



Join the conversation.

Interpretive Planning for Historic Sites

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 10:00 a.m. CT.

While you wait:

1. Download PDF of the webinar slides and handout under the "Handouts" tab of your control bar.
2. Confirm that your speakers are turned on and your audio is working by doing a sound check in the "Audio" tab of the control bar. Having problems? Exit and restart the webinar or switch to "phone call" for a phone number and access code to hear the audio through your telephone.

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The Museum Services Program provides support, resources, and training to museums in Texas.

- Consultations
- Webinars and workshops
- Resources

www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services

On our webpage:

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Grants and Fundraising
- Helpful Resources
- Connect and Learn

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Upcoming Free Webinars

www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars

- Practical Preservation: Applied Approaches to Collections Care
 - Tuesday, August 22, 10:00 a.m. CT
- Translation in Museum: Tips and Tricks to Get it Right!
 - Thursday, September 21, 10:00 a.m. CT

Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections

- *Managing the Mustiness: Mold Control & Collections Emergency Response*, August 15, 3:30 p.m. CT, TXCERA
- *Ethics in Fundraising*, August 16, 11:00 a.m. CT, Foundant
- *The ACEGen Model - Access, Collaboration, and Equity in Genealogy Collections and Research*, August 18, 11:00 a.m. CT, MANY
- *DIY Preservation: From Monitoring to Management*, August 23, 11:00 a.m. CT, CCAHA
- *Centering Historic Preservation in Community*, August 25, 11:00 a.m. CT, MANY
- *Beyond Labels: Understanding the Interconnectedness of Special Collections and Cultural Heritage Professions*, August 28, 5:00 p.m. CT, Backlog
- *Advanced Storytelling: How to Tell Stories Across All Types of Grants*, August 29, 11:00 a.m. CT, Foundant
- *Post-Pandemic New Museum Reality: The European Perspective*, August 31, 11:00 a.m. CT, MuseumExpert.org
- *10 Quick Tips to Supercharge Your Next Fundraising Appeal*, August 31, 12:00 p.m. CT, Productive Fundraising
- *Arsenic in Collections*, September 6, 1:00 p.m. CT, CCC

Lisa E. Worley and Hal Simon-Hassell



Interpretive Planning for Historic Sites

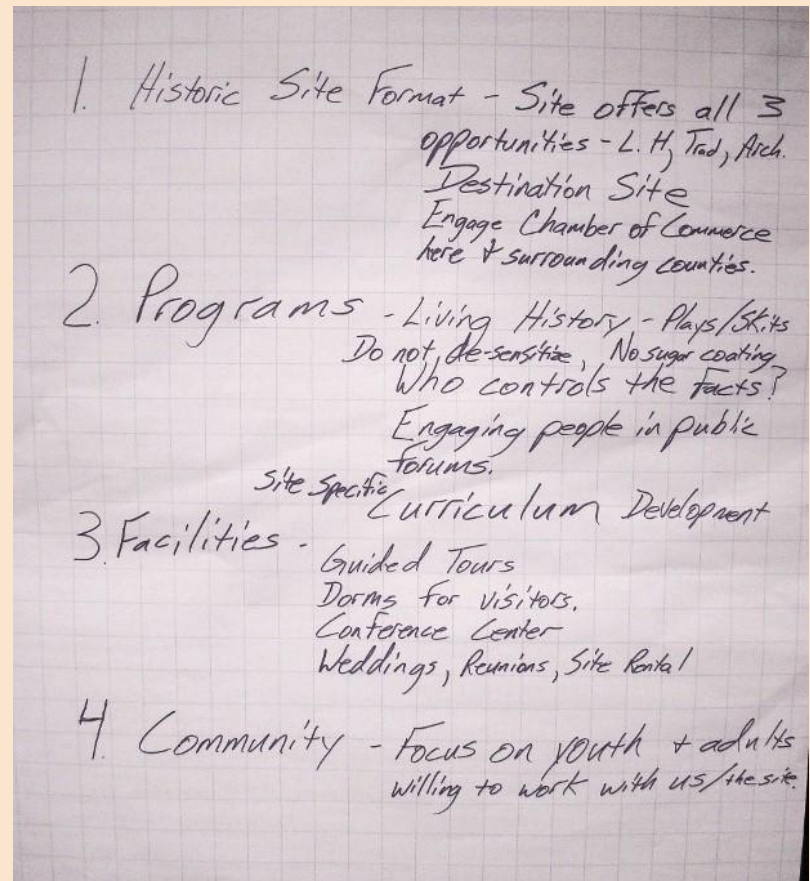
Texas Historical Commission
Museum Services Webinar
August 15, 2023

What is an Interpretive Plan?

