

# La Crosse, WI

## Historic & Cultural

# Museum Feasibility Study

Prepared for  
the City of La Crosse, Wisconsin  
Historic & Cultural Museum Task Force

Prepared by  
the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Tourism Research Institute



## **Acknowledgements**

This project was completed between September 2019 and August 2020. It was made possible by the efforts of multiple individuals and organizations, including:

### **Project Co-Directors:**

Dan Plunkett, Ph.D.

Kate Evans, Ph.D.

### **UWL Support**

We'd like to acknowledge all of the UWL faculty and students who assisted with the completion of this project, including students in the Recreation Management Program; students and faculty in the Archeology and Anthropology Department, faculty in the History Department, and Economics. Hundreds of hours collectively went into the gathering and analysis of all the information presented here.

We'd like to acknowledge Jon Evans, Constance Arzigian, Ph.D., and SaraJane Parsons, in particular, as other faculty who worked with students in their courses or individually as mentors to conduct research for this project.

Furthermore, this project was worked on individually by undergraduates Drew Kairis, Cylus Young, Emily Rolf, Chris Kirchgatter, Maggie Aumann, Jared Kronbach, Kayla Brooks, and Adam Francis and graduate students Ashley Differt, John Dahl, and Brad Morris.

### **Community Support**

We'd like to thank the City of La Crosse, the La Crosse Historic & Cultural Museum Task Force, the La Crosse County Historical Society, and all other stakeholders for their efforts in helping to complete this project.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	7
Stakeholder Participation .....	8
Part 1 – Interest & Vision.....	8
Stakeholder Overview .....	8
Part 2 – Resources .....	14
Part 3 – Desired experience.....	14
Outdoor Elements .....	15
Admissions .....	19
Visual Exhibits .....	23
Technological Exhibits .....	28
Non-technological Exhibits .....	33
Virtual Elements .....	37
Workshop Space .....	40
Youth Workshop Space .....	43
Conference Space .....	47
Event Space .....	50
Visitor Survey .....	53
Visit Characteristics .....	53
Museum Perceptions .....	56
Participant Characteristics.....	60
UW-La Crosse Student Survey .....	61
Participant Characteristics.....	61
Visiting Friends and Relatives .....	63
Motivation & Likelihood to Visit a New Museum .....	67
What Students want from a New Museum.....	68
Comparable Museum & City Data .....	73
La Crosse, Wisconsin.....	73
Chippewa Valley Museum - Eau Claire, Wisconsin.....	74
National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium – Dubuque, Iowa.....	75
National Norwegian-American Historical Museum & Heritage Center – Decorah, Iowa .....	76

History Museum at the Castle – Appleton, Wisconsin .....	77
African American Museum of Iowa – Cedar Rapids, Iowa.....	78
Insights Based on Comparisons .....	78
La Crosse Potential New Museum Site Analysis .....	81
Part 1 – New Museum Needs .....	81
Part 2 – Site Analysis, Opportunities & Challenges .....	81
Site – 333 North Front Street.....	82
Site – River Point District.....	83
Part 3 – Site Comparisons & Insights .....	84
Appendix A: Study Proposal .....	86
Appendix B: Comparable Museum Raw Data.....	90

## Executive Summary

The University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Tourism Research Institute conducted a study to assess the viability of creating a new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum. The following presents a summary of data collected to gauge the interest and sentiment towards a potential new museum.

### Stakeholder Input

- ✓ From the Fall of 2019 through Summer 2020, a range of data collection was conducted to determine if there was interest in the La Crosse community to support a new historical and cultural museum. This data was collected via a public survey, four public meetings held throughout La Crosse county (La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen) and focus groups. These data include input from the following stakeholder groups:
  1. Local arts and historical stakeholders
  2. Hmong community members
  3. African American Community members (B.L.A.C.K. & Enduring Families Project)
  4. Archivists from local libraries
  5. The Mississippi Valley Archeology Center
  6. Centro Latino
  7. La Crosse Historical Society, and
  8. Mississippi Valley Conservancy
  9. The Center – 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection
- All resulted in overwhelming support for a new historical/cultural museum in La Crosse County.
- Why?

Results indicated that participants felt that there are currently inadequate historical/cultural resources in La Crosse including the lack of a historical/cultural museum.

“This is our opportunity to tell our authentic story”- Hmong community member

“We need something to keep the history alive for the children growing up in the area”  
– Public meeting participant

A new museum would provide La Cross County an opportunity to tell a true and informative story about the unique history of the area including:

  1. The unique geographical features and rare ecosystems,
  2. The range of cultures present in La Crosse and their influence on La Crosse’s history and development,
  3. The opportunity to elevate non-dominant voices and historical experiences,
  4. The range of industry present historically in La Crosse
- ✓ In the Spring of 2020, a second public survey was completed to determine what type of experience the La Crosse community wanted in a new historical and cultural museum.

Participants were asked about the outside elements, admissions area, a range of exhibit types, workshop and educational spaces/offerings, and conference/event space. The results included several salient themes for each of these areas:

➤ **Outside Elements**

Overwhelmingly, the open-ended responses indicated that respondents most preferred an outdoor space with **seating** that allows for the gathering of community. Responses also consistently pointed to the importance of drawing on **La Crosse's history** in the final design of the visual elements included outside of the museum, though defining that history varied. Respondents also described a desire for the outdoor elements to **be interactive**, including for their use in **photo ops**. Respondents also focused in on the importance of including **natural elements**, both directly, and indirectly while also ensuring the outside elements were **fully accessible**.

➤ **Admissions**

Survey respondents felt that having the admissions area **near museum exhibits** was an important aspect of this feature. Closely related to this, respondent also identified a preference for a more **modern look** with an **open floor plan**. Alternative to the desire for a modern look, another portion of respondents identified a preference for a focus on **historical elements** in the admissions area while others identified specific design elements that they felt would be **aesthetically pleasing**. Regardless of specific design choices, others pointed to the most important aspect being the **welcoming** nature of the admissions area and the importance of good **customer service** elements.

➤ **Visual Exhibit**

Survey respondents provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the **interactive** nature of exhibits. In addition, respondents felt it was important to provide a **variety** of exhibit types and ensure they stay **updated**. Respondents also pointed to their desire for a **local historical** focus in the visual exhibits while focusing on the **flow**, need for **seating**, and including **open space** in the ultimate design.

➤ **Technological Exhibit**

Feedback related to technological exhibits focused largely on the interest in exhibits that are **interactive** or **sensory** based. Survey respondents also made clear their preference for a **limit to the technology** used in museum exhibits. Others brought forward **health concerns** related to highly interactive exhibits and were also concerned that exhibits should be both **kid and adult-friendly**. And, similar to other categories, respondents reiterated the desire for **variety**, a focus on **local history**, and **accessibility**.

➤ **Non-Technological Exhibit**

As with other categories, survey respondents were enthusiastic about the **interactive** nature of the non-technological exhibits. Respondents were also enthusiastic about the inclusion **local history** and **live demonstrations** in the museum. Similar responses to those that emerged related to technological exhibits were concerns about keeping **kids**

from **overwhelming the museum experience** and the **health concerns** that are endemic to interactive exhibits.

➤ **Virtual Element**

The majority of respondents were **skeptical** of the inclusion of virtual elements in the new museum. Those participants that found benefit to including virtual exhibits focused on **specific exhibit ideas**, utilizing virtual exhibits for **demonstrations**, or integrating virtual experiences into the **museum website**

➤ **Workshop Space**

Survey respondents felt workshop spaces could best be utilized in **demonstrating and learning hard skills**. Respondents also pointed to the benefit, if including a workshop space, of ensuring it is a **separate space** from the main exhibit areas in the museum.

➤ **Educational Opportunities**

Participants demonstrated an interest in **cultural workshops** and **nature-based workshops** most frequently. They also described the importance of taking into account **local considerations** when determining what educational offerings to provide and how to offer them. Participants' responses pointed to the importance of **adult-based** and **youth-based** educational opportunities. Participants also indicated the need for **variety/flexibility** in the educational offerings including offering them as **special events**.

➤ **Conference Space**

When asked about the possibility of conferences spaces in the museum, participants were **skeptical**. Those in favor felt it would be important to have **dedicated meeting rooms** and to maintain **flexibility** in potential conference spaces. Still other participants felt an **auditorium** would be the most useful space to include.

➤ **Event Space**

The most salient themes that emerged when participants were asked about the possible inclusion of event space was the ability to host **music** events, **group bookings** and **community events**. Survey respondents also pointed to the importance event space could play in providing the museum an additional **revenue source** and pointed the importance of **flexibility**. In contrast to the positive feedback, other participants were **skeptical** of the benefit of including event space in the museum.

### College Student Survey

- ✓ La Crosse area college students represent a potentially large interest group. A survey of UWL students was conducted to gauge their interest in visiting a new museum if it existed, and what would motivate them to visit.
  - 63% of students surveyed were somewhat or very likely to visit a new museum if it existed (n=224)

- What do they want to see/do?
  - By far, hands-on, interactive opportunities would generate the greatest interest from local students.
  - Students frequently mentioned “art” in reference to visual exhibits depicting local cultures, stories of the past, architecture, and the natural environment.
  - They want something unique- The building itself, the interactive opportunities, the way information and artifacts are displayed.
  - Connection to the universities – Including the history/opportunities to learn about all the local universities

What would motivate them to take friends and/or family to this museum if it existed?

- Having something new to do was most frequently mentioned as the reason they would take friends and/or family to visit the new museum.

### Visitor Survey

- ✓ In fall 2019 UWL students surveyed visitors to Grandad’s Bluff and Riverside park to learn more about visitor interest in going to a new museum, and what would motivate them to visit.
  - 171 individuals were survey, 64.3% of whom were not residents of La Crosse County
  - 68.3% of La Crosse County residents indicated they were either somewhat or very likely to visit the new museum if it existed
  - 62.6% of non-residents indicated they were either somewhat or very likely to visit the new museum if it existed
  - Most frequently interesting displays and exhibits followed by opportunities to learn would be top motivations for visiting the new museum

Average spending of Wisconsin visitor based on 2019 Wisconsin Department of Tourism data is \$121.02 (total spending/total visitors). In 2019 visitors were estimated to have spent \$281.4 million in La Crosse County. Based on these estimates alone there are an estimated 2.3 million visitors to La Crosse County annually. This presents a significant opportunity to create an attraction in a museum that a majority of visitors would have some interest in visiting.

