

Project Vision

Upper Canada Village and Crysler Heritage Park Visitor Centre

The new Visitor Centre for Upper Canada Village and Crysler Heritage Park will provide an inviting, informative and compelling environment to orient visitors to early Canadian life prior to their actual entrance into the two adjacent heritage sites – Upper Canada Village and Crysler Heritage Park, encompassing commemorative aspects honouring Canada's early peoples and the War of 1812 - Battle of Crysler's Farm.

The design of the Visitor Centre shall be harmonious with the natural and built environment and compliment vs. replicate the nearby 1860's Upper Canada Village. It is expected that the Visitor Centre building and landscaping design will reflect these **key attributes**:

- **Respectful** – of the history, culture, and geography of the site.
- **Visitor-focused** -- meeting the needs of a range of customers and providing easy flow for those making a quick stop as well as those spending an hour or more.
- **Economical** – minimizing operational and maintenance costs wherever possible.
- **Sustainable** – incorporating energy-savings and reducing environmental impacts. (LEED* certified at the SILVER level)
- **Sense of arrival** – stimulating visitor curiosity and a “wow” response.
- **Inspirational** – simple yet elegant, enduring, and timeless ... as the exhibits and visitor experiences engage, enrich, entertain and educate.
- **Evocative** – with the design stirring a positive emotional response, reinforcing the area's significance in Canada's early development as a nation.
- **Quality** – reflecting the strong international reputation of Upper Canada Village as an award-winning living history museum.
- **Flexible** – offer opportunity to change exhibits

(*LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

Space Allocation

The new Visitor Centre should allow for a welcoming environment that is friendly, open, and flexible to meet the demands of large groups or visitor rushes. The following elements will be included in building design:

- Accessibility, functionality, and flexibility of all space.
- Welcoming reception area
- Flexible exhibit & customer experience spaces, allowing for multiple uses as meeting and hospitality areas for 300+ people.
- Ticketing & visitor services

- Adjacent retail for merchandising a range of souvenirs, artisan ware, and snack items
- Sufficient food preparation area for event hosting and execution; seating for 30+ (could be enhanced with an enclosed outdoor patio).
- Group orientation space which can also house temporary or rotating exhibits.
- Conference room (or adaptable space) for 20-25 people featuring state of the art media technology.
- Washrooms
- Storage and receiving area for retail merchandise, out of sight yet convenient.
- Easy way-finding.
- Tasteful sponsorship, partnership, and “friends” recognition area.
- A small office and dressing area with lockers.
- Enclosed exterior patios affording incremental hosting spaces.
- A smooth, seamless and controlled access entrance/exit into Upper Canada Village.
- Built-in public address audio visual, variety of interior lighting, bright exterior lighting and presence.
- Seamless display opportunities for electronic displays, material distribution (such as brochures), computer terminals and web interaction, potential vending machines.

Strategic Objectives of Visitor Centre

- Drive **incremental, sustainable visitation** to Upper Canada Village, the key (ticketed) attraction and economic driver for the area, as well as the Battle of Crysler’s Farm War of 1812 historic site, making prominent use of the St. Lawrence River as a defining characteristic.
- Celebrate the **unique heritage and historical importance of the St. Lawrence River communities** within Upper Canada Region, leveraging the **social lives/role of the peoples** (UEL, French, Aboriginals) and settlements in the development of Canada, its defence against American invasion during the War of 1812., development of the Seaway eventually leading to Upper Canada Village.
- Generate **new net revenue streams**.
- Heighten **visitor experiences/satisfaction** and extend length of stay.
- Attract new visitor segments and **generate economic development** to area.
- Be deliverable within **budgetary and timing** constraints.
- Cost-effectively contribute to the **long-term financial sustainability and viability** of Commission operations.

How will success be defined?

- SLPC will attract significantly more Incremental visitors and tap into new visitor segments.
- Lapsed and repeat users will come back more frequently.
- Upper Canada Village's profile will expand and its heritage image strengthened.
- New reasons to visit will be immediately visible, extending interest and seasonality.
- The historic relevance of the sites will be self-evident, enhanced and celebrated.
- Additional retail and other new net revenue streams will be realized.
- Operating costs will be minimal, thus allowing for a longer season with negligible added expense.
- Residents and visitors alike will commend the new structure for its design, relevance and ease of use.
- Residents and visitors alike will become more informed about the St. Lawrence Seaway and the story of Upper Canada Village.
- Third parties will seek to host events and gatherings as this new "wow" venue.
- Local and international heritage/historic/UEL groups will be satisfied that the Village's heritage and that of the Crysler's farm battlefield have been protected and celebrated.
- The Ontario government, the Ministry of Tourism, the SLPC Board and staff will all be proud of the new centre and agree that we have successfully achieved our mandate.