

Gallery Lambton Strategic Plan

Prepared by the Gallery Lambton Advisory Committee

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*This document has been prepared on behalf of the Advisory Committee
by Ciel Clarke (member), David Taylor (Curator) and Walter Petryschuk (Chairman and editor)*

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Gallery Lambton has had an illustrious history of protecting and displaying a heritage of visual art dating back to the early 1900s. The prized collection is made up of over 900 pieces. Exhibits come from the permanent collection and exhibits originated in-house or by other galleries. The curator chooses the featured artist with due consideration for providing a variety of themes and viewing pleasure.

In addition, the Gallery offers services that involve education of pre-school and school-age children, young people, adults and seniors, at various levels of skill and in various media and techniques. The gift shop offers one-of-a-kind articles of an artistic nature and commensurate with the image of a public art gallery.

The County of Lambton finances the Gallery. It has been observed that the Gallery is having difficulty attracting funds from the major granting bodies and from the private sector. Without significant increases in resources, the Gallery has been operating in a 'sustaining mode'. This has meant that the exhibits and services have taken on an almost routine format.

The physical relocation of the Gallery from the Library into the Bayside Mall has not resulted in a larger and more interested body of visitors or users of the facility as was originally anticipated. Quite the contrary! The drop-off in overall attendance can be directly related to the lack of walk-by traffic consistent with the previous library location.

The Gallery Lambton Advisory Committee (the Committee) took on the task of determining the interest that exists in the community to do something radical with the Gallery and its location. This was assessed in 2002 and is the basis for the conclusion that a strategic plan looking ahead 10 years is a necessary step in revitalizing the gallery and its program. The strategic planning process was launched in the 3rd quarter of 2003 and has culminated in this document in the 4th quarter of 2003.

The key elements of the process were the conduct of focus groups representing the stakeholders who have a vested interest in the welfare of the Gallery. The inputs from these representatives were aggregated, distilled and prioritized before full debate within the Committee. Only then has pen been put to paper to provide a perspective of the vision and mission seen for the Gallery over the next decade.

The community recognizes that the Gallery has a unique and valuable asset in the current collection. The proposed direction for the Gallery is consistent with the County of Lambton strategic plan that states "to undertake a broad-based community development initiative that enriches the quality of life and the future prospects of Lambton County".

The following recommendations are designed to exploit this asset to its fullest potential and to place the Gallery in position as a leading destination for local residents as well as visiting tourists.

It is recommended ...

1. ... that Gallery Lambton be relocated into a new and larger facility, preferably located in the downtown core of Sarnia and on the waterfront, with an outside façade and environment commensurate with and complementary to the art that is on display inside.
2. ... that this not be a stand-alone facility, but rather, that it encompass other synergistic organizations such as a museum, library, other arts groups and collaborators, working with the Gallery.
3. ... that the Gallery diversify and expand its product offerings and services over the next five years in anticipation of a new location. There is a need for an expanded operating budget, eventually at a level sufficient to support the activities from the new location.
4. ... that a new and more dynamic marketing and promotion effort be initiated. This may involve hiring a professional marketer to enhance the image of the Gallery's offerings and the use of the recently hired Revenue Development Officer.

Strategic Direction and Plan

Vision Statement:

Gallery Lambton will be the leader for our community in the visual arts.

Mission Statement:

Gallery Lambton will manage a Canadian collection, will showcase artists and their works, and will provide an environment to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of visual art.

Background

In the recent past, Gallery Lambton had documented a set of guiding principles and a mission. These are captured in *Appendix A.1*. Although the Aims and Objectives are laudable and the operation has been consistent with these statements, the Committee deemed it valuable to re-visit the direction that the Gallery had been taking. The driving force has been to test the potential of a wider contribution to the community and to question the long-term financial viability of a sustaining mode of operation.

During 2002, the Committee sponsored a Citizen's Committee to assess the potential for a new facility to house and show the collection. This Citizen's Committee was headed by an Advisory Committee member and proceeded to evaluate a new gallery located in Barrie. There were tours and meetings with management to get a perspective on the process and methodology used to finance their new structure (see *Appendix B*). In parallel, a series of discussions were held with local decision-makers to assess the viability and potential of building a new facility to house Gallery Lambton.

It became apparent that prior to any serious planning for a new facility, the existing Gallery required a fresh look at its mandate, its operations, its services, and its relationships with various stakeholders, and its funding formula. The Committee agreed to develop a strategic plan that would define a vision and resultant initiatives for a revitalization of Gallery Lambton. Focus group sessions were organized to gather inputs from various stakeholder groups and the process of collecting inputs centred around a set of questions with a long-term perspective in mind (see *Appendix C*).

The time horizon for this look into the future was to be in excess of ten years.

Focus Group Summary

The outcome of the focus group sessions resulted in the identification of critical issues, the need for diversity, comments on marketing and promotion, a perspective of facility and location, a view of user relations and funding requirements.

Critical Issues

The focus group sessions revealed a consensus that the current location of Gallery Lambton is a disadvantage for the long-term development of the organization's program. It was an issue that came up repeatedly and was related to the move out of the Sarnia Library building, the new mall location, current space constraints, inadequate façade and the lack of walk-by traffic.

