

VIRGINIA BEACH
HISTORIC HOUSES
FOUNDATION, INC.

STRATEGIC PLAN

For the Historic Houses Foundation
2014–2019

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Introduction

As recommended by the Historic Sites Organizing Committee and approved by the City Council in 2007, the Virginia Beach Historic House Foundation will serve as the governing board for the historic houses owned by the City of Virginia Beach and operated by the Department of Museums and Historic Resources. The Foundation will represent the public's interest in preserving and maintaining the historic buildings, sites and collections as educational and cultural entities that exist for the benefit of the public.

The strategic plan was developed from a series of workshops held in April and May of 2013 by the staff and board members. Additionally, the board held seven workshops for various stakeholder groups and the general public in the month of September 2013.

Structure of the Organization: The Virginia Beach Historic House Foundation will operate as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization.

The Vision

The Virginia Beach Historic Houses and Properties are cultural assets that are valued and supported by the community. As Trustees we are committed to historic architecture, authentic collections, inspiring landscapes, and stimulating programming experiences for all audiences, and to maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and accreditation.

The Mission

The purpose of the Foundation is to support the city-owned historic houses and properties and create awareness of Virginia Beach history by providing funding for research, education, acquisition and curation of historic artifacts, structural enhancements, and public awareness programs.

Strategic Goals/Priorities

In pursuit of the future state we have envisioned and aspire to reach, the Virginia Beach Historic Houses Board will focus its energies and resources on three areas of priority during the coming years:

1. **Strengthen Financial Security** – A financial position will be established and later strengthened by creating and implementing a development plan that thoughtfully incorporates ways to diversify income sources. This includes sponsorships and fund raising activities.
2. **Increase Engagement of People** – An active board will play a greater role in fundraising events, embracing new ideas and concepts, supporting programming that engages a broad audience, and filling board seats.
3. **Build Public Awareness** – Establish branding of the organization and clear and consistent public communication will build visibility of the board, programs, financial support and the resources.

Key Initiatives and Strategies

Goal 1: Strengthen Financial Security – An improved financial position will be achieved by creating and implementing a development plan that thoughtfully incorporates ways to diversify income sources.

Identified initiatives and strategies are:

1. A comprehensive development plan will be created that incorporates donor cultivation, planned giving, annual appeal schedule, grants and foundation support, and fundraising events, etc.
 - a) Create Year-One fundraising goals.
 - b) Conduct direct mail appeals.
 - c) Conduct appointments with key community leaders.
2. One new gala events will be developed. These gala events should be designed to not only raise money, but to also build visibility and community support.

3. A dedicated fundraising committee will be established to regularly review and implement the development plan. New members/volunteers will be approached to be part of this committee. While the committee will be responsible for overseeing the plan, it will remain the ultimate duty of the entire Board to ensure that it is properly implemented and supported.
4. Foundation Sponsored events will be developed to create new friends within the community and build visibility.
5. All existing programs will go through a cost/benefit analysis to assess and review their current viability and possibility for future income and sustainability. (See Strategic Plan for History Museums)
6. New programs and events will be developed with the intent to raise needed funds. This will be done in tandem with the strategies outlined under Increase Engagement of People. (See Strategic Plan for History Museums)



Goal 2: Increase Engagement of People – An active board will play a greater role in fundraising events, embracing new ideas and concepts, supporting programming that engages a broad audience, and filling board seats.

Identified initiatives and strategies are:

1. In the immediate future the Board will reach out to a few existing members who are willing to play an active role in developing 1 or 2 new annual fundraising programs
2. Identify new members (working and contributing).
3. Pursue Board Development:
 - a) The Board of Directors will be comprised of members with responsibilities that are essential to the success and operation of the organization.
 - b) New Board Members will be identified and cultivated.
 - c) All Board Members will participate in the Board of Trustee Responsibility pledge.



Goal 3: Build Public Awareness – Increased branding of the organization and clear and consistent public communication will build visibility of the board, programs, financial support and the resources.

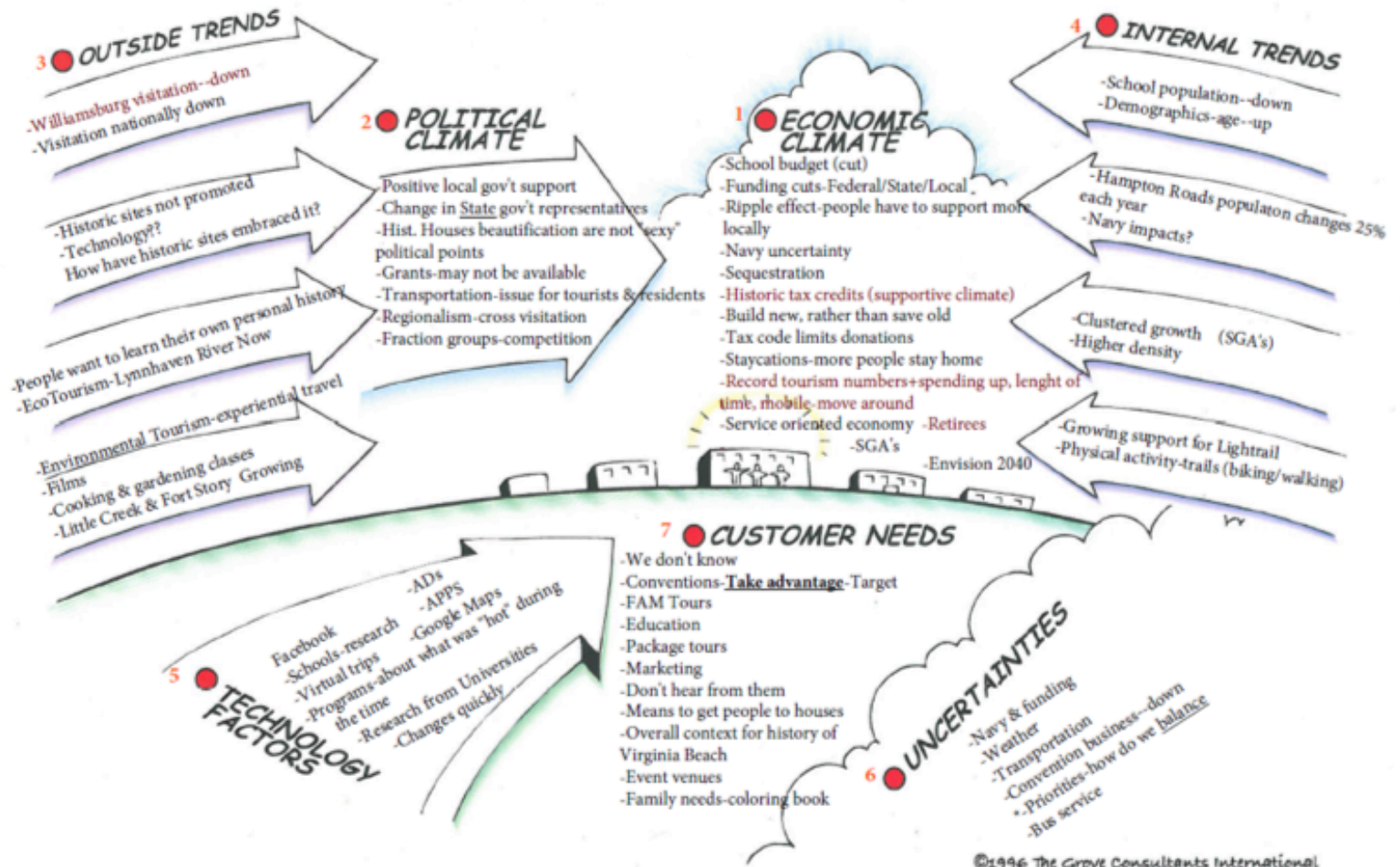
Identified initiatives and strategies are:

1. Develop a detailed marketing plan that will promote the uniqueness of the Virginia Beach Historic House Foundation, its programs, and its resources in a way that excites and engages a broad audience.
2. Develop a greater online presence. Create additional promotion through internet, etc.
 - a) Utilize YouTube as a way to promote programs, exhibits, and other activities.
3. Increase electronic communication with website, expanded email list, and other organizations.
4. Develop a greater presence with the community through new programs, exhibits, and collaborations.