### Comparable Cities & Museum

After examining available information from comparable cities and museums in the region there are a few insights a new La Crosse are museum might take into consideration:

- Comparable museums typically have an individual admission fee ranging from \$6-\$10. Based on information gathered from this study regarding the potential content and design of the new museum as well as participant input, management should **consider setting a standard individual admission around \$10**. It is likely student visits will increase if discounts are offered. Findings from our student survey and prior research support this. According to Brida, Dalle Nogare, and Scuderi’s findings “...students are found to already exhibit a strong interest in visiting museums. This suggests that given their slack time constraints, students may be receptive to discounted tickets, as is common in many cultural institutions” (2016, p. 280).
- Varying levels of memberships (e.g., individual, household, senior, student, and multiple levels of donations/sponsorship) are an important source of community funding. Individual annual memberships at comparable museums range from \$30-\$45.

**Household/family memberships are a popular option for local community**, often offered at a cost of \$5-\$10 less than the cost of two individual memberships.

- Comparable museums in the region see **20,000-40,000 visits annually**. This includes local community visitors and out-of-town tourists. Across the museums looked at anywhere from 60-85% of visitors were adults, and 15-40% under the age of 18. In one of the most comparable cities, Eau Claire, the Chippewa Valley Museum identified 69% as adults and 31% as students/youth. A new museum in La Crosse could expect to see visitor numbers above 30,000 especially in the earlier years, but potentially closer to 20,000 as years progress. Building a strong membership base and have rotating exhibits are a few ways to maintain higher levels of visitation and encourage repeat visitation.
- **Volunteers will be essential**. Most comparable museums operate at a lower cost by having strong volunteer network. Personnel is a significant portion of a museums operating expense. Most comparable museums have fewer than 10 full- and part-time staff, and rely on additional volunteers to operate the facility.
- Attendance and memberships alone do not cover expenses. Additional income will need to come from grants, fundraisers and special events, and other types of investments and/or gifts. Staff in particular will be needed to apply for programming and exhibit related grants as well as to organize special events and fundraisers.

### La Crosse Site Comparisons

The La Crosse Historical & Cultural Museum Task Force identified two existing sites near downtown La Crosse as having the potential to meet the needs of a new La Crosse museum: 1) an existing building at 333 Front Street North, and 2) new development in the River Point District.

- Both sites identified by the task force have pros and cons. 333 North Front Street is more likely to attract more non-local visitors (tourists) due to its proximity to downtown and Riverside Park. However, access to floor space could limit the exhibits on display, and renovating the space could lead to higher costs. The River Pointe District site presents the opportunity to have a blank canvas and more readily design a space that meets the needs of a new museum. However, it is farther away from local attractions which could deter more spontaneous visits (especially from short-term riverboat tourists).
- There is a lot of interest in having a new museum that represents the history and cultures of the area. Either location would be expected to generate similar levels of membership and donations, and attendance from local community members.
- The development costs to meet the museum's needs and operation costs once it opens depends on several factors, many of which can be better estimated following architectural renderings and exhibit designs.
- Typically, the costs to operate in a renovated building can be higher due to aged systems (e.g., HVAC, electrical, security) in place. However, if those systems at 333 North Front Street are being updated as stated the difference in operating costs between the two sites could be minimal.

## **Final Insights**

- A site should be selected where an open museum setting can be created. Prior research has found that an open museum setting provides a more satisfying visitor experience and results in a greater likelihood that visitors will become repeat visitors (Kottasz, 2006). Open settings are less structured by management, facilitating opportunities for discovery and interaction with exhibits. Participants in this study appear to echo a desire for a similar setting and opportunities.
  
- Cost estimate: There is not enough information at this point to present a realistic cost estimate. Prior research has shown that cost per square foot for building a new museum varies drastically, whether renovating an existing building or new construction. Variations arise due to a range of factors including the quality of construction materials, final finishes, the need for system updates, and unforeseen expenses. Initial costs will also depend on decisions regarding types of exhibits and exhibit features. Operational costs will vary depending on the number of temporary exhibits and frequency of rotation. Temporary exhibits in comparable museums are on display anywhere from three months to two years. Data compiled by Grabitske (2010) on 34 history related museums built in the U.S. between 2003 and 2010 cost \$645.50 per square foot. Adjusted for inflation using the RSMMeans Historical Cost Index that cost is estimated to be \$841/sqft as of 2020. Thus, a 20,000 sqft museum could cost around \$16 million while a 40,000 sqft museum could cost approximately \$32 million.
  - Exhibit designs in particular vary greatly ranging from less than \$100 per sqft for graphic floor/wall designs to more than \$600 per sqft for interactive exhibits (Walhimer, 2011). This cost is not only an initial cost, but a reoccurring cost every time temporary exhibits are changed.
  - Costs of renovating an existing building could be lower if mechanical systems are up-to-date.

Overall there is strong interest in and support for a new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum. Community members were excited to be a part of the input process and we would recommend continuing to include them throughout the remaining steps required for the realization of a new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum.

## Introduction

In January 2018, the City of La Crosse Common Council passed a resolution to create a La Crosse historic and cultural museum planning task force. The task force "...was created to engage the community to better understand interest and potential support for a La Crosse history and cultural museum, to gather information on programming, exhibits, displays, education and administrative needs, to gather information on possible locations, and to provide recommendations about the planning, timing, funding and partnerships needed to help develop a La Crosse history and cultural museum." Following its formation the task force adopted a vision of "engaging and inspiring people of all ages with a memorable La Crosse area historical experience" and a mission focused on "collaborating to identify location, design thematic elements and an initial business plan for a sustainable La Crosse historic and cultural museum" (see September 2018 task force meeting minutes).

In September 2019, the City of La Crosse entered into an agreement with the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Tourism Research Institute to conduct a study that helped further fulfill the vision and mission established by the task force. The purpose of this study was to assess the feasibility of creating a new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum by engaging local stakeholders, and obtaining additional primary and secondary data to further assess interest in a new museum, create a better vision of what this museum should be (if an interest was determined to exist), determine a potential location for the new museum, and further evaluate the feasibility of developing a new museum at the proposed location. The proposed project would include upwards of 50-60 individual students and students working on course embedded research projects working with faculty, the task force, and the community to gather the desired information (see Appendix # for full proposal details). The following were goals of the project:

- Goal 1: Meet with Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives for initial project discussion
- Goal 2: Involve local stakeholders
- Goal 3: Identify visitor (tourist) perceptions and attitudes towards museums
- Goal 4: Obtain information from other museums to assess feasibility of a new La Crosse Museum
- Goal 5: Use primary and secondary data collected to conduct a site analysis of a potential La Crosse museum
- Goal 6: Provide a final evaluation and summary of feasibility

The following presents summaries and details of the information gathered through the various stages of the study.

## Stakeholder Participation

A primary goal of the task force and this study was to engage local stakeholders. The following section presents the information gathered from stakeholders.

### *Part 1 – Interest & Vision*

The city of La Crosse and the greater La Crosse area has a rich and diverse history encompassing unique geological features and a rich cultural history. To help commemorate the progress and reflect upon the past, the city has appointed a task force to pursue the feasibility of a destination museum. This museum will seek to display a wide, and representative, array of assorted artifacts and exhibits including the collection currently held within the local historical societies and archives. To ensure the museum reflects the interests and ideas of the public, our team conducted an analysis of the La Crosse community and their opinions and ideas regarding the museum development including support for a new museum in the La Crosse area and the interest of local stakeholders to be involved with the project. Our team conducted four public meetings, eight focus groups, and administered two online surveys to gauge the interests of the local community and help determine their vision for the potential new museum. The focus groups conducted sought out perspectives from groups of people who may have especially valuable perspectives about La Crosse such as local historical societies and historically disenfranchised groups.

### *Stakeholder Overview*

When the task force began to identify important perspectives to involve in this process, they sought to ensure the voices of the community members are heard. In the four public meetings conducted there were a total of 30 members of the public present. Focus groups were also held to ensure that the widest range of voices possible were included in the discussion. The stakeholders represented across both Fall 2019 and Spring/Summer 2020 data collection were:

- Local university and community library archivists
- Mississippi Valley Archaeological Center
- United Funds for Arts and Humanities
- Franciscan Sisters
- Holmen Historical Society
- La Crosse Historical Society
- Hmong community members
- African American community members (B.L.A.C.K. and Enduring Families Project)
- Centro Latino staff and volunteers
- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- The Center – 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

Additionally, two online surveys were disseminated to provide another opportunity for the public to engage in the discussion if they were unable to attend face-to-face input sessions.

### *Results*

Throughout the entire public engagement process including nine focus groups, four public meetings, and two electronic surveys, a total of 472 members of the community provided feedback. Everyone who engaged with the data collection indicated they were in full support of the creation of a destination museum showcasing the La Crosse area and its history.

## *Museum Recommendations*

After the analysis of the Fall 2019 data collection (including four public meetings, eight focus groups, and an online survey), the results were analyzed within each group and across all groups and are grouped below into the following categories: Museum Exhibit Content, Museum Experience, Museum Visioning, and Museum Location. *Full data sets from each round of data collection can be found in electronic Appendix.*

### *Museum Exhibit Content*

#### *Highlight unique geography.*

One of the most prevalent topics discussed in our engagement process was the unique geography of the area. In discussions with groups such as the Mississippi Valley Archeology Center, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, and the Murphy Library Archivists it became apparent how integral of a role the river played on the development of La Crosse. In public meetings such as Black River Beach, and the Holmen Middle School the community members indicated that, and underlying theme could guide the visitors through the museum from one exhibit to the next tying in stories throughout. The river offers the perfect vehicle to show the history of La Crosse. Starting with the formation of the Driftless region, and unique ecosystems within it, the river begins its influence as it carves through the Mississippi River Valley. As the river flowed it created the sandy terraces that became ideal locations for the first human inhabitants, Mississippians and Ho-Chunk. As time continued the first European decedents arrived in La Crosse, they began to utilize the natural resources in the area to earn a living and develop industries, ultimately leading to modern day La Crosse.

#### *Highlight industry (historic and modern).*

Industry was another important theme discussed throughout the public engagement process. The community stakeholders expressed interest in a wide variety of industry that had developed and thrived in La Crosse. Starting with Nathan Myrick and his fur trading post then progressing into logging, lumbering, mining, and steamboats, these industries became the catalyst for the development of the city. The stakeholders also expressed interest in the history of these early industries and their effect on the region. Additionally, industries that developed later with the arrival of more people such as agriculture, breweries, and Adolf Gundersen's medical practice were also highlighted in the various public engagements. As more industry began to develop in La Crosse, so did the labor force. Immigrating to the region from Europe, bringing with them their unique cultures, they lived and worked together continuing story of the area.

#### *Embrace the diversity of the community.*

Displaying the diverse and vibrant cultures that have existed in La Crosse was identified as one of the most important items for a La Crosse Museum. Starting with the native people and moving on to European settlers, African Americans, Hmong, Hispanic, Amish, Syrian, and Lebanese were all identified as integral to the La Crosse area. In the Mississippi Valley Archeology Center focus group, the group explained how each culture could have an exhibit that asks the questions, "What brings them here? How did they adapt? How did the existing cultures adapt to them?"

