



The Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society

Business Plan

Prepared by the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre

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This project was led by the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre, and included the following consultants:

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Throughout the process of researching and writing this business plan, the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre spoke with several people who shared helpful information and opinions. The input provided by these people has greatly helped shape the plan you are about to read, and we wish to acknowledge those people and organizations here (in random order).

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Faith Wallace, *Program Officer, Canadian Heritage*

Robert Hersey, *Municipal Program Development Coordinator, Municipality of the District of Digby*

Glossary

Throughout this business plan, several terms are used that may not be familiar to all readers. Alternatively, some terms may have different definitions depending on the source and context. For that reason, we have included a short glossary for your reference.

Architectural drawing: an architectural drawing or architect's drawing is a technical drawing of a building (or building project) that falls within the definition of architecture. Architectural drawings are used by architects and others for a number of purposes: to develop a design idea into a coherent proposal, to communicate ideas and concepts, to convince clients of the merits of a design, to assist a building contractor to construct it based on design intent, as a record of the design and planned development, or to make a record of a building that already exists.

Bridge financing: a bridge loan is a short-term loan used until a person or organization secures permanent financing or removes an existing obligation. Bridge loans are short term, up to one year, have relatively high interest rates and are usually backed by some form of collateral, such as real estate or inventory.

Capital campaign: a capital campaign is a concerted effort to raise a substantial amount of money for a specific project or undertaking. A capital campaign always has deadlines, which can be as soon as a year or as far away as five years or more. Capital campaigns require coordination and cooperation from the organization and community.

Capital Campaign Cabinet: a group of passionate volunteers who work hard over a certain period of time to raise enough funding to accomplish an important organizational goal.

Case for support: a case for support is a 2-7 page document that tells donors who your organization is, what it has accomplished in the past, outlines your vision for the future, tells the donor why your organization's vision matters and why the donor should care, and gives the donor a chance to get involved by making an investment in your non-profit.

Concept drawing: Concept drawings or sketches are drawings, often freehand, that are used by designers such as architects, engineers, and interior designers as a quick and simple way of exploring initial ideas for designs. They are not intended to be accurate or definitive, merely a way of investigating and communicating design principles and aesthetic concepts.

Ecomuseum: An ecomuseum is a museum focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities. They are sometimes referred to as 'museums without walls'.

Experience development: the process through which an organization – often in concert with tourism practitioners – develops unique, authentic experiences that will be sought after by visitors.

Interpretive centre: an interpretive centre is an institution for dissemination of knowledge of natural or cultural heritage. Interpretation centres are a kind of new-style museum, often associated with visitor centres or ecomuseums, and located in connection to cultural, historic or natural sites. Interpretation centres use different means of communication to enhance the understanding of heritage. To aid and stimulate the discovery process and the visitor's intellectual and emotional connection to heritage, the

main presentation strategy tends to be user-friendly and interactive, and often use scenographic exhibitions and multimedia programs. Many interpretation centres have temporary exhibitions related to a specific aspect of the site.

Museum: Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

PESTEL analysis: a PESTEL (an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal) analysis helps an organization take stock of the important *external* factors that will shape its direction and success. These factors are usually outside of the organization's control.

Pitch deck: a brief presentation, often created using PowerPoint, used to provide your audience with a quick overview of your business plan. You will usually use your pitch deck during face-to-face or online meetings with potential donors, customers, and key stakeholders.

Social enterprise: A social enterprise works to achieve a social, cultural, community economic and/or environmental outcome, while simultaneously earning revenue. Social enterprises can be operated by for-profit entities, or by non-profit organizations. Essentially, a social enterprise applies an entrepreneurial approach to address a social objective, with an objective to create positive change in the community. Surpluses from the activities of the social enterprise are reinvested back into the enterprise.

Stakeholder consultation: the process through which an organization actively seeks to communicate with – and receive insights and feedback from – the people and organizations that will be impacted by its work.

SWOT analysis: a SWOT analysis is a simple framework that helps an organization takes stock of its key (internal) Strengths, (internal) Weaknesses, (external) Opportunities, and (external) Threats.

Virtual museum: a digital entity that draws on the characteristics of a museum, in order to complement, enhance, or augment the museum experience through personalization, interactivity and richness of content. Virtual museums can perform as the digital footprint of a physical museum, or can act independently

Introduction and Background: The Electric City

The Electric City is one of Nova Scotia's great, yet mostly unknown, stories. It's the story of the Stehelin family from France who settled in a rural area near Weymouth, and established a community that was decades ahead of its time – both in terms of technological advances as well as social inclusion and equity. The community had a working lumber mill, train, running water and electricity, the latter of which would not be available in the nearby town of Weymouth for another thirty years. The Stehelins were committed to treating everyone in their employ fairly, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. The Acadian, African Nova Scotia and Mi'kmaq employees were paid and treated on par with other employees, another notable advance on the typical management practices of the time.

The Electric City story has stirred the hearts and interests of Weymouth locals for decades. The Weymouth Waterfront Corporation worked for a number of years to support the development of the Electric City Research Centre. In May of 2018, the Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society was established to focus on the development of a permanent home for the Electric City story, and to use that concept as a means to support local economic and tourism development in southwest Nova Scotia.

Support for the Society to tell the story on a local, national and even international scale has come from many levels of government. Government support has enabled the Society to engage consultants to develop two important documents: an Interpretive Centre Development Plan (2016) and an Experience Centre Feasibility Plan (June 2018).

The Society had amassed a number of artefacts that were being housed in a facility in Weymouth, which was ultimately to become the permanent home of the Electric City story and the artefacts. Tragically, a fire in August of 2018 destroyed the building and its contents. The Society has continued to forge ahead with their dream of utilizing the story of the Electric City to support growth in the region.

A number of plays have been written and produced on the story and another is in the works to be performed in January 2020. A book, *Electric City: The Stehelins of New France*, was written by Paul Stehelin and published by Nimbus in 1983.

This business plan document, facilitated by the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre (AEC), provides recommendations regarding the establishment of a permanent facility to house the Electric City Interpretive Centre, along with other suggestions for consideration. The business plan was completed and presented to the board of the Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society in February 2020.

Business Plan Methodology

In order to complete this business plan, AEC and its team of associates focused its efforts in three areas:

1. Reviewing Electric City documents: as noted, the Electric City has documentation relating to this project dating back to 2016. Of particular interest to us were two documents: *The Electric City Interpretive Centre Development Plan* (Donna Hatt Consulting, May 2016) and *The Electric City Experience Centre* (Form: Media, June 2018). These two reports are of considerable size and reflect the Society's vision for its future. Although both of these reports were prepared prior to the August 2018 fire, they remain largely relevant to the Society's continued progress.

2. Facilitated discussions with the Electric City board of directors: a good business plan cannot be generic; it must reflect the wishes and ideas of the people who will be responsible for its implementation. To that end, AEC and its associates held a series of three facilitated meetings with the EC/NFS board of directors. These meetings gave us the opportunity to ask questions and develop a better understanding of the board's goals and philosophies. As expected, these meetings revealed both points of consensus and points of divergence between board members.
3. Interviews with key informants and stakeholders: a good business plan is also shaped by people, organizations, and community members *outside* the organization. These stakeholders – because of their unique positions relative to the Electric City – provided helpful insights and allowed us to see the Electric City's opportunities from different (but well informed) perspectives. Some of these stakeholders included the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage (CCH), and Tourism Nova Scotia.
4. Primary research: in addition to these steps, AEC and its associates relied on our own secondary research (primarily using online sources) to find information relevant to the project.

The Electric City's Vision

In a non-profit or business context, there are generally two ways to consider 'vision'. Broadly speaking, of course, a vision is an organization's imagined or ideal future. An organization is said to have a 'vision' as long as it can reasonably articulate what it wants to become and what outcomes it wants to produce. More narrowly, many organizations choose to develop a vision statement; a concise articulation of its broader vision using only a sentence or two. Vision statements are usually (and intentionally) very 'big picture' and are short on details on how the organization will get there.

Leading into this project, the Electric City had developed both a vision statement and a mission statement. They were stated as follows:

Vision: *The legacy of la Nouvelle France (1892-1918) illuminates and acknowledges the achievements and innovations realized by the Stehelins of France in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq, Black Loyalist, United Empire Loyalists, Acadians and other residents of Nova Scotia and the imprint it has left on the Province.*

Mission: *To share and illuminate the vision and story of the Electric City/La Nouvelle France, and to preserve and promote its heritage.*

In the early stages of this business planning process, we asked the Electric City board members to share their reactions to these statements. Although most agreed that the statements could be more finely worded (these statements could be better word-smithed during a strategic planning process), they also agreed that both statements reasonably represent what the Society is trying to do.

To fully understand the Society's vision, however, there are a few other important ideas we must consider. First and foremost, is that EC/NFS envisions these ideas being realized through *the creation of a building or facility*. In other words, this business plan assumes that – although there may well be other ways to bring the vision and mission to life – the most important avenue to study right now is the

creation of a facility that can serve as EC/NFS' 'home base'. This has been the Society's goal since the beginning (dating back to the 2016 Development Plan), and was clearly outlined in the Request for Proposals as the focal point for the plan. For this reason, we will focus most of the business plan on discussing this specific vision. However, we will also take time to consider alternate or complementary ways the Society could achieve its desired outcomes.

We must also consider that these statements (vision and mission) were created *before* the tragic fire of August 29, 2018. In the early morning hours of that day, fire levelled the building where the Electric City was storing the majority of its artefacts, photographs, stories, and paperwork. It goes without saying that while the high-level goal (illuminating the story of the Electric City/La Nouvelle France) may remain intact, the path to reaching that goal was irreversibly altered, as those treasures can no longer be part of the storytelling experience. The Society is also working with the provincial government to determine what – if any – access it will have to the original Electric City site.

To its credit, the Society rebounded quickly. Its board members – while disheartened by the fire – regrouped and have forged ahead. They have continued to fundraise, continued to plan, and have continued to signal to the community that its fundamental vision remains attainable.

Why is the Electric City Project Important?

Much of this business plan will focus on the Electric City on a micro level; that is, it will look at the organization from an internal perspective as it seeks to align the Society's resources with the operational steps required for start-up. However, it is equally important to examine a more fundamental, more macro-level question: *why is this project important to pursue in the first place?*

There are two main reasons this project – the development of an Interpretive Centre – is felt to be important. First, is the untold story of the Electric City. Although the story has been told over the generations through several publications and exhibits (and most recently through live theatre), the story is generally not well known on a wide scale. However, it is a fascinating story that many people feel is parallel to some higher profile parts of Nova Scotia's historical story. The story's central themes – early multiculturalism, culture, innovation and modernity, and global connections – are as relevant in 2020 as ever.

The second driving force for this project is the desire to initiate innovative economic development for South West Nova Scotia (and Weymouth, Digby, and Clare in particular). South West Nova Scotia (like several other regions) is facing economic challenges. As traditional industries seek to reinvent themselves and population decline continues, however, there are leaders within the region who are asking how they can further spur on economic renewal. The Electric City is one such group, and its belief is that by harnessing a unique local asset – the Electric City story – it can contribute tremendously to this process.

Looking around Nova Scotia, there is evidence to suggest that other small communities have successfully done what the Electric City aspires to do. One great example of this is Annapolis Royal. Facing significant economic strain in the early 2000s, the Town has witnessed a turnabout and is now experiencing growth and optimism. As is usually the case, this reversal of fortunes has been driven by many factors, one of which is the emergence of Annapolis Investments in Rural Opportunity (AIRO). Through its many clients, AIRO has demonstrated that if communities leverage local assets and determine what makes them authentic, they can attract both visitors and permanent residents.

The Electric City's Board and its community advisers firmly believe that the Society must have a physical presence, in the form of an interpretive/experiential center, located in the greater Weymouth area. This is important so that locals and visitors will have an authentic, hands-on activity-centered place to experience the Electric City story; this is especially vital since the actual site of the settlement is, for the foreseeable future at least, inaccessible to most potential visitors. The Board also believes the income such a center would provide will be vital to the Society's success and viability.

The Electric City is committed to playing its part in revitalizing the local economy, using one of the region's greatest assets – the Electric City story – as the vehicle to do so.

The Path to Start-up

It is truly amazing how many steps and hidden costs are associated with starting a new enterprise and purchasing a building. The most notable is the amount of support and administration time that goes in to planning a building and its accompanying capital campaign. The non-profit and government worlds move at a different pace than the corporate world. Lining up the non-profit/government/corporate worlds to work towards a common goal takes patience and significant finesse.

All of the above entities require proof of planning and of the sustainability of the project. They want to see success. They want to be seen as supporting an exciting, successful project that benefits a community; as such, the Electric City can expect to be scrutinized at every step and should welcome this. The Society should have all the information its stakeholders and partners want at its fingertips throughout the project. It is vital to remember at all times that these people/organizations/communities are helping the Electric City; as such, they must be treated with respect and have all their questions answered gracefully. They all have higher powers to answer to and all have their interests at stake, as well.

Below is an outline of generally what background studies you will be expected to provide. Each stakeholder could have different names for each study.

