



LITCHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM | INGRAHAM LIBRARY | TAPPING REEVE HOUSE | LITCHFIELD LAW SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Approved by Board of Trustees
February 2025

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About the Organization

The Litchfield Historical Society (LHS) is dedicated to sharing the history and culture of the Town of Litchfield, Connecticut, through dynamic exhibits, diverse programs and events, representative collections, and publicly accessible resources. LHS comprises the Litchfield History Museum, Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library, Tapping Reeve House and Litchfield Law School, and Tapping Reeve Meadow.

Since 1856, LHS has been an invaluable resource for making the history of the Town of Litchfield publicly accessible. The diverse stories of the community – including the history of the Litchfield Law School, America’s first law school – have state, national, and international significance. Through projects, initiatives, resources, and collaborations, the community of Litchfield and its visitors are engaged in explorations of the past. They are inspired to share their stories and listen to those of others. These interactions result in a collective appreciation that all experiences have value and support an engaged citizenry.



Planning for the Near-Term, Ensuring the Future

In the summer of 2024, the Board and full-time staff of the Litchfield Historical Society began a strategic planning process under the facilitation of Sarah Pharaon, principal of Dialogic Consulting. In early phases, stakeholders (members, donors, volunteers, local organizations, partners, etc.), board, and staff (full- and part-time) were interviewed regarding strengths, opportunities, and aspirations for LHS over the next five years. The content of these input sessions created a foundational reference document. This reference was utilized throughout two subsequent planning workshops focused on institutional identity, and strategic directives and goals.

Taking place in September 2024, the institutional identity workshop built upon knowledge learned during stakeholder interviews. During this phase of work Board and staff crafted an updated mission and developed an impact statement. They also identified organizational values, articulated site references, and crafted a statement about LHS's practice. The statement on practice incorporates elements of the organization's previous vision statement. Additionally, Board and staff identified key audiences for 2025-2030. While these audiences do not encompass all visitors served by LHS, they represent groups the organization strives to prioritize and serve better over the next five years.

In November 2024, a second workshop focused on strategic directives and goals was convened; four broad directives were developed. Areas of focus include Visibility, Resources, Belonging, and Community Health and Future. Specific goals supporting these directives were established by Board and staff at that time. Refinement and final drafting of institutional identity statements, strategic directives, and goals was undertaken by the Executive Director and Board in December 2024 and January 2025. Full-time staff will work with the Executive Director from 2025-2030 to create rolling 18-month milestone plans throughout implementation. The final strategic plan was approved by the Litchfield Historical Society Board of Trustees in February 2025 and will guide the organization into 2030. This planning for the organization's near-term work is an essential element of ensuring long-term institutional health.

Institutional Identity

Mission

We make the past usable, connecting our community and audiences with their history and culture to chart a way forward.

Impact

Honoring the place where many of our nation's earliest leaders studied, we strengthen historical literacy to support an engaged citizenry.

Abbreviated Mission and Impact for Select Communications Use

The Litchfield Historical Society makes the past usable. We strengthen historical literacy to support an engaged citizenry.

Values

A culture of INCLUSION

We create safe and welcoming spaces. We strive to remove barriers that prevent audiences – and potential audiences – from engaging with integrity.

A culture of INSPIRATION

We work to spark curiosity. We invite new ways of thinking. We ask hard questions of our audiences and of each other.

A culture of SUSTAINABILITY

We plan for the future. We invest strategically. We anticipate and evolve.

Key Audiences for 2025-2030

While we recognize that LHS serves a wide range of audiences and communities well, aspects of this strategic plan will help us better serve:

- Region 20 schools, students, and families,
- 25–40-year-old history and culture seekers,
- Litchfield residents who live geographically outside of the Town Center,
- regional tourists, specifically those staying at Litchfield hotels,
- individuals within the legal community.