The Context Map

Historic House Foundation Board



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Completed: 5/22/2013

Strategic Drivers of Change

	Positive (Growth- Opportunity)	Negative (Threats-Uncertainties)
External	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support for historic structures • Outreach from Cavalier to other historic properties • Rich history- first settlers- 50th Anniversary • Regional tourism efforts- strong, need to tap into them (not with us) • 3.5 million visitors per year 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in leadership • History is not “sexy” • School fiscal constraints • Sequestration
	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures in great shape • Owned & operated by COVB =stability, lessen operation needs • Friends Group • Grounds, location, neutral settings 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low revenues • Low attendance • Large maintenance bills • No story • Lack of storage • Does not link to school curricula • Houses not grouped together • Transportation





The Virginia Beach historic houses exist within a complex community and surrounding region subject to shifting societal trends. The Foundation must carefully monitor these external forces and accordingly.

Demographic trends

The population of Virginia Beach is increasing at a 1% rate, and increasing in its diversity of cultures.

Why is this important? We must find a way to engage our citizens in things that interest them.

Financial Trends

Changes in tax laws impact financial donations

With few federal dollars available, more charitable giving is directed toward human areas rather than cultural areas

Why is this important? We must make a case to inform and educate the public on the importance and benefits of making donations to the Foundation.

Educational Trends

Funding cuts in local schools along with testing priorities from the Standards of Learning dramatically cut school visits to the museums.

The youth population has decreased

Why this is important? Teachers are faced with learning standards, and the museums must align with these standards to encourage visitation and outreach. Also consider expanding adult education programs and lecture series to drive attendance from the adult population.

Leisure Time Trends

National trends show that historic museums have a declining attendance.

Shorter trips are on the increase.

Advances in computer communications technology have made people more physically isolated, fostering the need for more social and “real” experiences.

Fuel prices are rising, thus limiting bus tours and people willing to drive among the houses.

People use the internet to make informed choices on places to visit.

Why is this important? We must find ways to market to audiences that allow people to have authentic experiences; ones that they could not have on-line or outside the historic properties.

Trends in Technology

The Internet is used by 99% of the United States population.

Technology changes rapidly, often with unclear implications for museums in terms of exhibits, preservation, and accessibility.

Why this is important? The Foundation must take advantage of technology to expand its public presence, educational mission, and general financial income. We should look at ways to expand programs via the Internet.



Stakeholder Meetings and Town Hall Results (September 2013)

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Summarized Strengths

- Each house has attractive grounds and large lots
- Virginia Beach is the birthplace of history
- Each house is unique and has its own strengths
- The City Council cares about the houses
- The staff is professionally trained

Summarized Challenges

- The decline in schools visitation
- Lack of advertising and promotion
- Lack of school programs and outreach
- Lack of storage space
- High costs of conservation of collections
- Lack of interpretation plan for each house
- Buildings and grounds are expensive to maintain

Current Reality

Collections

Theme of current reality:

1. Authentic vs. Reproductive collections?
2. How do we maintain existing collections with limited dollars?

Finance/Audit

Theme of current reality:

1. What is the role of each house?
2. How will we raise money?
3. How will we increase revenues?
4. Maintain visibility in the City Budget Process.

Buildings and Grounds

Theme of current reality:

1. What is the role of the Foundation in the physical well-being of the houses vs. the City of Virginia Beach's role?

Education

Theme of current reality:

1. What is the interpretative plan for each house?
2. How do we increase programming and what types of programming?
3. How do we increase volunteers and ensure professionalism on these volunteers?



Differences Between a Museum and a Historic House

(Brainstorming session)

Historic House Museum

- Eclectic experiences
- May have broad focus
- Walk-in, walk-out
- Have to create a context
- A collection of something
- Don't have a sense of people who lived somewhere
- Impact/emotion
- Exhibits
- Can "touch"
- To see objects
- Changes
- Expect trained and educated staff
- Freedom-to explore-self guided
- Cost more
- Kid friendly
- Physically accessible
- Large
- All day
- More education focus
- Facts/scientific
- Does not define me
- More likely to get money
- Story changes
- Larger age range
- Trendy

Historic House

- Trip back "in time"
- Place where families lived
- "Home"
- Focus on that property "limits"
- Living
- Families can tell a story of who lived there
- Present a broad view of the house more going on than one aspect
- Relate to a house because we live in a house-see yourself there
- Context for the family potential to show passage of time
- Once you've seen one, you've seen them all
- "Don't touch"
- To hear stories
- Stays the same
- Don't expect trained staff, think volunteers run them
- Captive-must do a tour
- Not physically accessible
- Small
- 1 hour to tour
- Affordable
- Not professional
- Mature audience
- Programming could change
- Subset of museum

What Characteristics Make Up a “Great” Foundation Board?

- Great communication w/in Board and Community
- One vision-all working together
- Clear on direction
- Commitment to the goals
- Solicit funds, administration of funds, investing funds
- Leadership in the community-someone to initiate action in the community
- Sensitivity to the needs and nuances in the community
- Members who can raise money (“Give it, get it, or get off”)
- We nurture partnerships to grow assets
- Find sponsors
- Public face of the stewards of the history of Virginia Beach
- Brand and have a professional packet to give to donors
- One-on-one contact w/donors
- We are visible at events
- We are partners w/the Press
- Seek grants
- Articulate goals
- Identify criteria
- Cultivate new Board members
- Public face of Historic Houses

Communication

Public Face
Partnering with the press

Fund Raising

Grants
Raise money
Nurture partnerships to grow assets
Fund sponsors

Community Involvement

Leadership in community
Nurturing
Stewards of history of VB
Nurture new board members
Visible at events

How We Work

Commitment to goals
Articulate our goals
Criteria for decision making
One vision-all working together

Committee Assignments

Communication

Stephen Mansfield
Fielding Tyler

Fund Raising

Clancy

Community Involvement

Sandy Craig

How We Work

Joann
Bob Jones

Communication

Goal: Raise awareness (initiate)

In order to:

- Fund raise
- Raise awareness
- Education about the houses
- Raise public interest
- Cultivate awareness

How do you measure this?

- Chart money coming in
- Attendance
- Pre-posttest w/schools
- How many articles?

- Visible at events
- Nurturing relationships
- Stewards of history of Virginia
- Beach-value
- Become visible in the community

Measures:

- New board members
- City council support
- Attendance
- Support
- Press coverage

Fund Raising

Goal: Raise services and resources

In order to:

- Maintain houses
- Educate-staff and public
- Foster research
- Ask donors to invest (resources, time) in a great cause

Measures:

- Amount of money raised
- Where did it go?
- What did you buy?

In order to:

- Maximize success
- Hold ourselves accountable to provide quality services to the community

Measures:

- Strategic Plan
- Board continuity
- Metrics
- Criteria for decision making
- Communicate with City Council
- City Council support

Community Involvement (by the Board)

Goal: Pursue outreach opportunities

In order to:

- Get new board members
- Have buy-in into the value of Historic Houses
- Leadership in community

Appendices

1. Virtual Town Hall Results
2. Department of History Museums Strategic Plan



VIRTUAL TOWN HALL RESULTS

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Introduction

The Virginia Beach Historic House Foundation, the governing body of the historic houses owned by the city of Virginia Beach and operated by the Department of Museums and Historic Resources, is developing a strategic plan to guide the staff in preserving and maintaining the historic buildings, sites and collections as educational entities that exist for the benefit of the public. In this regard, the board is seeking public input to use when developing strategic goals and actions. The mission statement for the board is:

Virginia Beach historic houses and gardens will become prominent local, regional and national historic attractions through outstanding architecture, authentic collections and inspiring landscapes; and will deliver stimulating programming experiences for all audiences. The houses and properties are a cultural asset and are valued and supported by our community.

The houses under the board's governance are:

- Adam Thoroughgood House: 1636 Parish Rd.
- Francis Land House: 3131 Virginia Beach Blvd.
- Lynnhaven House: 4409 Wishart Rd.