- **Strategic Plan** for the organization (community/stakeholder consultation must be included)
 - Donna Hatt Consulting, in the *"The Electric City Interpretive Centre Development Plan"* provided the essential ingredients for this requirement. It is important to note that this Plan was developed in May 2016. Strategic Plans should be reviewed every 3-5 years. In May 2020 (fast approaching) this document will be 4 years old and is in need of updating. That will be a factor in budgeting both time and money for the new Interpretive Centre fundraising initiative.
- **Feasibility Study** for the building (building necessity should be key to the organization's success as outlined in the Strategic Plan).
 - This requirement is fulfilled by Form:Media's "Electric City Feasibility Report" June 2018 and enhanced by this Business Plan.
- **Exhibit Plan** (if necessary)
 - Required for this project and fulfilled by Form:Media's "Electric City Feasibility Report" June 2018.
- **Business Plan** – shows the potential for sustainability of the project

- Fulfilled by this report.
- **Architectural Concept Drawing**
 - An Architect selection process will be required by the Society to fulfill this requirement. The firm selected for the project will be required in the *terms of reference* for the contract to provide Concept Drawings for the project. These drawings are crucial in fund development. Although this expense should be reduced if the Society purchases an existing building (instead of pursuing a new build), there will certainly be a significant expense incurred here.
- **Case for Support:** this is one of the most crucial documents needed for Fund Development. The Society will need to develop this document.
 - *In its simplest form, the case for support is a philanthropic investment prospectus: a straightforward document that tells prospective donors what your organization hopes to accomplish with their philanthropic gifts. A case may be developed for a campaign or for special project fundraising. Frequently however, organizations with successful fundraising programs have developed a case for support that positions the organization for investments that support the full breadth of its activities—from annual giving, planned giving, and major gift programs, to special events.¹*

At this point the costs associated with the purchase (or construction) of the building should have been determined. The architectural concept drawings, case for support, architect fees, exhibits, furniture and fixtures, landscaping, site preparation, connection to utilities, permits, fundraising and program development costs are in addition to this. The Electric City is looking at the “Project Budget” from here on in; the purchase cost of the building is not the cost of the project as a whole.

This is where the timing gets tricky. Once the Electric City has its concept drawing, case for support and budget, it can go for funding through various avenues – municipal, provincial, federal in addition to private funds. Your project budget will need to estimate the potential funding from each entity. There will be application forms to fill out, timelines to be met and juggled. Each entity will have different deadlines and rules on how much can be spent in which fiscal year. It is advisable to have the various grants in place, or at least promised, before the Electric City begins its capital campaign.

Some organizations hire a Project Manager to oversee the entire endeavour. The Project Manager will complete a Risk Matrix and a timeline. They will complete the applications for grants under the guidance of the Board of Directors, who have the responsibility of the entire project. The Project Manager will coordinate the fundraising as it runs in parallel to the building purchase and renovation timeline. They will recruit a Capital Campaign Coordinator, who will recruit the Capital Campaign Cabinet. The members of the Cabinet will raise the corporate funds. This usually presents itself as a peer-to-peer Campaign. In the meantime, the Electric City will need a smaller local fundraising committee. The Capital Campaign Cabinet will want to see a financial commitment from the local community. This could be as large a contribution as \$100,000 given the scope of this project as outlined by Form:Media.

The Capital Campaign Cabinet will need the Architect Concept Drawing, a Case Statement for Support and an Administrative Assistant. The Assistant will run a fundraising database, issue receipts, book

¹ Benefactor, 2019. “How to Write a Case for Support”. [Online]. Available: <https://benefactorgroup.com/case-for-support-faq/>

appointments, provide documentation as required and organize refreshments for meetings and receptions. The establishment and maintenance of this database is the sole responsibility of the Electric City Board. This database must be maintained throughout the life of the campaign, which is generally (but not always) five years. Major donors commonly distribute their contribution over several years. Reminders and receipts must be sent in a timely manner. Although the Society's Campaign Coordinator and Cabinet will be done their work before the building is purchased, the donors still need to be looked after. The advantage of keeping this database and having a staff member manage it is that the Capital Campaign can be morphed into an Annual Campaign to support long term sustainability of the organization at the end of the life of the Capital Campaign.

The fundraising budget needs to include the Assistant, the database, appreciation (in the form of receptions and thank you cards) and communication (those lovely goal achievement thermometers outside of construction sites are actually rather expensive!). The Assistant will work with the Project Manager to make sure all the paperwork and forms and reports go back in a timely manner to the granting agencies.

The Project Manager needs to be able to juggle the funding because (a) it usually spans across fiscal years and (b) governments, government agencies, and government ministers may change. The Capital Campaign Cabinet will be watching closely to see that the grant funding is secure.

- Liaise with the Architect
- Renovation/redesign estimates for the building
- Tender - Hire a General Contractor (Construction Manager)

All of the above require the funding to be secured *before* the project starts. If a significant amount of funding is pledged through your Capital Campaign over 4-5 years, the Electric City will need to secure bridge financing to ensure a steady cashflow. Further, the Society will be responsible for construction safety on site and will need various builders' insurances. The Electric City board will carry the responsibility of the Project, not your Project Manager or Construction Manager. It would be advisable to obtain legal advice at this stage to assess your liability and how much insurance you should carry. This will be over and above your general Board liability insurance, which appears to be already in place.

In parallel to all this activity, the Electric City must maintain a positive public presence. All of the above work will be completed behind the scenes until most of the fundraising is done. Usually a capital campaign is very quiet and does not go out for a public appeal for contributions until most of the funds are raised. Then the public "ask" goes out (i.e. "*we only need x \$'s to reach our goal – help us out*"). So, here comes the third parallel course of action – experience development (activities to raise awareness and revenue while introducing the initiative to the public) and marketing! Pick the right people to head up these pillars for the project. There are generally very different kinds of people who have the skill sets and enthusiasm for fund development, construction/renovation and program development. The timeline for fund development and construction is usually 5-10 years. The Electric City's public presence needs to be strong in these interceding years. It will need a good plan for succession to keep these balls in the air through the whole project.

Developing experiences and activities to raise awareness and revenue for the building requires a high level of expertise in this field. There are people and programs that will help the Society design these experiences and activities.

For Program Development and Tourism Product Development resources, please review:

- ACOA's experiential tourism product development <http://www.tourismsynergy.ca/workshops.html>
- Tourism Nova Scotia Experiential Product Development <https://tourismns.ca/>
- Communities, Culture and Heritage <https://cch.novascotia.ca/investing-in-our-future>

These organizations can help the Electric City get started free of charge. They have grant programs and work closely with communities to help fulfill their potential. There is cost sharing in most of these cases.

These programs will fit nicely into Electric City's strategic planning process. A strategic plan should be re-addressed every 3 to 5 years, in the case of an active growth period it is recommended to address the strategic plan every three years. The experiences that are developed will be part of the earned income portion of the sustainability plan for the future stability of the organization. The response to the sale of these experiences and programs will help determine the size and functionality of the proposed building. In the process of developing these interpretive programs, the organization may come to the conclusion that they need a much smaller space, or it may be determined that you do not need a building to fulfill your mandate. It is important to always keep an open mind.

In summary, the Electric City will need to keep all three balls in the air as this project progresses: Fund Development; Building Purchase/Renovation and Experiential Program Development. This has all been done before and is achievable. It is imperative that the Society is prepared to take on the tasks with commitment and enthusiasm. It seems overwhelming at first but given detailed planning, excellent partners and strong leadership your dream can come to fruition.

Capital Campaign

Pre 2020
Strategic Plan
Feasibility Study (Exhibit Plan)
Business Plan

2020
CASE for SUPPORT
Hire Campaign Coordinator
Hire Administrative Assistant
Recruit Campaign Cabinet
Purchase and develop Database

2021
Launch and complete Capital Campaign
Launch and complete Local Campaign

2022
Newsletter
Donor appreciation incoming pledged donations

2023
Newsletters
Donor appreciation Incoming pledged donations

2024
Grand Opening of newly renovated building
Launch Annual Campaign

Building

Pre 2020
Strategic Plan
Feasibility Study (Exhibit Plan)
Business Plan

2020
Hire Project Coordinator
Solicit building funding from all levels of Government
Retain architect and complete concept/architectural drawings

2021
Secure all agreements from Government funding agencies
Secure bridge financing to accommodate pledges from capital campaign

2022
Secure all funding for the building purchase
Solicit construction estimates
Tender the building renovation contract
Begin renovation

2023
Renovation

2024
Grand Opening of the newly renovated building

Experience Product Development

Pre 2020
Strategic Plan
Feasibility Study (Exhibit Plan)
Business Plan

2020
Address Strategic Plan for 2020 - 2024
Work with the Weymouth Community, Tourism Nova Scotia, CCH and ACOA to develop authentic experiences to tell the Electric City Story

2021
Launch 4 World Class Experiences
Develop the Electric City Theatre Festival
Begin developing partnerships for use of the building

2022
Re-offer 4 World Class Experiences
Launch the 1st Annual Electric City Theatre Festival
Add school program development for new building

2023
Add 4 new World Class Experiences
2nd Annual Electric City Theatre Festival
Plan the Cafe and Gift Shop

2024
Grand Opening of newly renovated building

The Competitive Environment for Museums and Interpretive Centres

Museums and Interpretive Centres are competing in a rapidly changing world where the experience is becoming the primary product. People are seeking to make memories, not to collect post cards – at least not exclusively. There are many and sundry reasons to start a museum or interpretive center or both, but they all boil down to the same base motive – to tell the story. Storytelling has been fundamental to human communication since the beginning of time. Before there was the written word, information was passed down through generations by the Storyteller. How we tell our stories has changed as we experiment with the communication tools at our disposal. Humans have tried telling their stories through the spoken word, by collecting artefacts about the story, by writing poems, songs and plays.

The term “museum” is not proprietary nor trademarked. There are no ‘museum police’ who decide whether or not you can call yourself a museum. In the scholarly world a museum has specific goals to collect artefacts that meet its mandate and to hold these artefacts in the public trust in perpetuity. Artefacts are carefully catalogued and preserved so that they may hold time at a standstill and be studied. These museums preserve objects, archival material and intangibles (skills, breeds, seeds, language) to assist us to understand the human condition over time, and to help us understand how we’re growing and evolving as a species. The traditional museum basically displayed a fraction of its objects in glass cabinets for the public to gaze upon. It is only recently that museums have added education and marketing departments. These departments often clash with the collections departments. Preserving objects for the future is difficult at best without the objects being handled and experienced by lay people. The conundrum is easy to see.

The public is now voicing their opinion on how they would like Public Funds to be used in the museum context. The public would like more interaction and more authentic experiences. It is challenging for museums to operate as funding declines while the demand for services increases. Museums find themselves in need of fund development skills sets.

Telling your story in the form of a museum is a task not to be taken lightly. The people who donate objects to your collection to enable you to tell the story you wish to tell are entitled to know how you intend to care for these objects and how they and their descendants can see these objects at any time in the future.

In order to get grants and public funding for a museum, the Electric City would need to meet museum standards for artifact collection and preservation. There are courses and manuals on how to manage your collection. Many community museums spend much of their time maintaining their facilities and collections. The storytelling is hard to do on top of that. Although it is possible to be a museum without meeting these standards, it will be difficult or impossible to obtain public funding.

Interpretive Centres (and similar venues, such as Science Centres) *also* tell a story but they do not collect artefacts, objects, or specimens. They often have major work to do to maintain facilities and exhibits to tell their stories, but they have determined that they will not take on the task of collecting artefacts as part of their mandate to tell their story. These institutions are often as successful in telling their stories as museums are, they just do it in a different way.

The largest trend right now in program delivery is story telling, where organizations strive to deliver their story through a compelling, authentic experience. According to Tourism Nova Scotia Experience Development Advisor Heather Yule, organizations must “look at the authentic connection to place – the authentic cultural story.” This principle is reinforced by the following passage from Tourism Nova Scotia’s website:

Unique, authentic experiences distinguish Nova Scotia from other travel destinations. Through crafted experiential tourism opportunities, our visitors are provided with unique, entertaining, and/or educational activities that make it possible for them to have a personal connection to Nova Scotia and its people. It's about visitors becoming active participants, trying a new skill, learning about who we are or how we live, or challenging themselves. It is about meeting the locals – the chefs, fishers, farmers, artisans, guides, musicians, storytellers, and people in our communities across the province that have a special skill to share or an interesting story to tell and who help make Nova Scotia a great place to live and visit.²

This message is reinforced by the results of Nova Scotia’s Tourist Exit survey, which were made public earlier in December. According to a recent CBC article on these results:

“Anna Moran, the director of policy and research for Nova Scotia, said the province's "authentic, real advertising" is part of the reason those [exit survey] ratings are so high.[...] When visitors come here they get exactly what we tell them they're going to get.”³

This is exciting in that this doesn’t *necessitate* having an actual structure to begin delivering the story. With respect to experience development, the world really is your stage. Think in terms of food, drink – taste, smell, touch, sound, sight. When you are starting from scratch it is advisable to look at all your options before you decide what is the best way to tell your story. Look at the costs, the ability to sustain and the flexibility of the method you use to tell your story.

The youth of today are looking for flexible, authentic experiences both for entertainment and for work opportunities. As the storyteller, the Electric City needs to look not only at the method of telling the story, but who will tell the story in the future. It is important to provide the tools for future generations to tell the Electric City story. Technology has opened up so many new, alternative opportunities for storytelling.