The second most important issue was the dependency on one source for funding. The Committee that this constituted an "Achilles' heel" for the future development of expanded services as indicated to be a necessity by the focus group attendees.

The third most significant issue is the level of promotion and professional marketing the Gallery's services. The existing methodology is tried and true but is not having much effect in attracting larger numbers of people to use its services (see *Appendix D.1*). While the organization is operating in a steady, sustaining mode rather than one of dynamic growth in scope, increased offerings, and new services, there is an opportunity for new approaches to marketing and promotion.

These current negatives are counterbalanced by the very positive perception of the existing art collection, not only its intrinsic value, but also its unique contribution to local and, indeed, national culture. The focus groups vouched for the favourable rapport that existed between the Gallery and its 'customers' – those who are involved in or use its services. This positive reinforcement embraces the relationship between the public and the staff, the latter being considered a positive asset in the conduct of Gallery business.

Need for Diversity

Gallery Lambton is currently focussed on providing exhibits that span a wide variety of tastes and that satisfy many needs (*Appendix A.2*). This element is based on in-house resources and circulating exhibitions. These may be of historical significance, may be contemporary, may be representative of regional, national and international issues and may display emerging artists. The latter themes seem to find favour with the granting councils. In order to attract additional support, the exhibitions need to increase the frequency of higher risk shows, new media, and exhibits perceived to be at the "cutting edge" of the art world.

In the area of educational offerings, there should be an increase in student tours of exhibitions through an expanded bus program. Also suggested are increased studio programs applied to the general public including both youths and adults, increased tours to satisfy the needs of the seniors in the community, and an increase in public lectures extolling the merits and characteristics of the collection.

There should be continued stewardship of the existing collection with an eye to acquisitions that enhance the scope, value and merits of the collection. The curator should continue to be committed to the care and maintenance of the existing assets of the Gallery while ensuring that its contents meet the needs of the local community as well as requests from outside peers for exhibition in other venues.

The future program would involve a significant increase in the visible enthusiasm of the Gallery's service delivery. This requires the establishment of working relationships with representatives of the elementary school systems. In order to capture the imaginations of the children, an increase in the frequency of first hand viewing and explanation of the available visual art is recommended. In addition, the Gallery should sponsor an education program for elementary school teachers to provide them with an increased understanding of the nuances of visual art. This may be built from existing platforms and in concert with partnering organizations.

It is recognized that the current hours during which the Gallery offers its services do not meet the needs of the diverse community. This is a change from the days when the collection was housed in the library and was available for viewing in the evening and weekend hours. It is anticipated from a move to a new location and new facility that the Gallery's services will be available to the public with expanded hours.

There is a need to recognize the impact of new electronic media and technology on the potential to expand both content and its use in new forms of expressing visual art. Obvious applications include on-line accessibility of the collection via the Library and Gallery networks. The Committee recommends an integration of this technology into all aspects of Gallery operations from such aspects as virtual tours, to administrative uses such as archiving the assets, to the creation of new forms of exhibits.

The "hidden treasure" that is the collection, and the work of regional artists should be promoted outside the County with a view to enhancing the reputation of the Gallery. Additional effort should be expended on creating these circulating exhibitions to thereby expand the viewing audience and to inform others of the merits of this work.

With a view to increasing the creativity of regional artists, expanded opportunities should be created to broaden their horizons through professional programs and workshops encompassing media such as ceramics, printmaking, sculpting, painting, and the like. These offerings would be for the youth at the secondary school level and for adults in the community. Existing program elements of "how to look at visual art" should be expanded to maximize the appreciation of the medium.

Marketing and Promotion

The Gallery's visibility among the decision-makers of the region, in both the private and public sectors, requires a dramatic change. There must be more involvement in Gallery programs and more appreciation of the value that this organization has within the community. To achieve this deeper involvement among the leaders of this community will necessitate initiating activities to attract and engross senior executives from the private sector and elected officials.

Today's methodology for marketing the programs of the Gallery involves press releases, newspaper articles, a newsletter, presence on the County web-site, invitations to exhibits, brochures and catalogues, and exposure of the gift shop to walk-by traffic. To enhance the image and to increase revenues of the Gallery, merchandising should be maximized. In marketing the future program there is a view that new technologies could be exploited more fully, such as utilizing video, on-line access and ordering of merchandise.

To improve the communication of the Gallery's offerings, a speaker's program should be planned. This would be a professionally prepared package of material extolling the scope and merits of the full program and ancillary activities. There is an obligation to increase the promotion of regional artists both locally and via circulating exhibits thereby reaching a wider range of interested attendees. Given additional space in a new facility, the gift shop can become more important, special occasions can be sponsored to take place on the site, and facilities could be leased to encourage new and different client groups to become associated with the Gallery.

The Gallery should recognize that it cannot be all things to all people as that would be too broad an undertaking for the available funds. It should review the recommended mandate to determine what areas it would service and should cooperate with other arts organizations to cover the demands of the more general population.

