

Report on the
McPherson County Old Mill Museum

Submitted to
McPherson County
and the
City of Lindsborg

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My assignment is to offer an assessment of the McPherson County Old Mill Museum complex, suggest vision possibilities, and propose a process for proceeding.

Prior to visiting Lindsborg May 5-8, I had several conversations with Mayor Becky Anderson and reviewed material about and provided by the Museum. During my visit I met with about ninety County residents in thirteen groups and with Museum staff. During these discussions I was interested in understanding how participants used or related to the Museum, its value to them, and its perceived value to the County and City. I probed its strengths and weaknesses and its perceived potential, and I sought to understand its stakeholders and advocates. We talked about the Museum's future and many possibilities for positioning the Museum to contribute more as a County and City asset. We discussed feasibility and what change would require of the community.

I was struck by the willingness, and often enthusiasm, of the participants to talk about the Museum and its future. There was an underlying desire to see the site thrive, but at times an air of resignation that change would be difficult. Many participants, though, were excited to be invited to approach this challenge as one of envisioning what the site should be and might become, with the understanding that a long-term plan could be developed to work towards that vision, rather than tweaking the existing plant and program.

It is especially timely to consider the future of the Museum during Lindsborg's sesquicentennial year. Lindsborg has done an exemplary job of developing its brand as Little Sweden and attracts visitors to McPherson County to enjoy how attractively this heritage is presented. The Museum has the potential to strengthen significantly its value to County residents, the Little Sweden reputation, and the visitor experience. Folks are rooting for that to happen.

Assessment

The fifteen-acre parcel comprising the Old Mill Museum complex is a valuable asset in itself. Although for some it may seem just a little too far to walk from downtown Lindsborg and, with the closure of the iconic bridge, a bit out of the way, the property borders and straddles the Smoky Hill River. The bridge, though closed, still attracts people to it and the river, even though the riverbanks have become debris-strewn and overgrown, and the picnic grounds and campground have seen better days.

My first impression of the museum complex was one of disappointment. The site doesn't impart a confirming sense of arrival. It is difficult at first to "read the site" and to understand where one should go, and the fencing is unwelcoming. The left side of Heritage Square, with its modern false fronts, introduces an element of confusion amid the presumably authentically old buildings; it distracts and detracts from them.

A closer look about conveys a sense of slight shabbiness. The general condition of the site contrasts with the care and attention accorded downtown Lindsborg and the overall excellence of other facilities like the Birger Sandzen Memorial Gallery, Drom Sott Inn, and Bethany Lutheran Church. The vibrant and attractive graphic design that introduces visitors to Lindsborg online and through brochures is reflected in Lindsborg's shopping area. The central Lindsborg experience is a pleasant feast for the eyes that communicates "we care and take pride in our town." That element is missing at the museum. I hasten to add that this is not a commentary on the quality of effort by the museum's slim maintenance staff. The demands of the site and old buildings simply exceed the capacity of 1-2 persons to keep up and to approximate Lindsborg standards.

Although the visitor is drawn visually to Heritage Square and the Roller Mill, one understands from the signage that one enters the museum building to begin one's experience. The building's design doesn't communicate this well, and the small, cramped museum lobby fails to convey a sense of welcome and to heighten anticipation.

The first exhibition space also fails to orient the visitor. This space should reinforce for visitors that they made a good decision to come and should not only strengthen a sense of welcome, but also begin to orient visitors to the site and its programmatic opportunities and to the main interpretive messages of the site. Instead one first encounters exhibits of much lower-tier interest -- folk art sculptural depictions of local personalities and scenes, and antique natural history mounts. (Only one person I encountered hoped the latter would stay!)

I was relieved and gratified to enter the exhibit experience that begins to tell the story of the people of McPherson County. Its narration is light with regard to the indigenous people who lived in this region for millennia before Europeans showed up centuries ago and settlers even more recently, but its exposition of where the area's settlers came from and why they came, and their experiences as settlers, was thorough and engaging. I was glad to see that it told both Swedish and German stories; the Mennonite story is an integral part of the narrative. The settler experience is well told and is more important than the dated exhibit experiences in the first gallery.

One next segues to the Roller Mill history. How extraordinary that this building, complete with its restored and operational equipment intact, survives! I can only imagine the community sweat investment that has made this possible. I was

fortunate to have a one-on-one tour through all the floors with Jim Malm, and I tried to imagine the excitement during Millfest, when the building was filled with tours and the equipment was running (though not milling). It is a bit of letdown, though, to visit a fully operational mill and not see it operate.