Other properties that may benefit from the board's grants are:

- deWitt Cottage: 1113 Atlantic Ave.
- Ferry Plantation House: 4136 Cheswick Lane
- Old Coast Guard Station: 24th Street & Atlantic Ave.
- Whitehurst Buffington House
- Upper Wolfsnare

To submit your comments, please click the blue "Post" button below or you can click the "Your Response" tab above this introduction to be taken to the survey questions.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

As of October 10, 2013, 6:22 AM, this forum had:

Attendees:	305
Participants:	33
Hours of Public Comment:	1.7

Responses

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Answered	31
Skipped	2

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Answered	32
Skipped	1

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Answered	33
Skipped	0

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Answered	33
Skipped	0

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Answered	33
Skipped	0

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Nancy DeFord inside Beach

September 27, 2013, 9:13 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Houses seem well-maintained, grounds and exteriors are interesting

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

more presence in social media, more well developed web offerings,

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

6 months ago

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

interesting

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

interested in seeing all three at one time for comparison

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Kendall Ziegler inside Princess Anne

September 19, 2013, 11:35 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

I know that they had summer programs for kids, this is good. The homes are authentic to their time.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More advertisement about programs. We only went to one of the summer activities and that was because I read something in the Va Beach Beacon. After that i could not find when the other programs were taking place even though the attendant said there was more.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

July 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The kids program was good and afterwards we got to view the house.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Kids program about birds.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Frank Moore inside Bayside

September 16, 2013, 9:55 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Restoring the houses to as close as possible original form.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

No Response

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

In June 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The knowledge of the guides

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

When I want to sample history

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Brian Howard inside Centerville

September 16, 2013, 6:48 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Seems to be a renewed interest in living history programs at the homes. Need more and various events such as fairs, trades, and the like.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Finish repairs to the Francis Land House front steps. Have more living history events focusing on the local history from the 1600 to 1900. There is other local history than pirates. Colonial, Federal, and Victorian periods need better representation at the appropriate homes.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

June 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Living history interpreters.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

War of 1812 presentation focusing on the local history and happenings during that period.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Edmond Morrison inside Lynnhaven

September 14, 2013, 11:23 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The deWitt Cottage (Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum) continues to be a popular attraction on the ocean front. The city keeps the house in good repair. This house has a unique position among our historic houses being within walking distance of most of the boardwalk attractions.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

If the general population were more aware of our historic houses our visitation would increase. We need to get the word out that Virginia Beach is more than a "watering hole". We have lots of history here but we are seen as an entertainment venue only.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Wednesday, September 11, 2013.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

My visit was to the deWitt Cottage. I like the structure itself, its beautiful setting, well landscaped yard. I also like the museum with the history of decoys and waterfowl hunting in this area. The Edgar Brown display of historic items is really quite wonderful.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

No particular event.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Richard Sloan inside Kempsville

September 11, 2013, 7:40 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The city is making an effort to maintain these houses, to varying levels of effectiveness.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More historic artifacts could be purchased and displayed in these houses. Also, more care must be given to maintenance issues.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

6 months (Lynnhaven House)

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The docent was very knowledgeable and entertaining. More training for the docents of all the houses would be good.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Personal interest in historic houses.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Ali Allred inside Princess Anne

September 11, 2013, 8:46 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

No Response

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

When I was younger, staff at the Francis Land House used to wear time period clothing. That was really nice. I felt that the house was very bare and lifeless upon my last visit. If there were opportunities for groups or schools to hold events there free of charge, they could charge admission for attendees and maybe increase the money brought in. Field trips where they "house hop" would be great for elementary or middle school students. Market to groups like women in design, AIA, ASID, IIDA, etc. to volunteer, host events, etc. Hold farmers markets in the yards or get the houses to allow folks to host bake sales, yard sales, etc. and open for tours. Decorate for the holidays to attract passersby.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Within the last two months

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Learning about what life was like on that very site when it was first built

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Field Trip for the Art Institute of Virginia Beach

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

C. G. inside Princess Anne

September 7, 2013, 6:23 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Bigger effort to organize and support them together

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Get the Frank Lloyd Wright house to be available for a really well rounded sample of area architecture

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Spring

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Guides that know and love the houses, Seeing some history in this sprawling stripmall town

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

DAR meeting

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Gary Bennett inside Kempsville

September 6, 2013, 1:48 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

They are still standing. Sadly they are slowly falling into a state of disrepair.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

A Lot. For instance, the historic hoe on VB Blvd (i can't remember the name) has its front steps ripped down for i dont know how long and its still not replaced.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

With in the last few months

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

I like the preservation of the founding roots of this city

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Personal interest

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

RICHARD GREATHOUSE inside Bayside

September 6, 2013, 5:39 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

AS HISTORICAL SITE, THEY DO NOT GET THE ADVERTISING NEEDED TO ATTRACT VISITORIES. WITH ONLY FRANCIS LAND VISABLE FROM A MAJOR STREET, THE REST ARE WAY OFF THE MAJOR ROADS. THE SIGNS ARE IN PLACE BUT NOT WORKING. NOW IF YOU ADD FERRY PLANTATION INTO THE MIX, YOU HAVE 4 HISTORICAL HOMES JUST IN THE LOCAL AREA. BAYSIDE HISTORY TRAIL, THAT HAPPENS IN MAY, ADD PEMBROOK MANOR, MORNING STAR BAPTIST, OLD DONATION, HAYGOOD UMC, AND YOU HAVE A GREAT COLLECTION THAT THE CITY SHOULD BE PROUD OF. AND THERE ARE OTHER SITES IN THIS CITY THAT COULD BE ADDED INTO AN EFFORT TO BRING PEOPLE WHO LOVE HISTORY AND THE BEACH TO OUR CITY.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

BRING THEM OUT TO THE FRONT ON CITY WEB SITES. INCREASE SIGNAGE TO GET MORE VISABILITY.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

FERRY PLANTATION WITHIN THE LAST WEEK.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

THE WORK TO PRESERVE THE SITE.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

WE MEET THERE FOR OUR BUSINESS MEETINGS.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Colleen Ripley inside Kempsville

September 5, 2013, 8:46 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The people who run the homes and give tours are very well educated on the history of the houses and the area.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Maybe more advertising to bring in more visitors and revenue.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

During Spring Break 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The knowledgeable and friendly staff. Very excited to tell us the history of the homes

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

It was just a day to spend with my sister and my niece visiting from Newport News

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Patricia E. Dolan inside Centerville

September 5, 2013, 5:15 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

I enjoy colonial history and love to share it with visitors and friends. Wednesday in July classes are great.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

None to offer....just keep doing more of the same.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

3 weeks ago Went to Upper Wolfsnare, before that the Francis Land House in early summer

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

the guide was quite knowledgeable

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Wednesday In July was quite good. Also did a lecture at the Adam Thoroughgood House.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Susan Flye inside Lynnhaven

September 5, 2013, 4:31 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

1. Preservation of the homes and their contents 2. Staff are very welcoming and provide excellent participation opportunities and training to adult docents and teenage volunteers.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

1. Make homes and their events more visible with traditional and internet marketing. 2. Enhance the gift shop inventory, to improve the guest experience and raise additional funds. The book offerings could be gleaned from the well rounded collections in the shops of Mt. Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, and Monticello.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

August 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

As a docent, my last visit was to give tours, so I liked the interest shown by visitors. The out-of-town visitors are happy to have discovered such a hidden gem, and the local visitors are proud of their own city's history.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Life of a Pirate at the Thoroughgood house.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Beth Richardson inside Beach

September 5, 2013, 1:43 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Knowledgeable staff

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Detail the garden beds; need to be maintained more often

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

April 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The house

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Events going on that day; Virginia Native Plant Sale

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Jim Plaatsman inside Princess Anne

September 5, 2013, 12:57 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Better recognition and awareness of events; informed staff and volunteers

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Improved hours; access to the lookout tower at 24th Street Life Saving Station

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Last week - Lynnhaven House

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

New Visitor Center and volunteer staff

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

None

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

jerry jorgensen inside Princess Anne

September 5, 2013, 12:32 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Hard to answer, as I was not aware that these were city owned buildings. Have been to the one on Virginia Beach Blvd for a craft show.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Buildings obviously need to be maintained, but not sure that it is the responsibility of the city to do so. There is a need for these facilities to be promoted.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Last fall for a craft festival

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Folks were nice. Crafts were ok.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Craft Sale

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Barbara Lizana inside Centerville

September 5, 2013, 12:30 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

No Response

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

I think more publicity could be made. The sites are indeed mentioned in various publications, but we are not stressing the age and assets of our historic sites as i.e., Williamsburg, does. I would like to see a tourism ad in national publications that presently uses the "Virginia is For Lovers" line for something other than the Virginia Beach oceanfront--something with a "historical tag" maybe? We can't "compete" with Williamsburg but maybe stressing our historic sites could attract someone who doesn't visit us because of the "beachy" aspect.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Three years ago

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The fact that maintenance/restoration was so close to the original and well-maintained.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

A Girl Scout exhibition at Francis Land House---I am a former leader, and donated an entire uniform from 1957 to the Scouts at that site.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Sallie Zeil inside Centerville

September 5, 2013, 12:05 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The buildings and grounds are keep well maintained.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Improve the way that advertising for these sites is handled. Do something to make tourists more aware of them. Perhaps offer a combined admission fee to all the historic houses. A shuttle bus tour of them would be awesome, even if it was only done for special occasions, like during the Neptune Festival, or perhaps offer a Holiday shuttle tour, or a garden shuttle tour in the spring. Offer a couple of new programs/events each year so that long term residents won't feel like they've "been there, done that".