Other aspects of the cultural exhibits discussed included religion, music, clothing, and art. Lastly, regarding the creation of these exhibits, a Hmong Council Member explained, “it is important to talk with people who know and live the culture to be involved. This is our opportunity to tell our authentic story.” Allowing people within the culture to be involved with the presentation of their history and culture gives these groups of people the control and freedom to express themselves. This is especially important because throughout history some of these groups of people have been horribly mistreated and stripped of these very rights.

*Embrace all of La Crosse’s history.*

One final suggestion regarding the museum exhibit content is to include **all** of La Crosse’s history, even if it is not positive. Numerous times throughout the public engagement process the stakeholders indicated the importance of not overlooking the negative things that have occurred in La Crosse. Popular topics discussed in the public engagement process included La Crosse’s Sundown Town status, the forced removal of Native Americans, brothels, and the tension between preservation and development, among others. These histories and events played a vital role in making the La Crosse area what it is today. Taking the time to shine a light on this history can be a great learning experience for visitors. Acknowledging the hardships experienced by these people can help bring closure and foster understanding within the community. In our public engagement activities, it was the displays and monuments that embraced the hardships and mistreatment of the past that had the greatest effect on the visitors. Monuments like the Lynching Memorial in Montgomery, AL, the 9/11 Memorial, Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles, CA, the Holocaust Museum in Budapest, and the Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, WI, were all identified as being the most impactful historical displays visited by the stakeholders.

### *Museum Experience*

*Tell a story and entertain participants.*

Many participants brought up the idea of having exhibits that tell a story and entertain as opposed to having all exhibits being static with a written description. These types of exhibits, participants discuss, would allow museum visitors to be more likely to connect to emotion of the history and be more inclined to spend more time in the museum and engage more with the history. Participants repeatedly discussed how important it was that the exhibits should bring the museum to life with their stories and displays.

*Rotating, interactive exhibits.*

Closely related to the need to tell a story, participants were very eager to share ideas about having interactive exhibits as well as exhibits that rotate over time to keep the museum fresh and ensure repeat visitors. Most results showed that people preferred museums/exhibits that had some sort of participant interaction or had exhibits that would rotate so that it wasn’t the same artifact or display every time they visited. People are looking for a “living” museum that allows them to be a part of the history making and get involved. Rotating exhibits would also help to ensure that the widest range of community voices are included in the museum. So, over time, additional stakeholders could be included in the vision and content creation of the museum.

Some of the interactive exhibits and activities that were mentioned during meetings were child-friendly programs, special events during holidays, and cooking classes based on time-periods.

### *Programming.*

To ensure the prosperity of a potential museum many of the stakeholders stressed the importance of great programming. The creation of educational programs for school children was highlighted as one of the most important opportunities. Working with the local schools to teach the youth about the past will empower students to take pride and ownership of the area's history and continue its preservation for future generations. Other programming ideas discussed include social/cultural events such as art galleries, beer tastings, Indigenous People's Day, Kube Tournaments, among others were all suggested. Exciting programming incentivizes people in the community to buy-in and support the museum. It changes the museum from a collection of displays and artifacts into place of that fosters a vibrant community.

One of the most highly requested aspects of the new museum is to include a venue capable of hosting performances, films, and lectures. The stakeholders saw great value in educational content conveyed through more than just writing. Video content in the museum can show information and history in ways not possible in a tradition display. Programming ideas discussed included hosting traveling film festivals, book tours, lectures, local films, and concerts. Giving the visitors options for how to consume the information makes the experience more inclusive for those who have difficulty reading or prefer an auditory and visual display over textual descriptions. The last recommendation made for programming is to include an outdoor space and educational programs within it. At the Holmen public meeting the stakeholders discussed the opportunity to integrate the surrounding landscapes into the museum. This would help emphasize the underlying theme of the importance of the river and surrounding geography. Some programs discussed for this outdoor space include historical gardens containing popular crops from the time period maintained with historically accurate tools, an outdoor classroom space for school groups, and programs about native American tool making and usage.

### *Be flexible and maintain relevance.*

A final common theme that emerged was that community members were very interested in ensuring that the potential new museum could be a draw to the area and one that maintained relevant to the community. Participants discussed having visited museums that are outdated and that do not keep up with the constantly changing culture and communities in which they sit, making them less desirable to visit. Participants felt it would be most beneficial for this potential new museum to appeal to changing community interests over time and to maintain a dialogue with the community over time to ensure it is doing so.

### *Museum Visioning*

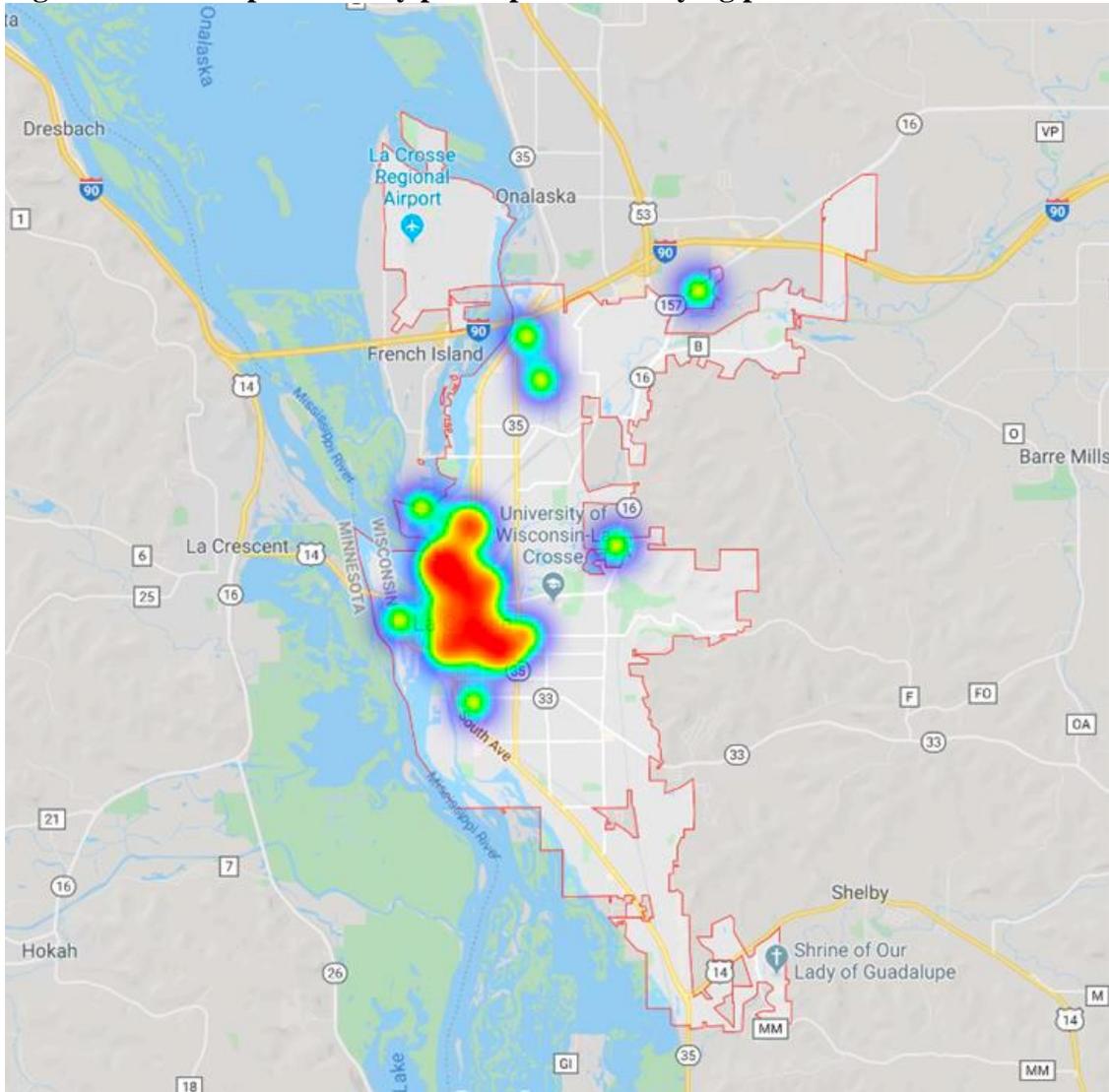
When stakeholders were asked to describe what they would like to see in the creation of a museum for the La Crosse area we encountered many ideas. Regarding the physical characteristics of the museum, many of the stakeholders felt that the museum should be large and aesthetically pleasing both inside and out. A museum that is visually striking provides the

opportunity for La Crosse to create a new landmark. A member of the Holmen Historical Society described the Milwaukee Public Art Museum as an icon for the city of Milwaukee, under the right circumstances, the La Crosse museum could have a similar effect. Using the natural environment as inspiration, the design could also push the underlying theme throughout the museum. For the interior, components like a versatile performance venue, an area to display the artwork of local creatives, and the ability to show large artifacts such as fire engines or delivery wagons were also discussed. For the museum exhibits themselves the stakeholders want to ensure the museum has something for everyone, offering kid friendly displays, and interactive exhibits help keep the visitors engaged while in the museum. When curating the exhibits themselves they should be a balance of technology, artifacts, and written content allowing the exhibits to feel current while allowing them to remain relevant as technology progresses. Additionally, there should be consistent displays and exhibits while also rotating exhibits to keep the content fresh. Along those same lines, many stakeholders were fond of the opportunity to host traveling exhibits from other museums.

### *Museum Location*

For the location of the new museum the stakeholders identified dozens of potential locations for the museum. While keeping in mind the underlying themes and opportunities that exist within each space, participants largely believed the museum should have access to the downtown area, incorporate a view/ access to the river, and should be a newly constructed building (see Fig. 1). To give the museum the best chance to fulfill its potential the location needs to have plenty of traffic and access to surrounding activities like those that exist in downtown La Crosse. Additionally, proximity to the river will emphasize its importance to the visitors. Lastly, a new building will give architects the ability to create a powerful and iconic building to celebrate the history of the La Crosse area. Keeping these criteria in mind a location in or near downtown La Crosse and adjacent to the Mississippi/Black River's is an ideal location for the museum.