- Process to fine tune programs with mission
 - Establishment of specific goals
 - Structured vision of how to achieve goals through appropriate and meaningful experiences
 - Development, organization and analysis of content into relevant and engaging messages
 - Outline of strategies for delivering the interpretive messages
 - Template for future development allowing for changing priorities
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Interpretive Plans guide-

- Education program development
- Exhibit design
- Collections use
- Space planning
- Resource allocation



The Great Facilitator-

Outside contract team vs. In-house staff

In-house staff -

- familiar with background
- familiar with site & issues
- close to operations

Outside contractor/facilitator -

- fresh & objective perspective
- avoids using staff time
- prior planning experience



Getting started-

- research other plans and documents
- review plans that have been completed for your site
- Locate maps, photographs, reports, research, etc.— anything that helps provide a comprehensive picture of your site's characteristics



Your Core Planning Team-

- 7 - 10 people to maintain tight focus
- contract team/facilitator
- site staff members & administrators
- board and friends group representatives
- Topical specialists as appropriate



Creating your stakeholder group-

- Yes, you really do want to include your community!
- Your stakeholder group:
 - large enough to gain wide community input and perspective
 - avoid loading group with single perspectives
 - large enough to afford break-out groups
 - small enough to develop good rapport



Who are your stakeholders?

- Museum board & friends group
 - Volunteers & docents
 - Site-associated descendants
 - City/County government (elected & staff)
 - School district/homeschoolers/colleges
 - Civic organizations
 - Other historic organizations
 - Churches
 - Local media
 - Topical historians/authors
 - Others of local prominence not listed above
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Building stakeholder momentum and interest-

- issue invitations at least four weeks in advance to allow for RSVPs
 - make personal contacts whenever possible
 - send reminder notes and thank you notes
 - stress the flexible and organic nature of interpretive plans as a roadmap to the future
 - offer feedback and copies of completed plan
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Getting community "buy-in"-

- Build credibility and demonstrate relevance
- Evidence of place within the community
- Show interest in multi-group viewpoints
- Express interest in new ideas & approaches



Your meeting logistics-

- pre-set agenda with varied activities
- single-day vs. multi-day
- single meeting vs. multiple meetings
- meeting space planning & logistics
- refreshments and scheduled breaks



What is in an Interpretive Plan?

- Statements of significance
 - Why is your site important?
 - Interpretive themes
 - What are your site's most important stories?
 - An audience analysis
 - Who currently visits? Who do you want to visit?
 - Visitor experience objectives
 - How do your audiences interact with your site?
 - Plan of action
 - How are you going to implement the plan?
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Preparing the interpretive plan-

- analyze information gathered from staff and stakeholders
 - Develop interpretive themes
 - Assess and target audiences
 - Develop visitor experience objectives
 - Create an implementation plan
 - Develop interpretive strategy
 - Create action plan



Institutional timing & phased plans-

What period should an interpretive plan cover?

- can vary (3-5 years, 5-7 years, 10 years)
- dependant on organization's circumstances

Why are phased plans important?

- developmentally- to allow for organic change
 - budgetarily- to spread implementation costs
 - phasing can building forward momentum & stakeholder involvement
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Implementations and priorities-

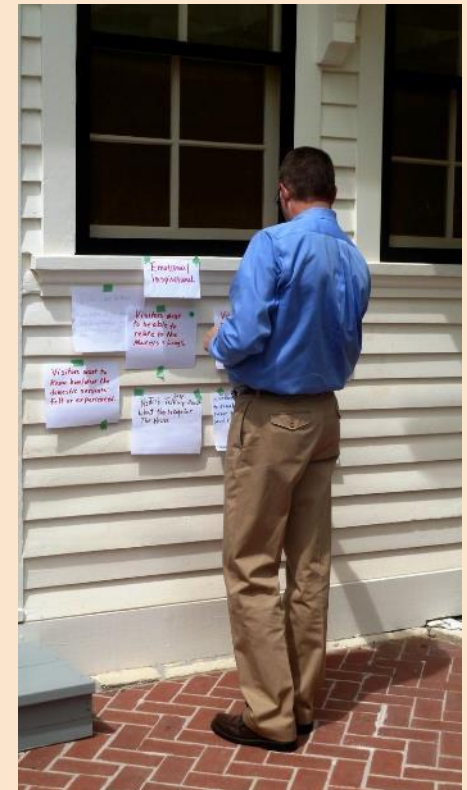
New Interpretive Plans should-

- serve as an organizational roadmap
- set realistic priorities
- allow for changing priorities
- always be living documents, not set in stone



Final thoughts and Q&A

- Include outside voices whether or not you develop the plan in-house
- Outside consultant doesn't necessarily mean big \$ for a plan-- it can be as simple as a meeting facilitator
- Research other plans; they're available from a variety of institutions



Presenters

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