The nearby 1870 homestead cabin seems like an orphaned afterthought, separated from the other historic structures in Heritage Square.

A significant volume of County archival records is housed in the basement of the museum building. This is an important museum function invisible to most, but important to the County and those seeking information from these records. Fundamental responsibilities are to ensure that the records are securely stored and housed in an orderly fashion and that they are searchable, which requires familiarity and finding aids for the contents of the records. The records need to be accessible, physically and through the help of knowledgeable staff, to those seeking their information. Although their basement location in a building without ADA-access beside a river is not ideal, the County's archives have been very well cared for and their researchers very well served by 38-year staffer Lenore Lynam, assisted by Sheila Malm, both of whose work was lauded by many with whom I talked, as was their conduct of very successful genealogy workshops.

The Heritage Square side of the museum is problematic. The Swedish Pavilion is a more-than-worthy anchor, though it cries out to be better maintained and to be more actively used and appreciated. The complex is an appropriate place to preserve one of the County's 123 one-room schools, its first courthouse, and its first train depot. I wonder, though, about the value of the train behind and hidden by the depot. It is a massive artifact, but one that is difficult to appreciate in its current location, and given that it will not operate as the mill does, and visitors are prohibited from exploring it (how frustrating this must be for children and their parents), what is its contribution to the visitor experience? The 1879 school/Bethany Academy building has great local significance and, like the train depot, offers interior space useful for exhibitions and programs.

The Heritage Center is a conundrum. It houses historic interiors, equipment, and displays, with inadequate interpretation about their significance. Connections are vital for visitors today. They are less interested in collections for collections sake than twentieth-century audiences were and are more interested in understanding why they should care about an object or interpretation. The Center provides rest rooms for Heritage Square, a maintenance shop, and on the second floor collections storage. Its exterior detracts from the museum, its interior is not a strong contributor to the visitor experience, and the several small rooms of collections storage are cramped and inefficient.

While the addition of the museum building in 1968, the Swedish Pavilion in 1969, and the Heritage Center in 1977 were significant and commendable accomplishments, as was the exemplary restoration of the Roller Mill completed in

1981, the museum building and Heritage Center have not withstood the test of time. Forty-plus years later, another generational investment is needed to render the site appealing to today's audiences and to leverage the Lindsborg brand.

Minimum standards for visitor experiences have risen, and this site has not kept pace. County residents and visitors to Lindsborg have higher expectations of the places they visit. They encounter well-designed, well-maintained attractions elsewhere. Historic sites must not only do a good job of preservation and restoration, but they must carefully select the key stories to tell and engage visitors in their telling. Folks expect good visitor amenities, including shopping and dining. The total visitor experience must be considered and provided for. The bar has been raised; it's not even the same bar anymore!

Programmatically, local and regional sites need to relate to, engage, and be an integral and valued part of their communities. The impressive volunteer participation in and attendance at Millfest must be noted and lauded, as must the museum's engagement with some Bethany College students and schoolchildren from many counties. Many residents, though, are no longer drawn to the museum; some no longer recommend it to visitors and family.

Indeed, a major weakness is that there is no organized or structural governing, advisory, or support group for the museum. As a county department, it has no active board or engaged advisory group, with emeriti members seeded throughout the community. It lacks dedicated oversight and a cohesive advocacy group and fundraising core. One can lament limited resources, but leadership needs to recruit advocates who will help secure increased resources. While the absence of this support is a serious shortcoming, it need not be fatal. There are ample folks in the community who do care and would like to see improvement.

Born, it seems, from the tremendous volunteer enthusiasm and outpouring for restoration of the mill and preservation of other historic structures, the Old Mill Museum has been sustained primarily by steady, reliable funding from the County. This has been a blessing for the preservation of the structures, collections, and the County archival records. The County and its residents have received value for this expenditure. Being a part of government, however, can also become a disadvantage because residents may assume the County takes care of the museum, and the museum doesn't build fundraising muscle of its own. That has become the case with the Old Mill Museum.

Without a board providing oversight and organizational infrastructure helping to secure resources, the museum has become dependent on that steady stream of County funding, which has been adequate to stay afloat but insufficient to thrive.

It has not kept abreast of maintenance nor mounted the programmatic and marketing initiatives needed to keep it competitive as an attraction. The museum does tell the history of the County and preserve its historic structures and records

and deserves to continue to receive this level, at least, of County funding, but it must also be able to make a case for its future and attract additional funding.