Art may be based on the traditional media such as paint, wood, stone, metal, textile, and so on. Gallery Lambton's target market for building the collection of visual art, for holding exhibits, and for promoting talented individuals encompasses the activities of the professional artists. The market for its other services however, encompasses the full spectrum of interests, skills and needs of the general population. This is Gallery Lambton's challenge for the future development of a diversified program and offering of services!

Integration with Other Organizations

This is an area that has much potential to enhance the stature of the Gallery. Heretofore, the Gallery has cooperated on certain occasions with other organizations such as combining music and exhibit openings. Much more could and should be done.

There is a realization that, within the County of Lambton, there are many organizations interested and involved in visual art from craft-type organizations to stand alone professional artists. There are also many organizations related to the performing and literary arts. Most of the focus groups mentioned the need for partnering with other arts organizations to provide a more entertaining program with broader appeal.

To expand its sphere of influence, to live up to its vision and to flourish in the future, Gallery Lambton must seek out working relationships with other arts-based organizations. Through the cross-fertilization of ideas, such relationships will lead to new ways of executing existing and new program elements. Creating a working relationship with other key arts organizations could provide access to their memberships. Conducting more integrated activities with music or dance groups would alter the perception of a staid and possibly elitist positioning of the organization. The Gallery could provide the atmosphere and content material of fine art that is not available to other arts organizations. Cooperative programs and definitive working relationships with such organizations enhance the image and create a view of a dynamic and vibrant organization, seeking to satisfy its patrons and to expand its horizons - to grow.

There are synergistic opportunities to be exploited with other organizations such as the library, the museums, the theatre groups and other tourist venues. The craft guilds also are possible partners in special exhibitions or presentations. It will take initiative and determination to actively cooperate with each of these potential partners in order to maximize the individual contributions of each participating organization.

Space and Location

The focus groups felt strongly that a downtown location was the most appropriate for any current and future Gallery. Its accessibility to different socio-economic groups offers the widest possible appeal to utilize its services.

Significant negatives counterbalance these positives. The mall location is considered a major drawback due to the lack of walk-by traffic, the proximity of a food court, the association with a small business environment, the nondescript entrance and the lack of any architectural landmarks of artistic appeal. The size of the facility relative to the growing inventory of art is considered too confining. The educational space is shamefully inadequate. There is little possibility of expanding “in-house” activities.

A New Facility

The focus groups corroborated the assumption made by the Committee from discussions held during the past couple of years that a new facility was needed to allow the degrees of freedom for the Gallery to fully exploit its assets. They provided significant, and to a great extent, heart-felt inputs about the configuration and ultimate location of a new facility. Whether it was new construction or a retrofit of an existing building, there was unanimity that the architecture should be striking and that it should reflect the contents of the facility; that is, it should have a creative and artistic appearance. There was sympathy for a possible retrofit if there were an appropriate building with a historic connection to the community. The preference was for the new facility to be located in downtown Sarnia on or near the riverfront.

It is recommended that this facility have an imposing entrance and visible façade and be dramatically larger in available space from the current circumstance. The latter is essential for an expansion of exhibits and offerings. Also a ‘must’ for any move to a new facility is the location of other significant and like organizations in the same building, for example partnering with a museum or library, creating a cluster of administrative offices for other arts organizations, and possibly a dining establishment.

A draft set of requirements is presented in *Appendix E*. Encompassed in these specifications are environmental requirements to protect the collection, display needs, educational space, accessibility, internal movement, receiving/shipping, studio, administrative offices, utility corridors, and gift shop. It is anticipated that the latter should play a more significant role in the generation of future revenues.

Customer Relations

There are currently 142 “Friends of Gallery Lambton” which constitutes the membership of the organization. To generate an expanded membership is a concern to the Committee and is seen as a problem that demands attention. From membership flows volunteerism, a necessary ingredient if the Gallery is to expand its program and is to create a more dynamic environment for the conduct of its affairs.

An immediate program to increase membership is recommended. The value of having an enlarged body of interested and committed people identifying with the Gallery is difficult to quantify but intuitively is recognized to be a significant positive. There is a current perception to many in the community that the Gallery is elitist in nature even though that is not the image that its management and staff desire to foster.

From the discussions leading to this document, it is recommended that the Gallery should have a closer working relationship with regional artists by showing and creating circulating exhibits of selective work.

There is a need for a significant increase in promoting and marketing the Gallery’s services and collection. Part of this increase should provide a more visible presence in the County communities. Such outreach practices would be designed to provide more accessibility to the services, to appeal to people from the four corners of the County who find it inconvenient to commute to the existing or any new location, and to get more people involved.

Funding

There is a concern about the reliance of the Gallery on a narrow range of funding. The County is the primary funding source for the Gallery. This is both an asset and a liability. The Gallery is dependent on the County for legal and tax advice, insurance and other administrative support such as information technology. Being part of the county organization is an asset from the viewpoint that the County represents the people and provides for its constituency, services that the residents of the community see as having a social and economic value. This relationship is a disadvantage from the viewpoint that the Gallery is dependent, essentially, on a single source of revenue. If there were a fiscal retrenchment within the County’s budgeting plans, then the Gallery could be affected in short order.