Here are some examples of communities that offer experiences using some innovative technologies:

- Examples of outdoor light shows, possible for the actual site of Electric City – using solar, of course! <https://www.wheels.ca/top-ten/8-of-the-best-christmas-light-shows-in-canada/>
- Perkins House Museum, Liverpool, Nova Scotia (Holograms) <https://perkinshouse.novascotia.ca/>

² Tourism Nova Scotia (2019). “Experience Development”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.tourismns.ca/development/experience-development>

³ Willlick, Frances (December 2019). “From ‘too much hype’ to ‘earthly paradise’: tourists react to Nova Scotia”. CBC News [Online]. Available: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/tourist-feedback-nova-scotia-1.5395180>

- *Experience our interactive exhibit! Let 21st century technology transport you Colonial Liverpool in the 1700s. Like friendly spectres from the 18th century, Simeon Perkins and his family will introduce you to family life during an exciting time in Nova Scotia's history. Meet our ghosts and help them reveal their fascinating stories and diverse opinions using interactive memory boxes. Meet Simeon as he prepares for his day. Follow his wife Elizabeth and servant Mary Fowler, working in the pantry, as they share confidences about life in a busy household. Listen to the children's stories and watch them play marbles in the upstairs bedroom*
- Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, Shelburne, Nova Scotia <https://blackloyalist.novascotia.ca/>
 - *The new Black Loyalist Heritage Centre houses a new multimedia presentation of the Black Loyalist journey from Africa to the American colonies then to Nova Scotia and back to Africa. Explore the virtual copy of the Carlton's Book of Negroes and search for your ancestor who may have experienced part of this incredible journey. Discover our impressive archaeological pit containing the material evidence of this compelling story. These archaeological artifacts were excavated here in Birchtown in the 1990's.*
- Grand Pre, Grand Pre, Nova Scotia <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/ns/grandpre/activ>
 - *Located in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, discover powerful Acadian stories within a picturesque landscape. Success and struggles are told throughout a captivating multimedia presentation and engaging displays, a splendid Victorian garden, and a Memorial Church. Immerse in a guided exploration of the Acadians' tragic upheaval during the 18th century. This is Grand-Pré National Historic Site—l'Acadie brought to life.*
- Canadian Museum of Human Rights <https://humanrights.ca/exhibition/explore-canadas-proclamation-through-augmented-reality>
 - *Experience an amazing milestone in Canada's human rights story by entering the immersive world of augmented reality!*

The Social Enterprise Approach and the Experience Approach

At the core of the Electric City project is the focus on community, and supporting all members of the community to progress. That collective progression was the foundation upon which the Electric City was built, and is the impetus for the current initiative - to support the community of Weymouth, and southwest Nova Scotia, to benefit from the telling of the story. Given this focus on community, and the social nature of this project, the Society may want to consider a *social enterprise* structure as a way to meet its objectives. While there is no legal definition of a social enterprise, there are generally accepted principles. A social enterprise works to achieve a social, cultural, community economic and/or environmental outcome, while simultaneously earning revenue. Social enterprises can be operated by for-profit entities, or by non-profit organizations. Essentially, a social enterprise applies an entrepreneurial approach to address a social issue, with an objective to create positive change in the community. Surpluses from the activities of the social enterprise are reinvested back into the enterprise.

Social enterprises are being founded on a growing scale and can be seen in small towns and communities. They exist on much larger scales as well. Examples of local social enterprises are the Wolfville Farmer’s Market, Flower Cart Group, and Lake City Works (which provides services such as computer repair, cleaning and maintenance while supporting people with mental illnesses to build on their strengths and develop employment skills).

The social enterprise concept lends itself to creative solutions to community challenges. In this case, the Society is working toward the establishment of a permanent home and facility to tell the Electric City story. One way to support that dream could be through the establishment of a social enterprise which provides experiences to tourists, and locals, who are looking for an authentic opportunity to learn more about the Electric City. The revenue generated from experience participants could support the ongoing development of the interpretive centre.

There are more and more examples of communities and organizations who are offering experiences to paying participants, and some of those examples are doing so without an actual “home base.” Experiences for those interested in learning more about Electric City could include guided tours to the facility, complete with interpretive presentations on life at that time. Meals could be provided, or, there could be an opportunity for participants to be engaged in the creation (and consumption!) of a meal that would have been traditional during the age of the Electric City. A suggestion from Tourism Nova Scotia is to consider if the area of Electric City can qualify as part of the UNESCO Biosphere for Night sky. Tourists, especially those from densely populated areas, are traveling great distances to experience a truly dark sky. There is also an opportunity to capitalize on the rural nature of the area, and the availability of wildlife.



The Society has talked about how ATV enthusiasts are enjoying the Electric City site, and a focus could be put on promoting the site as a destination for ATVers, while perhaps providing some additional amenities or experiences.

Experiences and activities of this nature would help to spread the word of the story, while providing participants the ability to engage first-hand with the site and the activities that were important at that time. Many of the suggestions included in the 2016 Interpretive Plan could be relevant to the current situation, even in the absence of a facility.

Case Studies and Success Stories

Tourism experts are reporting a growth in the number of tourists who want to be immersed in cultural and experiential activities. Those tourists don't want to just learn about events/cultures, etc., they want to experience them, and feel as though they are part of the story. Below are some examples that highlight the growing interest on the part of tourists to be immersed in activities.

The ***Devour Film Festival*** is based in Wolfville, Nova Scotia and has become the world's largest film festival devoted to films about food, while providing a variety of food-based and culinary experiences. Devour started small and continues to have no specific 'home' but utilizes facilities throughout the community to host its activities.

Dinner on the Ocean Floor has become so popular that the experience sells out quickly and generates a long waiting list. Participants spend \$950 + HST per couple to enjoy a three-course meal prepared and served by a local chef, and paired with local wines and beers. These experiences are available at Burntcoat Head Park (eastern shore area) and along the Bay of Fundy.

Tidal Reveal: Dig for Canada's Oldest Dinosaurs: Fundy Geological Museum, Parrsboro, Nova Scotia. Take an exclusive Zodiac boat excursion along shores of the Bay of Fundy to an active dinosaur dig. Dig for fossils of Canada's oldest dinosaurs alongside museum experts and paleontologist, seeing the latest discoveries revealed by the world's highest tides. Then enjoy a lobster sandwich picnic lunch on a Jurassic beach. \$360.00 + tax June 1st, 2020 to September 30th, 2020

LaHave Islands Glamping Adventure Foodies will love this guided glamping adventure with everything provided! Island hop by kayak, to colourful fishing communities and pristine coasts. Indulge in fresh seafood and local flavours prepared for you on the beach, try yoga on stand-up paddleboards, and glamp under the stars. From \$799.00 to \$1199.00 + tax July 23rd, 2020 to August 31st, 2020

Ecomuseums, or museums without walls, support and tell the story of the lived heritage in local communities. Ecomuseums are being established in many communities across Saskatchewan. They provide a framework for sustainable community development by leaving natural and cultural heritage objects in place, such as the Electric City site and any remaining foundations, and having the community work together to develop a plan to show off the significance of the site. The objective of an ecomuseum is to "enhance quality of life within the community, to make the community a place where people want to live, work and play; a place where people are proud to call home and where they share a strong sense of belonging."⁴

The Town of Mahone Bay is another interesting example, which holds a series of festivals and events throughout the year which bring visitors to the community on numerous occasions. The **Mahone Bay Heritage Weekend**, the **Scarecrow Festival and Antique Fair** and the **Father Christmas Festival**, are all outdoor events that take place throughout the town and community. In the case of the last two event, residents and businesses work together to develop a scene that encourages visitors to walk through the town to see the various displays. Businesses will often hold special shopping or food events. The Town is very busy during these events which have organically grown from humble beginnings.

⁴ Massey, Sandra (November 2014). "Museums without walls: Getting the conversation started on ecomuseums." [Online]. Available: <https://www.saskculture.ca/impact/success-stories/museums-without-walls-getting-the-conversation-started-on-ecomuseums>

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis provides an opportunity to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that will impact and organization, and or project. Typically, the strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization (therefore, the organization may have more influence over these areas), while the threats and opportunities are external to the organization. While we expect that there are other SWOTs that could be included in this analysis, we have chosen the top 4-5 to be included in this document.

STRENGTHS (internal)	WEAKNESSES (internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Electric City story is compelling, with two main areas of interest: technological advancement and social inclusion and equity • Support from all levels of government in the form of enabling the creation of various strategic and foundational documents • Society co-chairs are passionate and dedicated • Successful theatrical productions have an excellent reputation, and have generated much enthusiasm • Board members have time and passion to volunteer for the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some board members may lack historical background of the project, and would benefit from a new board member package, to ensure they understand how the Society has evolved to its current formation and goals. • Board does not always seem to be speaking with ‘one voice’ • Lack of succession planning – what happens when the co-chairs or other board members are not able to continue this work? • Some potential community partners not strongly engaged yet • Success will depend on the unwavering focus of a/some innovative champion(s). There is currently no staff person – all efforts are implemented by volunteers
OPPORTUNITIES (external)	THREATS (external)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative approaches to telling the story, such as experiential activities, which are increasingly popular with tourists • ACOA tourism experts keen to support innovative initiatives • As a number of cultures are part of the Electric City story, there is the opportunity to work with representatives from those cultures to establish a cultural exchange and encourage them to envision how their ancestors lived/worked at Electric City. Numerous interpretive opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited government funding for new builds of interpretive centres, museums, or community spaces • Widespread community support is not evident • High cost of building an interpretive centre, and the ongoing maintenance/management • Remoteness, and relative inaccessibility, of the actual site, and distance of Weymouth from metro Halifax • Limited availability of amenities required by tourists – accommodations, dining options, etc.

Key Success Factors

Key success factors (KSFs) state the most important elements required for an organization to achieve success. KSFs articulate what the organization (in this case Electric City) must do *exceptionally* well to achieve its goals. Although the Electric City – like any other organization – must do *lots* of things well, there are five things in particular that we view as critical to its progress.

- **KSF 1: Enlisting large-scale, professional fundraising expertise:** The Electric City and its board is to be commended for the fundraising efforts it has undertaken to date. Through various special events (teas, lunches, bottle drives, calendar sales, etc.), the Society has generated important operating revenue while also engaging the surrounding community in its efforts. These types of ‘roll-up-your-sleeves’ efforts signal to the community that the Electric City’s volunteers are committed and are willing to work hard for the cause.

These fundraising efforts are great for community visibility. If the Electric City wishes to bring its vision to life, however, it will need to enlist professional fundraising support to bring fund development to the next level. Professional fundraisers (such as Halifax-based Bloom Non-Profit Consulting Group, for example) are well positioned to support organizations with capital campaigns, development planning, prospect research, and more. These professionals are fee-based, but enable organizations to elevate their approach to fundraising and fund development.

- **KSF 2: Engaging stakeholders:** over the past several years, Electric City board members have made a point of reaching out to government and quasi-government agencies to discuss the Society’s objectives. Some members have – on a purely voluntary basis – attended numerous industry and community networking events designed to learn best practices and raise the Society’s profile (and the profile of the Electric City story). The Society has made considerable gains through this approach, having not only generated interest but also grant funding (such as for this business plan).

We believe it is vital for the Electric City to not only continue these efforts, but to intensify and formalize them. The organization will benefit greatly by working with organizations like Tourism Nova Scotia (which has several Experience Development Advisors who are available for support), Communities Culture and Heritage, the Digby Area Tourism Association, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS), Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association, the Western REN, and others. These organizations – and others like them – serve as both influencers and (on occasion) gatekeepers for success in tourism. Working in concert with them – so as to align the Electric City’s efforts with their existing strategies – will be necessary.

- **KSF 3: Evolve beyond a working board:** there are various types of non-profit boards, including policy boards, governance boards, advisory boards, management boards, and several other hybrid models. Currently, the Electric City is largely a working/operating board. Working boards, generally speaking, exist when the board members also do the operational work of the organization (and usually because funds do not yet exist to pay staff).

With a large scope of work ahead, Electric City board members are going to have to continue ‘rolling up their sleeves’ and doing the work (as they have been very steadfastly doing for the past several years). However, as Electric City takes on larger initiatives – such as the purchase

and renovation of a building – it is unlikely that volunteer efforts alone will be sufficient, and paid staff will need to be hired.

To that end, we believe the organization must begin to consider how it will fund its first part-time employee; someone who can work in concert with the board to further formalize the group's efforts. This does not mean the board will no longer be a working board; rather, it means that the board will have someone to anchor their efforts. This individual will be accountable for handling a growing volume of enquiries/correspondence, and will ensure greater coordination of the board's efforts.

In the meantime, we believe the Electric City board – as a whole – should consider participating in board governance training or workshops (often offered by organizations like the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia). Such training would assist the board in developing clarity around its roles and responsibilities; an important step as the organization grows. The board may also wish to consider creating and introducing a board recruitment package, which can help attract new board members and create a consistent orientation experience.

- **KSF 4: Thinking of Electric City as a business:** the Electric City is – and likely forever will be – organized as a non-profit society. At some future point, it may even become a registered charity. This is quite typical for any organization whose primary aim is of a socially beneficial nature (in this case the perseveration of history and heritage).

As the EC/NFS continues towards its goals, it is imperative that the Board builds and nurtures a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition to asking *'how can others support the Electric City'*, the board must also ask *'what irreplaceable experience can the Electric City provide that customers and stakeholders are glad to pay for?'* Although the Society has already demonstrated this entrepreneurial spirit through the creation and delivery of live theatre performances, it will be well served to think further about how it can position itself to become less reliant on donations and community goodwill. Developing a social enterprise may be a solution to accomplishing a social goal, through a business lens.