With a compelling vision of renewal and transformation, the museum complex has the potential to strengthen its service and attractiveness to County residents, strengthen the Lindsborg brand and visitor experience, add scope and critical mass to that experience, and diversify its funding sources.

Vision possibilities

There is a range of choices for the museum complex's future, but one must free oneself to think of them. Many residents with whom I talked were resigned to minimal, if any, improvements because of assumed obstacles or parameters. I encouraged them to pull up and think more openly about the site's potential and future. We are at a seam or hinge; now is the time to think about what the site looks like, say, twenty-five years from now, not what repairs to work toward next year. Most people accept that change is needed, and most feel major change is needed. It was liberating for them to be encouraged to think freely and openly to develop a vision for the site's future.

The most immediate task is for the community to come together around what it wants the museum complex to become. What is it that we shall work together to accomplish? What is the point on the horizon toward which we aim? If the community agrees on that, it can figure how to get there over time. That is a doable planning process. A phased long-term development plan with, perhaps, five-year milestones can be put together. A governance and management plan can be put together. Partners and funding can be developed. But first the community must come together around a vision and commit to its support through its long-term journey.

While the site now seems dormant and declining to many, it is an asset. It has potential. The challenge is to capitalize on its potential, articulate a vision, let go of aspects that do not contribute to the site's future value, and then develop a step-by-step plan to implement the vision over time.

One option, of course, is to maintain the status quo. Change nothing. While archival services will remain strong, and several special events onsite will continue successfully for the foreseeable future, one suspects that continued slow degradation of the site and slippage of community awareness, integration, and participation will result. This is a slow death scenario.

Another option would be to begin to fix elements in place. Clear debris and brush from the river, replace the exhibit in the introductory room of the museum, and repaint the Swedish Pavilion. Funding a higher level of maintenance and even

stepping up existing programming, however, does not alter the present model of operation nor its downward trajectory.

The time is ripe for a generational rethinking of the site, how it serves the public, and how it fits into the life of the County and City. Instead of being out of sight and out of mind, it needs to develop its own gravitational pull for county and city residents and visitors so that they seek it out as a part of their lives and visits. What is happening at the site should enrich community life, strengthen Lindsborg's reputation and attractiveness as a destination, and in turn strengthen McPherson County as a stopping-point for travellers and as a place to live.

The good news is that key ingredients are in place to build on.

The site straddles a river with an iconic bridge. This itself is an attraction. Everyone loves water; locals love the bridge! Visitors do, too, if and when they discover it. The river can become an integral part of the attraction of the site.

Perhaps it is worth having more conversations about the bridge, as long as they do not derail progress on the museum. Will the bridge contribute more in its current passive state as a pedestrian and bike bridge, or would finding a way to reopen the bridge to vehicular traffic be welcomed by residents and contribute more to the vitality of the area and the museum? If the bridge were rebuilt and reopened to traffic, it would be important to explore retaining the historic steel structure, beloved by the community and attractive to visitors, as a non-functional feature.

The museum complex also is adjacent to, but fenced from, a popular park. How can this whole area, from the south side of the river to Riverside Park to the Roller Mill and Heritage Square and even beyond, work better together and provide an excellent experience for all visitors? Might there be an opportunity to provide in the area a range of rustic accommodations that would accentuate its specialness and make attending special events, concerts, and festivals even more appealing? The expertise for managing rivers and campgrounds resides in park and recreation professionals. Consideration should be given to transferring responsibility for improving this part of the experience to those managing the adjacent Riverside Park.

Also by the river is the Roller Mill, a truly remarkable historic asset. How best to capitalize on it? This will require finding a way to communicate to people today why they should care about it and why it is interesting; food is the logical hook. The vastness and "how" of the floors of machinery need to be made understandable, and the experience of its operation more frequent and accessible.

How could one improve upon viewing firsthand an intact artifact of this size, explained by passionate interpreters? Because today's audience is less familiar with mills and milling generally, and because it's difficult to grasp how this equipment on several floors operates as one unit, it would be helpful to have a graphic

introduction to the mill and a small operating model -- that mills! -- to help the visitor understand how this building-sized piece of equipment turned grain from the field into flour for the kitchen. How was that flour similar to or different from flour we use today, and how does grain become flour and reach us today? One group participant wondered if Kansas State, which offers a milling degree, could be engaged in assisting with preservation and interpretation of this distinctive artifact.