**Figure 1. Heat map created by participants identifying potential new museum locations**



## ***Part 2 – Resources***

The La Crosse County Historical Society current has a diverse collection of objects stored in a variety of spaced across multiple locations. In total they are currently stored in approximately 5,828 square feet of space, most of which is storage due to a lack of exhibit space.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Sq. Footage</b>	<b>Contents</b>
West Ave. garage	752	furniture, items too large to carry to basement
West Ave basement	2173	textiles, 2-D, small items
West Ave main floor	303	books, textiles, portraits
West Ave loft offices	188	furniture, furs, safe
West Ave balcony	152	oversize textiles, furniture
Off-site storage facility	1800	vehicles, boats, furniture
Other off-site	160	fire trucks, piano
Riverside storage needs	300	canoes, artifacts

5828 sqft

These objects only reflective the holdings of the LCHS, and not potential contributions from other area stakeholders. All considerations for a new museum should consider the need for exhibit and storage space for LCHS objects and additional objects provide by other stakeholders for permanent or temporary exhibits.

## ***Part 3 – Desired experience***

Building directly off the museum element preferences cited by participants of the fall data collection, a survey was created with examples of these preferred elements from existing museums. The goal of this round of data collection was to identify more specifically what should be in and around this potential new museum based on support for desired content and experiences. Specifically, the following elements were included:

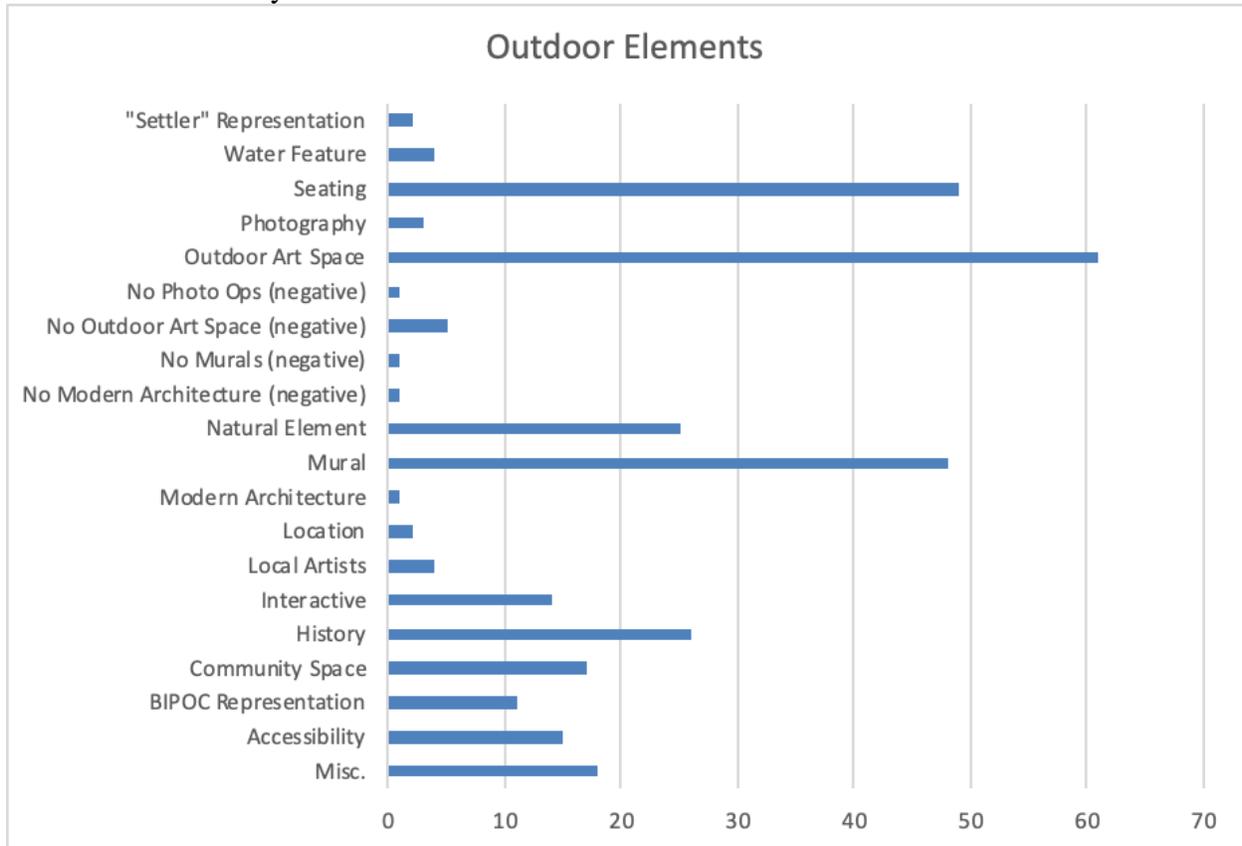
- Outdoor elements
- Admissions
- Visual exhibits
- Technological exhibits
- Non-technological exhibits
- Virtual elements
- Workshop space
- Youth workshop space
- Conference space

Survey participants were asked to view several images within each element and indicate which parts of the displayed experience they either liked or did not like. An open-ended question was also provided for each of the nine element sections so participants could expand on what, specifically, they liked or did not like related to the element. The results are presented by element below.

### Outdoor Elements

In relation to desired outdoor elements, participants indicated a high level of interest in an outdoor art space or mural as well as seating and the inclusion of a natural element.

- An ideal location for a new museum will include outdoor space for congregating, and the ability to commission local artists to create pieces of artwork depicting the cultural and/or natural history of the area.



Overwhelmingly, the open-ended responses indicated that respondents most preferred an outdoor space with **seating** that allows for the gathering of community:

“Having seating space to meet up with others in your party, or enjoying the outdoor museum space is inviting and offers a chance to enjoy interesting relevant art pieces or other displays.”

“Fun, colorful, interactive and full of life of all kinds that represent our beautiful area! Somewhere you can take a break and but also draw people in with what treasures lay inside! A mix between what's new and where we came from”

“Very open and welcoming. Places to gather/sit and enjoy the outdoors”

“I would love a mural that was made my local artist with seating and a stage. So not only is it a historical place, but a place to gather with friends, and a place for events.”

“Public art and green space. A place where people could each lunch in summer and just linger.”

Responses also consistently pointed to the importance of drawing on **La Crosse's history** in the final design of the visual elements included outside of the museum, though defining that history varied:

“Culturally significant/indigenous art at the entrance is very important. This would mean a lot and look breathtaking to the people. A mural on the side of the building with seated area would also be a positive addition. A place where there is beautiful art and a place to sit and relax will surely bring visitors.”

“History of La Crosse but not just boards you read. Change it up a little maybe have different artists whether they sculpt, paint or etc do a piece that corresponds to their chunk of history. And or maybe take pictures of the historic buildings in la crosse and tell their history and then below each encourage people to support the Historical Society so that protected buildings are kept up and shared with generations”

“Art should encompass a variety of styles and periods. Rather than just containing abstract murals or edgy concrete sculptures, the outdoor space should contain references to all kinds of art. Perhaps a Rodin-esque sculpture could be flanked by Expressionist murals featuring LaCrosse landmarks. A mosaic with gentle hints of Monet's dabbing brushstrokes could guide visitors through waves of concrete walls (inspired by the towering bluffs) to modern abstract metal sculpture with bench seating.”

“I'd like to see some culturally accurate indigenous artwork outside the museum, honoring the land the museum will stand on.”

“Mural and sculpture acknowledging black bodies on which the US was built (especially around river trade) AND something to acknowledge being on the cultural land of the Ho-Chunk People. We should center and co textualize right from the get”

“A place for communal gathering would draw people to the museum more I think. I'd like to caution cultural and indigenous aspects of a museum and ask that representation from those cultures be heavily involved.”

“Gardens, art, and architecture inspired by the LaCrosse area, and by the nationalities that originally settled here (ie Scandinavian)”

“I would want to see the museum in a downtown location in a historic building, possibly in the same area as the children's museum. It would be neat to see vintage recreations of advertisements on the outside walls from companies like Trane, Allis Chalmers, Heileman's, Gund and others in paint and neon on the outside walls.”

“Riverboat history, river-nature, Native American culture, Ag, historic businesses in LaX,”

Respondents also described a desire for the outdoor elements to **be interactive**, including for their use in **photo ops**:

“Lots of art and sculptures and interactive pieces”

“Fun, colorful, interactive and full of life of all kinds that represent our beautiful area! Somewhere you can take a break and but also draw people in with what treasures lay inside! A mix between what's new and where we came from.”

“I like the idea of outdoor seating. I like it to feel more authentic and real, not pictures and signs but textured and something to experience. There should be areas to interact with and discuss the art and / or history”

“I'd love to see a "path" or "story" opportunity for people who would like a winding path of art to follow with a progression of art. Maybe a sort of drum circle like art experience with history heavily woven in”

“It would be cool to have some attraction outside of the museum that people could take photos of or with. More people would post pictures with it and basically be advertising for the museum. The mural or historical picture would be cool. Based on how people reacted to the blue baby statue, I dont think an artistic piece would be a good fit. I also like the idea of a grassy/outdoor seating area too. Would be a nice place to meet up with friends.”

“I like the options with art that is accessible. Even if people don't go to the museum the first time, the art and murals are popular spots for Instagram photos and it will draw people in, sticking in their mind and maybe on a rainy day they will think “let's go to that cool museum where we took pictures last summer”

Respondents also focused in on the importance of including **natural elements**, both directly, and indirectly:

“Clean, ivy, no boring concrete, or blocked off doors/windows, easy to read signs”

“Lots of seating. Indigenous plants with interpretive signage regarding cultural significance”

“I like outdoor spaces where people can sit and absorb the surrounding sculpture and art murals. I think garden elements - plants, trees, hedges, fountains add to the experience. I like the idea of the mural behind a stage area, it could be an outdoor classroom or performance venue. Lighting would be important for evening visitors”

“Prominent name placement. Something interesting to look at: mural, statue. Color; Landscaped green space with flowers and trees with some seating and shade. Easy entrance for those with disabilities.”

“A zero invasive design. Essentially delete surrounding buildings by painting murals of the city prior to civilization so we can admire the natural beauty of the coulee region”

Another salient theme that emerged was the desire for this space to be **fully accessible**:

“Access for strollers, bikes, wheelchairs. Shaded areas and benches or other places to sit and climb for kids. It would be great to have a display that ties the place into its role

throughout la crosse's history and maybe helps show the changes the city has gone through over time."

"Murals would be great, anything interactive, outdoor seating, and accessibility to people of all abilities as well."