Governance

The focus groups expressed a need to examine the governance structure of the Gallery within the County Administration. The Committee recommends that there be consideration for such a review in the light of the proposed expansion of program and services.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

It is recognized that to implement all recommendations in this document may not be possible. However, not to implement the strategic plan would mean that the status quo would be a challenge to maintain. The Gallery, in a sustaining mode, could only look forward to the possibility of poor morale amongst its management and staff as well as a shrinking of services and offerings. This strategic updating process has built an expectation in the many people who have contributed. They are eagerly awaiting a follow-up to this document. The public would not like to see the Gallery become only a repository of the collection and a vehicle for showing exhibits of constrained scope. The envisioned gradual increase of activities and its commensurate budget requirements are presented in the Goals (page 12) and an example of growth implications in **Appendix C.3**.

The Gallery offers a key means to meet the cultural, non-material needs of Lambton's future generations. With investment, a new facility, a set of working relationships with like-minded arts organizations, there is the potential, over time, to become a tourist "destination". By way of its contribution to the quality of life in the region, the Gallery supports the ability of the community to attract others as residents.

The proposed direction for the Gallery is consistent with the County of Lambton strategic plan that states "to undertake a broad-based community development initiative that enriches the quality of life and the future prospects of Lambton County". Through the recommended collaborations and potential partnerships there is a basis "to build a shared community of interests". To be a true revitalization of services or an endeavour to gain more favour within our community, then new and additional capital, operational funding, and resources must be invested in the organization. These are the initiatives required to fulfill the vision

"Gallery Lambton will be the leader for our community in the visual arts."

and succeed in the defined mission –

"Gallery Lambton will manage a Canadian collection, will showcase artists and their works, and will provide an environment to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of visual art."

Goals – Next Two Years

The following actions should take place within the next couple of years. Many of these can be accomplished without a significant capital investment and are a prelude to creating a new facility. The Committee and the curator have committed to embarking on these goals recognizing that there is a resource challenge and a competition for the available time and money.

1. To obtain acceptance of the strategic plan by the County of Lambton administration and elected representatives.

Responsibility: Chairman, Advisory Committee
Timetable for completion: First Quarter (Q1)/2004

2. To improve the environmental controls in the existing facility.

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q4/04

3. To exhibit young, emerging, regional artists.

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q1/04

4. To increase the frequency of circulating exhibitions

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: on-going

5. To increase the amount of instructional information within the exhibition brochures.

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: on-going

6. To modify the entrance to the existing facility with a new look.

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q2/04

7. To refurbish the Gallery's existing interior.

Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q4/04

8. To attract a coordinator for leading an expansion of volunteerism.

Responsibility: Advisory Committee
Timetable for completion: Q1/04

9. To upgrade and improve the existing web-site.

Responsibility: Curator and representatives of the County Information Technology Group
Timetable for completion: Q1/04

10. To seek a business leader as head of a committee whose objective is to establish a new facility.

Responsibility: Advisory Committee
Timetable for completion: Q2/04

11. To set up a group whose task is to define the specifications for a collection database.
Responsibility: Advisory Committee, Curator and IT Representative
Timetable for completion: Q3/04
12. To hire a full-time education officer.
Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q3/04
13. To reconfigure and refresh the gift shop.
Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q1/04
14. To hire an additional curator specializing in contemporary art and to redefine the existing curator position as specializing in art history and the care of the permanent collection.
Responsibility: County Administration
Timetable for completion: Q3/05
15. To produce the 2003 Annual Report.
Responsibility: Curator and County Administration
Timetable for completion: Q1/04
16. To initiate a program whereby exhibiting artists provide workshops in the County's secondary schools.
Responsibility: Curator
Timetable for completion: Q3 – Q4/04
17. To create a special event (by invitation) for the unveiling of the approved strategic plan.
Responsibility: Advisory Committee and the County Administration
Timetable for completion: Q2/04

Appendix A: Historic Operational Guidelines

The Gallery has been operating under the following guidelines. These are to be replaced, where appropriate, by the content captured in this document (ed.).

Appendix A.1: Mission Statement

“Gallery Lambton is dedicated to the collection, preservation, promotion and interpretation of historical and contemporary visual art for the enhancement of life in the community.” (As expressed in the Aims and Objectives)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Community

Gallery Lambton will serve the diverse communities and the people of southwestern Ontario, in particular Sarnia and Lambton County, as expressed in the Mission Statement, by collecting and preserving a permanent collection and presenting exhibitions of merit. By these activities, the Gallery will endeavour to broaden the community’s appreciation and understanding of the visual arts.

2. The Permanent Collection

Gallery Lambton is dedicated to the acquisition, conservation and exhibition of a collection of Canadian historical and contemporary visual art that is permanent and held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations. Information on the history and development of the collection will be provided to the public, and the collection will be made available for research and study for the further understanding of Canadian visual art.

3. Exhibitions

Gallery Lambton is dedicated to the presentation, installation, and documentation of art exhibitions of merit; to provide a context for contemporary art through a balanced program of historical and contemporary art that will be drawn from local, national and international sources; to provide exhibiting opportunities for practicing visual artists; to pay fees to artists for rendering professional services; to interpret and animate exhibitions through tours, lectures, films and other events; to conduct research; and to document exhibitions and programs.