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

It's been a few years.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The variety of things going on at the Francis Land House (music, dance, food, the bonfire outdoors) for this event

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Twelfth night

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Debra Rice inside Bayside

September 5, 2013, 12:01 PM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Maintenance, tours

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More events at houses to help draw people there

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

2012

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Enjoying seeing house and learning more about the history while attending a tea with friends

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Tea, craft fair

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Nathan Miller inside Bayside

September 5, 2013, 11:39 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The upkeep of the homes and the day to day running of them seem to be outstanding.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More advertising.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

2003

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Very knowledgeable staff.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

No specific program or event caused my visit.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Framingham Village Homes Association inside Centerville

September 5, 2013, 11:26 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

the day-to-day operation seems to be more than satisfactory.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Offer more public events that highlight the history of the house and the city. AND advertize more efficiently. How many of our many tourists even know these wonderful homes exist? My guess is very few. With increased tourist traffic, you should consider offering discounted rates to Virginia Beach residents.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

July 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

the general condition of the building and grounds

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

none

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Carolyn Caywood inside Bayside

September 5, 2013, 11:21 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

I particularly liked the Bayside History Trail Event.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

how to improve accessibility while retaining historic authenticity

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

2011 Francis Land for the wildflower sale

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

I appreciate the commitment to preservation

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

native plants

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Marie-Louise LaFond inside Beach

September 5, 2013, 11:21 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

They are very well kept.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

I feel that the historic houses are a national treasure that are not as well marketed as they could be. We own a historic bed and breakfast at the Oceanfront and our guests are always surprised to find that Va. Beach has the oldest brick house in the U.S. and that there are so many historic houses here. In particular our international guests are always uninformed about what history is here in our City as they literally never know about them. I know that this answer is wider in scope than what was asked in the question but people coming to the Beach especially from outside the US think of us as a beach destination and not as a historic destination. This morning we made up an itinerary for guests from Buffalo that included the lighthouses, First Landing, The ARE, and so on. It will keep them happy for a whole day. I think we need more aggressively to market non-fry-at-the-beach things to do for the summer and most particularly for the September through May season.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Is there a shuttle tour that can be taken of all the houses during scheduled hours during the summer and reserved during the off season?

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

I like knowing that people actually lived in these places

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

An event where you could buy indigenous plants.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

David Grochmal inside Lynnhaven

September 5, 2013, 11:10 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Programs at the Francis Land House

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Better advertising. Have neighborhood picnics or celebrations at each house.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

four or five years ago

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Chritmas celebrations and decorations

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

12th Night at Francis Land House

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Charlotte James inside Lynnhaven

September 5, 2013, 11:08 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Have only visited the Adam Thoroughgood and Francis Land Houses, but both of those had excellent docents.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Parking, particularly at the Adam Thoroughgood House (but that may be an impossibility given its location in a residential neighborhood).

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Two years ago.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Seeing how people lived at the time of the houses.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Took my grandson when we both had a day off.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Linda Napier inside Beach

September 5, 2013, 10:47 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

They are well kept and informative

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Better marketing - Summer camps for kids - art events - historic participation events - garden tours of all houses on a weekend.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

This summer

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

guides were informative

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

curiosity

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

S Lowe inside Kempsville

September 5, 2013, 9:26 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The guides are very good. Visitor centers at lynnhaven and Thoroughgood were very nice. Block ticket and senior rates were helpful.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More publicity and a better web page that is kept updated. Each house needs to have a brochure with information/historical facts about the house that

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Summer 2013

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The guides were well informed. Liked the walking paths.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

None specifically-visiting local attractions.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Paul Burke inside Bayside

September 5, 2013, 9:22 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The fact that with all the development you managed to save a sliver of history is amazing - all those summer cottages torn down the ocean front has zero character except for Tautogs

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

In the offseason you should have live music events on the lawns out front - but not rock n roll - acoustic music - music from the era of the house - string quartets, bluegrass, sea shanties, art auctions, fundraisers for worthy organizations the VB Aquarium, EVMS, Chrysler Museum, work with the Opera Company and Virginia Symphony, then buy the surrounding land and recover a larger foot print for these properties and move other historic buildings together, they are too spread apart. Mt Vernon is one property but with huge grounds and is a draw. These homes are blips between sprawl and strip malls there is minimal signage and they have limited visibility from the main roads - even the one located on VB Blvd. And whether it makes any sense or not - you need a well stocked gift shop - you should also consider aligning those homes/gift shops with Williamsburg, The Civil War Trail People and the Smithsonian consult with them.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Three years ago

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

The authenticity and the grounds

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

none

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

P Henderson inside Lynnhaven

September 5, 2013, 9:07 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Preservation efforts and docents are both vibrant programs

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More parking; combo ticket for multiple entries or for multi days.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Last month (August)

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Docent

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

None in particular

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Susan Topping inside Centerville

September 5, 2013, 8:46 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Not sure

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Open them up for citizens to rent out for parties, weddings, etc to bring in some revenue for the City.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

10 years

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

It was not memorable.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Meeting

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Lisa Castellano inside Kempsville

September 5, 2013, 8:42 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

The houses have been kept very well. Love the new visitor's center at Lynnhaven House

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

Very poor use of social media to promote the houses. Tourists and residents aren't just looking at the city guide books. These houses need better websites (virtual tour perhaps), Facebook and Twitter presences. How about an occasional Groupon? Has anyone looked at the monthly eNewsletter that Nauticus sends out? What a great way to promote programs at the historic houses!

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

December 2012

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

Programs are excellent

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

Adam Thoroughgood House - Yule Log lighting

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Kirsten Modine inside Princess Anne

September 5, 2013, 8:35 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

In a city where we tend to focus more on the bright, flashy new things that will draw tourists to the area, the fact that these homes are still maintained and open to the public is pretty amazing.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

As someone who has lived in this city most of my life, I would have to say that these homes are not very well marketed. Most of them aren't in highly visible areas that people drive past every day, and as a result, many people don't even know they exist. I think it is important to make an effort to make people (locals and tourists) more aware that these homes are available and open to the public. Perhaps holding events on some of the properties might help to draw a crowd. Serving a ladies' tea or holding screenings of period films on the lawn or Easter egg hunts would all be a fun reason to come by and enjoy these historic sites. I'm not sure if any of those events already occur, but if they do, they are not very well advertised to the general public.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

Over 15 years ago, but I have visited many historic homes in other cities and countries much more recently.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

For me, visiting a historic home is like walking through a portal in time. It takes me to a different place and allows me to imagine a time much different than the era of hustle and bustle, miles of traffic, and thunderous jets flying constantly overhead. It is a reprieve from Virginia Beach's "new normal", which is neither quiet nor relaxing.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

School field trip.

Virginia Beach Historic Houses

Please complete a brief survey to share your thoughts about Virginia Beach's historic houses, such as the Adam Thoroughgood, Francis Land and Lynnhaven houses, and share ideas you have on how to improve them.

Kathleen Beck inside Bayside

September 5, 2013, 8:22 AM

What is going well at the city-owned historic houses (ex. Adam Thoroughgood House, Francis Land House, Lynnhaven House)?

Docents are excellent at explaining the history of the homes and their relationship to the development of the area.

What improvements can be made at the city's historic houses?

More publicity to draw tourists to the area in the "off season" (October - May) to enhance the economy of the City.

When did you last visit a Virginia Beach historic house?

I live close to the Thoroughgood House and have visited the other homes in the past year.

What did you like best about your last visit to a Virginia Beach historic house?

As part of a work group, enjoyed a tour and tea served at the Lynnhaven House.

What program or event caused you to visit the historic house(s)?