Programming and marketing will require focused attention. Static history museums are the ultimate deferrable experience. They must fight against the impression that a visitor has “been there, done that” and the impulse to put off going until next month or year. In today’s crowded and noisy marketplace, with so many demands on and options for people’s time, it is important to build awareness, provide compelling incentive to visit now, and deliver excellent experiences.

There are several ways that small museums can do this. Events paced 4-8 weeks throughout the operating year provide reminders about the museum and reasons to visit. Not all events need to be of the same scale, but successful events should repeat reliably and predictably year after year.

Because staff and volunteer resources are valuable, it may not be possible to offer some programming every day, but it should be viable to develop a regular schedule of enriched experiences that become embedded in people’s minds. A “First Friday” demonstration, a “Second Saturday” workshop, and a “Third Thursday” speaker are examples of programming that maintains vibrancy without constant reinforcement.

And because the museum is likely always to have a small staff, volunteers will be a precious commodity. Running a thriving volunteer program will be essential to the site’s success. I heard that Lindsborg is “a city of 3,000 volunteers,” and that the museum attracts volunteers from beyond Lindsborg, but also that volunteers are becoming scarcer and that volunteer fatigue is real. It will be necessary to compete successfully for volunteers, match their skills and interests with meaningful and rewarding tasks, and recognize their significant contributions.

It is vital to rethink the visitor experience and to relate it to key elements of the Lindsborg brand. In addition to un-separating the site, broaden what is available to enjoy at the site. Embrace art. Offer dining, and shopping. Keep history, of course! But history needn’t be precious and compartmentalized. Add to the appeal of being there by providing more to enjoy.

Lindsborg attracts visitors as “Little Sweden,” but it is also known for its artistic life and resources. The superb Birger Sandzen Memorial Gallery, Small World Gallery, Red Barn Studio, Hemslojd, and other enticing galleries strengthen this reputation. Numerous groups with whom I met suggested providing residencies to welcome practicing, teaching artists. This would complement the appeal of the galleries and shops downtown by providing County residents and visitors opportunities to meet,

work with, and learn from artists and craftspersons who are also comfortable working in front of the public and leading workshops.

These hands-on, make-or-start-something-to-take-home opportunities also provide incentive for repeat visits and can develop a group of committed supporters and devotees over time. They can draw from Swedish heritage and slojd tradition to enliven and enrich the museum and tie directly to the Lindsborg brand. A rich menu of introductory and in-depth hands-on learning opportunities also will help connect history and legacy to today's audiences and DIY culture. This will be the most powerful form of living history the museum can offer.

Changing exhibitions are another important ingredient to maintaining community and visitor interest. They are a reason to come back and to come now. They don't always have to be developed in-house; travelling exhibitions can be brought in. One should help kick off the season, and another pique midseason interest. The 1879 School and train depot offer inviting spaces for exhibitions and activities, though HVAC and security concerns may need to be addressed.

I hasten to add that there will continue to be a need for a permanent exhibit that tells the story of the native people, settlers, and community development of the County and City. Residents need this; schools and young people need this; and visitors are interested in this. This is an essential component, a core experience. While it doesn't require huge space, it does require excellent exhibit design and execution so that it doesn't pale in comparison to what people experience elsewhere. Visitors will also be interested in having these stories brought up to date. Where are those native people today? How do the Swedish and Mennonite traditions survive in the area, and where can one go to learn more?

Consideration of refreshments and food options should follow site and activity visioning. The site is just far enough away from dining choices in Lindsborg's core that visitors should be able to purchase something onsite. Would a seasonal counter or truck selling sandwiches, sodas, and ice cream satisfy those in the museum/park/river area? Restaurants are high-risk businesses, especially in small markets, but would the community support a distinctive venture along the river, maybe a small taproom with a limited but excellent menu? When the vision for the context is articulated, research and testing can help guide what entrepreneurs may propose.

I heard many times that the "cobbling together" of the 1968 museum building and 1898 mill warehouse has been problematic and that the 1977/1980 Heritage Center building design and materials also present challenges. Perhaps it is time to consider the future of these buildings. How would we rethink locating space for archives, collections, exhibitions, maintenance, dining, shopping, and artists' studios and workshops? Executing this planning with design and construction commensurate with Lindsborg standards would dramatically transform the site.