4. Promotion and Interpretation

Gallery Lambton is dedicated to the dissemination of information about the visual arts through publications and other written documentation, tours and talks, public lectures, and art classes for adults and children.

Appendix A.2: Current Activities and Programs

1. Balanced year round changing exhibitions in two gallery spaces
 Regional, national and international art and artists
 Contemporary and historical
 Variety of media and techniques

2. Education
 Tours of Exhibitions by students and adults
 Walking tours by exhibiting artists
 Hands-on components for school tour
 Publications that help to explain exhibitions
 Didactic labels
 Art Classes for children and adults
 Bus trips

3. Permanent Collection
 On-going care and maintenance
 On-going documentation and research
 Acquisitions by donation and purchase
 Exhibitions
 Loans to other public art galleries such as the National Gallery of Canada

4. Publicity and Promotion
 Media Releases
 Quarterly Newsletter, *The Bridge*
 Memberships
 Invitations to special events

5. Other services
 Gift Shop
 Art Registry
 Exhibits of local artists' work in gift shop
 Opening receptions for new exhibitions
 General curatorial advice on art in private collections

Appendix A.3: Policies

Acquisition Policy (*Excerpts, ed.*)

Priority should be given to:

- the further development of areas of strength in the collection
- the acquisition of works by important contemporary Canadian artists (effort should be made to carry out this priority on a long-term basis, careful consideration being given to the artists in all stages of their careers)
- the acquisition of works in areas related to the strength of the collections which are as yet undeveloped

Purchase

The curator will develop a general list of desirable areas of purchase at the beginning of each fiscal year. The Curator carries the responsibility for the search and the selection of acquisitions – pursued in partnership with the Director.

Donations

Similar standards will be exercised with donations as are observed with purchases. The Gallery should accept only works of art that are unrestricted and have no conditions attached to them, and that are on the basis of a total transfer (including copyright where available) from the previous owner of the Gallery by means of a signed Deed or Gift form.

Certified evaluation will be acquired and upon acceptance of the gift by the Gallery, an official receipt for income tax purposes will be issued.

Disposal

The curator may recommend disposal of any work from the collections but this must receive approval from the County of Lambton.

Conservation

Preservation and upkeep of the collections is the responsibility of the Curator and the staff.

Appendix A.4: Exhibitions and Documentation

The Collection exists for the benefit and enjoyment of the public and should be as accessible as possible.

- minimum of one major Permanent Collection per year
- minimum of one minor complementary exhibition per year

It is the responsibility of the Curator and the staff to arrange regular exhibitions of work from the collections and to ensure that each work is properly documented, catalogued, researched and photographed, and that up-to-date records are maintained.

Loans from the Permanent Collection

All other loans to individuals, County Departments will be from the Loan Collection, a list of works of art from the permanent collection that has been selected by the curator and approved by the County of Lambton. The Loan Collection are works that have a lesser artistic and financial value than the remainder of the collection.

All loans are at the discretion of the curator and subject to the approval of the County of Lambton.

No long-term loans will be permitted. No works will be for sale. Loans to public art galleries may be made from the art collection, providing that the work is in fit condition to travel.

Loans to individuals may be made from the Loan Collection. A fee based on 5% of the insured value per annum will be charged to the individual.

Appendix B: Information Gathered During 2002

Mr. George Visser, a member of the Advisory Committee, conducted an investigation into the potential for a new gallery and to determine the local support for a new facility. This investigation involved three major elements, namely visiting a new gallery located in Barrie (with the curator), interviewing local decision-makers (with the chairman) and meeting with possible sponsors of such a new facility. The emphasis of the latter two initiatives was to measure the extent of support in the community, notably from civic minded individuals who hold membership in service clubs and organizations dedicated to community development.

The general conclusion from these interviews and discussions was for the Committee to pursue a more fundamental look at the mandate of the Gallery and the services being offered to its constituents. It was apparent that there was general support for the permanent collection and the existing services. The visit to the McLaren Art Gallery, a not for profit public art gallery located in the heart of Barrie, yielded a perspective on the scale of effort required to obtain funding and to build a new facility. The conversations also provided an insight into the diversity of program and service offerings established in parallel with the building initiative.

Following are samples of conclusions drawn and advice from personal interviews held locally by Mr. George Visser.

“From meetings we have had with individuals and public figures we can conclude that there is support and interest in the project.”

“Public dissatisfaction with the current location in Bayside Mall runs very high. People who patronized the Gallery in the past openly state to me that they no longer wish to be part of it because they are upset about the move. They wonder what the rationale behind it was when the gallery was moved from the library quarters to downtown Bayside Mall. It was a recurring complaint.”

“Details for funding the annual operating budget without increased public support through increased tax levy is of equal importance to raising capital funds for building a new facility.”

“Gallery Lambton needs to engage in long term planning if the County government is serious about creating a future for Gallery Lambton.”