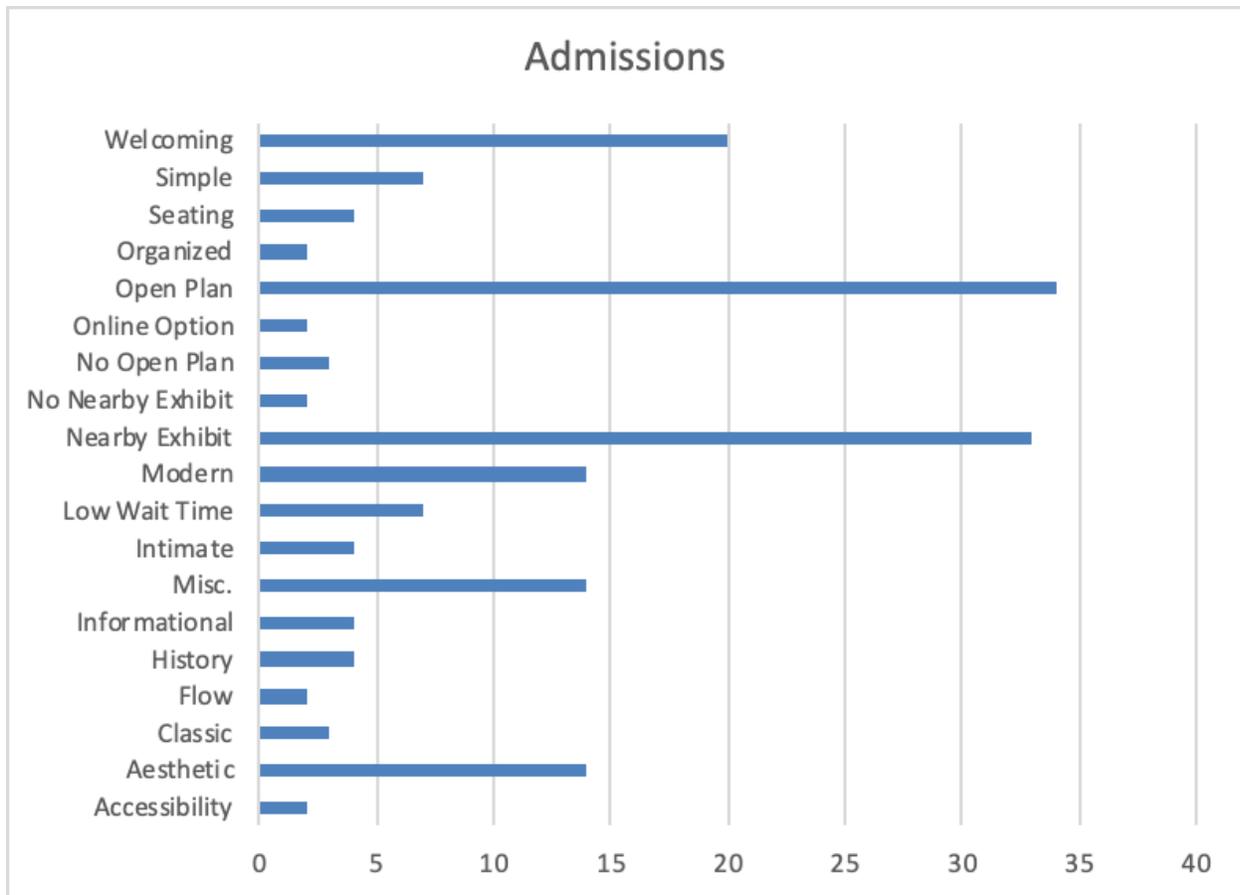
"I would like to see art or sculpture on the exterior walls/spaces of the museum that is accessible to the public."

"Seating near exhibits, especially for handicapped and elderly patrons"

### Admissions

Participants indicated the importance of creating an admissions space that has an open plan and is nearby exhibits. This is consistent with prior research which has found that an open museum setting provides a more satisfying visitor experience than a closed setting (Kottasz, 2006). Participants also indicated that a welcoming atmosphere was critical to the space as well as aesthetic appeal.

- A new La Crosse museum should have a large open entrance area with natural lighting that creates an inviting approach admissions staff.



Survey respondents felt that having the admissions area **near museum exhibits** was an important aspect of this feature:

“I like the idea of the ticket area being on one side or the other, perhaps with a window, large artwork, or enlarged photos behind it. It would be nice to see sculpture(s) in the main lobby, and I think it would be great to be able to see visuals of the museum; it would add to the excitement of going in.”

“I love how museums like the National Gallery of Art and the Detroit Institute of Art begin with a small entrance that suddenly opens up into a main foyer that is open concept with the main desk floating near the door. A fountain or center stauette creates a sense of enticement when the eyes are drawn to it before noticing the partially obscured corridors and alcoves beyond.”

“It’s more welcoming to have an open-air entrance and be able to start to see some exhibits

“It should be warm and welcoming, not like a department store where they’re trying to accommodate as many people they can as quickly as possible. I like to see some art before getting tickets to know what to look forward to or to have something to look at while waiting to get my tickets.”

“Keep it simple, with some hints of what is to come”

“I like the open area with view of museum behind. The others look too sterile and like any other setting, like a bank, hospital or clinic.”

“Glimpses or teasers of what is inside. Open, historic looking-old wooden floors etc.”

“We need a sneak peak!”

Closely related to this, respondent also identified a preference for a more **modern look** with an **open floor plan**:

“I think La Crosse should be swinging towards a modern look vs. traditional.”

“I like the clean modern look & limited visuals before entering. First image is nice but may be too distracting with both sides open - does seem more fitting with the visual aesthetic of a history museum”

“I think wood floors would make the area feel more modern and welcoming. I don’t like the modern look in the second photo because it reminds me of an airport. The open look I feel makes the museum look smaller. Having the Museum not visible and having a counter with multiple attendants looks more established. A modern industrial look would be a great tribute to the area’s history and sets the tone for the museum. I envision repurposed wood floors, exposed pipes and duct work and brick incorporated.”

“I envision the space as a large, modern style entrance that is spacious, but has minimal view to the museum.”

“I like the open space concept with colorful art displayed above and around”

“I would like to get a sneak peek of the museum from the ticket area. It gives you an idea of what to expect and gets you excited for what you’re about to see. The large open area looks the most appealing to me.”

“Big open spaces feel nice to be in, even for employees working there. Modern is nice too, because it gives us a new update city look and feel. The pictures I didn’t like, looked and felt outdated.”

“Like the open clean feel. I do like the straps designed to keep people in line as opposed to rush forward & squeeze their way ahead of some one in line - although that’s not a real likely problem here in LaCrosse”

Alternative to the desire for a modern look, another portion of respondents identified a preference for a focus on **historical elements** in the Admissions area as well:

“I understand the need for the more modern kiosks with multiple stations too help with traffic flow. But the older style is much more aesthetically pleasing and reminiscent of the grander museums.”

“I envision it like the first picture. A restored, saved building in downtown La Crosse. Original aspects to the building preserved as much as possible. With some see-through to the museum itself.”

“I think some visual of the museum will be engaging for visitors before they get to the desk. Also if there is a way to keep the ticket kiosk historical, I think that would reflect the significance of la Crosse a bit better”

“I like the historic looking entryway. I like how that type of entry allows s the person to enter from either side after visiting the admissions counter.”

Others identified specific design elements that they felt would be **aesthetically pleasing**:

“either go completely old & elegant like brick walls, or very modern like the belle square building in la crosse”

“I just want it to be pretty and classic looking. Multiple kiosks seems efficient but unnecessary given the small size of our community. The large entrance area would be nice for event hosting.”

“I think wood floors would make the area feel more modern and welcoming. I don’t like the modern look in the second photo because I reminds me of an airport. The open look I feel makes the museum look smaller. Having the Museum not visible and having a counter with multiple attendants looks more established. A modern industrial look would be a great tribute to the areas history and sets the tone for the museum. I envision repurposed wood floors, exposed pipes and duct work and brick incorporated.”

“It should feel grand”

“visually pleasing is number one.”

Regardless of specific design choices, others pointed to the most important aspect being the **welcoming** nature of the admissions area and the importance of good **customer service** elements:

“Prefer a more human treatment. Avoid cattle-herding.”

“I think it would be nice to have seating in the lobby for people to rest coming, including surfaces of some sort to allow for people to set down drinks and purchases. I also feel adequate restroom facilities and drinking fountains should be accessible to people in the lobby”

“It would be nice to have multiple terminals for a quick process to pay for tickets but the open concept makes it hard to know where to form lines and what the process is. Displays for admission prices and special exhibits to look out for would be helpful”

“I like having ticket information very visible and some sort of organizing factors to keep lines in order and moving.”

“Don't have multiple directions to go after being admitted. It is confusing and makes people feel disconnected to the experience. An example is the Minnesota Zoo. After you are admitted you have to study a map to know where you are. Its hard to do with kids or if you just want to see what your there for.”

“I don't like seeing huge empty areas of wasted space. A nice flow for admissions where it's not hard to figure out where to go or who to talk to is good.”

“While multiple kiosks provide efficiency, I don't like how it makes the space feel like an area you just get herded through and not a place to stop and rest and a part of the experience.”

“Open space. Clear information. Helpful people.”

“Bench seating would be good for those waiting for others in their party. Clear signage is a must, but the photo with "TICKETS" leaves me cold. Is there a cloak room, or lockers to leave winter coats?”

“It would be nice to have multiple terminals for a quick process to pay for tickets but the open concept makes it hard to know where to form lines and what the process is. Displays for admission prices and special exhibits to look out for would be helpful”

“Admissions area with space and accommodations for large group tours, especially kids, to congregate, drop off coats and backpacks, listen to a teacher or docent give them orientation. Without blocking the admissions counter for other visitors. Once more: integrated access for wheelchairs, others with special needs.”

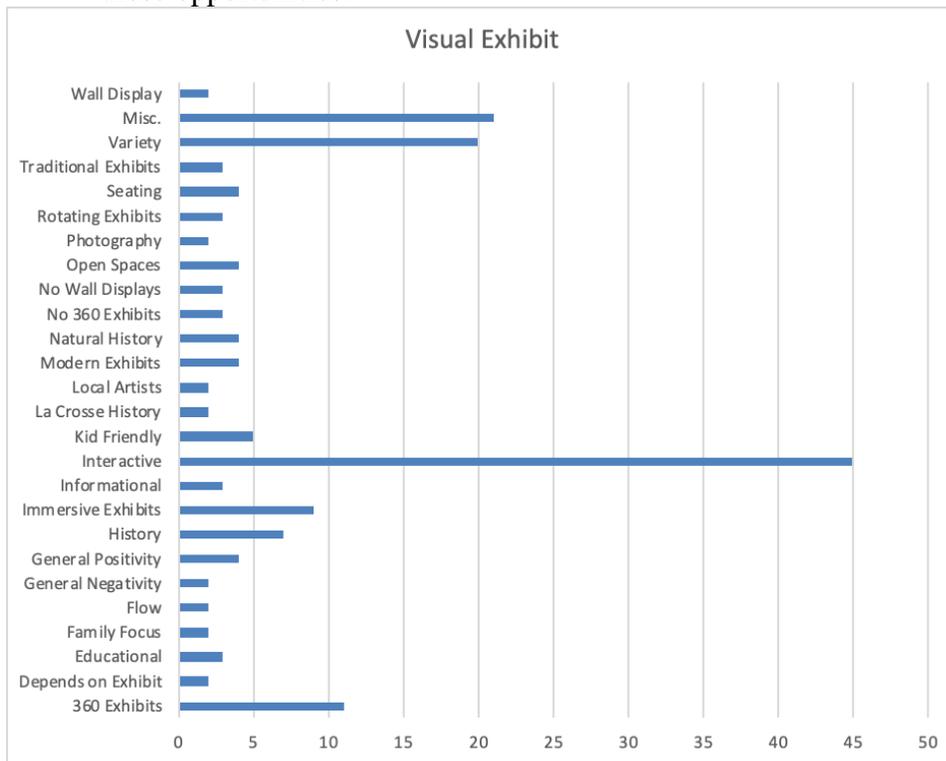
### Visual Exhibits

For visual exhibits, participants indicated a strong preference for interactive elements as well as the ability to fully immerse in those exhibits. Interactive experiences that are most engaging will allow for creativity, productivity, and/or engagement in communication (Shedroff, 2000).