One other aspect of this site transformation is consideration of how to shorten the perceived distance of the site from downtown. It's a very short drive, and it's only a five-block walk, but it seems further than it is because one walks to Mill Street to access the site. If, however, the site is opened up so that one feels comfortable approaching it from Main Street near Lindsborg Street and Highway 4, it becomes a three-block walk, and the site is much closer.

Adaptive reuse of the picturesque Anton Pearson home and workshop could become an approach to the museum complex. If the property were renovated and its grounds restored, it would be lovely to walk past or through it and enter the site by the Swedish Pavilion. The Pearson buildings could be used to support the expanded activities at the museum. The home could provide lodging for artists-in-residence and serve as a gallery for their works. Pearson's workshop could serve as class and workshop space for the artists to work with registrants in half-day, full day, or weekend settings.

The Swedish Pavilion itself is an important artifact in search of purpose. Handsomely situated at the north end of the complex, it helps to tie the site to Lindsborg and the Little Sweden brand. Not designed for permanence, it needs activity to justify the continuing maintenance it requires. Its open space invites a wide range of events and activities, and its wings could be adapted, with rest rooms in one and kitchen in the other, to support more robust use. Reasonable parameters would need to be established on use, and its fit in the marketplace with the J. O. Sundstrom Conference Center figured out, but it begs to be properly outfitted for year-round multi-purpose use for museum events and activities and as a rental venue. Bethany College staff, for example, expressed interest, noting the need for reunion spaces.

While some Bethany College education and history faculty engage their students with the museum, there appears to be opportunity for growth. Local K-12 educators would welcome expansion beyond field trips, including tapping in to future programming and demonstrations. They also offered the participation of their career technical education students as museum initiatives advance.

While we have talked in broad strokes about major change, it is important to note that many elements, large and small, contribute to transformational and reputational change, including building maintenance, landscaping and grounds maintenance, graphic design, and onsite directional and interpretive signage. This is especially true given Lindsborg standards and attendant expectations.

In discussion after discussion, participants imagined what the site could be ten, twenty, or twenty-five years from now – an evolving, open, lively, and enticing rebranded cultural hub with a variety of activities and experiences, attracting quick stops, visits to see new exhibits or to participate in events and activities, and more in-depth learning opportunities.

There is a range of options to consider for the site, but simply tinkering with the current model kicks the can down the road. For the site to have a future and to strengthen, to the benefit of the County and the City, the Lindsborg brand and visitor experience, it needs to change. It not only needs refreshed, it needs to become a different, vibrant place – but it cannot overnight. It is apparent that public officials and the community recognize the need for change. The next step is to invite a full and open discussion about the future of the Old Mill Museum complex and to come together on a vision for its future.

Moving forward

It is important to move the focus of the discussion from one of the museum complex's being a problem to one of how the southern end of the City develops as an attraction for County and City residents, strengthens the already strong Lindsborg brand, and broadens the visitor experience, helping to attract first-time visitors and repeat visits and to lengthen stay.

It is important to recognize the potential of the significant assets (Riverside Park, bridge, river and adjacent areas, Roller Mill, Swedish Pavilion, and relative proximity to the City core) and explicitly to broaden parameters for discussion.

It is important to invite the community to think about what it would like the area to become and to envision the key elements and activities that are a part of that vision.

It is important that the community come together on a conceptual vision, without bogging down on specific placements, design, and details.

Community consensus and support from public officials are crucial. Plans can be developed to reach goals; timelines can be drawn and milestones drafted. First, though, the community needs to come together on what success is. It needs to own this ambition and commit to it.

This report may serve as a starting point. It is a reflection of discussions with more than ninety residents, most of whom would like to see the complex succeed. All recognized that this would require change and would be a long-term undertaking, tackled step by step. Perhaps a first step is to invite those participants for an initial conversation, followed by one or more open community conversations with a purpose – what is our shared vision for the Old Mill Museum complex and surrounds.

I also encourage County and City officials to begin to consider the “how” of moving forward from community conversations. If and when, in the months ahead, the community comes together around a conceptual vision, a group of individuals needs to be charged to move it forward. This group should be small enough to function

effectively, but large enough to include a range of stakeholders (perhaps a County administrator and a City administrator, a member of the County board and a member of the City Council, a board member from the Smoky Valley Historical Association, a leading member of the arts community, a businessperson, a parks professional, an educator, and a Bethany College staff member), and its members should want to serve, rather than feel obliged to serve.