With this material as a basis and subsequent discussion, the Advisory Committee concluded that Gallery Lambton needed to embark on a redefinition of its vision. It was concluded that a new strategic plan was a prerequisite to any thought of seeking to establish a new facility. A cross-section of the community was to provide an assessment of what was the perspective of Gallery Lambton’s service delivery and contribution to the local quality of life. The result was the “focus group” approach to getting inputs as the basis for this document. (ed.)

Appendix C: Focus Group Process - Summary

In mid 2003, the Advisory committee identified 8 main groups of “stakeholders”, people and groups who would be interested in the Gallery, and would care strongly enough to contribute their individual perspectives of its future. A list of approximately 270 names from the following categories was developed:

- Gallery Lambton membership
- Gallery Lambton staff
- Primary grade and other art educators
- High school arts teachers
- Other arts organizations
- Independent artists
- Media, tourism, and Chambers of Commerce
- Politicians, including municipal, County, Provincial and Federal

From the Gallery membership (as the largest block of people assumed to have a high level of interest and commitment), a personal phone invitation was issued to participate in the first of the focus group sessions. A cross-section of representation was sought with the end result that people were called randomly from a list made of 60% City and 40% County representatives. In all cases, the calls were met with an enthusiastic response, and a remarkable willingness to help and participate. It was an auspicious beginning to the long process ahead for the Advisory Committee.

All other categories of possible participants were asked either at random, or all were invited, and a good response was obtained from most groups (80-100% of contacted persons responded). The exception was the “politicians” category. It was not possible to converge on a common time, so we sent the representatives of this group a written version of the same questions that were posted at the in-person sessions, and asked for their responses by mail. The response was the least satisfactory of the eight groups accessed with only a 20% response.

A professional facilitator, Mr. Trevor Jordan volunteered to help developing an open and disciplined process for the focus group sessions. His effort in facilitating the meetings elicited excellent participation and response from all those present. The questions developed are included in **Appendix C.1**. For continuity and co-ordination of the results, the same questions were put to each group. The participants were enthusiastic, considerate, vocal, passionate, obviously concerned for the Gallery, and had a willingness to assist in this process.

Advisory Committee members took notes of the responses at the various sessions, and collated the results. There were a total of 38 single-spaced, typewritten pages of the responses! Of course, many similar concerns, comments and remarks were made at the focus groups. After all groups had provided their inputs, the latter were consolidated under common themes and tabulated. This brought the document to about 8 pages. An Advisory Committee member, its Chairman and the Curator met to further synthesize and distill the results into three key points within each of the categories from the focus group sessions.

In mid November, the full Advisory Committee met to review the Focus Group responses. Using the various inputs, the committee developed a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement (Appendix E), and thoroughly discussed the many themes and issues that had arisen in the various sessions.

Building on these discussions, Ciel Clark, Walter Petryschuk and David Taylor began writing the draft strategic plan.

Appendix C.1: Focus Group Questions - GENERIC GROUP

1. What adjective or short phrase best describes your impression of Gallery Lambton?
2. How would you rate your overall satisfaction level with Gallery Lambton?
(High, Medium, Low).

About the Present

3. What do you see as positive features, current strengths of Gallery Lambton?
4. What do you see as negative features, current weaknesses, limitations of Gallery Lambton?
5. Are there any other comments or opinions you would you like to share specifically about?
 - The Gallery's diversity and delivery of services,
 - Its current and possible future location
 - Its relationship with its customers

Looking to the future

6. As you think about the next 5-10 years what concerns you most about Gallery Lambton?
7. If a wish list was to be developed for Gallery Lambton 5-10 years out what would you like to see on that wish list?
8. What more do you think could be done in the short term to energize or create excitement around the Gallery?"

Closure

9. Are there any other thoughts, opinions or suggestions you would like to share about any aspect of Gallery Lambton that may have come to mind since we started or you felt opportunity for expression was not presented?

Thank you for participating

Appendix C.2: Distillation of Aggregated Material

Themes

Positives 1. The Art Collection

Rapport with the public

The staff

Negatives 1. Location and façade of existing facility

Funding (essentially sole source)

Marketing and promotion (visibility)

Diversity (answers to 5a)

More marketing and promotion

More educational programming and school relationship building

Integration of art with other cultural activities and environmental considerations

Current Location (answers to 5b)

Positives 1. Downtown Parking

Accessibility to a diverse set of socio-economic groups

Negatives 1. Entrance is non-descript

A mall location

The size of facility is deemed to be restrictive

Future Wants in a New Facility

Location to be downtown

Waterfront location was the most popular want

Desire for a surfeit of space

Customer Relationship (answer to 5c)

Perceived as being elitist

Needs to have a closer relationship with local artists (not as an agent)

Integration of offerings in concert with other arts (multi-dimensional in perspective)

Concerns (answers to 6)

Funding as to sources, level, narrow base, etc.

Too low a membership

Too often stand alone – needs more synergistic relationships

Wish List

Application of technology such as on-line access, interactive viewing, application of 21st century digital technologies (e.g. HDTV), etc.