Selected Site References

In examining possibilities of our future work, we are dedicated to incorporating recognizable facets of each of the following:

As a **COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE**

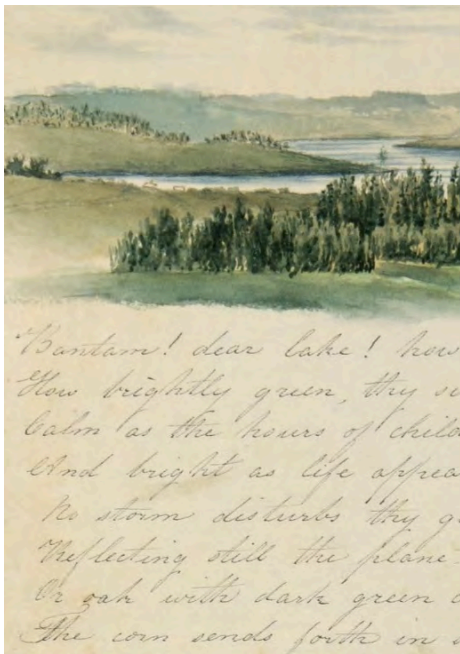
Located on a historic corner in a changing region, LHS supports and builds on the growing interests and needs of the greater community. We not only offer a retrospective lens into the past, but also a foundation for a common future.

As a **GATHERING PLACE**

We support the social and cultural needs of the community by offering a vibrant meeting place in the center of town. Our meadow behind the Tapping Reeve House and other public spaces invite relaxation, leisure, learning, and connection.

As a **CONCIERGE**

We prioritize remaining responsive to the needs of our audiences. We facilitate connections and provide access to resources – both internal and external. We work to ask new questions and find new answers.





Our Practice

As a unique campus including a museum, research library, historic site, recreational meadow, and America's first law school:

We use our historic buildings, sites, and collections as catalysts for compelling and truthful storytelling as we share the history and culture of the Town of Litchfield. We aim to help all – from children to adults, and hobbyists to scholars – engage in explorations of the past. We inspire people to share their experiences and memories, while listening to the stories of others. These interactions build a collective appreciation that all experiences have value.

We honor what our community has entrusted us with, ensuring our work is for the benefit of the public. We protect what we have while recognizing good stewardship may require that we modify, or even let go of collections, practices, and programs no longer supporting our mission.

We believe in collaboration and partnership. We are dedicated to innovation that comes from bringing together people of disparate ideas. We design our events, exhibitions, and programs with this in mind.

We remove barriers between past and present to better understand who we were, who we are, and who we will become. In doing so, we work to increase pride of place and build a stronger collective identity for Litchfield.

Strategic Directives and Goals

To achieve our mission and move toward our impact, LHS will pursue four broad strategic directives and associated goals over the next five years:

1. INCREASE VISIBILITY

To meet its mission and grow its impact, LHS recognizes the need to communicate effectively with our community, visitors, and out-of-town audiences about who we are, what we stand for, and what we do. We will work to improve our communication tools to ensure consistent and clear messaging. We will strive to highlight our unique assets and value. We will prioritize increased exposure, celebrating our offerings with integrity.

- 1.1 – Strengthen LHS’s organizational identity and brand.**
- 1.2 – Shift community perception of LHS from additive to critical.**
- 1.3 – Partner with value-aligned organizations and entities for increased exposure and audience expansion.**
- 1.4 – Highlight the Litchfield Law School as a unique historical asset.**

2. GROW AND ALIGN RESOURCES

LHS requires financial, board, and staff resources to support the continued implementation of its strategies and goals. Key elements of this plan involve evaluating LHS’s operations to promote what is successful, improve what is not, and prioritize valuable staff time. The institution recognizes the critical need to invest in the care of human, financial, and operational resources to reach near-term goals and ensure long-term stability.

- 2.1 – Build and nurture a vibrant and nimble LHS Board of Trustees.**
- 2.2 – Invest in a fulfilled and healthy organizational staff.**
- 2.3 – Foster a culture of philanthropy and entrepreneurship to maintain and grow our funding from private, public, and earned revenue sources.**
- 2.4 – Maximize the care for and use of LHS facilities.**
- 2.5 – Maintain a refined and active collection for increased public impact, mission fulfillment, and sustainability.**

3. ENHANCE BELONGING

History is the collective story of society, and museums are community anchors trusted to foster belonging and inclusion. As we continually ask ourselves, “for whom do we exist?” LHS recognizes the need for our community and audiences to see themselves reflected in our practices and spaces. We will strive to make our organization a relevant, accessible, and thriving place of connection, learning, and dialogue. We will work alongside others in this endeavor.