This task force may be charged to:

1. Flesh out the 1- or 2-paragraph conceptual vision into a more descriptive, but not detailed, vision in its first month.
2. Recommend in its first 3-4 months a governance structure for this undertaking. I believe a new not-for-profit entity will need to be formed with which the County may contract to operate the complex and manage its operations. The task force should also recommend board composition and membership for this entity and help it launch within a year.
3. Recommend 3-year start-up funding for the new entity. This may include continuing the County funding level, adding some City funding, and seeking grants and private gifts. Subsequently the not-for-profit should earn continued public funding, seek grants, recruit partners, build private support, and develop earned income.

During the next year the task force, working with those who will comprise the board of the new entity, should also draft a job description for a Director/CEO so that the new organization, when operational, may expeditiously search for staff leadership. This position will require a special combination of skills and experience. He or she will need to have enough leadership and organizational experience to help the new organization take off and will need to be sufficiently entrepreneurial to take risks, fail, learn, and move on. He or she will need to be a kindred historical and artistic spirit who listens well, leads humbly, and is gifted with energy, perseverance, and a thick skin. The Director will be the face of this new enterprise and must represent it well. There will be missteps; this is a start-up. It is a big job. Those hiring the Director and the community surrounding him or her will need to sustain their support on the journey. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

The new board with its director should move quickly to develop a phased plan, taking care to keep public officials and the community informed and managing expectations:

1. Further flesh out the task force's conceptual vision, identifying key programmatic, site, and facility components.
2. Identify phases for implementing the plan, with key milestones more detailed in the first five and ten years and more generalized in the second ten years.
3. Develop an initial business and funding plan.
4. Include programmatic initiatives and marketing strategies for the initial five years.

It will be imperative that the Director and board keep public officials and the community informed about progress and challenges and engaged in the work.

I urge the task force and new entity's board to engage early on with the "stEps" program of the American Association for State and Local History. This national organization of about 6,000 history organizations, professionals, and volunteers has many small history organization members and has developed this program to help them grow and become more effective. Its self-study, self-paced assessment program helps an organization focus on mission, vision, and governance; audience and market; interpretation and program; stewardship of collections, structures, and landscape; and management.

Summary

- The product of laudable community enthusiasm in the 1960s and 1970s, the Old Mill Museum complex is tired and in need of a generational transformation to reverse its downward trajectory.
- The site, however, has the potential to be a significant asset to McPherson County and the City of Lindsborg and their residents. Its location straddles the Smoky River adjacent to an iconic bridge and Riverside Park, a short walk from Lindsborg's downtown. The superbly restored Roller Mill, exceptional Swedish Pavilion, and several other structures of local significance are important features, and the community for the most part values the site and would like to see it be more successful.
- The site needs to be viewed as an integral part of a much larger context rather than as a separate entity. The river, picnic, and campground areas need to be managed in conjunction with the Park and in close coordination with an opened mill complex and Heritage Square. The Anton Pearson site is an important link and should be developed in conjunction with the site to support its mission and tie it closer to Lindsborg's core.
- The mission, facilities, and programs of the site require a new and broader cultural vision and additional visitor amenities. This should continue to be where residents and visitors to the area come for the story of native people, settlers, and the development of McPherson County and Lindsborg, but working, teaching artists and a lively slate of other educational activity can enrich and deepen the experience, complementing other aspects of Lindsborg. Shopping and dining are essential ingredients of the experience and are expected by today's visitors.
- A variety of program activity, regularly and reliably delivered with consistent quality, and a well-thought-through, efficient marketing strategy developed with key partners are essential to initial and sustained success.
- Further investment in the museum building and Heritage Center should be weighed against the return on investing in new facilities that support a broader vision.

- A more broadly conceived and well executed cultural hub will serve County and City residents, enhance their quality of life, strengthen Lindsborg's Little Sweden brand and broaden its appeal as a destination, attract visitors, lengthen stay, and build repeat visitation and support.
- This robust initiative requires a new organizational structure and governance, with a committed board and closer oversight, supported by public officials and the community.
- Public funding streams should be sustained and broadened, grants sought, potential partners identified and involved early in the planning process, a program of private giving launched, and eventually legacy giving invited and endowments initiated.
- *The critical first step is for the community to come together on a long-term conceptual vision for the area and the museum complex in particular and to commit to its development and implementation over time.*
- With the community's conceptual vision in hand, a task force may lead and then bridge planning with a new governing board. Hiring a director and establishing a phased, long-term framework with milestones will guide development, manage expectations, and with open, continuous communication, sustain support.