More outreach components in the programming

More partnering with other arts and like-minded organizations

C3: The Next 5 Years

Short-term Action

1. Re-vitalize the entrance
 2. Enhance membership and volunteer numbers
 3. Partner with other sites (e.g. museums, library) and other arts groups
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Other – Miscellaneous

1. Revitalize the Vision and Mission of the Gallery
 2. Revitalize the Gallery offerings exhibiting more leadership and dynamism recognizing that more funding will probably be required
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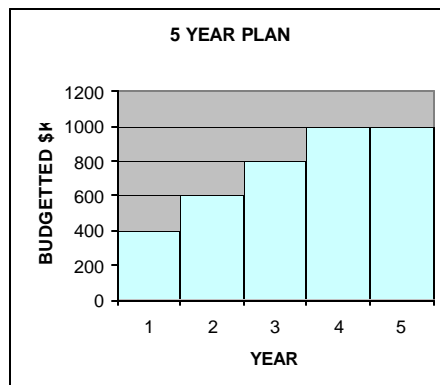
Appendix C.3: The Next 5 years

The following explores the possible scenario where a new, expanded facility comes into being in year 4 and 5 from an acceptance to move forward toward the implementation of a new facility.

Components of a 5 year business plan include

1. Program definition year by year (musts and wants) and estimation of implementation costs
2. New facility definition, costing, funding, construction, and commissioning
3. Definition of business relationships (partners, associated tenants, etc.)
4. Staffing requirements – number and qualifications
5. Considerations for the collection
6. Estimates of the operating and capital costs year by year

For operating costs – **an example**



One cannot expect that the expanded program could be put into place instantaneously. Rather what is required is a gradual ramping up of activities and new initiatives to reflect the creation of a more dynamic set of offerings by the Gallery. This step-by-step increase in budgeting would reflect the increase in staffing and fiscal support for the new expanded program. At the terminus of these increases one would see an organization operating in a new facility with programs consistent with the needs of the communities being served.

Appendix D: History of Gallery Lambton

Pre-history - Key Moments

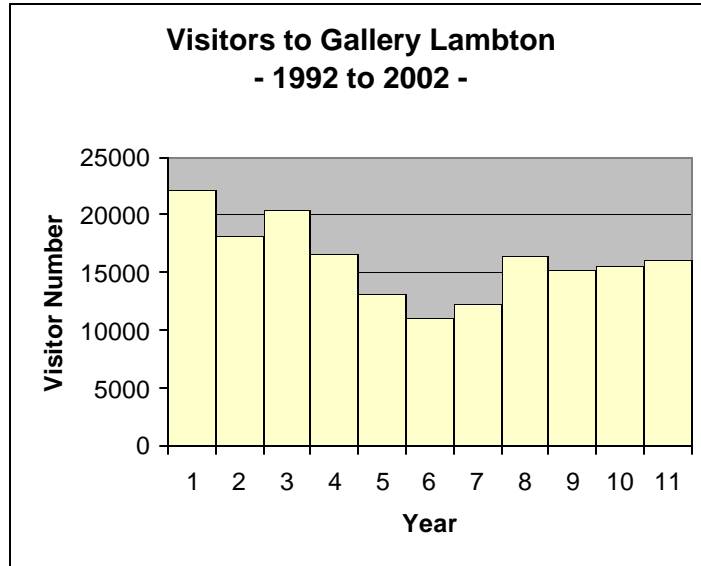
- March 1920 The first art exhibition held by the Sarnia Conservation Committee at the old Carnegie Library, Sarnia. Purchased three paintings, including a large painting by A.Y.Jackson from funds raised by collecting and selling rags and newspapers for recycling
- Nov 1920 Second exhibition held by the committee. Purchased three more works by Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven (Lawren Harris and Arthur Lismer)
- 1923 Exhibitions continued to be held for the remainder of the decade
- 1925-26 Exhibitions originated by Sarnia were circulated to the Chatham Public Library in 1925 and two in 1926
- 1920s Important purchases continued to be made including works by Edwin Holgate, *The Lumberjack*; J.W.Morrice, *Scene in Algiers*; twelve Arctic sketches of 1927 by A.Y.Jackson; and Ernest Lawson, *Entrance to Peggy's Cove*
- 1955 The Sarnia Library Board initiates the Sarnia Industries Art Fund. This money was raised from Sarnia's Industries to purchase Canadian works of art. The first two, in 1956, were important canvases by Lawren Harris, *Spring on the Oxtongue River*, and A.J.Casson, *Crescendo*.
- 1956 The Sarnia Women's Conservation Art Association (the former Sarnia Conservation Committee) donate their collection of approximately twenty-five Canadian paintings, sketches and works on paper, to the Sarnia Public Public Library. Most of these were by Tom Thomson and The Group of Seven.