One great resource we encourage the Electric City to review is Earth Rhythms, which is “an award-winning boutique Nova Scotia experiential tourism company dedicated to fostering travel conversations and custom immersive experiences with creative people in out-of-the-way places where we live beside the Bay of Fundy and the Annapolis and Gaspereau Valleys.”⁵ Earth Rhythms, which is owned and operated by Celes Davar, can be found at www.earthrhythms.ca.

- **KSF 5: Developing a succession plan:** early in this business planning process, AEC and its associates asked the Electric City board members to consider their future role within the organization. All boards should have a succession plan and we recommend that one be implemented as soon as possible for EC/NFS.

More directly, the board must ask *'how sustainable would the Electric City be if a few key board members were no longer able to participate in its work?'* Currently, there are 7 listed board members. As the Electric City considers approaching government agencies and community members to request donations and investment, it should expect these stakeholders to want

⁵ [Earth Rhythms \(2019\)](http://www.earthrhythms.ca). “Welcome to Earth Rhythms”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.earthrhythms.ca>

reassurance that the organization has a stable, competent, and well-governed board. The Electric City should also be able to demonstrate to funders that additional board or volunteers can be enlisted without difficulty when the need arises.

- **KSF 6: Deliver a consistent and crystal-clear message to the community:** throughout the business planning phase, there have been several suggestions that Electric City invite general community members together for a public meeting. Although this is certainly in keeping with KSF 2 (Engaging Stakeholders), there is considerable risk to this step if it is not properly executed.

By the time the Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society summons the community together, it should be fully prepared to:

- Demonstrate clear progress on the project
- Share its forward-looking vision in an inspiring manner
- Project complete unity between board members
- Clearly articulate how the project benefits those in the room
- Clearly articulate how people in the room can make a meaningful contribution to the project going forward

A meeting that accomplishes these five things puts Electric City in a favourable position with the community and will move the project forward with community support and enthusiasm.

Site Selection and Location Analysis

Currently, the Electric City's goal is purchase the former Valufoods store and property at 4479 Highway 1 (Weymouth) at an approximate cost of \$200,000 (with an additional \$1.8 million in renovations and land development. It should be noted, however, that during the research and preparation of this business plan, the Society did consider other options. In this section of the report, we will review those other options (solely for the purpose of context and comparison), but will ask you to pay particular attention to 4479 Highway 1 (Site 3); the financial forecasts that appear later in the report are based on this particular property.

Site selection, generally, is the process of identifying potential locations for a commercial (or in this case community) structure and weighing the pros and cons of each. Ultimately, the goal is to determine the best location among the available options. A site selection process aims to answer questions like:

- How much does each site cost, both in absolute dollars and in cost per square foot (or acre)?
- Will lenders, donors, or stakeholders look more favourably upon one location versus another?
- Which location is likely to attract more visitors or achieve the greatest visibility?
- Does the site offer appropriate access to utilities (e.g. electricity, sewer, water)?
- Are the soil conditions conducive to the project's structural needs?
- Is the site zoned in such a way that the Electric City could carry out its plan in accordance with municipal by-laws?
- Will the site require major maintenance (i.e. drainage, retaining walls, topography)?
- Which location puts Electric City in the best position to expand when and if desired?

- Is the site large enough to accommodate the Electric City's current plans?
- Does the site provide for adequate parking and accessibility?
- What other developments – if any – are expected to occur near the site in question?
- How might climate change affect each potential site over the long-term?
- Is the site near to other important attractions? In other words, will it help to form a cluster of attractions, or will it be relatively isolated?
- What signage or other by-laws might prevent the Electric City from carrying out its plan on site?

These are just some of the many questions that professional site selectors examine when helping an enterprise choose the optimal location. While many of these questions are beyond the scope of this report (in particular, those relating to the physical quality or characteristics of each site), we are able to offer some ideas and recommendations for the Electric City.

Before we identify the three sites currently in consideration, it is important to acknowledge that the original Electric City site is not currently in consideration. Although this remains an extremely valuable asset that the Society should attempt to make use of in the future (formally or informally), it is not currently accessible without major upgrades to the terrain leading into and out of the site. Further, the Society does not have ownership of the land and does not currently have a clear agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia to use it for commercial or educational purposes.

The three sites originally under consideration were as follows:

Site 1: The J.D. Irving Mill property; Lot 9, 122 Weymouth Falls Road, Weymouth

The J.D. Irving Mill property is a well-known site in Weymouth, as – up until the mid 2000s – it was home to one of Weymouth's largest employers (the Irving Sawmill). Although the exact dimensions are unknown at this time (as the property is not listed for sale), this property is believed to be the largest of the three under consideration. As such, it would presumably allow for the most future expansion if and when the Society decides to move in that direction. The site is well above Weymouth's flood plain area as well, eliminating the risk of flooding. The most significant (known) disadvantage of this property is that it is located on Weymouth Falls Road, about a half kilometer away from Weymouth's main route (Route 1 – Evangeline Trail). Although precise traffic counts were not available, it is fair to estimate that the location receives a much smaller volume of drive-by traffic than the other two sites; certainly a disadvantage for a visitor attraction.

Site 2: The former garage property; 4604 Highway 1, Weymouth

4604 Highway 1 is located just north of Weymouth's Sissiboo River, and is referred to as 'the former garage property' because – many years ago – the site was home to an auto repair shop. Since that time, it has been unoccupied with an average annual assessment of about \$27,000. While the lot is comparatively small (at 10,160 square feet) and is at increased risk of flooding (it sits about 150 feet from the Sissiboo River), it is in consideration for its prominent location within the village. It is less than a half kilometre away from Sissiboo Landing, which is a Cultural Interpretive Centre that also houses Weymouth's Visitor Information Centre. It is also near to several commercial amenities and – as such – has a comparatively high traffic count. Although the small lot size may limit future development on the property, it is likely the most visible of the three sites in consideration. It should be noted that while the property is not currently listed for sale, the Society believes the current owner would be open to

reasonable offers. Certainly, the major concern with this property is that – at 10,160 square feet – it would not be large enough to accommodate the Society’s proposed 13,300 square foot building. It is unknown whether adjacent properties would be available for sale.

Site 3: The Valufoods store and property: 4479 Highway 1, Weymouth

4479 Highway 1 is located less than a kilometre to the south of the Sissiboo River, and is a well-known property because – for many years – it was home to Valuefoods (and formerly Foodland). The store, which ceased operations in August 2019, was listed for sale soon after and is currently listed for \$200,000. This price appears to include both the building (4,500 square feet), and the adjacent property which totals approximately 6 acres. The property – though not as close to Sissiboo Landing as 4604 Highway 1 – is attractive for a few reasons; not only is it the sole property currently listed for sale, but it also backs on to the Sissiboo River. This may afford the Electric City some unique commercial opportunities that the other properties would not. Clearly, the structure (if it were to be kept and not demolished), would need to be renovated considerably before it could begin to serve Electric City’s purposes. Also, at 4,500 square feet, it is less than half the size of the Society’s original building plan and would thus limit the Electric City’s activities unless an expansion was included. Still, a new 4,500 structure (from the ground up) would cost considerably more than \$200,000 (for the structure alone).

Site Selection Summary

	Lot 9, 122 Weymouth Falls Road (mill)	4604 Highway 1, Weymouth (garage)	4479 Highway 1, Weymouth (store)
2019 Assessment	\$286,800	\$27,700	\$103,500
Taxes (2019)	\$5,306	\$512	\$1,915
Age	n/a	n/a	34
Building size	n/a	n/a	4,500 square feet
Lot size	2,063,437 square feet	10,160 square feet	261,360 sq. ft (6 acres)
Average sale price	n/a	\$113,631	n/a
Current sale price	n/a	n/a	\$200,000
Average days of market	n/a	140	n/a
Zoned	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial
Waterfront	n/a	n/a	Yes
Signage by-laws			
Flood risk	Low	Medium-high	Low
Distance to other attractions			
Parking/accessibility	Unknown	Unknown	Strong
Maintenance required	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Opportunities for future development	High	Limited	Medium
Access to utilities	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Environmental risks	Unknown	Unknown	unknown

Image 1 – Sites currently in consideration (map)

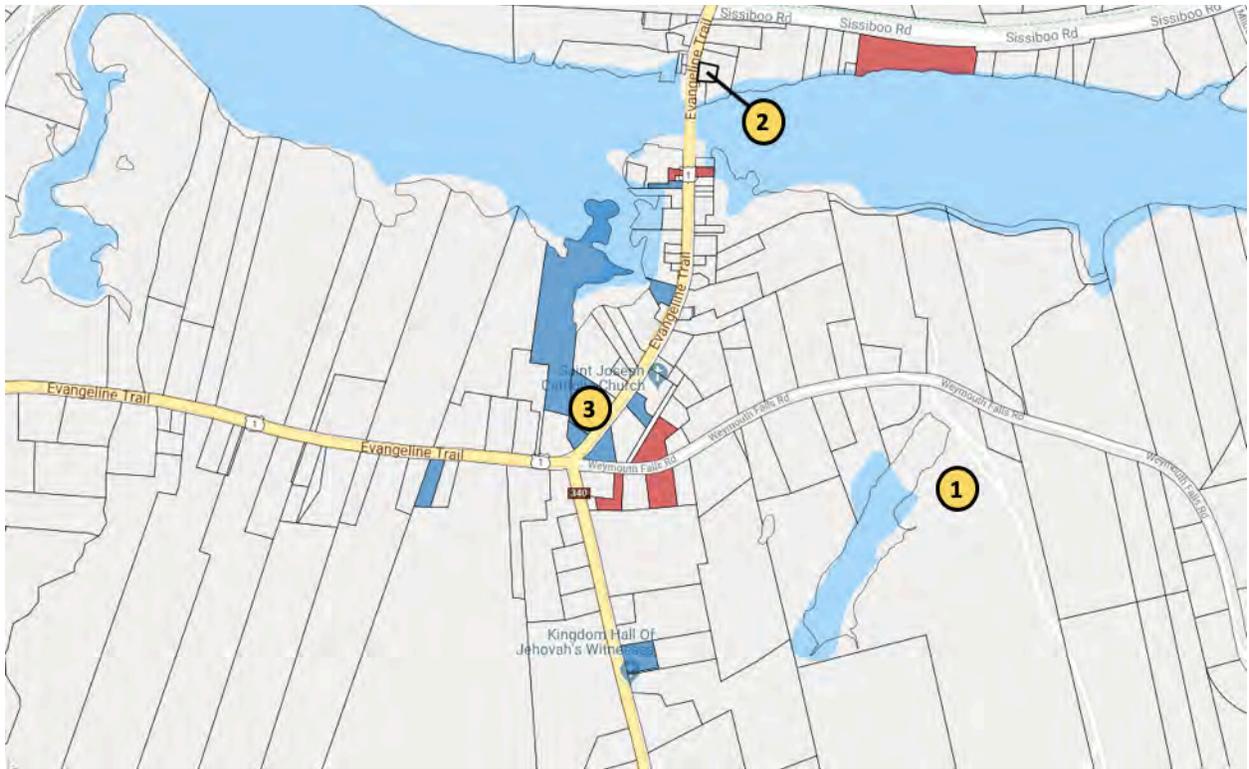


Image 2 – Sites currently in consideration (satellite)

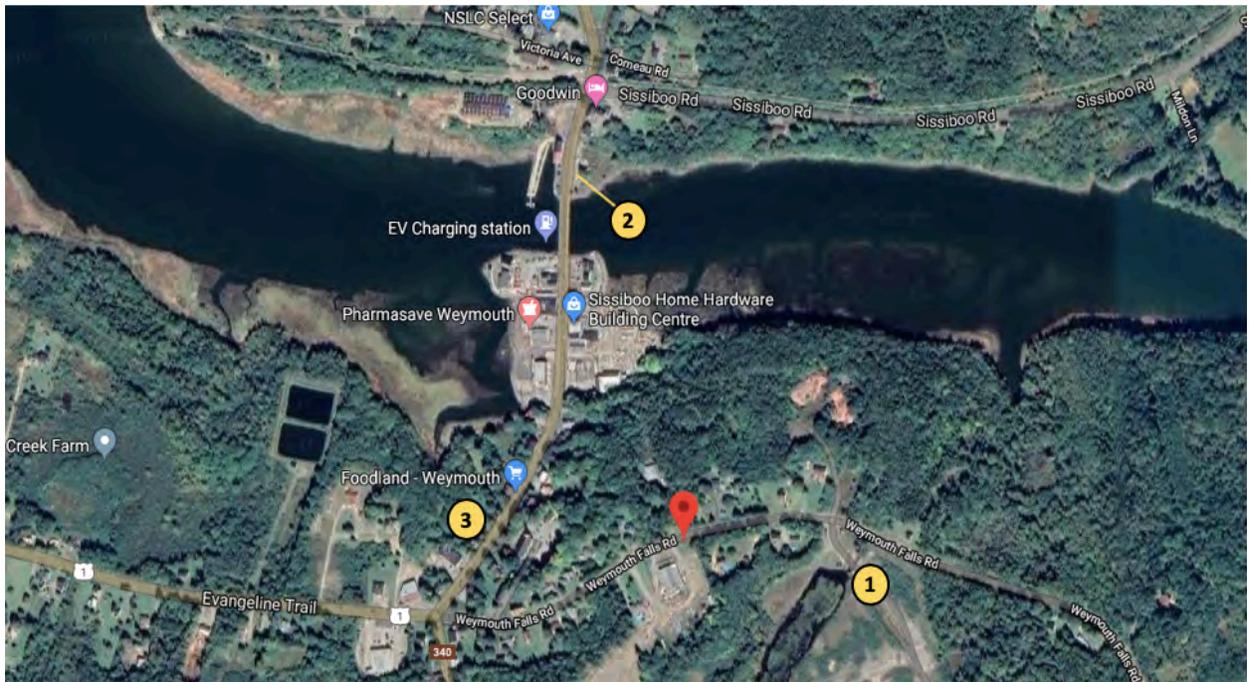


Image 3 – 4479 Highway 1: The Valufoods Property (street view)



Image 4 – 4604 Highway 1: The Former Garage Property (street view)



Policy Considerations: Acquisition, Cataloguing, Storage, and Preservation of Artefacts

There is quite a bit of assistance available in the museum community describing what is needed to collect artefacts for a museum. There are many resources available should an organization wish to take on becoming a museum in the true sense of the word. There are two very useful resources in Nova Scotia to help with what is needed to set up a collections department/committee for a museum.

The Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) has on-line resources under the Nova Scotia Museum (NSM) (interestingly enough, the NSM is not a single building, but a family of museums that are managed in many and sundry ways). The staff of the NSM are also a great resource; they are very knowledgeable and approachable. There are also grants available through CCH for community cultural projects, not necessarily related to museums specifically. This speaks to the evolution of the interpretation of heritage and culture and how it fundamentally reflects the community.

- <https://museum.novascotia.ca/collections-research>
- <https://museum.novascotia.ca/resources>
- <https://cch.novascotia.ca/investing-in-our-future>

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is likely the best source for assistance with collections management. The NSM Collections Management system is in the process of being re-vamped with all the new technology available. The ANSM NovaMuse project is newer and uses a much more user-friendly database for collections management. Sometimes it helps to be new. ANSM also has extensive on-line resources for all museum functions. Many of the resources can also be used for setting up

volunteer Boards (governance), facility management, marketing etc. Their collection management documents have been developed with extensive consultation and are very robust.

<https://ansm.ns.ca/resources.html>

Regardless of whether or not the Electric City decides to be a museum, it may decide to have temporary exhibitions in its interpretive centre. Alternatively, the Society may want to rent space in Weymouth to tell a portion of its story. It is important for the Electric City to remember that it doesn't need to tell the whole story at one time. In that case the Society may want to borrow objects/artefacts from people in the community. The process is essentially the same to borrow an artefact as it is to permanently collect an artefact. In the former, you are simply collecting the artefact for a finite amount of time. That is the key word - "finite". It is also imperative to have all borrowing or collection agreements in writing.

Collection Management Policies can also be used to manage loans. For instance, if you borrow an object from a community member you need to document that object. The Society member tasked with documenting the loans should take photographs, perhaps modify an Artefact Receipt form to collect all the relevant information about the object and its owner. This will include address, contact information, date of loan, and the designated time period when Electric City will have access to the object. Make sure the donor knows they are responsible for insuring the object should anything happen to it.

It is also necessary to be mindful of Canadian 'abandon property' laws. The problem is you do not own loaned objects and therefore do not have the right to dispose of them if the donor fails to retrieve the loaned object after the loan period is up (one of those quirky little rules many exhibit development people usually don't think about). Make sure the person loaning the object has proof of ownership, signs all the paperwork and agrees to take possession at the end of the exhibition. The agreement will need to have a written statement of what will happen to the loan if it is not retrieved. Seek legal advice on how to word the agreement.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are part and parcel with any commercial or non-profit venture, and the larger the venture, typically the greater the risk. The Electric City's proposed interpretive centre is no different, and in this short section of the business plan we will attempt to identify some of the more salient potential risk factors. We will also briefly consider the likelihood of each risk occurring and the threat level each risk poses to the overall success of the venture.

Risk factor	Risk probability	Potential impact on Electric City viability
Limited or insufficient government financial support	Medium-high	Very high
Board or volunteer burnout/attrition	Medium	High
Lack of suitable location for interpretive centre	Low	High
Lack of buy-in/support from Weymouth community	Low-medium	High
Lack of buy-in/support from other key stakeholders (Tourism NS, CCH)	Low-medium	Medium-high
Difficulty executing fundraising	Medium-high	Very high
Lack of interest in the Electric City story from key customer segments (schools, tour buses, etc.)	Low-medium	High
Insufficient/lower-than-expected revenues	Medium	Very high

Budget overruns during start-up	Medium	High
Lack of consensus on details of the Electric City story	Low-medium	Medium
Inability to attract diverse board members and volunteers	Low-medium	Medium

Marketing and Promotional Strategy

A marketing and promotional strategy should take the guesswork out of communicating your story to your target markets. A good strategy should also identify the tools you will use for each purpose, so that you don't waste your time and resources working on something that won't have the return you envisioned.

Marketing and promotions is a major part of any campaign, especially one that will be looking to gather financial resources from varied and high-profile funders and donors. It is strongly suggested that the Electric City appoint a person, or a committee, to manage the communications role, and ideally, hire a professional with the capacity to implement a strong strategy.

The following marketing and promotional strategy can be modified to fit the resources and objectives of the Society.

Background and Context

Provides a basic understanding of the story, why it's compelling and who is involved.

The Electric City was an established community outside of Weymouth, Nova Scotia, that was in existence from 1898 to 1912. Founded by the Stehelin family, who had immigrated from France, the community was decades ahead of its time, both in technological advances, and social practices. The Electric City had a lumber mill, a railroad, running water and electricity, almost 30 years before other areas had similar amenities. All employees in the community were treated the same, regardless of their race or ethnicity, and were paid a wage, rather than being reliant on the company store for the wares.

The Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society is working to tell the story of the Electric City, and the Stehelin family who founded it.

Communications objectives, audiences and key messages

Objectives, audiences and key messages will likely differ, depending on the situation. The messages delivered to potential funders will be different than those delivered to the general public.

Audience – Potential Funders

- The Electric City was ahead of its time, and showed the world how to marry technological and social advances for the good of all. Join us to tell this powerful story to the world.
- Let's work together to keep the story of the Electric City alive, and bring much needed development opportunities to south west Nova Scotia.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your support can keep the lights on in the Electric City. Let’s work together to tell this amazing story of technological and social advancement.
Audience – Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the Electric City story help your organization or community? Contact us to identify ways that we can collaborate. - The Electric City was ahead of its time, and showed the world how to marry technological and social advances for the good of all. Join us to tell this powerful story to the world. - Telling the story of the Electric City can bring numerous opportunities for our communities. By working together, we can leverage the opportunities to support local growth.
Audience – Visitors and Tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Electric City invites you to learn about the social and technological advances that were implemented at a small, rural community from 1898 to 1912. - Visit the Electric City to experience the history of this nearly forgotten community, that paved the way for numerous social and technological advances.

Communications Challenges	
<i>Knowing the challenges ahead of time enables groups to develop mitigation strategies.</i>	
Lack of local and provincial knowledge of the story	
Funding for a marketing campaign	
‘Person responsible’ for implementing campaign	
People need to hear a message at least 6-8 times before it resonates	

Communication Tools	
<i>There are a variety of tools, which can be accommodated depending on the message and audience.</i>	
Key networks	
<p>Key networks include those who are connected with the story, or local organizations. Messages can be crafted and sent via email to specific contacts, asking them to distribute the message to others. This tool is ideal for fundraising campaigns, and to raise awareness about activities happening at the Electric City (such as a grand opening, or special events). The Electric City has already identified and engaged with several key networks.</p>	
Social Media	
<p>Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the three main tools that can help to spread the message in a low-cost way. A thoughtful and intriguing post can have a tremendous impact on raising awareness about the community, a fundraising campaign and events/activities. Social media campaigns can be targeted, but can also have appeal to a general audience.</p> <p>The Electric City already has a Facebook page, and could work to increase followers to that page – those people have already shown their interest in the story and are a prime target for helping to disseminate information to their own contacts.</p>	

Social media campaigns should take into account the various pages that are already bringing together people who have interests in this area, such as:

- Historic Nova Scotia (also a free mobile app) <https://www.facebook.com/HistoricNS/>
- The Ernst Collection – Historic Photos of Nova Scotia <https://www.facebook.com/The-Ernst-Collection-Historic-Photos-of-Nova-Scotia-1629237710658965/>
- History Nova Scotia - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/oldhistoryNS/>
- History of Weymouth Nova Scotia <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1284465291631534/>

Using social media to expand your reach requires someone(s) who is engaged in the technology and knows how to make it work for them. The tips and tricks in this document may help to get started, or to get more comfortable with using social media to your best advantage:

<https://www.sendible.com/insights/social-media-for-nonprofits>

Website

A website is a key tool to distribute the message to a variety of audiences. Most people interested in learning more about the Electric City will look for a website to answer some key questions before deciding if, and how, they should become involved. The website should include:

- History on the Electric City – what it was, where it was located, when it existed, who was involved (the Stehelin family and the various cultures that were represented in the community)
- Pictures of the settlement
- The path forward for the Society – how is the Society moving forward to tell the story of the Electric City. What is the mission and vision of the board, who are the board members and what are the overall objectives and goals?
- How to get involved
 - o Potential Donors - this page should include some elements from this documents case for support, which outline why a funder should want to contribute to the cause. There should be explicit instructions on how to support the cause and how the money will be used.
 - o Potential Volunteers – information on how someone can volunteer with the cause, and what type of work they can expect to engage in.

Radio

Local, provincial and national radio stations and programs can increase awareness. Many stations are often looking for content and may be keen to tell the story. Contacting stations may yield some surprisingly positive results. CIFA (a locally produced, largely Acadian station) <http://cifafm.com/> will likely have particular interest in the story, as well as CBC Nova Scotia Information Morning. This coverage is best place ahead of an event, or announcement, such as a grand opening or specific event.

Television

The provincial/Maritime morning shows are also keen on new content. The two morning shows in this region are Global News Morning and CTV Morning Live Atlantic. Again, utilizing this form of media is best place as promotion for an event or an announcement.

Print Media

Local and provincial papers are often also looking for content and are often keen to run ready-to-print stories.

Key Spokespersons

It's helpful to have 1 or 2 key people who will be responsible for speaking on behalf of the Electric City.

Key Customer Segments

At the centre of every business plan lies the fundamental question: who are – or will be – your customers? Only when a clear and convincing answer to this question has been provided can an organization like the Electric City hope to persuade funders, donors, and other stakeholders to support their efforts. Although customer segments are always subject to further definition or refinement, the current feeling is that the Electric City's customers are as follows:

- **Elementary and school-aged children:** a natural target visitor for most museums and interpretive centres is children (and perhaps more specifically, children aged 8-18). Although many of these children lack the means or motivation to attend museums on their own, they often visit as part of school-organized field trips. Currently, there are 120,604 students registered for school in Nova Scotia, with just more than 18,000 of those students attending school in either the Tri-County, South Shore, or Acadien provincial boards. Of those, approximately 10,000 attend elementary schools, 3,500 attend junior high, and 4,500 attend senior high.⁶ A further 13,249 are enrolled in the Annapolis Valley. Although school field trips have faced some reductions in recent years (due to high transportation costs and safety concerns), there is certainly reason to believe the Electric City can attract a considerable number of visitors from this segment.
- **History enthusiasts/Personal History Explorers:** Destination Canada offers a great deal of insight into Canadian visitors, including Explorer Quotient Profiles[®]. These research-based profiles segment all visitors into several unique categories based on their behaviours, interests, and motivations. The goal is to help tourism operators like the Electric City better understand how to attract them and meet their needs. One such categorization is Personal History Explorers, who “are primarily defined by their desire to connect to their own cultural roots – and do so by travelling in comfort, style and security.” This segment, which represents about 13% of all visitors to (and within) Canada, is profiled at length in its Explorer Quotient manual.⁷ There, you will find an in-depth overview of their travel values, social values, demographics, travel behaviours, and more.
- **The Acadian community:** given how central the Acadian community is to the Electric City story, it is natural to assume that this population will have an above-average interest in the interpretive centre and its programming. With an estimated 40,000 Acadians living in the Maritimes, 96,000 living in Canada, and a further 901,000 living in the United States, this represents a market of interest for the Society. The opportunity to attract this community may be magnified, given that the 2024 World Acadian Congress will be held in nearby Clare/Argyle. About 100,000 people are expected to attend.⁸
- **Quebecois and overseas visitors:** in a similar vein, it should be noted that approximately 119,000 Quebecois visit Nova Scotia annually. Although this number has declined somewhat in recent years, it remains a significant market of interest for the Electric City, given the

⁶ Province of Nova Scotia (2019). “2019-20 Enrolments by Region/Board & Level.” [Online]. Available: <https://stats-summary.ednet.ns.ca/student-enrolment-board>

⁷ Canadian Tourism Commission (2019). “Explorer Quotient Profiles.” [Online]. Available: https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/2013-01-01/Tools_ExplorerQuotient_Profiles_2015_EN.pdf

⁸ The Chronicle Herald (May 28, 2019). “Nova Scotia to host World Acadian Congress in 2024.” [Online]. Available: <https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/local/nova-scotia-to-host-world-acadian-congress-in-2024-316452/>

francophone connection to the story. It should also be noted that Nova Scotia welcomes approximately 104,000 overseas (non-US, non-Canada) visitors each year⁹, a number that is growing quickly (it increased by 15% in 2018 over 2017). Although the country of origin for these visitors is unclear, the Electric City should aspire to better understand the motivations and desired experiences of these visitors, as they figure to play a larger part in Nova Scotia's overall tourism economy.