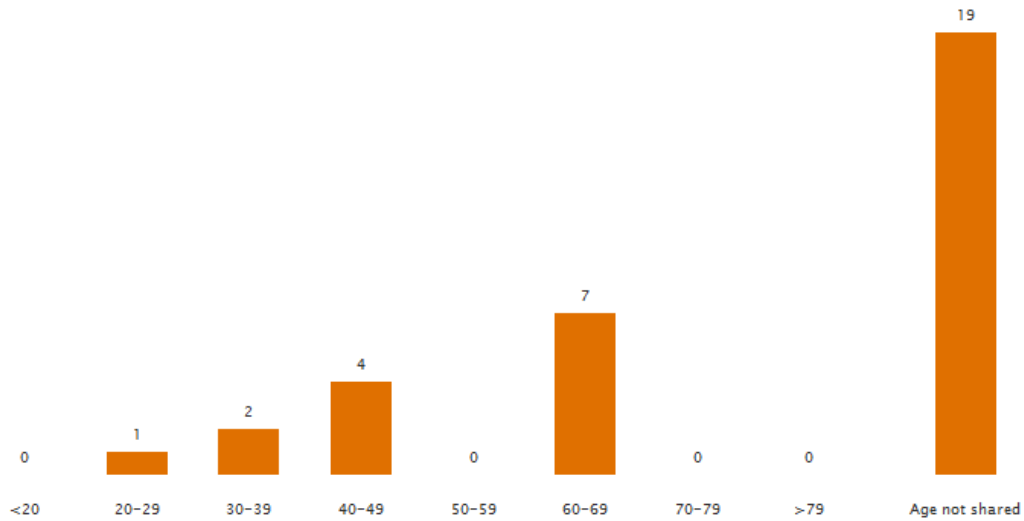
Visits to the Thoroughgood house grounds have been in conjunction with neighborhood events and walking in the neighborhood.



Virginia Beach Historic Houses Demographic Report

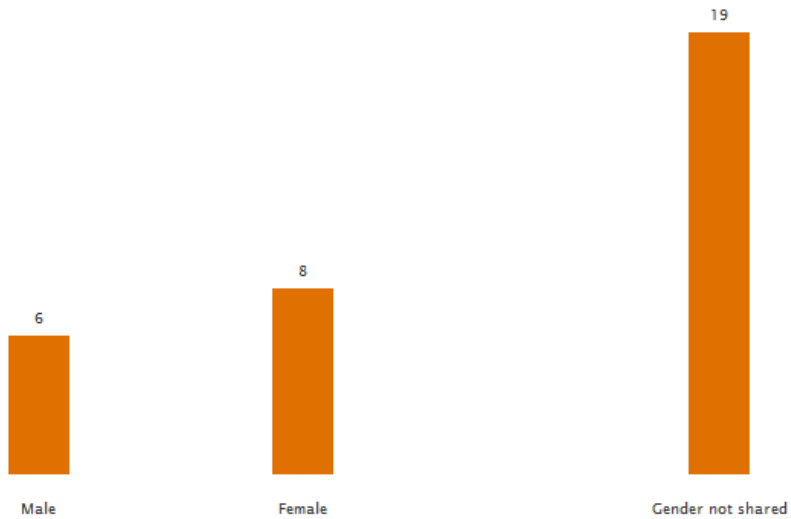
Age group

33 responses



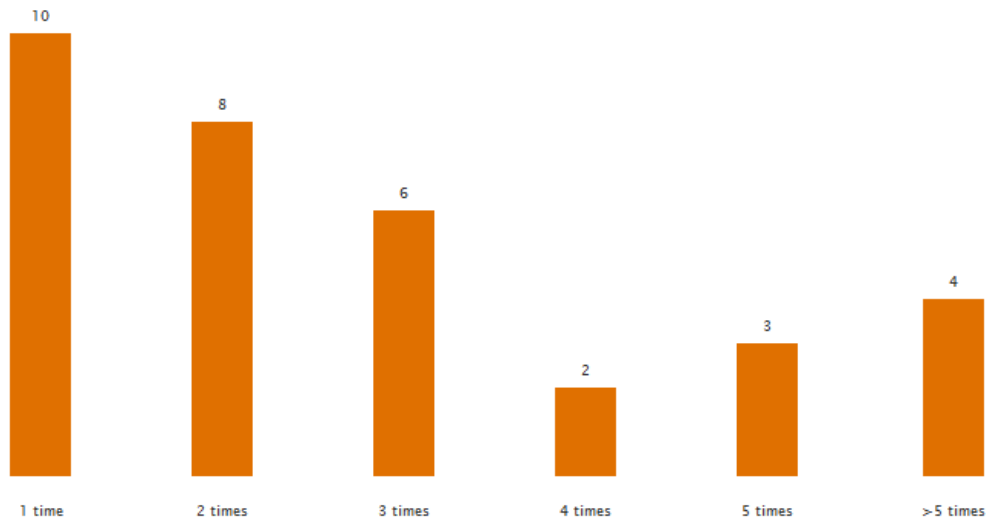
Gender

33 responses



Frequency of participation ▼

33 responses





VIRGINIA BEACH
HISTORY MUSEUMS

STRATEGIC PLAN

For the Department of Museums

2015–2020

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Introduction and Organizational History

The Virginia Beach History Museums include the Francis Land House (FLH), the Thoroughgood House (TH), the Lynnhaven House (LH), and the Princess Anne County Training School/Union Kempsville High School Museum (UK). They are part of the City of Virginia Beach Department of Museums, which also operates the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center.

As part of the municipal government of the City of Virginia Beach, the Department of Museums provides educational services to citizens and visitors, works to conserve the natural environment and preserve our historic treasures, and engages the community in these efforts.

Francis Land House

The City acquired the Francis Land House and the 35 acres of land surrounding it in 1975 for \$735,000. Much of this land was then parceled and sold for more than \$1,000,000. The city leased the historic house for a brief time, but soon issued a request for proposals for use of the building, none of which were chosen.

In 1984 a group of citizens proposed the building be used as a historic house museum. To that end, City Council created the Francis Land House Board of Governors, and the Francis Land House opened to the public on May 17, 1986. Initially part of the Department of General Services, in 1991 the Land House became part of the newly established Department of Museums.

Thoroughgood House

The Adam Thoroughgood House had been owned by the City of Norfolk and operated by the Chrysler Museum for years. When the Chrysler Museum reduced its operating hours due to financial constraints in 1998, the City of Virginia Beach Department of Museums took over operations of the house. In September 2003, full ownership of the Adam Thoroughgood House was transferred from Norfolk to the City of Virginia Beach.

Lynnhaven House

The Lynnhaven House was restored by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) in 1975 and operated by the Southeastern Branch of APVA. In 2004, the Southeastern Branch began raising funds for construction of the Colonial Education Center, adjacent to the historic house. The City of Virginia Beach Department of Museums took over operations in 2006, and in 2008, the City acquired the Lynnhaven House and completed the Colonial Education Center.

Princess Anne County Training School/Union Kempsville High School Museum

Princess Anne County Training School was the first high school for African Americans in Princess Anne County, now known as Virginia Beach. In 1962, the segregated school changed its name to Union Kempsville High School. And in 1969, schools were integrated across the city, and Union Kempsville graduated its last class.

A public museum commemorating the school opened in June 2010. The Museum was funded by Virginia Beach City Public Schools, and its collections and operations were handled by the City Department of Museums.

Additional sites

In addition to the four sites that it owns and operates, the Department of Museums owns an additional four historic sites that are operated by non-profit organizations. These sites include the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum at the de Witt Cottage, Ferry Plantation, the Old Coast Guard Station, and the Whitehurst-Buffington House.

The Strategic Plan

As an organization that is staffed by municipal employees and operated for the benefit of the community with the public trust, it is essential that we consider input from both our internal and external stakeholders. To that end, we have embarked upon an extensive strategic planning process. The Strategic Plan will serve as a platform for growth and a guide for meeting our long-term goals and objectives in daily operations. It is a living document that provides a roadmap for our future and will naturally evolve along with our needs.

The Mission, Vision and Values statements were created by our employees, as they are the ones who will be required to live them through their actions every day. This form of participatory management will help foster internal “buy-in” to the statements and the Plan overall. The Plan therefore represents a shared vision, and it holds staff accountable to standards upon which they all agree.

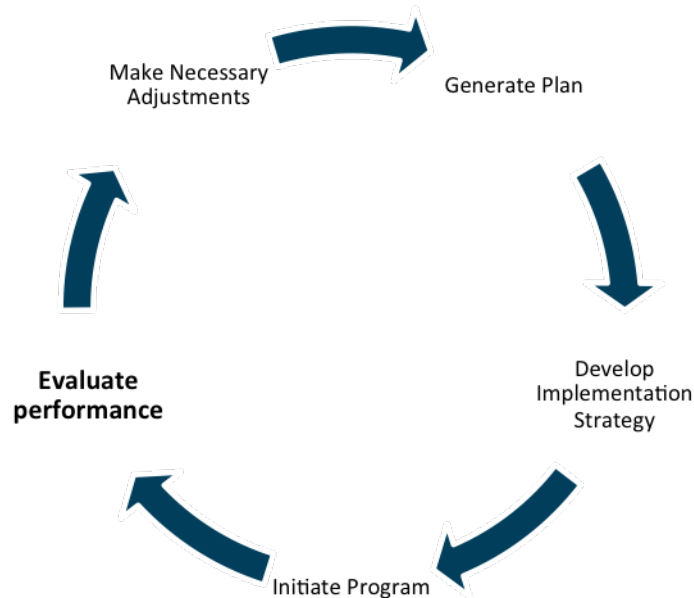
What are the elements of our Strategic Plan?