History

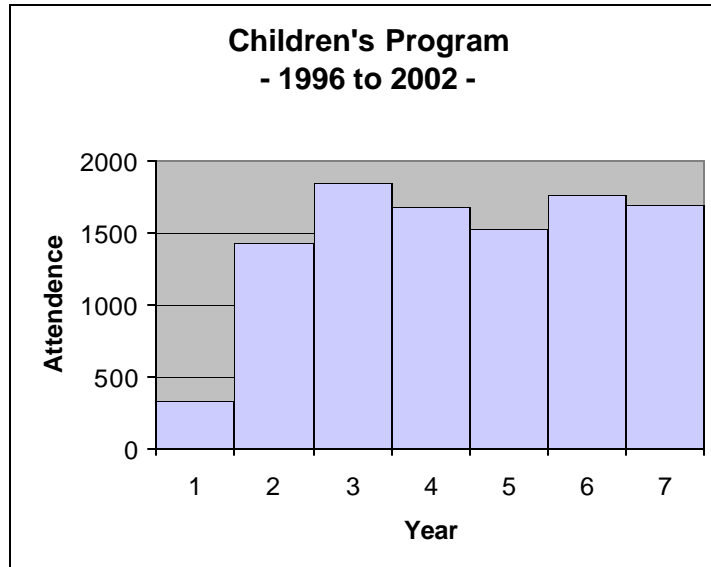
- 1961 The Sarnia Public Library and Art Gallery opens to the public in the newly erected Library Building on Wellington and Christina. This includes the transfer of the Canadian collection of art donated by the Sarnia Women's Conservation Art Association.
- 1991 With amalgamation, the Gallery changes its name to Gallery Lambton and comes under the jurisdiction of the County of Lambton.
- 1996 Gallery Lambton moves from the Sarnia Public Library to the Eaton Centre (now the Bayside Mall). This includes improved storage for the permanent collection and a more professional system for hanging works of art in exhibit spaces
- 1996 Street naming project for Heritage Park Estates. Prominent Canadian contemporary artists had streets named after them and they donated a work, or works, to the collection. Unique collaboration with a Real Estate Company
- March 2000 80th anniversary re-creation of the first exhibition of the Sarnia Conservation Committee

Appendix D.1: Attendance Statistics

Total Visitors : Gallery Lambton moved to the Mall in 1996. In January and February of 1997, attendance dropped dramatically because an admission fee was charged.



Program attendance (art classes and gallery tours)



Appendix E: New Gallery - Draft Space Requirements

Exhibition Galleries

Main Gallery (Changing Exhibitions)	50 x 50 = 2,500	
Small Gallery (Changing Exhibitions)	40 x 40 = 1,600	
Sadie Knowles (P.C. Group of 7 etc)	40 x 40 = 1,600	
Large Gallery (P.C. rotating)	50 x 50 = <u>2,500</u>	
Total Exhibition Galleries	8,200	8200

Storage

General	20 x 20 = 400	
Display cases/stands	20 x 20 = 400	
Perm. Coll. Paintings and Sculpture	50 x 50 = 2,500	
Perm. Coll. Works on Paper	15 x 15 = 225	
Art Class supplies and Chairs	15 x 20 = 300	
Gift Shop supplies	15 x 20 = 300	
Office Supplies	10 x 10 = <u>100</u>	
Total Storage	4,225	4225

Administration Spaces

Curator I	15 x 20 = 300	
Curator II	15 x 15 = 225	
Admin. Assistant/Building Manager	15 x 15 = 225	
Publicist	10 x 15 = 150	
Graphic artist	10 x 15 = 150	
Educator	10 x 15 = 150	
Clerk/Casual	10 x 15 = 150	
Staff Lounge	15 x 20 = 300	
Volunteer Lounge	15 x 20 = <u>300</u>	
Total Staff Requirements	1,950	1,950

Meeting/Study Rooms

Art Studio	30 x 30 = 900	
Meeting Room	15 x 20 = 300	
Lecture Room	20 x 25 = 500	
Library	20 x 25 = 500	
Total Meeting/Study Rooms	2,200	2,200

Miscellaneous

Shipping and Receiving	25 x 40 =	1,000
Crate acclimatization/storage	20 x 20 =	400
Preparation/Exhibition storage	25 x 25 =	625
Printing Room	20 x 20 =	400
Gift Shop/Reception	25 x 25 =	625
2 x W/C (each 10 x 20)		400
Coat check	5 x 20 =	100
Entrance Foyer/Orientation	20 x 30 =	600
Hallways, etc.	10 x 10 =	<u>100</u>

Total Miscellaneous	4,250	4,250
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TOTAL INTERNAL SPACE REQUIREMENTS 20,825 sq.ft.

Linkages:

Shipping & Receiving should be next to crate acclimatization/storage and this would be next to the exhibition preparation & storage. These should be in easy access of the permanent collection storage and the exhibition galleries. The Gift shop should have a street presence and next to the entrance foyer and orientation area for school and other large groups. This should be easily accessible to the exhibition galleries. The staff offices, meeting rooms and lounges should be in close proximity to one another. The Art Library and Lecture room should be fairly close to the Art Studio. The art studio requires a north light preferably (skylights?). Washrooms and coat check should be close to the entrance foyer, reception and gift shop. The washrooms should be large enough to accommodate large school tours and seniors. Accessibility to the physically handicapped is a necessary design consideration. A freight elevator, adequate in size to handle the anticipated voluminous objects, must also be included.

Other factors:

The total area should be in climactically controlled according to the specifications of the Canadian Conservation Institute and similar to a lending gallery such as the National Gallery of Canada. Therefore, the exits/entrances to the outside must be carefully protected.