- **Authentic Experiencers:** like Personal History Explorers (above), Authentic Experiences are another Explorer Quotient profile. Representing about 12% of Canadian visitors, Authentic Experiencers are “are typically understated travellers looking for authentic, tangible engagement with destinations they seek, with a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit.”¹⁰ These visitors love immersing themselves in new cultures, love to learn, and are willing to take their time in museums and interpretive centres. For a more in-depth discussion on Authentic Experiencers, refer to Destination Canada's Explorer Quotient guide.
- **All three levels of government:** although governments may not be *end users* of the interpretive centre (at least in the same sense as other segments), they remain a very important customer segment. This is because – both at start-up and potentially on an ongoing basis – the Electric City will count on these levels of government for vital funding. As such, their needs, goals, values, and interests are every bit as important (and perhaps more so) than any other single segment. Of particular interest to Electric City will be the Municipality of the District of Digby (municipal), the Weymouth Village Commission (municipal), the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage (provincial), Tourism Nova Scotia (provincial), and the Department of Canadian Heritage (federal). It is imperative that the Electric City works to link its approach and objectives to Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan, which can be accessed here: <https://novascotia.ca/culture/>

PESTEL Analysis

A PESTEL Analysis (a close cousin of the PEST, STEEP, and STEEPLE Analysis) is a useful analytical framework that helps an organization – such as the Electric City – understand and interpret its external environment. It essentially answers the question ‘*what is going on outside of the Electric City Society that is going to have a significant impact on the Electric City Society?*’ It is helpful because it breaks the organization's entire external environment (which is large and sometimes chaotic) down into six categories, matching the six letters in the acronym, which are:

- P:** Political trends
- E:** Economic trends
- S:** Social trends
- T:** Technological trends
- E:** Environmental trends (the natural environment)
- L:** Legal trends

⁹ Tourism Nova Scotia (2019). “Market Highlights: Quebec” [Online]. Available: <https://tourismns.ca/sites/default/files/Quebec%202019%20TNS%20Market%20Plan%20LowRes.pdf>

¹⁰ Canadian Tourism Commission (2019). “Explorer Quotient Profiles.” [Online]. Available: https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/2013-01-01/Tools_ExplorerQuotient_Profiles_2015_EN.pdf

Although a full PESTEL Analysis is beyond the scope of this business plan, we believe it is important to discuss some of the most significant external issues The Electric City will want to monitor. We deliberately use the term ‘monitor’ because – in many cases – these issues (because of their macro nature) are beyond the Society’s influence.

1. Tourism numbers and key performance indicators (economic): the success of the Electric City’s interpretive centre will be shaped to a significant degree by overall Nova Scotia visitor numbers. These are published regularly by Tourism Nova Scotia¹¹, and should be monitored annually for trends.
2. Visitor preferences (social): it’s not only important to know how many visitors are coming to Nova Scotia (or engaging in tourism within Nova Scotia), is it also imperative to understand who these visitors are, and the experiences they are looking for once they are here (and how this is changing over time). For example, Tourism Nova Scotia is applying a major push to increase the number of Chinese visitors in the next decade, recognizing that as a means to overall tourism growth. The Electric City must seek to understand these different visitor types, and adjust their offerings accordingly.
3. Corporate philanthropy and sponsorship (economic): it is reasonable to assume that in both the short and long-term, the Electric City will depend on support (to some degree) from the corporate sector. It is, therefore, important to understand the charitable priorities of relevant businesses, and to identify which sponsorship opportunities may be appealing to them. The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia¹² would be a relevant organization to establish contact with in this regard.
4. Energy cost and usage (technological/economic): there are two reasons why the Electric City may wish to follow new developments in clean or alternative energy in Nova Scotia. First, is that energy will be a significant cost driver for the interpretive centre, representing many thousands of dollars of expense each year. Secondly, is that energy and electricity ties in naturally with the Electric City’s story, and integrating into the centre’s programming may make for highly current and relevant visitor experiences.
5. Preservation of nature and natural resources (environmental): to varying degrees, the Electric City’s future goals may involve visitors interacting with nature. For example, the Society may decide to lead tours of the historic site, or make use of the Sissiboo River in some fashion to engage visitors. To this end, the Society will want to monitor Nova Scotia’s evolving environmental protection regulations, such as the pending Nova Scotia Coastal Protection Act¹³. The Nova Scotia Department of Environment¹⁴ will also be able to provide useful information to support the Society as it moves forward.
6. Relationships with government (political): if the Society moves forward with the construction of an interpretive centre, there is little question that government financial and moral support will

¹¹ Tourism Nova Scotia (2019). “Tourism Statistics.” [Online]. Available: <https://tourismns.ca/research/tourism-statistics>

¹² Community Foundation of Nova Scotia (2019). [Online]. Available: <http://cfns-fcne.ca/en/>

¹³ Province of Nova Scotia (2019). “Coastal Protection Act.” [Online]. Available: <https://novascotia.ca/coast/>

¹⁴ Nova Scotia Environment (2019). [Online]. Available: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/>

be necessary. To this end, the Society must make it a priority to establish and nurture relationships with relevant political representatives (MLAs, Councillors, MPs) and departments (Communities, Culture, and Heritage). The Electric City will need support from these important stakeholders, and should dedicate resources to building these bridges.

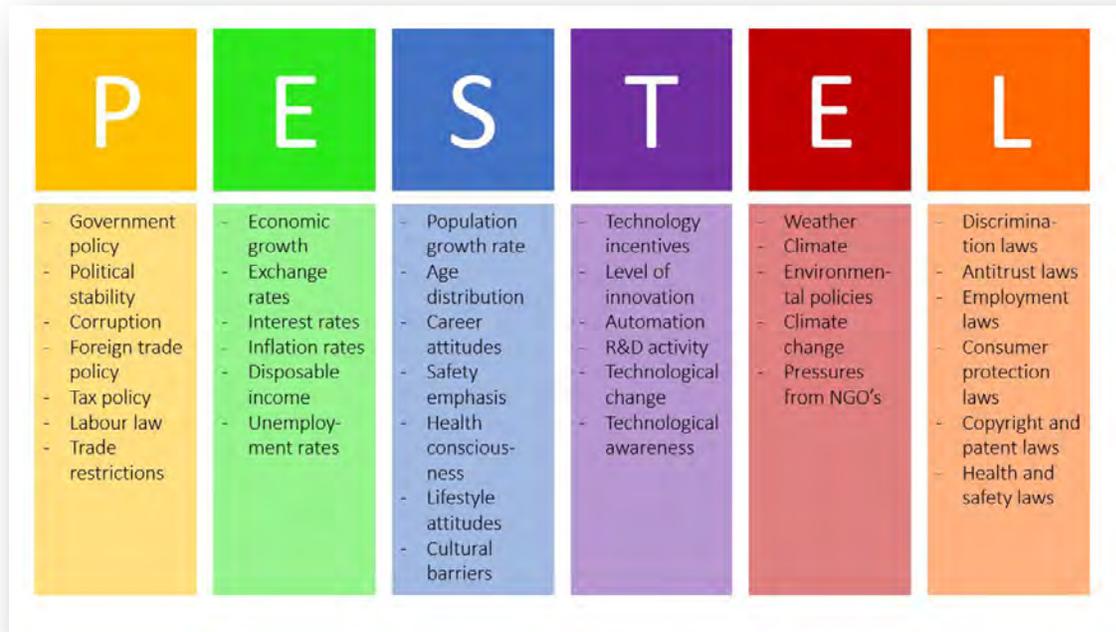
7. Board and volunteer diversity (social): although there is no ‘correct’ way to compose a board of directors, it is generally agreed that diversity is desirable; diversity in terms of demographics (age, gender, education), as well as skill sets, interests, profession, and other characteristics. As it continues to grow its board and volunteer base, the Electric City should consider doing so strategically to build a well-rounded and robust team.
8. Immigration (social): in many ways, the Electric City story is a story about immigration and multiculturalism. As such, the Society would be well-advised to closely follow the activities and initiatives of Nova Scotia Immigration¹⁵, ISANS¹⁶, and other organizations mandated to promote immigration within our province. Just one example of this came earlier this year, when Nova Scotia Immigration launched a 3-year plan to attract Francophone immigrants.¹⁷ Such initiatives may present attractive tie-in programming opportunities for the Electric City now and in the future.
9. Copyright law (legal): copyright law falls under the broader category of intellectual property law, which generally exists to protect the intangible or intellectual aspect of an object (as opposed to the physical object). In Canada, laws pertaining to copyright fall under the *Canadian Copyright Act*. The Act helps define the materials that are protected by copyright, the rights that are protected under copyright, and the duration of copyright on protected items. Copyright laws have the potential to affect the Electric City in several ways, including (a) the use of copyright materials belonging to others (photos, text, etc.) and (b) the creation of the Electric City’s own copyrighted material (such as the scripts for its plays). Although there do not appear to be any urgent copyright matters facing the Electric City, it would be well served to develop a policy and strategy as it continues to grow.

¹⁵ Nova Scotia Immigration (2019). [Online]. Available: <https://novascotiainmigration.com/?nav>

¹⁶ Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (2019). [Online]. Available: <https://www.isans.ca>

¹⁷ Nova Scotia Office of Immigration and Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (March 2019). “Nova Scotia Francophone Immigration Action Plan.” [Online]. Available: https://acadien.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/inline/documents/fr_immigration_action_plan_en.pdf

Figure 3.1 – PESTEL Analysis Overview



Current Financial Position

Before looking ahead to the Society’s potential financial future, it is important to briefly take stock of The Electric City’s current financial position.

Based on the (unaudited) financial statements provided by the Society, the Electric City appears to be in a positive and stable financial position. The balance sheet dated November 30, 2019 shows that the Society has \$14,599 in total assets, all of which are current. In fact, all assets are currently either cash or cash equivalents and there are no outstanding accounts receivable. Further, the Society also reports no outstanding liabilities, meaning that all \$14,599 in assets can currently be considered organizational equity.

From a revenue and expense perspective, the Society has generated a net income of \$8,752 on total revenues of \$34,344 through November 30, 2019. Nearly 50% (\$15,708) of this revenue was generated through the Electric City’s Community Theatre presentations, while various smaller fundraising efforts (book sales, teas, calendar and mug sales, etc.) generated the remaining revenue. It should be noted that the nearly 30% of 2019 revenue (\$10,200, accounted for as ‘miscellaneous income’) is the funding received for this business plan. This is offset by a similar amount on the expense side of the income statement.

Continuing with the expense side of the income statement, the Electric City’s major expenses (besides the aforementioned expense for this study) are travel (\$3,328), administration expenses (\$2,500), and marketing and promotions (\$1,848). A summary of revenues and expenses can be seen below.

It is clear that the Electric City is in a stable and positive financial position. Financial statements like these suggest that the Society’s finances are responsibly managed, and that there is no reason to believe the organization will be faced with immediate financial pressure. At the same time, these financial statements illustrate that the Electric City is a very small organization in comparison to the organization it aspires to become. Fundraising efforts and earned revenues – while encouraging – have totaled less than \$25,000 in 2019, and net revenue from these efforts has been considerably smaller. As the Electric City aspires to grow, it is vital to recognize that its governance, fundraising, and management systems will need to evolve accordingly.

Figure 2.1 – Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society Revenues (2019, to November 30). Total revenue = \$34,344.20