Participants also highlighted the importance of variation in the visual exhibits included in the space.

Prior research has shown that most museum visitors come in groups, and a fun group experience is an important element of a satisfying visit (see Hornecker & Stiftner, 2006).

- When design exhibits for a new museum it will be important that there is space and opportunities for groups to interact within those exhibits.
- When looking at prior research and comparable museums, individual exhibits may need thousands of square feet to create engaging interactive elements that can accommodate groups of people and offer the variation visitors desire. Existing facilities do not offer these opportunities.



Survey respondents provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about the **interactive** nature of exhibits:

“Interactive exhibits are awesome way to get people more engaged. The more interactive the better”

“visit the Science and History museums in St. Paul or Minneapolis MN before designing. They have an excellent way of making the museum educational, visually interesting, and interactive for all ages.”

“I think it’s important to make displays engaging and interactive where possible. I didn’t like any part of the Photo Theme: Family observing visual wall exhibit because it has no design or character to it. I love art, it just a few painting on a blank wall is no good...”

“Small spaces that only a couple of people can fit into should be kept to a minimum; they create bottlenecks. A good mix of open viewing spaces with interactive exhibits for kids and adults is nice. Some traditional gallery spaces are a plus.”

“Make it interactive and engaging. Do not focus too heavy on making everything where you can only read about it”

“The more interactive the better, use all 5 senses”

“The more interactive exhibits are much more interesting to me, those that have multiple facets and include the different senses to engage you and transport you to the material.”

“If there’s special historical things (like a vehicle or something along those lines) maybe try and do something similar to the fire truck at the children’s museum but more for everyone and not just children”

“Something all immersive. I liked the 360 exhibit however when things are that colorful and bright, kids seem to get excited and take over certain exhibits. Which isn’t a bad thing! It’s important to get them immersed.”

“Need more than pictures and plaques to keep interest of the next generation; 360 and interactive as much as feasible”

“3D rooms are GREAT! They will bring the guests who are attracted outside, in! I think that not having so much reading would be great, but if the museum were more like the second photo, that would be so cool! It would allow people to be able to see things that they are interested in, at different angles. Having different types of exhibits will keep people interested, like OMG what will come next?”

“I want to be on path that twists and turns with interactive information stations.”

“Interactive displays and inviting areas. The Milwaukee public museum is amazing and something to consider when designing our museum. Lots of interactive design and display. Imaginative areas of play for children.”

“Interaction is great! Static, flat exhibits with lots of reading tend to make people lose interest! Written messages should be bulleted wherever possible! Or voice action messages! Engage the people wherever possible! Kids and even adults tend to get bored very easily with all static exhibits!”

Another salient response that emerged from the feedback on the visual exhibits was the importance of providing a **variety** of exhibit types and ensuring they stay **updated**:

“I love the idea of having multiple types of visual exhibits. As a teacher, I know that people learn in all different ways. Some people want more of a visual experience that they can view as they continue through a space at their own time. Some like real life set ups. Some like to interact with / in the exhibit. I would love to see some of each!”

“A good mix would be nice. Some hands-on stuff for kids and cool stuff for everyone to look at”

“A variety of gallery style and immersive and engaging meets the needs of a broader audience. Please include modern local artists-maybe in a special section that changes every 6 months to keep it fresh. An engaging look at the indigenous people of past and present in our area would be great. Make sure to represent the history and art of more than just white men.”

“All of the [examples in the survey] are important and should be incorporated! People learn differently and want to engage with history in different ways! This would also make the museum more accessible. Just make sure there are audio-guides, text descriptions, and closed captions where applicable”

“I think the exhibits should include those of modern art, of mixed mediums. There should be a mix of sizes and artists, and potentially one immersive experience.”

“I think a variety is nice. I like the 2d artwork, and any images when necessary to explain. 3D objects/displays are much more exciting because anyone can look at images on a screen to learn but physical objects make the experience of going to a museum”

“We do have a void in la Crosse for art museums, so a mixture of local, modern, and imported art would be incredible! I’d love a good old-fashioned art museum with some rotating art”

“Wrapping the old with the new in presentation, the Riverside Museum's exhibits are embarrassingly dated.”

“A variety of gallery style and immersive and engaging meets the needs of a broader audience. Please include modern local artists-maybe in a special section that changes every 6 months to keep it fresh. An engaging look at the indigenous people of past and present in our area would be great. Make sure to represent the history and art of more than just white men.”

Respondents also pointed to their desire for a **local historical** focus in the visual exhibits:

“I would love to see some natural history with walk through spaces showing the geology and history of how our area was formed and what it's made of. This could walk us into the history of La Crosse and how it came to be. How cool would it be to walk down a historical scale down version of main street”

“Wildlife exhibits or natural area exhibits. Historical timeline of photographs; grouped according to commercial, residential and agricultural interests”

“I love the idea of exhibits that you can walk into and feel like you're there. The closed visual exhibits are fine too. I also think some large photos of the old La Crosse life, city, and people would be interesting. I think an aquarium on one side of the museum would be great for everyone too like some cities do. This would attract more people and more often, throughout the year in all weather.”

“La Crosse area themed things both historic and current Natural outdoor images Area is so beautiful”

Others had thoughts on the **flow**, need for **seating**, and including **open space** in the ultimate design:

“I like to see a natural flow of exhibits and not have to walk around wondering which way to go next.”

“Consider traffic flow, avoid congestion.”

“I think museums should be more interactive to engage visitors in learning and that the exhibits should be scattered around the room rather than being on the walls to help create a flow to the rooms.”

“It would be great to have designated areas for specific subjects/eras so related displays are in the same vicinity and have a progressive feel through the museum, but then also have an area that has random displays scattered, maybe in a more central area of the museum. I again feel there needs to be pockets of seating areas for people to take a rest, and centrally located restrooms.”

“None of these pictures included seating. Each exhibit needs period style benches.”

“I like the paintings or photos hung in groups. Not too high, please. Wide comfy benches down middle of room. Enclosed displays help viewers focus and prevent touching. Realistic settings are best. The platform displays looked flat. Printed signs a bit too low. My least favorite. Kids love the displays they can enter and interact with. Seating at entrances would be nice for adults who get tired.”

“Open areas that have minimal work within a certain space is best. Walls with many angles look too busy and are a distraction to the actual work.”

“Put a lot of space around items. Don't fill negative space with clutter. Give people time to think before moving on to the next thing.”

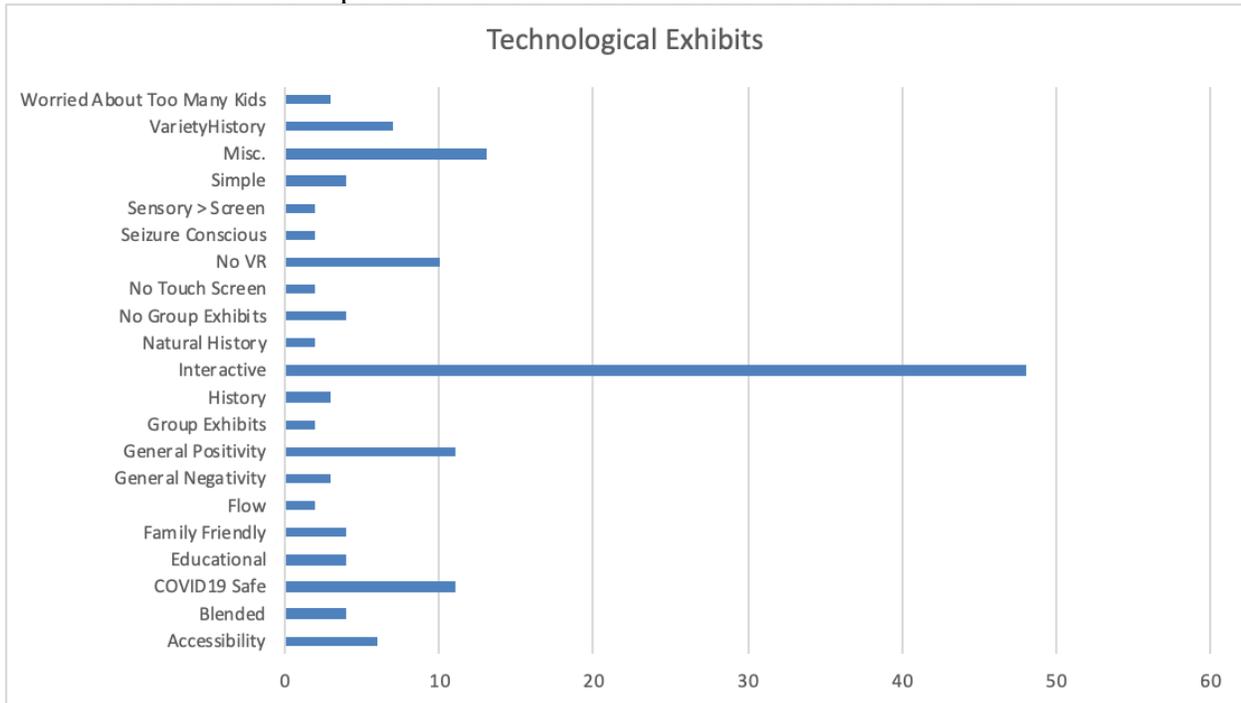
“I like the idea of the exhibits feeling open like the 360 platform. The display glass enclosures with taxidermy animals seems like an outdated way to display items. Interactive displays will help children gain interest in local history and will help them learn and have fun. Wood floors and skylights would be a nice touch to make the area

feel open and bright. Creative displays with modern plaques depicting the items history is more attention getting and interesting.”