- Clearly stated mission, vision, and values
- Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)
- Identification of critical issues and service gaps
- Strategic long-term goals that will guide the organization well into the future
- Stated objectives with clearly defined action items
- Record-keeping for items that have been completed, replaced, or revised
- Tracking mechanism for the resources provided to us

Performance Assessment

An effective Strategic Plan establishes goals that can be objectively evaluated by preset performance measures. Methods of assessment can range from a to-do list to a fully integrated self-evaluation. The key is that the assessment provides the organization with effective feedback that clearly identifies whether or not the plan is being executed at its highest potential.

Table 1: Performance Assessment Cycle



Process and Acknowledgments

The Virginia Beach History Museums would like to acknowledge the Friends of the Historic Houses and the Historic Houses Foundation (external stakeholders), the Virginia Beach History Museums staff (internal stakeholders), the Virginia Aquarium, and the Virginia Beach Fire Department for their contributions to our Strategic Planning Process.

Strategic Planning Team

Beginning in the winter of 2014, numerous work sessions were conducted with the Virginia Beach History Museums staff to evaluate the division's need for a Strategic Plan.

The tasks were to:

1. Identify the Virginia Beach History Museums' mission, vision, and values
2. Assess the division's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
3. Create a list of critical issues and service gaps

Each component was vital in developing appropriate and effective goals, as well in identifying critical tasks and metrics that will aid in periodic assessments.

Table 2: Strategic Planning Team Participants

Travis Halstead, Manager	Nicole Moore, Museum Educator II
Anne Miller, Museum Special Projects Coordinator	Shirin Spencer, Museum Educator II
Kimberly Schmidtman, Museum Educator II	Jennifer Smith, Administrative Clerk
	Jaclyn Sullivan, Administrative Assistant

FINDINGS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Mission, Vision, and Values

The Mission Statement

The Virginia Beach History Museums' Mission Statement establishes the purpose for the organization's existence.

Table 3: VBHM's Mission Statement

The Virginia Beach History Museums serve as educational resources for the community and as stewards of historic buildings and museum collections in the City of Virginia Beach.

The Vision Statement

The vision statement motivates and excites those working within the Virginia Beach History Museums and gives direction for the future.

Table 4: VBHM's Vision Statement

The Virginia Beach History Museums exist to inspire the community to engage in lifelong learning by exploring the past.

The Values Statement

The Director of the Department of Museums has challenged us to uphold certain core values. These values must be held by all members of the organization in order to achieve the culture we seek.

Table 5: VBHM's Value Statement

The values of the Virginia Beach History Museums are based upon a belief in:

- **Performing efficiently and ethically**
- **Having a strong sense of purpose**
- **Treating each other and our guests with respect**
- **Valuing teamwork, trust, and quality results.**

SWOT Analysis: Survey

Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis compels an organization to take an objective look at itself. It also gives those outside the organization an opportunity to provide feedback. With this in mind, members of the full-time staff and selected members of the community were asked to complete a survey based on a SWOT template from Kotler's Museum Marketing & Strategy. The survey included the following questions about the Virginia Beach History Museums:

Strengths

- What makes people visit?
- What makes people recommend us?
- What skills do we have and what are we especially good at?
- What can we do that nobody else can?
- What successes have we had recently and why?

Weaknesses

- What skills do we lack and what aren't we good at?
- What do others do better than we do?
- What failures have we had and why?
- Why do people choose our competition?
- Why do previously happy visitors and members leave us?

Opportunities

- What new products and services could we offer?
- What new skills and capabilities could we acquire?
- How could we become unique?
- What new types of customers/markets/needs could we serve?
- What changes in the market could we exploit?
- What new ideas, techniques and technology could we use?
- What new ideas, techniques and technology could undermine us?
- What competitors could damage us?
- Are there any legal, economic or political threats to us?
- Are our customers changing?
- What other changes in the market could damage us?

Threats

- What new ideas, techniques and technology could undermine us?
- What competitors could damage us?
- Are there any legal, economic or political threats to us?
- Are our customers changing?
- What other changes in the market could damage us?

SWOT Analysis: Responses

Below are selected responses to the survey from both internal and external stakeholders. The full list of responses is available in the History Museums Manager's Office.

Strengths

Internal

- We provide historical information visitors can't get elsewhere.
- National Historic Landmark status (TH)
- FLH is easy to find. No bridge/tunnel travel (relevant to beach tourists).
- Admission is affordable; combo tickets have a long expiration date.
- Beautiful gardens/grounds
- School and scout programs are established and well-known by local teachers and leaders who keep coming to us.
- Programs interest people – which may not necessarily be about the house or its residents.
- Unique collection; interest in history, interest in museums in general; public programs; school programs; guided tours
- People are looking for something to do away from the oceanfront. They like visiting old houses or were here many years ago and want to come back.
- The people who recommend us will usually do so because they are invested in us.
- Great customer service
- Interest in program topics; knowledge of local and state history; good customer service; good experience during their visit
- VB has the earliest Chesapeake houses anywhere and a high number still standing.
- Skilled and committed volunteers
- We are not afraid to try new things, even if they fail. We are willing to stretch outside of the box and are open to new results.
- We value teamwork.
- We can tell the story of America from colonial beginnings to the civil rights era with our four sites.
- We are able to design and implement programs with a small budget.

- UK is a high-quality, professional museum.
- FLH is already compromised in many ways so we can do a lot with it.
- Accurately interpret four sites that are significant to local, state, and US history
- Tell the history of Princess Anne County/City of Virginia Beach
- Strong partnerships through HERO enable us to do more, reach more people.
- LH and TH complement each other.
- The 2014 “Gathering of the Guilds” was a successful event, with over 400 people in attendance.
- Successfully changed the format for “Yule Log” this year, starting earlier and lighting the log at the beginning of the program.
- The tea for Princess/Queen Anne celebrated our county namesake and allowed the public to celebrate a royal birthday/attend a royal birthday party.
- Outreach programs – people are interested in resources that can go to them; traditional programs– relatable and involve customs.
- The Widow’s Weeds and Hair Wreaths: Victorian Mourning and Funeral customs had an audience of 40 people, mostly new visitors.

External

- People visit to learn more about America’s “First Region.”
- Moderate weather, vibrant tourist industry, and large military presence
- Cape Henry – “First Landing”
- Proximity to Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Hampton, Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown, Smithfield
- Economically stable and the sites are an important drawing card.
- Historic Houses are unique treasures.
- Authentic with a generous City, Friends, and Foundation investment in funding, time, and volunteer energy
- Friends organization is a strong supporter, providing funding and volunteers for the houses and their programs.
- Employees are friendly and knowledgeable about the houses and their history.
- Broad and encompassing support from all organizations

Weaknesses

Internal

- Lack of technology –visitors may want more technologically interactive experience.
- Insufficient marketing. We don’t create quality marketing materials and are not reaching the audiences we need.
- We want to do new programs all the time but don’t need to—we can reinvent old/ existing ones. Our program planning is focused on the short-term.
- We aren’t good at creating revenue. We are often working on multiple programs at one time and never catching up, instead of planning one, and then moving on to the next program.

- Need for a historical interpretation that links all four sites
- We don't have the reputation or strong ties to major historical events, people, or movements to make us a "must see" historical attraction. Even within the local area, people are often unaware of the museums.
- Gift shop sales have declined to almost nothing.
- Lack of policies/SOPs and a clear understanding of boundaries with stakeholder groups.
- Collection is vastly underinsured and we need a major risk assessment.
- Other museums have a larger following than we do. We are still trying to find out what works for us.
- Other sites offer more changing exhibits, summer camps, teacher workshops, homeschool days, and hands-on/interactive experiences or opportunities.
- Older and disabled guests physically can't get in to the houses; need to increase accessibility.
- PT staff should be supervised more closely.
- It is hard to pinpoint the reason for program failures. Additionally, programs often have poor attendance.
- People are reluctant to go into Renaissance Academy to visit Union Kempsville and to purchase event tickets.
- Finding the sites can be difficult. Two are in residential areas and signage and maps are inadequate.
- Sites are not close together or in a historic district. We are not going to get many walk-in visitors; people generally are coming on purpose. Low foot traffic.
- Houses and museum do not change, so public may not want to make repeat visits.
- Support areas and visitor amenities (kitchens, restrooms) are poor.
- People choose the competition or the Aquarium and other oceanfront venues. We are often not viewed as a "real museum."