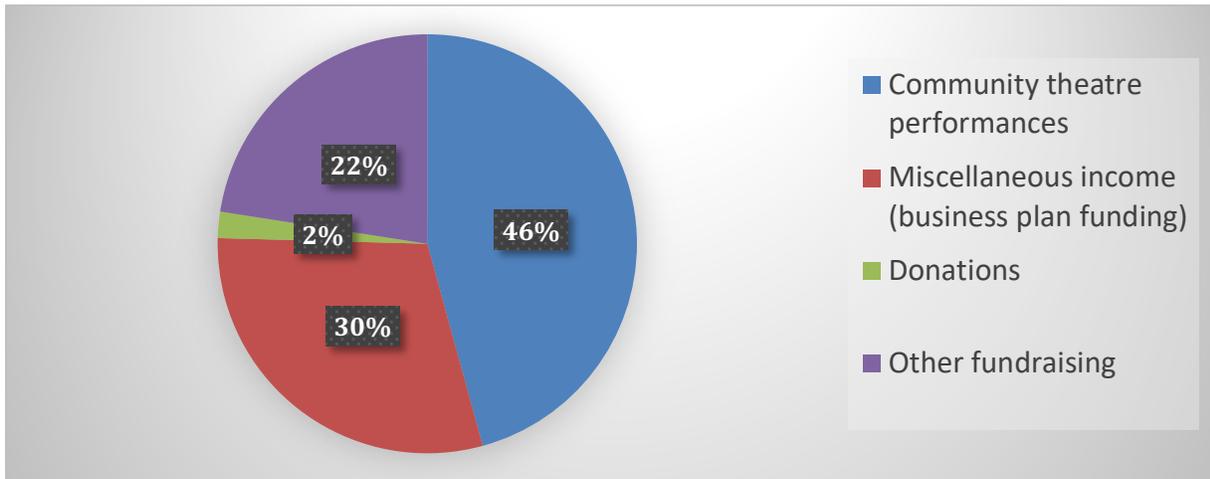
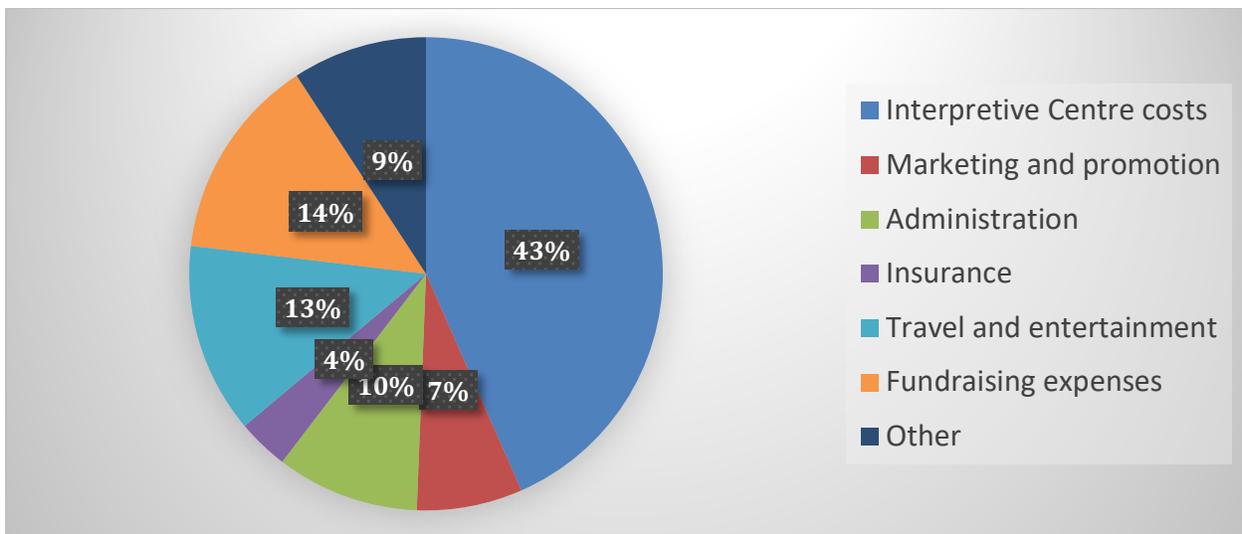


Figure 2.2 – Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society Expenses (2019, to November 30). Total expenses = \$25,591.22



Financial Forecasts

Preamble: the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre and its associates have taken great care in preparing a set of 10-year financial forecasts for the Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society. We have created these financial forecasts as part of a larger financial model using Microsoft Excel (there are currently no printed copies). The financial data contained in these forecasts are based on the most accurate information available during the preparation of this business plan. Although AEC is confident that these forecasts present a realistic overview of the revenues and expenses associated with the creation of an interpretive centre, it is important to note that new information (not known or available during the research process) could materially alter the actual financial outcomes of this project.

It is also important to note that these financial forecasts provide an overview of a *single* scenario. For that reason, we have provided the Electric City with the aforementioned Excel model so that they can easily update the model (if and when new information comes to light) or test different scenarios.

Introduction

Any business plan is incomplete without a careful consideration of its financial consequences. For that reason, we have spent a considerable amount of our time attempting to project both expenses and revenues associated with the construction and operation of an interpretive centre to house the Electric City. The set of 10-year financial forecasts (including income statements and assumptions) have been provided to the Electric City in a separate Microsoft Excel file. In the following section, we will highlight some of the key considerations and assumptions.

Start-up Costs

Building a new interpretive centre is a costly endeavor. In fact, most businesses and non-profit organizations never incur a capital cost more expensive than their real estate (land and building). For that reason, it is important to discuss our assumptions about the facility.

Currently, the Electric City is proposing to purchase and renovate the former Valufoods building, a 4,500 square foot building situated on 6 acres of land at 4479 Highway 1 Weymouth. Although the original Form:Media report proposed the construction of a 13,300 square foot facility (at a cost of \$4.25 million), the board feels the Valufoods building represents a more attractive option at this time. The estimated purchase price of this building is \$200,000, with an additional \$1.8 million to be spent on renovations and modernizations.

The second major start-up cost are the human resource expenses associated with fundraising efforts. Simply put, in order to arrive at start-up, the Society will have to invest considerably in paid positions aimed at marshalling resources, creating relationships, and leading fundraising initiatives. Currently, it is estimated that the Society will invest between \$275,000 – 300,000 in human resources to raise the capital required to purchase and renovate the building. Although this figure is rationalized and aligned with the tasks necessary to start-up, it is somewhat speculative and can be adjusted (upward or downward) if necessary.

Although the construction and human resource costs represent the vast majority of start-up costs, there are other costs included in the financial forecast. Grand opening events, launch-stage promotional efforts, architectural drawings, and database expenses have also been considered.

Operating Expenses

Although it is fair to say that most interpretive centres have a long list of expense items (seen in the financial forecasts), it is also fair to say that two operating expenses stand out above the rest: building operation expenses and human resource expenses.

Building operation expenses include all those items associated with the day-to-day operation and upkeep of the Electric City's interpretive centre. This includes (but isn't limited to): property tax, heat, water, sewer, insurance, landscaping, custodial, and snow removal. We have estimated these expenses based on our analysis of comparable facilities, recognizing that none have identical properties to a newly constructed facility. Overall, we estimate that – on an annual basis – these expenses will total about \$22,000 - \$26,000.

What we have also accounted for, however, are numerous part-time and full-time salaries. There can be no question that in order to both manage a building (its physical properties) and provide an engaging visitor experience, the Electric City will have to incur the ongoing cost of labour. Although the wage rates and hours are debateable (and subject to change), it is clear that the Electric City cannot operate on volunteerism alone. In our initial forecast, you will note we have allowed for full-time Executive Director (beginning in Year 5), as well as two seasonal programming staff. Currently, the total estimated annual expense for these positions is approximately \$90,000 (which includes mandatory employment related costs, or MERCs). As the Electric City continues to plan for specific programming, the number of staff required may either increase or decrease; as this occurs, the financial forecast should be updated in real-time as these decisions are made.

Revenues

Revenues, in contrast to start-up and operating expenses, are much more difficult to forecast. While there is usually ample historical data to inform expense projections, revenue projections are comprised of a series of reasonable and logical scenarios and assumptions.

The revenue side of our financial model is based on the following key assumptions:

- That the overall number of visitors will grow from 2,000 in the first year of operation (2024) at a cost of \$7.00 per visitor) to 3,000 by the fifth year of operation (at a 2029 cost of \$9.00 per visitor). There will be no admissions in December or January, as the centre will be closed. These figures are also easily modified within the financial model to analyze various scenarios. It is also critical to note that only 65% of visitors are assumed to be paying for their admission (which is in line with industry norms).
- It is assumed that there will be community programming space within the building, which will be leased on a fee-for-use basis. Total revenues are currently forecast at \$9,800 per year, beginning in 2024.

- That the average gift shop expenditure per visitor will be \$2.50, totaling \$5,000-7,500 per year in sales. Cost of goods sold are estimated at 30%.
- That the Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society will be successful in fundraising (or otherwise acquiring through sponsorships) \$100,000 - \$110,000 per year for each of the next 10 years of operation.

There may exist numerous revenue-generating opportunities beyond those noted above. However, such opportunities are yet to be identified.

Other Financial Considerations

In addition to the expenses and revenues projected in our financial model, there are several other considerations that should factor into the Electric City's direction with this project:

Cost overruns: It will come as no surprise that large-scale building projects are sometimes met with completion delays and budget overruns that impact financial feasibility and cash flow. For example, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's forthcoming municipal service building – originally budgeted at \$6.6 million – is now set for \$8.7 million. This is not to say that such an overrun would occur with the Electric City's new interpretive centre (and very least not to this magnitude), and it is also not to suggest that projects that *do* exceed their budget are somehow mismanaged. It is rather to suggest that cost overruns are not at all unusual and should be considered a risk factor.

Alternative energy: throughout this process, there has been considerable discussion about the use of alternative energy sources (particularly Solar Photovoltaic, or PV). In addition to environmental protection motivations, there are both financial and strategic reasons for this. From a financial perspective, there exists potential to save on operating expenses in the long-run by making an up-front capital investment in solar panels to meet the interpretive centre's energy needs. Although it is early days for this technology, it is clear that many communities and community groups are choosing to go in this direction. A couple of examples include the Charlie Cheeseman Memorial Arena in Cardston, Alberta, where (in 2017) 546 solar panels were installed at a capital cost of \$283,000¹⁸. The second is in Selkirk, Manitoba, where earlier this year the City completed a \$437,000 solar panel installation on its Recreation Complex¹⁹. Although these are certainly not 'apples-to-apples' comparison, these examples will give the Electric City some sense of the investment required. There is sufficient interest in solar energy that the Province of Nova Scotia recently launched the '*Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Pilot Program*'.²⁰

There are strategic considerations concerning alternative energy as well. In its 2018 report, Form:Media put forward an interpretive framework for the Electric City featuring '*Innovation and Modernity*' as one of the three pillars, with '*Electricity, Light, and Power*' as a subtopic. It is therefore not lost on the Electric City board that – in addition to long-term cost savings – using alternative energy sources for its

¹⁸ Campbell, Quinn (August 2017). "Cardston goes green with installation of 500 solar panels at civic centre and arena." *Global News*. [Online]. Available: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3677928/cardston-goes-green-with-installation-of-500-solar-panels-at-civic-centre-and-arena/>

¹⁹ CBC News (May 2019). "Selkirk flips switch on province's largest rooftop solar installation." [Online]. Available: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/city-selkirk-flips-switch-solar-1.5134206>

²⁰ Province of Nova Scotia (2019). "The Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Pilot Program". [Online]. Available: <https://novascotia.ca/solar/solar-electricity-community-buildings.asp>

interpretive centre may tie in nicely with the very story it is trying to tell. Although the specific nature of that tie-in has not yet been identified, we believe it is worth further exploration.

A full-scale examination of alternative energy sources – and the financial implications of those sources – was beyond the scope of this business plan. Although there are very good reasons to consider alternative energy, we cannot at this time draw definitive conclusions about the viability of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) or other alternative energy sources for the Electric City. What we *can* suggest is that (a) this would be very much a long-term investment that would likely increase the Society's initial capital outlay and that (b) the financial return on investment would not be realized for many years. On the positive side, there is also evidence that the Electric City would not be alone in financing this energy upgrade; the federal government has numerous infrastructure investment programs targeted at alternative energy, and it is possible that the Electric City could take advantage of these.

In any event, we would urge the Electric City to decide on its energy sources *before* building its facility, in order to prevent unnecessary retrofitting costs.

Launch costs: when the Electric City completes the renovations of the Value Foods building and is ready to launch the new Electric City Interpretive Centre, it should keep grand opening expenses in mind. This might include things like website development, ribbon cutting ceremonies, tours, and other launch-stage promotional efforts aimed at generating excitement and community buy-in. Although it is difficult to forecast these costs (much of it depends on how elaborate the Society chooses to be with its grand opening/launch), may wish to make an allocation for this. Currently, no funds are allocated for this.

Recommendations

Having spent the last several months researching and considering this exciting opportunity, the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre and its associates offer the following recommendations:

1. Consider 'building up' to a building: as this report (and particularly the financial forecasts) shows, the Electric City's current plan for an interpretive centre comes at a significant cost (estimated \$2.0 million). This is a major investment, and one that will require several different sources of financing (including large-scale fundraising efforts and contributions from the Society itself, as discussed earlier).

It is our belief that a 'build-up' approach – focusing on delivering experiences that generate both revenue and community excitement – may be the most effective way for Electric City to ultimately position itself to finance a facility. This route would take several years to accomplish, but – if successful – could build a groundswell of enthusiasm in Southwest Nova Scotia. Such community buy-in makes it much easier to attract individual donors, government funders, corporate sponsors, and volunteers.

2. Engage professional fundraising support in preparation for approaching large potential corporate sponsors and foundations: as noted earlier, microdonations or microphilanthropy (generally defined as contributions of \$50 or less) – while helpful and generous – are insufficient unless there is widespread or viral enthusiasm for the cause. For perspective, the Electric City would require 40,000 unique donations of \$50 to finance the interpretive centre as currently proposed.

For a capital campaign to be successful, larger donors are needed. For this reason, we would suggest that it should consider approaching large potential corporate sponsors and foundations. This could include foundations that are aligned with Electric City's vision (such as New Brunswick's McCain Foundation), or potential corporate sponsors like Irving or ENGIE (a French multinational electric utility company). Corporations like these, for various reasons, may have a strategic interest in seeing the Electric City project move forward.

3. Develop and expand the Electric City team: bringing the Electric City's vision to life will require strong team leadership, a significant time commitment by team members, and – very likely – an expanded team. Currently, the Society has a core group of between 6-8 people who are contributing to driving the project forward. While we expect that these 6-8 team members will continue to lead the process, they will likely require more hands on deck to carry out necessary tasks.

