

2026-2031 Strategic Plan

Lunenburg Academy Foundation

May 2026



Mission

Preservation, restoration, and celebration of the Lunenburg Academy, a National Historic Site.

Vision

The Lunenburg Academy is a living centre for heritage, culture, and education, connecting the community and its visitors to the history of the UNESCO Town of Lunenburg, while sustaining and celebrating its legacy as Lunenburg's first National Historic Site.

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The Lunenburg Academy
symbolizes our heritage.

- *Engagement participant*

Letter from the President

For over 130 years, the Lunenburg Academy has been our town's "Castle on the Hill." That longevity is the result of many generations of residents, volunteers, advocates, and donors who are committed to preserving this iconic, vibrant building, which has been and continues to be a place of learning for all kinds of community members.

This strategic plan is the next expression of that commitment. Over the winter and spring of 2026, we have worked to understand the Academy's needs, doing research and stakeholder consultation to think deeply about the role of the Lunenburg Academy Foundation. What has emerged from that process is an ambitious but achievable plan that is rooted in our heritage and firmly oriented toward what comes next.



The Academy's designation as a National Historic Site, and being adjacent to a UNESCO World Heritage Site, gives our work both local meaning and global significance. We have a remarkable story to tell, and an ever-growing circle of people who want to help us tell it.

None of this happens without volunteers. The heart of this Foundation has always been dedicated volunteers. To each of you: thank you.

The road ahead will be marked by more partnerships, collaborations, and community presence. We enter this next chapter with clear direction, shared purpose, and enduring optimism.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Bruce Hebb

President, Lunenburg Academy Foundation

Introduction

The Lunenburg Academy Foundation was incorporated in 1981 with the purpose of caring for, preserving, and restoring the Lunenburg Academy — a National Historic Site in the Town of Lunenburg, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For over four decades, the Foundation has been the primary steward of one of Nova Scotia's most recognized and beloved landmarks, a building that has defined the town's skyline and shaped its civic identity since 1895.

Since the Academy's transition from active school use in 2012, the Foundation's role has grown significantly. What began as a heritage preservation mandate has expanded to encompass community activation and capital fundraising. Today, the Academy is a living community hub, home to the South Shore Public Library, educational programs, heritage and arts organizations, and civic events that draw residents and visitors alike.

This strategic plan represents a pivotal moment for the Foundation. It was developed through an extensive process of background research and stakeholder engagement, including individual interviews with board members, Town of Lunenburg representatives, Academy tenants, and community partners.

The plan that follows sets out four strategic pillars for 2026-2031, grounded in a renewed mission and vision for the Foundation.

The Academy has endured for over 130 years because each generation found a way to protect and invest in it. This new strategic plan lays out a roadmap for the next five years to continue this historic legacy of stewardship.



Engagement Insights



Stakeholder consultations were a key part of this strategic planning process. Board members, Town of Lunenburg council and staff, and building tenants were consulted, and their perspectives directly shape the plan's priorities, grounding LAF's forward direction in relationships, realistic constraints, and emerging possibilities.

Overarching themes, represented above, emerged from these conversations. Across all groups, the Academy's emotional and community significance came through clearly, alongside thoughts and questions about governance, financial resilience, and the role of LAF in Lunenburg's broader heritage landscape. Consultation insights are reflected in the strategic priorities that follow.

Strategic pillars

The following four strategic pillars will guide the Lunenburg Academy Foundation over the next five years.

These pillars were decided upon through a collaborative and evidence-based process, combining research, community consultation, and Board workshopping.

Each pillar is accompanied by specific actions, outlined on the following pages.

Pillar 1

Expand organizational capacity

Pillar 2

Build a financially sustainable foundation

Pillar 3

Preserve, care for, and steward the Lunenburg Academy

Pillar 4

Animate the Academy as a living destination

Pillar 1

Expand organizational capacity

1.1 Develop and execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Lunenburg to formalize the LAF-TOL partnership

1.2 Implement a phased staffing plan to build toward full operational capacity, beginning with a Fundraising Coordinator and progressing to a Fundraising Director and/or Executive Director, with expanded Heritage Classroom and Academy tour capacity added at an identified milestone

1.3 Recruit two new board members with targeted skills in fundraising / advancement and heritage, respectively

1.4 Advance job descriptions for Board positions

1.5 Develop and adopt a board succession plan

Pillar 2

Build a financially sustainable foundation

2.1 Recruit a Chair for the Board's Fundraising Committee

2.2 Lead and implement the accompanying fund development strategy

2.3 Initiate an endowment fund campaign

2.4 Launch an annual signature fundraising event

2.5 Continue to explore fund opportunities through provincial, federal, and private funding sources

Pillar 3

Preserve, care for, and steward the Lunenburg Academy

3.1 Complete roof repair (ongoing, 2026–)

3.2 Seal the basement and foundation leaks through a phased repair plan

3.3 Refresh the life-cycle cost analysis

Pillar 4

Animate the Academy as a living destination

4.1 Engage the Town of Lunenburg to explore levy opportunities

4.2 Convene an annual heritage sector roundtable or summit to identify collaborative and co-promotion opportunities

4.3 Activate the heritage sector roundtable to consider shared gift shop operations (including year-round hours and multi-site merchandise), joint fundraising opportunities, and a heritage entrance fee model

4.4 Strike a Committee of Academy Tenants to explore collaborative programming

4.5 Develop a Group Event Strategy for co-hosted events and opportunities

4.6 Prepare for Lot Development Plan

Measuring Progress

Internal implementation tracker

Accompanying this strategic plan, LAF will use an internal-facing implementation tracker. This tool assigns each action to specific people, outlines a phased timeframe for implementation, and provides measures of success. This tracking tool allows LAF to both measure and report on progress toward fulfilling the strategic pillars.

Updates in The Scribbler

As part of measuring and reporting on progress, LAF will include strategic plan advancement updates in our annual publication, *The Scribbler*.

Conclusion

The LAF's renewed vision and mission reflect our evolving role as a champion for Lunenburg's heritage, and our mandate to preserve the Academy building so that it can continue to be a place of education and learning. We are excited about the future of the Foundation and are committed to continuing to work with our partners and community members in the Town of Lunenburg and beyond.

This strategic planning process also produced a range of supporting tools, materials, and foundational resources that will continue to support the LAF's work as implementation moves forward.

We sincerely thank those who were a part of this strategic planning process. Your insights and perspectives form the cornerstone of our new strategic plan.

Get in touch!



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