't there an established timeline for this Plan? Strategic Plans usually have an end date in mind, right?

Life is a journey. As the world changes around us (and it changed quite a bit in 2020), we need to be able to adjust accordingly. We are also constantly making new strides towards our efforts and initiatives and may get ahead of schedule!

FOCUS AREAS

1. REACH AND RESOURCE GROWTH
2. EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
3. BEITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
4. CURATION AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

These four categories, or Focus Areas, are initiatives PPFV staff and board members have identified as avenues for organizational improvement. These Focus Areas are based off of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis that was performed in the beginning of 2020. Through the year that followed, the Focus Areas were refined by staff and board members to narrow down future organizational efforts and ensure their alignment with our Mission and Vision. They were then broken up into short- and long-term Objectives. The rest of this Plan will outline those Objectives.



SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

FOCUS AREA #1:

REACH AND RESOURCE GROWTH

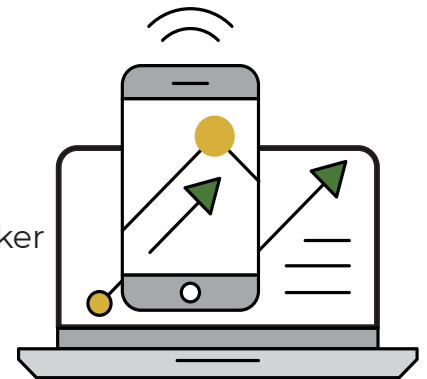
- Develop and Institute a cohesive marketing plan
- Establish annual funding growth goals
- Establish annual membership growth goals
- Define and pursue staffing goals and requirements
- Leverage CRM (customer relationship management) software to streamline our efforts and market in a targeted manner



FOCUS AREA #2:

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Increase visibility in the Tri-City community and beyond
 - Social media leverage and growth
 - Social media Content Plan
 - Participate in/leverage local festivals
 - Create and publish educational videos about our sites and related activities
- Build on momentum of the popularity of *The Woman Who Smashed Codes*, a book about Elizebeth Friedman, a codebreaker who got her start at the Fabyan site
- Create interactive museum walkthroughs for digital visitors
- Establish a volunteer recruitment and retention strategy
- Provide regular educational events
- Engage with community members of all generations
- Create advocacy support framework
- Cater school engagement to Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) curricular requirements
- Actively pursue school and homeschool involvement with our sites and programming
- Create out-of-the-box engagement experiences for students



LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

FOCUS AREA #3:

BEITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

- Assess the building and build framework for rehabilitation plan
- Define building's priorities and establish a goal
- Procure funding
- Proceed with rehabilitation



FOCUS AREA #4:

CURATION AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

- Creation and maintenance of accessioning policies and Emergency Plan
- Complete inventories of all museum sites
- Museum experience improvements
- Appraisals and conservation plan
- Improved artifact storage



PLANNING CYCLE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Objectives for each Focus Area will be reviewed at least **annually at the beginning of each calendar year**. Each January, staff and board review the previous year's efforts, successes, and failures and make corrections to apply for the following year. Part of that review will be to cross-reference the efforts with objectives within this Strategic Plan to ensure that our energies are applied to furthering PPFV's Mission and Vision.

Already, several things outlined in this plan—both long- and short-term objectives—have been completed or are underway. These items include:

- Creation and completion of PPFV's site-specific Emergency Plan
- Creation and implementation of new artifact accessioning policies
- Condition assessment of the Beith House
- Continued leverage of our CRM software
- Establishing volunteer recruitment and retention strategy
- Updating school tours to align with ISBE curriculum requirements

Implementation of new initiatives will be explored as opportunities arise.

“THE BEST LAID PLANS...”

As mentioned early on, this Strategic Plan is just that: a plan. And, like most things, no matter how well we plan, events and circumstances beyond our control will happen. We plan, therefore, to use this document as a guide for improving, growing, and adapting as our community changes around us.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PPFV Board of Directors

Jim Kautz, *President*

Lori Koontz, *Secretary*

John McNeely, *Treasurer*

Lisa Krzeczowski

Bill Cook

Tracy Aris

PPFV Staff

Kelsey Shipton, *Executive Director*

Debra Corwin, *Director of Durant House and Sholes School*

Vivien Lasken, *Director of the Fabyan Estate*