- 3.1 – Grow and implement commitments to inclusive opportunity and access, internally and externally.**
- 3.2 – Build a responsive visitor experience for LHS guests and users.**
- 3.3 – Open avenues for meaningful involvement for youth and younger adults.**
- 3.4 – Take steps towards the repair and support of relationships with underrepresented and unrepresented communities.**
- 3.5 – Assess and evolve our membership program.**

4. CONTRIBUTE VALUE TO LITCHFIELD’S HEALTH & FUTURE

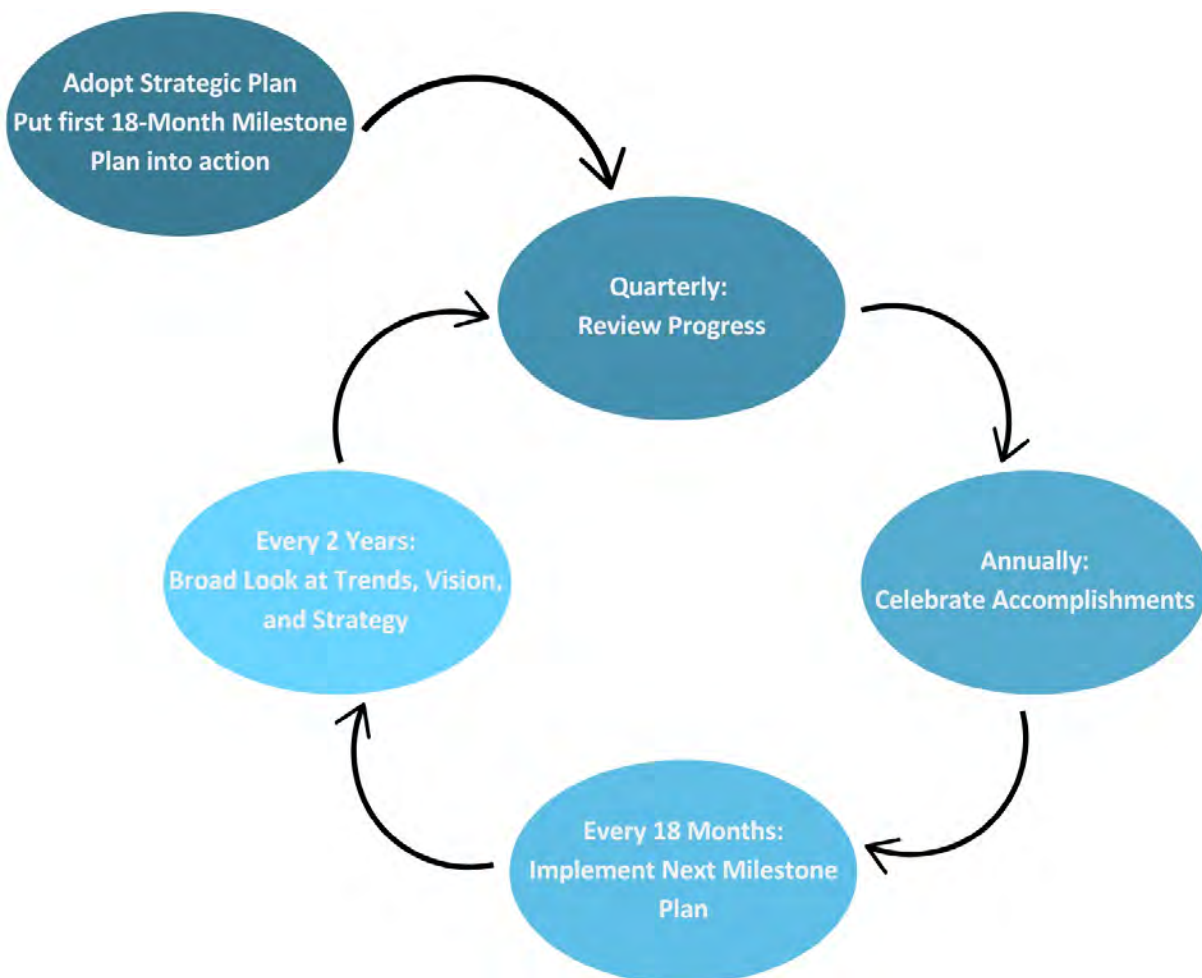
As a community museum and local history organization LHS is uniquely positioned to contribute to the Town of Litchfield’s quality of life. Through our work, we will look for ways to support area students. We will find opportunities to enhance the well-being of residents. We will work to promote historical literacy and an engaged citizenry, while contributing to collective impact.