### Technological Exhibits

As indicated in the visual exhibit responses, participants also strongly preferred interactive elements. Prior research has shown that museum technologies can enhance learning when they provide an interactive experience and are easy to use (Pallud, 2017), but it is important to note that visitor experiences take different forms.

- A blend of technological enhancements with opportunities to interact with authentic artifacts will be important in a new museum to cater to diverse markets.



Feedback related to technological exhibits focused largely on the interest in exhibits that are **interactive** or **sensory** based:

“I like these ideas. They look fun. I'm not sure about the virtual one, as it seems cheesy, but maybe new technology would make it better. Interactive digital screens would be better for kids today than the interactive wall with just buttons.”

“Interactivity makes the museum experience!!!”

“MAKE AS INTERACTIVE AS POSSIBLE FOR ALL AGES, mobility, and disabilities.”

“I love the interactive opportunity that technology can provide to make learning more multidimensional and may reach a wider variety of people with different learning styles”

“Use all the technology and involve all the senses as much as possible with max interaction and family friendly accessibility with additional info adults can access if desired to go deeper”

“I do like the idea of getting all different senses involved and using different kinds of technology! Kids love pushing buttons and manipulating on screens. The scent thing

concerns me for health and cleanliness purposes. The thing someone was holding to an ear also seems a little..... uncomfy. Maybe instead of using something that is hooked up there that multiple people are using, a QR code or some other link to a cell phone that people can access..?"

"Technology can be used to inform people of the history and function of various exhibited pieces. More hands-on things can help people understand the fundamentals of some ideas, and technology using a variety of senses are good for everyone."

"I think technology is great to incorporate in the museum to give it a more modern feel and keep people's attention. The VR display would be great to show off the areas scenic views and wildlife. Hands on displays were always my favorite as a child and kept me engaged. Light exhibits feel like an escape and are great for all ages and are an enjoyable experience. Computerized touch screens would be great to incorporate along with displays, although I'm not sure they would have much interest if they were stand alone. Sensory exhibits are exciting because they create an experience that is unique."

"One of my favorite exhibits at the Great River Musuem in Dubuque is very simple. It's a video of the whole river from the air, with a control where you can speed up or slow down the video. The interactive part makes it more exciting. Whole body and sensory activities are also exciting."

"Pressing a button corresponding with a bird and hearing it's call is a really cool interactive tool. I also like little theatre rooms that show natural or historical significance of the area. Maybe a sensory rich cave exhibit would be cool."

Survey respondents also made clear their preference for a **limit to the technology** used in museum exhibits:

"love the scensory simulations without the screen time as much. We stare at screens already enough as it is."

"Technology needs to be a tool to enable rather than itself being the focus. Unless it's a technology museum."

"I hate the sight of people shut off in VR masks. Maybe put them in booths, or just skip the whole thing. Technological exhibits need to work well, not break down, and serve the mission of the museum, not just entertain. But I would love to have a whole-body experience with interactive log rolling!"

"A few touch screens are okay, but I find myself skipping over a lot of these interactive exhibits in a museum. They often cause road blocks and noise. And not very sanitary"

"I like hands on and i suppose a younger crowd would like the higher tech things. I prefer real items to explore and touch and manipulate."

“I don't think it's necessary or feasible to do virtual reality for this sort of museum. The number of users would be limited, and supervising the area so everyone can have a chance to participate would be difficult. The idea of a smell display just doesn't appeal at all. I like the idea of interactive displays, but again I'm concerned about regular, ongoing management of germs in these areas. (This would be a huge concern of mine even if we didn't have COVID-19 going on.)”

“Virtual reality could be interesting, but there's something off putting for other people in the room. I have really enjoyed small video viewing areas behind other exhibits. No denying technology will be a big part of future museums, but all tech can be boring.”

“I think the interaction exhibits are great, but not the touch screens and video games. Everyone has enough of that at home already.”

“All these screens! I would leave all these places in the photos immediately. If allowed, I would set fire to the screens. All dreadful. Why would one go to a museum, with amazing things to see, then look at screens? Screens have terrible effects on the brain, the nervous system, the capacity to think and receive what's being perceived. You can't seriously be considering these things.”

“I enjoy technology that enhances the experience, but doesn't take over the experience.”

Others brought forward **health concerns** related to highly interactive exhibits

“Participatory exhibits are always fun but now with covid 19 we probably don't want to be touching anything.”

“I like combining tech with hand/ body manipulation. The only exhibition I might question is the projected light area. Kids (and/or adults) with seizures may have problems. I am not an expert on this, so I would check with professionals.”

“In this new age, trying to figure out how to keep things sanitary is going to be a challenge”

“I love interactive exhibits but as a shy kid I would hate being forced to work with other strange kids to learn. Also, after COVID-19 I can't help but notice how much kids are touching things. I would like to know they were sanitized regularly. I would be grossed out if I interacted with something and it was sticky.”

“Interactive displays are great. But, the difficult thing is keeping them clean. I have issues wearing something that someone wore or touching something that I cannot clean or see someone else cleaning in between uses”

“Sometimes virtual reality things can cause issues for people with things such as vertigo or seizures. For that reason, I would recommend staying away from virtual reality. Also the group one may not be ideal if it is not a busy day and only one or two people are there as they would not be able to participate in that activity then.”

“Given the current pandemic it would be good to think of ways to interact without touching everything or making VR headsets that are easy to clean between visitors. Tech that uses cameras to capture body movements is good too.”

“Interactive displays are great. But, the difficult thing is keeping them clean. I have issues wearing something that someone wore or touching something that I cannot clean or see someone else cleaning in between uses”

“I like the blend of physical manipulation and computer combo. It's nice to offer exhibits that involved different senses, touch or smell for blind children. The light display could pose problems for kids who have seizures. Smells could cause problems for asthma sufferers. Maybe just clear caution signs would do. The body interactive one looked fun. I am not as technological as children are so. . . .”

“The future of interactive, touchable exhibits should be questioned as we learn more about pandemics.”

“With the COVID-19 epidemic, it's hard to imagine safely touching earphones, exhibits, controllers, screens, etc”

Respondents were also concerned that exhibits should be both **kid and adult-friendly**:

“As with the last page, kids can sometimes get over excited and this means they can take over a space without parental or museum supervision. Kids go especially nuts over technology. I might be 25, but I still want to experience the interactive tech exhibits! But I've been in the situation where kids are there as well and take over a space so much it's difficult to take a turn. This just leaves me disappointed and bored with that exhibit.”

“I think a few of these would be really a lot of fun. But your kid would insist you stand in line behind 6 other kids because they would really reading to try it. Then you're stuck waiting 10-15-20 minutes. If it's really cool, there had to be enough of it. Not just for 2 or 3 people at a time.”

“there is (was?) a new Egypt exhibit at MPM where there was a digital wall with a timeline. Only one person could press buttons on a screen at once. You could be reading something when someone comes in and presses a new button. While it was an AMAZING idea, it took me a long time to go through the facts on the timeline because people (mostly kids under 10) kept pressing different buttons to see pictures.”

“This should be a less collaborative place in terms of the occupants. There should be some form of interactive experience, however it is not necessary to be technological. Also, sensory/science exhibits should be avoided because the museum will then primarily attract children and adults will not want to go.”

“I've been in too many museums where the techno stuff no longer works. I don't like having to wait to do it, I don't like not being able to do it because there are out of control children.”

And, similar to other categories, respondents reiterated the desire for **variety**, a focus on **local history**, and **accessibility**:

“Interactive exhibits that you get to touch, see, and hear will allow for the best experience”

“Pair technology with more analog approaches to allow focus for long or short amounts of time based on interest of the feature and attention span of the user.”

“I feel a variety of different things would be great. If you use the same technology all the way through it would get boring. Not everything needs technology. I like walking into the past. How about walking through Myrick's fur trading post? Experience the past, not just look at it through a screen.”

“I envision logging simulations, a ride up the "crawler", river challenges, winter activities (including curling which began in 1912 outdoors at Pettibone), reconstructions of the building of Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, etc”

“Old and new ways of presenting art should find ways to flow together. Perhaps nature scenes from the La Crosse area could be projected before being superimposed by artists' renditions.”

“I like interactive exhibits but please don't make them all dependent on sight/hearing. It would be great to have a variety so people of all abilities can discover and enjoy”

“Blend technology with traditional exhibits, make sure its accessible to all”

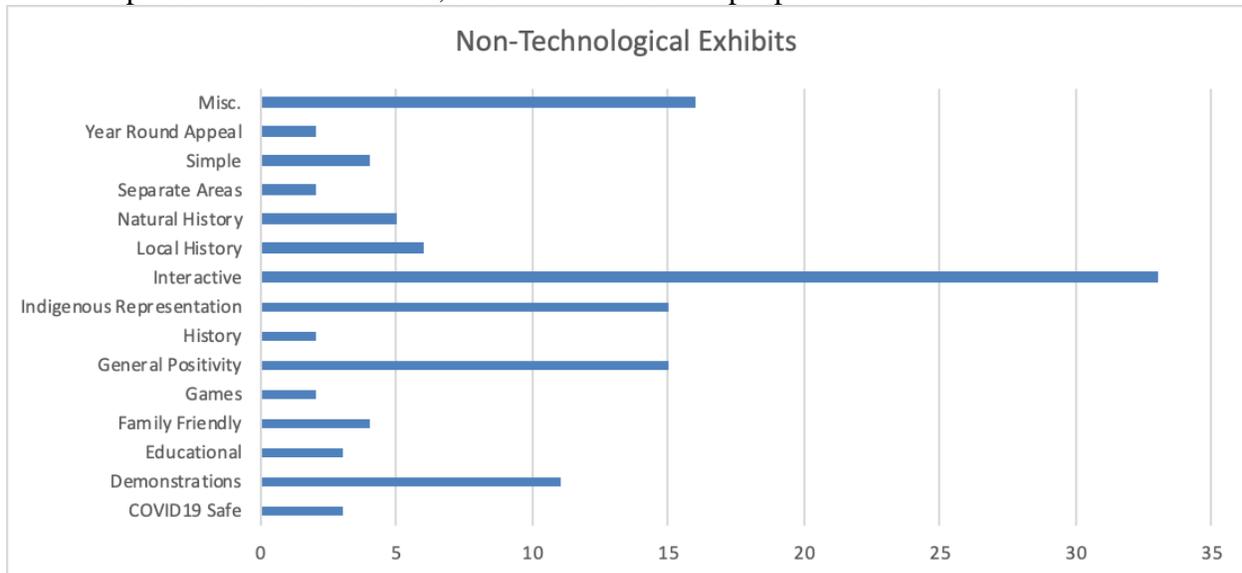
“The more interactive the better. Provide accommodations to make content accessible to all ability types”

“I think all of these options are great ways to include technology in museum exhibits, but please keep in mind people's varying abilities to hear, use their whole bodies to interact with exhibit tech, etc.”