External

- Communications and coordination of issues to "stakeholders" and "selling" the houses to the public
- Perception across some visitors, donors, and Friends that their contributions (both solicited and offered) are not being displayed, used, and recognized. Some feel disenfranchised and not appreciated.
- Overall documentation and, in particular, the written and photographic history associated with the houses is weak.
- Lost opportunities to present and engage the public with characters in period costumes to provide a more rewarding experience.
- Management of technology and especially its timeliness and effectiveness from a human factors perspective.
- High turnover of staff with attendant cost to train and retrain replacements.
- There is little or weak coordination and cross-selling across the three (3) historic houses of the programs and mutual opportunities for visiting with other Virginia Beach Houses, facilities, and attractions.
- Fewer visits planned by the Virginia Beach Schools than in the past

Opportunities

Internal

- Could offer more/better private events with better support areas (renovate kitchen, restrooms).
- Accreditation
- Technology would allow us to work more efficiently with schools (e.g. Promethean board).
- Museum stores could generate revenue if redesigned and stocked with merchandise people want to buy.
- The van—now we have it; we should use it for outreach.
- Support from department for marketing
- Better content for and management of social media
- We have started offering more event rentals and spaces available for meetings and this has the potential to create new revenue.
- Offer programs that are out of the box and not necessarily related to the history of the site
- Art exhibits; outreach programs for retirement communities; homeschool classes; tours in Spanish; tours for the deaf with a signer; workshops on traditional crafts; summer concerts; mystery murder dinners; better gift shop items
- We could have more of a virtual presence by offering collections online, iPad tours, YouTube videos, audio tours, etc.
- Annual event that no one else in area offers – like a Mardi Gras festival
- The Thoroughgood/Lynnhaven Chesapeake House narrative is a unique story, and should be leveraged.
- Target “hipsters”—those who are part of the “locally made, locally grown” movement, by offering craft beer classes, soap-making classes, etc.
- Homeschool families; beach goers; communities in VB that rarely visit or participate in programs – military, Latinos, teenagers, and college students.
- Access to school TV stations throughout the state
- Have a day where we stay open later, particularly in the summer and have a food truck or two on the grounds.
- Videos that provide background information in the lobbies of each house; gas-station TV

External

- The Friends could take on a greater role as advocates for the historic houses with City Council, other civic organizations, the Foundation, and the public.
- More formal engagement with external organizations and their members with museum staff earlier in the program-planning process to discuss and vet programs and to identify needs for volunteering and funding support.
- Better media outreach to WHRO and the Virginian-Pilot (including the Beacon) to request their support in publicizing the programs and functions at the houses

- External organizations (Friends, etc.) could work with city staff to develop, operate, and maintain a new Web-accessible Archive, making multimedia, oral histories, documents, records, photographs, and 3D virtual-reality tours readily searchable and available.
- The Friends could formally send out Volunteer Forms to recruit members.
- Support an effort by the city museum staff to create an Annual Visitor's Pass for the houses.
- The Friends, in coordination with the Foundation, seek to provide more corporate sponsorships with appropriate signage and display.

Threats

Internal

- Technology is constantly changing and expensive to replace.
- The Aquarium staff does an outreach program on Native Americans in the area that is in direct competition with our program..
- Large sites like Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg get more school groups because they can accommodate larger numbers in one visit.
- The beach: The City markets VB as a resort city, not a cultural destination. Amusement and theme parks are perceived to be more fun.
- Low-priority status in the City budget. Stakeholder groups seem to have competing agendas.
- U.S. Department of Commerce reports that museums, historic sites, and similar institutions are climbing out of the 2008 recession, but at a slow pace.
- Cost of building preservation far exceeds available funds.
- Visitation to historic sites has declined nationwide.
- Ongoing effects of previous decisions expose the City to liability.
- Many of our visitors would prefer something a little less formal and more hands-on, as opposed to the guided tours we offer.
- In the past, young people visited museums with their families. Museums are not typical destinations for today's families, making it difficult to convert young people to adult museum visitors.
- The National Endowment of the Arts reported in 2013 that the percentage of adult visitors to historic sites dropped.

External

- Moderate risk of loss of knowledge and history associated with the houses due to turnover or not replacing key personnel
- Growing cultural, educational, and historical indifference
- With so many competing demands for time and money, the public simply stops coming or visiting in significant numbers.
- If attendance and interest falls to unacceptable levels, the Virginia Beach City Council may lose interest and decrease funding to the point where programs and exhibits are no longer publicly viable or accessible. This threat is especially significant at a time when the City is considering other capital expenditures and investments, which may well have higher priority.

Critical Issues and Service Gaps

After analyzing the current operations, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the Strategic Planning Team identified a list of critical issues and service gaps that will help provide the foundation for creating the division's four long-term goals and numerous supporting objectives. The list of critical issues and service gaps follows and is in no particular order.

- Programming and interpretation
- Preservation and conservation
- Community relations
- Marketing: Print and social/electronic media
- Engagement: How do we make things personal while still promoting the business?
- Relevancy: Trends in the field, technology, computer upgrades, interactive media
- Physical accessibility
- Learning accessibility
- Customer service
- Organizational development
- Building improvements
- Facility rentals
- Risk management
- Funding: Budgeting and fundraising
- Accreditation: American Alliance of Museums
- Memorandum of Understanding: Updated and appropriate.
- Organization structure: Review organizational structure annually to maintain maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
- Staff development: Provide training for staff members in areas that will facilitate their success and that of the department in the future. Provide supervisory-level training to all educators to allow them to function effectively in their new roles as supervisors of part-time employees.
- Volunteer resources
- Community relationships: Alumni, City agencies, civic organizations, Foundation, Friends
- Collections management

Strategic Goals

The Virginia Beach History Museums play a specific role in City Government, with responsibilities in four main areas. In order to meet these responsibilities, we have identified strategic goals under which fall specific objectives and critical tasks. Objectives are based on issues identified in the SWOT analysis and noted in the Critical Issues section of the Plan. The four strategic goals established by the Virginia Beach History Museums are:

Community Relationships

The Virginia Beach History Museums will serve the community, value collaboration and partnerships, and maintain strong ties to civic organizations.

Organizational Development

The Virginia Beach History Museums will maintain a professional, efficient organizational structure and follow best practices in our field.

Resources

The Virginia Beach History Museums will serve as responsible stewards of the City's funds, facilities, personnel, and collections.

Education

The Virginia Beach History Museums will support lifelong learning.

Objectives

Goal 1

Community Relationships

The Virginia Beach History Museums will serve the community, value collaboration and partnerships, and maintain strong ties to civic organizations.

Objective 1A	Strengthen relationships with partner organizations	June 2016 Performance Update	June 2017 Performance Update
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new MOU with the Princess Anne County Training School/ Union Kempsville High School Museum (PACTS/UKHS) Alumni • Ask the PACTS/UKHS Alumni and Friends Association what programs and temporary exhibits they would like to see • Meet regularly with the PACTS/UKHS Alumni and Friends Association to discuss concerns, programs, and exhibit plans • Establish and adopt an MOU with the Friends Organization 		

Objective 1B	Reach out to civic organizations and community groups to find out how we can serve them.		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a semi-annual meeting at a neutral facility and invite the public to come discuss their needs and wants from the Virginia Beach History Museums • Meet with community groups such as garden clubs, civic leagues, military groups, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts to discuss what they want to see from the Virginia Beach History Museums • Reach out to the military community to find out how we can meet their needs in a way that gets them to our sites (possibly the Blue Star Program) • Take outreach programs to military families • Work with the local African American community (e.g. UK Alumni, BGLO Fraternities and Sororities, the NAACP, the Urban League, Seatack and Williams Farm Rec Center) • Work with Scouts to hold an open house at our sites or invite them to have a table at our programs 		

Objective 1C	Work more closely with other city agencies to conserve city resources and gain exposure		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collaborate with other departments on programs and events through History Education Resource Opportunities (HERO) • Use HERO as a tool to further collaboration with Parks and Recreation where their summer camp groups to come to our sites for small programs, and we provide outreach to their afterschool programs • Establish better relationships with Building Maintenance, Risk Management, Finance, Management Services, Facilities Management, City Clerk's Office, and other City departments 		

Objective 1D	Expand our marketing by reaching out to other parts of Virginia and North Carolina (Northern Virginia, the Eastern Shore, the Outer Banks, Elizabeth City, and Greenville, NC)		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the marketing division to create an ad campaign similar to the “Wild Side” campaign • Get funding for marketing from the Historic Houses Foundation • Use acquired funds to create high-profile print ads • Film a 30-second commercial • Promote VBHMS seasonally through Virginia’s Visitors Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently listed on a suggested itinerary for “Springtime in Coastal Virginia” on the Virginia tourism website • Listed as a Yuletide destination if/when we return to holiday programming (after construction) • Develop press kit for website • Develop plan for social media with measurable objectives for success • Put educators into community as speakers; advertise this service on website 		

Objective 1E	Become and remain a premiere example of guest relations		
Timeline	2015/16 and Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and have staff complete guest relations training that includes how to interact with people face to face, phone etiquette, and public speaking through classroom settings and online courses • Evaluate effectiveness of programs by using multiple survey/assessment methods, including surveys, mystery shoppers, program evaluations and technology-based assessments 		

Goal 2

Organizational Development

The Virginia Beach History Museums will maintain a professional, efficient organizational structure and follow best practices in our field.