To this end, we propose the Electric City do two things in this sequence:

- Work within the team (or with an external facilitator) to better define roles and expectations, and to ensure the Society employs best practices in organizational governance. Simply put, a project of this order must be developed on a strong and stable foundation of human resources if it is to succeed.
 - To closely examine the skills and aptitudes of current board members and volunteers, so that the Society can not only identify its strengths, but identify any existing skill gaps. Subsequently, the Society should aim its recruitment efforts towards individuals who can bring those skill sets to the team. Fundraising, financial management, and community relationship building/public relations are but a few of the key skills many non-profit boards lack.
4. Explore formal partnership opportunities: to date, this project has been based on the assumption that the Electric City – by itself – will be responsible for financing the interpretive centre. This approach is certainly not unreasonable, but neither is it the only approach the Society could take. We believe it is worthwhile to ask whether there might be other community groups or organizations (or even commercial entities) in Digby County in need of permanent space, and – if so – working together to move ahead. If this exploration were to result in one or more additional partners, it would likely generate more political and community will to make the centre a reality.
 5. Consider broader community consultation: community consultation can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, we know that community consultations can lead to new and better ideas, generate greater community buy-in and enthusiasm, and fill-in vital information gaps. On the other hand, it can result in more unanswered questions, reveal a lack of consensus, and delay action. Although we do not see it as our place to urge the Electric City to conduct a broader community consultation in this case, we do believe there are benefits to doing so, and found this confirmed in our conversations with other stakeholders. This interpretive centre – if it is built – will have significant effect on the Village of Weymouth and its residents. As such, there is some risk that – if broader consultation does not occur – moving ahead could result in either apathy or opposition.

It is our opinion that such a consultation need not 'start at the beginning'. In other words, the goal would not be to revisit basic questions like '*what could the Electric City do to tell its story*'.

To a large degree (through the various reports), that step has already been completed. Rather, it could be used as an opportunity to measure the community's interest in or reaction to a very specific plan for the interpretive centre (or the shared community space within the interpretive centre). This step could (and perhaps should) align closely with the launch of a capital campaign.

6. Create a versatile or flexible space: as the Electric City proceeds with the purchase and renovation of an interpretive centre as planned, it should do so with an intentional focus on creating a space that can easily be used for various purposes and is inexpensive to reconfigure if needed. Although every building must be built with a defined purpose in mind, it is not uncommon for community facilities to require expensive renovations as needs evolve. The inclusion of shared community space within the facility should be preceded by consultation with the groups intended to make use of it.
7. Achieve a visible 'quick win': over the past three years, the Electric City has invested in three major studies; a development plan, an experience centre report, and now a business plan. While these reports are all important in shaping the Society's vision for the Electric City, they do not often generate a great deal of enthusiasm in the broader community. Generally, community members start to become engaged when they observe tangible signs of progress.

For this reason, we strongly urge the Electric City to achieve a 'quick win'. A quick win, in this context, means reaching a notable milestone that would signal to Electric City's stakeholders that tangible progress is being made towards its ultimate goal (the construction of an interpretive centre). This could be something like a professionally produced video showcasing the Society's vision, the launch of a capital campaign, the solicitation (and announcement) of a significant donation, the acquisition of property, the launch of an official website, or the acquisition of official architectural drawings or artists renderings. Although some of these can be realized more quickly than others, these are all things that may be attainable in the relatively near-term.

It should be noted that the Society's success with their theatre productions can be marketed as a quick win as the theatre production becomes a full fledged Theatre Festival. This would be a job for the Experience Product Development team/Committee. More "quick wins" could be generated through marketing the progress the Society is making.

8. Engage with Tourism Nova Scotia and align with its strategies: Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) is a private sector-led provincial Crown corporation whose main objective is to grow the size and value of Nova Scotia's tourism industry. They do this by pursuing very specific strategies and by offering programs and services that help tourism-based organizations (like Electric City) build their own capacity to thrive. TNS has mapped out its key goals and strategies in its business plan²¹ and strategic plan²², and we would strongly urge the Electric City to work closely with TNS' tourism development advisors as it continues to move ahead. Electric City's chances for securing government grants or funding for this project will increase considerably if it is able to

²¹ Tourism Nova Scotia (2019). "Corporate Overview." [Online]. Available: <https://tourismns.ca/about-us/corporate-overview>

²² Tourism Nova Scotia (2019). "Driving Export Revenue: 2018-2023 Strategic Plan." [Online]. Available: <https://tourismns.ca/sites/default/files/Tourism%20Driving%20Export%20Revenue%20Strategy%202018.pdf>

demonstrate that its strategies are aligned with greater provincial strategies. Celes Davar (referenced earlier in 'Key Success Factor #4') could potentially be a great ally in this effort.

9. Acquire letters of support: projects of this magnitude typically require a groundswell of community support to move forward. This is especially the case when the project will require significant financial contributions from the community and various government departments. These investors and contributors require assurance that the project is broadly supported and – to that end – we would encourage the Electric City to solicit and collect letters of support (from supporters, influential community members, community partner organizations, etc.). These letters of support will not only help build the case that the project should be supported and funded, but will also help the Electric City board build relationships along the way.
10. Develop a pitch deck or case for support: a pitch deck is a short visual presentation that entrepreneurs (in the Electric City's case social entrepreneurs) create when seeking funding from others. It overviews their business plan powerfully and succinctly, and shows clearly why funders and investors should consider contributing to the venture (along with a call to action). It is akin to a case statement, which is used in fundraising to convince community members that the venture is worth supporting. There are numerous examples available for free online, including this one²³ from the Girl Museum, which is a virtual museum dedicated to celebrating girlhood and providing safe virtual spaces for girls.

Conclusion

Over the past three months, we have conducted considerable primary and secondary research with the goal of helping The Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society make an informed decision about its future. We have spoken at length with representatives from the Electric City board of directors, who have shared with us their vision and goals relative to the project. We have spoken with representatives from numerous important stakeholder groups to better understand their needs and ideas about how the Electric City can best move ahead. We have also explored other organizations in rural Canada that have already travelled the path the Electric City wishes to pursue.

Throughout the process, we have been exceptionally impressed with the openness and candidness of all parties involved and with the availability of information (tourism, museums, and interpretive centres are all very well studied). It is apparent to us that each of these stakeholders genuinely wishes to help the Electric City bring its dream to life, and to make the best and most informed decisions possible.

There is no question that – as the Electric City moves forward with this project – much more work lies in the future than in the past. It will not be a simple case of 'if you build it, they will come'. There are many different stakeholder needs to satisfy, and the Electric City will be tasked with uniting the stakeholders around a shared vision for this community asset. This is achievable, but the work involved should not be underestimated.

As always, the Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre remains available to answer any questions in the months following this project's conclusion. We look forward to supporting the Electric City in any way possible.

²³ Girl Museum (2018). "Celebrate Girlhood: 2009-2019." [Online]. Available: <https://www.girlmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GM-Pitch-Deck-2.pdf>

Appendix A: Planned Utilization of Physical Space

The purpose of this table is to overview the intended use or configuration of the Electric City's proposed space. This updated model is compared with the originally proposed, 13,300 square feet building, which appeared in the earlier Form:Media report,

Program Element	Original square footage	Newly proposed square footage	Increase (+) or Decrease (-)
Welcome/cash/gift shop	500	500	No change
Exhibit space (inter media)	2,000	500	-1,500
Exhibit space (construction)	2,000	0	-2,000
Program Space (shared with meeting space)	3,000	0	-3,000
Admin/office space 1 director office, 4 workstations for staff	500	250	-250
Kitchen	400	400	No change
Cafe	400	0	-400
Storage	600	300	-300
Washrooms	350	350	No change
Circulation	300	150	-150
Theatre for 150 people: seating (110)	1350	1,000	-350
Theatre for 150: stage (110)	500	300	-300
Theatre for 150 people: back of house (110)	1,000	750	-250
Additional washrooms	400	0	-400
Project total	13,300	4,500	

Appendix B: Full List of Financial Assumptions

Purpose: the purpose of this document is to outline the critical financial assumptions currently included in the financial forecasts (seen in the Excel spreadsheet).

Start-up Costs:

1. Currently, the Electric City anticipates purchasing and renovating a building (ValuFoods) at a total cost of \$2,000,000.
2. Before the interpretive centre opens, the Electric City will be required to invest in a number of paid positions in order to advance the project and its fundraising. Currently, these positions are estimated at:
 - a. Campaign Coordinator: 2 years at \$30,000 per year
 - b. Campaign Administrator: 4 years at \$25,000 per year
 - c. Project Coordinator: 4 years at \$29,700 per yearCombined, this equals a total expenditure of \$84,700 per year for Year 1 and Year 2, and \$54,700 per year for Year 3 and Year 4 (a total pre-start-up human resource investment of \$278,800.*
3. Interior/architectural concept drawings are estimated to cost \$20,000 in Year 3 or 4. This cost may be reduced somewhat as the building now in consideration is an existing structure.

**Note: currently, the financial forecasts show a four-year gap between now and the interpretive centre's opening. This is subject to change (shortened or lengthened) depending on the Society's approach. The Society may modify this time frame if it wishes to test alternate scenarios.*

Operating Expenses:

1. An Executive Director will be hired at start-up, at an expected salary of \$45,000 in Year 1, increasing by 1% each year thereafter. These salaries begin in Year 5.
2. Two part-time program staff will be hired at start-up, at total annual wages of \$37,128 (\$19,656 and \$17,472). Their wages will increase by 1% annually. These salaries begin in Year 5.
3. Advertising and promotion is currently budgeted for \$4,800 annually, beginning in Year 5.
4. Phone and Internet are currently budgeted for \$3,600 annually.
5. Commercial insurance is budgeted at \$1,200 annually.
6. Property insurance is budgeted at \$3,000 annually, beginning in Year 5.
7. Web domain fees are currently budgeted at \$240 annually.
8. Staff training and development expenses are currently budgeted at \$3,600 per year (in addition to salaries), beginning in Year 5.
9. Janitorial/custodial expenses are currently budgeted for \$6,000 per year, beginning in Year 5.
10. Technology support and repairs are estimated at \$1,200 per year, beginning in Year 5.
11. Office supplies is currently budgeted for \$600 per year, beginning in Year 1.
12. Property taxes are currently budgeted at \$6,000 per year, beginning in Year 5.
13. Small fixtures/fixture replacements are budgeted for \$900 per year, beginning in Year 5.
14. Credit card/debit fees are estimated at 1% of all admissions revenues, beginning in Year 5.
15. Accounting and bookkeeping fees are estimated at \$1,200 per year, beginning in Year 1.
16. Legal and other miscellaneous professional fees are currently budgeted for \$2,400 per year, beginning in Year 1.
17. Heat, lights, sewer, water, and utilities are estimated at \$6,000 per year, beginning in Year 5.
18. The subscription fee for a fundraising database is currently budgeted for \$2,100 per year, beginning in Year 1.

19. Registration (and re-registration) of the Society is budgeted to cost \$31 annually, beginning in Year 1.

Revenues:

1. # of estimated of annual visitors to the interpretive centre will be 2,000 in the first operating year, increasing to 3,000 by the fifth year of operation.
2. Admission price will be \$7.00 per person in the first operating year, increasing to \$9.00 per person in the fifth operating year.
3. In keeping with industry averages, only 65% of all visitors are expected to pay admission. The Electric City may adopt different policies at its discretion.
4. Visitor distribution is not spread equally across the year, but is rather currently projected as follows: January (0%), February (10%), March (10%), April (5%), May (10%), June (10%), July (10%), August (15%), September (15%), October (10%), November (5%), December (0%). This visitor distribution is highly likely to vary, and will align with the Electric City's various programs and offerings throughout the year. The distribution has only been included for cash-flow forecasting purposes at this point.
5. Average gift shop expenditure per visitor is \$2.50.
6. Average cost of goods sold for the gift shop is 30%.
7. The Electric City will generate \$9,800 in revenue per year (\$816 per month, \$188 per week) through the rental of community space to other organizations.
8. All start-up costs are currently budgeted to be financed through fundraising efforts and earned revenues (plays/performances). In actuality, we recognize that it is likely that the Electric City will be able to acquire some wage-sharing grants along the way. We also recognize that – once a considerable portion of the needed capital has been raised – the Society will likely be able to acquire some non-repayable capital funding from one or more levels of government. Given the uncertainty of these amounts (and the timing), they have not currently been included in the financial forecast. For a summary of fundraising or financing needs, please see the table on page 3.
9. Building sponsorship and naming rights are not currently included as revenue sources; however, there may be some potential here as the launch draws nearer.
10. Currently, there are no revenues or expenses associated with the continued delivery of the Electric City's theatrical performances (or any other experiences or programs). These can and should be incorporated in consultation with the Society.

Other key financial assumptions:

1. No loans or mortgages are currently assumed at any time.
2. The Electric City/La Nouvelle France Society will fully fund the acquisition and renovation cost of its building before start-up.
3. The facility will be open during December, January, February, and March primarily for special, pre-planned events (plays, school visits, etc.).
4. The building is assumed to be 4,500 square feet on the main floor, with an additional 1,000 square feet of storage space in the basement.

Total fundraising/capital campaign/funding requirements (based on current assumptions):

The purpose of this table is to summarize the Electric City’s financial needs for the first 10 years of operation, to support the establishment and ongoing operations of the facility. It is important to note that these amounts are over and above any earned revenue (paid admissions, space rentals, and gift shop sales). In other words, these are the revenue and capital needs not otherwise accounted for. Although we have classified these amounts broadly as ‘fundraising and sponsorships’, it may refer to any source of financing or revenue not referred to above. For instance, some of the funding below may be sourced from government departments.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	TOTAL
Funding required to sustain operations	106,767	106,942	74,576	99,809	110,837	111,548	110,733	111,383	112,067	110,836	1,055,498
Funding required to purchase/renovation of building	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000							2,000,000
Total	606,767	606,942	574,576	599,809	110,837	111,548	110,733	111,383	112,067	110,836	3,055,498