- 4.1 – Utilize LHS resources to respond to gaps in K-12 in-school and extra-curricular programming of Region 20 schools.**
- 4.2 – Build upon and enrich LHS’s offerings as a “third space” to promote social connection in the community.**
- 4.3 – Create life-long learning opportunities for adult populations with intentionality.**

Implementation and Accountability Plan

Recognizing the nimbleness required to accomplish the Strategic Directives and Goals set out in the 2025-2030 strategic plan, LHS's implementation cycle will promote continual action, reflection, and accountability. To ensure a flexible and "living plan" with alignment across our various areas of work, we anticipate regular staff and Board review sessions to monitor progress, make plan updates, and celebrate accomplishments.

Implementation Cycle



Accountability Plan

To hold ourselves accountable to transparency with our membership, community, and visitors, and to ensure measured implementation, the following steps will be taken:

- Strategic Directives and Goals from the plan will be shared publicly via the organization's website, as well as directly to organizational members and the community through limited print collateral and public meetings.
- The LHS Board president (or their designee) will be made responsible for ongoing accountability to the plan.
- The Executive Director will report to the Board of Trustees on progress of Milestone Plans quarterly.
- The Executive Director will check in with LHS staff on milestone progress and individual work plans at quarterly meetings.
- The Executive Director and LHS staff will develop 18-month milestone plans for Board review on a rolling basis. Individual work plans will be developed annually by the Executive Director and staff to support milestone achievement.
- A progress report will be made to the Board of Trustees by the Executive Director at the end of each milestone plan.



Implementation Timeline

Date	Deliverable	Completed
Pre-Approval December 2024- January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning Facilitator transitions all workshop notes and documentation to LHS Executive Director (ED) ED completes final drafting of body text for Strategic Plan Board review of final body text for Strategic Plan ED completes final edits and formatting of Strategic Plan Staff develop Milestone Plan #1 	
Month 1 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approval of Strategic Plan and review of Milestone Plan #1 Staff implement Milestone Plan #1 	
Month 3 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboard and inform new Board members 	
Month 4 May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 6 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 9 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 12 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 15 April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboard and inform new Board members 	
Month 16 May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 17 June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff develop Milestone Plan #2 	
Month 18 July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED Milestone Plan #1 progress report to Board ED reviews Milestone Plan #2 with Board 	
Month 19 August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff implement Milestone Plan #2 	
Month 21 October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 24 January 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board Two-year review of trends, vision, and strategy 	
Month 27 April 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboard and inform new Board members 	
Month 28 May 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	

Date	Deliverable	Completed
Month 30 July 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 33 October 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 35 December 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff develop Milestone Plan #3 	
Month 36 January 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED Milestone Plan #2 progress report to Board ED reviews Milestone Plan #3 with Board 	
Month 37 February 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff implement Milestone Plan #3 	
Month 39 April 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboard and inform new Board members 	
Month 40 May 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 42 July 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 45 October 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	
Month 48 January 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four-Year review of broad trends, vision, and strategy 	
Month 51 April 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboard and inform new Board members 	
Month 52 May 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED Milestone Plan #3 progress report to Board 	
Month 54 July 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board Begin developing next Strategic Plan 	
Month 57 October 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED quarterly report to Board 	