Objective 2A	Obtain accreditation through the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and follow best practices established for our field	June 2016 Performance Update	June 2017 Performance Update
Timeline	2016/17 and Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through accreditation process with AAM • Maintain accredited status once it is achieved • Remain up-to-date on best practices in museums and adjust our planning accordingly 		

Objective 2C	Update, create, or revise all critical plans and documents		
Timeline	2015/16		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Code of Ethics • Strategic Plan • Disaster Preparedness/ Emergency Response Plan • Collections Management Policy • Standard Operating Procedures 		
Objective 2D	Provide ongoing training and development for staff and volunteers		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold quarterly training sessions to review interpretation at each site • Provide ongoing informal assessments and regular formal assessments for performance management • Provide career/volunteer orientation and training for all new members of the organization • Assign new employees to each site for a short period of time to become familiar with each facility • Have one staff member certified as a Volunteer Resource Manager through the City of Virginia Beach's Office of Volunteer Resources • Attend annual meetings of AAM, VAM, and/or AASLH to network with other museum professionals on a national and local level • Have FT staff take advantage of workshops provided by professional museum associations 		

Objective 2E	Upgrade security systems and safety practices		
Timeline	2015/16		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide weather radios for each facility • Provide two-way radios for communications between houses and visitor centers • Develop security/safety SOP • Maintain fire extinguishers and smoke detectors; remove flammable debris and unnecessary items from storage • Safety and first-aid training for all staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR Training • Handling of hazardous fluids • Emergency evacuation procedures per site • Each site to become a city-certified AED facility 		
Objective 2F	Develop long-term plan for cottage		
Timeline	2015/17		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate structural stability and major system components • Develop facility use plan for immediate needs and five years out 		

Goal 3

Resources

The Virginia Beach History Museums will serve as responsible stewards of the city's funds, facilities, personnel, and collections.

Objective 3A	Comply with all City of Virginia Beach policies and procedures especially regarding financial matters	June 2016 Performance Update	June 2017 Performance Update
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the City Auditor's recommendations for cash handling Maintain City Manager's directive regarding handling City funds Follow best practices for submitting payment vouchers Comply with SWAM requirements when seeking quotes and bids 		
Objective 3B	Provide responsible stewardship for the City's buildings and collections		
Timeline	2015/17		

Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Risk Management to ensure the historic buildings and collections are appropriately insured • Complete the transfer of information to the electronic collections database and relocate the database to a secure server • Provide wireless internet service to the Colonial Education Center • Address all maintenance issues with a request for service once noticed • Communicate to all parties when issues have been addressed so that requests are not duplicated, or if something is still not right, it can be addressed • Be forthright with stakeholders about building improvements and repairs so the public receives correct information • Use CIP money for improving all facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francis Land House upgrades and renovations • Lynnhaven House restorations • Thoroughgood House visitor center • Union Kempsville AV upgrades 		
Objective 3C	The Virginia Beach History Museums will complement admissions revenue with revenue from private events		
Timeline	2015 and Continuous		

Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify facility improvements to attract more private events • Ensure price of private event rentals is competitive and affordable • Work closely with Risk Management and the City Attorney to make sure contracts are accurate and meet or exceed the City of Virginia Beach's requirements • Communicate with Landscape Management to ensure the grounds are well-maintained and attractive for private rentals and events • Review arrangements civic groups had under previous management and allow them to rent facilities for their meetings/events if they wish to continue using the sites under our management 		
Objective 3D	Hold an annual meeting to analyze current programs and events and decide if and how they can be modified for the future		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and revise holiday program offerings, and possibly package as an ongoing holiday event • Revise the Gathering of the Guilds and the relationship with the Native Plant Society • Create and maintain an additional summer event, like Life of a Pirate or the Craft Beer Festival • Upload appropriate reports, surveys, e-mails, news articles, etc. to SharePoint for review before the annual meeting • Determine if and how events and programs can be modified and improved • Implement identified changes as needed 		

Objective 3E	Provide the Virginia Beach Historic Houses Foundation with options for sponsoring events		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities, options, and directions for program funding • Create quarterly programs that are held specifically for the Foundation 		
Objective 3F	Upgrade technology for internal purposes, including maintaining existing technology		
Timeline	2015/17		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update our Point-of-Sales at all sites to include current software • Purchase and install a color copier/scanner at the Francis Land House • Upgrade computers as required 		

Goal 4

Education

The Virginia Beach History Museums will support lifelong learning.

Objective 4A	Develop educational materials to accommodate all learning styles	June 2016 Performance Update	June 2017 Performance Update
Timeline	2015/18		

Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create hands-on areas, baskets, and/or experiences for tactile learners • Develop panels or other printed materials for visual learners • Assess the tour guides to ensure an accurate and quality narrative is being delivered to auditory learners • Identify and develop appropriate alternative experiences for people to accommodate their abilities • Train all staff on the alternative experiences • Develop succinct site histories and program information and translate them into the most common languages used by people who live in and visit Virginia Beach • Produce alternate-language brochures • Provide alternate-language tours or create alternate-language audio recordings 		
Objective 4B	Use technology to reach new audiences		
Timeline	2015/18		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create films to tell the story of each site • Utilize eMediaVA to make Museum information available to students and teachers • Purchase and install Promethean boards in the classrooms at the Colonial Education Center 		

Objective 4C	Expand and evaluate programming		
Timeline	2015/18		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review programs for school groups to make sure they meet current SOLs and Common Core needs • Create public programs that are engaging and interesting to a wide audience • Create a “library” of programs that can be used for a variety of outreach mediums • Improve our specialty tours and programs and create add-ons to our guided group tours 		
Objective 4D	Develop a calendar of changing exhibits		
Timeline	2016/19		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff research positions through internships or temporary research assistants through Abacus to help develop content for changing exhibits • Find funding for research and materials to support regularly changing exhibits through grants or funds from the City of Virginia Beach or the Foundation 		

Objective 4E	Conduct research on an ongoing basis		
Timeline	Continuous		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take quarterly trips to the Library of Virginia to research records and information relevant to our sites • Go through the records and deeds at the courthouse to find information relevant to our sites that are not already in our possession 		
Objective 4F	Have collections surveys performed by specialty conservators in order to identify and prioritize conservation needs		
Timeline	2015/17		
Critical Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the collection type with the greatest need of conservation • Identify conservators that can assess those collections • Have those conservators estimate the cost of a survey with a prioritized list of conservation needs • Have the chosen conservator perform the survey • Have objects conserved as necessary • Find funding for object conservation as necessary 		

Success of the Plan

The Strategic Plan can only be successful if it is adhered to. That said, the Plan does not address every potential situation, so both the document and the organization must remain flexible and open to new opportunities. The Plan will live and grow along with the organization. It is written so that critical tasks and/or objectives may be removed, modified or added to as needed. The organization will conduct a comprehensive review of the Plan every six months to ensure that it is being followed, to judge the success or failure of items, and to add additional objectives as necessary. If the department is committed to evaluating the plan's success at regular intervals and conducting business with our strategic goals in mind, the Plan will succeed.

Accomplishments from the Previous Plan

As this is the first Strategic Plan written and adopted by the Virginia Beach History Museums, there are no accomplishments to report yet. After the January 2016 review, the Plan will be updated to account for the critical tasks that have been completed, and to reflect any new tasks necessary. Additionally, each critical task has a reporting column that will provide a two-year snapshot of that task's status.