### Non-technological Exhibits

Again, interactive elements were the clear preference among respondents. Additionally, for non-technological exhibits, participants indicated a desire for authentic cultural representation and demonstrations correlating to the exhibits. Destination visitors' authentic experiences take different forms (Pallud, 2017). Particularly when it comes to cultural heritage attractions, visitors will look to engage in real-world experiences and direct interactions with local people, places, and artifacts.

- While incorporating technology can create interactive and engaging opportunities, virtual and/or reproduced artifacts and activities need to be balanced real pieces of history, representations of cultures, and interactions with people from the area.



As with other categories, survey respondents were enthusiastic about the **interactive** nature of the non-technological exhibits:

“I love these ideas! Especially the hands-on exhibits! I’m a retired art teacher and love to see needed tactile experiences for all ages.”

“Hands on drastically enhances the experience to me. Love the idea of trying out relevant games, listening to experts explain pieces you can touch and experience. Things that bring the topic alive.”

“Non-technology interactive activities are great. In today’s world technology is used so much it is great to be able to experience a non-technology activity!”

“Using hand on learning and living things (provided the quality of life of the living things isn't impacted) would be a great way to bring people in

“Hands on exhibits are great for learning. Would love to see any version of it at the museum”

“I love these ideas!! Use them all! Getting families to work together and touching and interacting with authentic things— yes yes yes!”

“Exhibits that are hands on, individual or family sized, and are nature/indigenous themed are best.”

“I love all the these interactive ideas like I've saying. An aquarium would be nice, exhibits you can walk into and interact with would be great. Old boats, vehicles, building structure, equipment.”

“I think hands-on exhibits are a great idea, as long as they are designed well enough that they do not wear out quickly from many guests using them. As far as specific ideas, perhaps a variety of crafting-themed exhibits that demonstrate the ways things were made in the area by native americans, early white settlers, and on right up to modern times.

Respondents also identified how important it was to include **local history** in the non-technological exhibits:

"Love all of this. I think stuff related to early La Crosse...what did they make? Ho Chunk traditions....archeology work. The change of the river over time."

“now you are on to something! are there any make and take options out there? Love the historical items that can be experienced by going inside. In MN they have a grain elevator experience, and plane that can be entered and are pretty memorable. It would be neat to include some of the agriculture aspects of our area.”

“Any locally performed crafts/technologies of peoples who've lived in the area”

“PLEASE INCORPORATE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE AND CONNECT WITH TRIBES AND LIAISONS TO HELP YOU. DO NOT GENTRIFY OR APPROPRIATE THEIR CULTURE.”

“Honestly, I love all of the ideas on this page. This sounds like the most ideal museum in the world. I think having a Native American game, would help teach visitors about the culture in La Crosse. Having an exhibit on the marsh would be so great also, to incorporate the land features in our area, that is not just the bluffs or the river.”

“Hands-on exhibits could feature materials and objects native to the La Crosse area; visitors could "fill in the wetlands" on a topographical map of the region or use moon sand to shape the contour of bluffs (which would revert to their original shape between participants).”

“interactive stuff is fun. it would be cool if there was a game you could play to recognize all the landmarks from La Crosse.”

“I would really like to see the Native American cultures of our area respected in culturally appropriate ways. We have so much to learn and discover.”

Survey respondents were also enthusiastic about the inclusion of **live demonstrations** in the museum:

“The best museums we tour have live demonstrations and interpreters to give vivid accounts of what family life would have been like in a particular era or location or industry; max hands on and exploration and discovery with period pieces not also utilizing electronic and computerized technology”

“Historical models you can enter are so fun. It's like you are there. I also love the idea of an expert teaching or demonstrating skills. Outdoor exhibits are great, but cannot be used all year round unless it's a seasonal exhibit.”

“All of the above! I especially like and have been impacted by museums that include demonstrations and people sharing their culture in tangible ways, but all of these are really good for different purposes”

“Love the skill demonstrations and opportunity to explore cultures and habitats”

“Do NOT make an exhibit about something we can see in real life at Myrick Park. Why would I go to a museum to observe plastic ducks in a marshland exhibit when I could go for a walk and see the real thing. I am most interested in expert demonstrations.”

“I feel like the animals exhibits with the taxidermy animals seems outdated. The hands on models seem to get destroyed relatively easily and turn into an eye sore over time. Hands on learning is by far the most interesting and engaging for all ages. I like the idea of creating something that you could keep. Watching an expert work on a lost trade is also a unique experience and has a tendency of gathering excited crowds. Another great thing would be to have local artists and performers schedule events for the public at the museum.”

Similar responses to those that emerged related to technological exhibits were concerns about keeping **kids from overwhelming the museum experience** and the **health concerns** that are endemic to interactive exhibits:

“Not that enthusiastic about hands-on, but likely of interest to families with children. Perhaps a separate area.”

“Adult only sections?”

“Totally learning based exhibits, maybe an adult area and a child area”

“I want an art museum, not a history or field science museum. Most of these exhibits are geared towards children thus will not have the ability to attract and older crowd.”

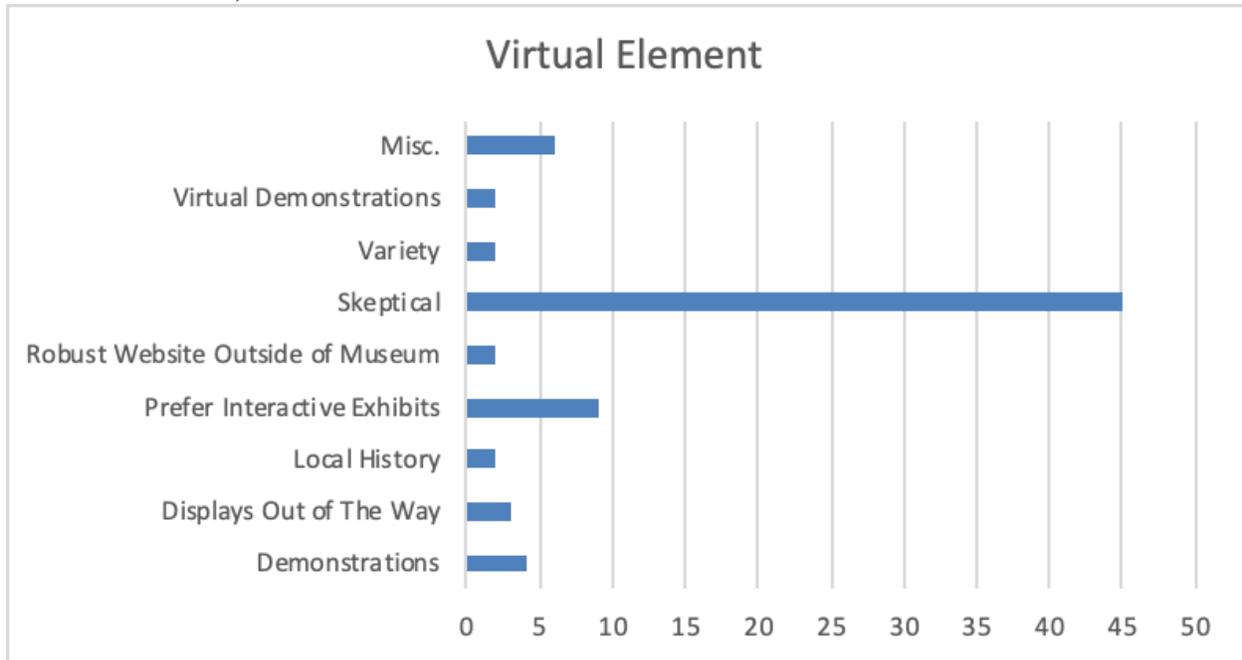
"Hands on exhibits can be cool to a degree. I personally don't enjoy hands on like this, but this is definitely the place where kids could get their energies out. However, with the new day and age after the pandemic, hands on stuff like this (and tech exhibits) may be more frowned upon due to germs? We'll have to see!"

“I think hands-on will need to consider the new reality of Covid 19. Historical models you can enter and be part of are great! Tactile and hands are good. I wouldn't be too into group participation with other families.”

“My main concern would be cleanliness.”

### Virtual Elements

The most common response of participants related to the inclusion of virtual elements was skepticism for the inclusion of such elements. They also indicated a preference for interactive, rather than virtual, elements.



The majority of respondents were **skeptical** of the inclusion of virtual elements in the new museum:

“I don't think staring at a screen is the best way to pass information within the museum.”

“All of the above are great options for technology. I don't want the tech draw to overwhelm museum or visitor. Please consider hands on and tactile exhibits.”

“I would rather have people experiencing the museum than interacting with others over a screen. Unless it is a seminar or visiting artist type experience. I also had an idea for a genealogy room where people could access computers and maybe get support.”

“Unless there's some added value provided by the museum or the museum environment there's little purpose to providing another venue for access to virtual exhibits, except to provide another venue for access”

“Not in love with the sterile room with a row of screens: too much like old school computer labs. Technology for independent learning can be delivered some other way. And don't forget most kids already have this at home: the museum should offer something special.”

“Not a fan of virtual exhibits unless they are necessary or can be implemented very well.”

“Um, let's not make it look like a zoom business meeting! I selected negatives for the watching the expert work-- I think that's generally a great idea, but that set-up looks really cumbersome, like a low-tech classroom, not a museum option.”

“None of these appeal to me; they're way too much like school and work environments. People can access this type of virtual exhibits from home - maybe (free) cards could be available at the museum exit area that would list more extensive online resources related to museum exhibits/themes”

“I don't like these very much. I think that having computers would distract from the museum feel. And a projector with a table just feels like a business conference room, and not like we are coming to the museum to learn or explore. Less screen time= more family time.”

“I think it makes sense to use this for guest lectures and classes, but I would be really disappointed if I walked into a museum and it looked like a computer lab”

“Why is this virtual learning necessary? / other ideas like the previous section are better interactive experiences.”

“I'm not loving these. During this covid-19 era where so much has to be remote and virtual, I much prefer real human interaction. I'm not sure what the purpose of this area would be. Perhaps a collaborative “cafe” kind of area could work? Different types of seating set up in different areas with tablets in some places or technology that a group could work on at once.”

“NO VIRTUAL. I can do all of this on YouTube. Why would I go to a museum to look at a computer. I have one at home. Virtual learning is overrated and discourages creativity. All of this could be accessible through a museum website, but your website won't be as good as larger national museum. If i am going to interact with a museum website I'd choose the Smithsonian or the Met, not dinky little la crosse. Also, if I were a kid on a field trip to a museum, I'd want to explore and observe, not play some bs computer game or talk to a virtual teacher. Kids experience too much virtual learning already. Don't make them do it on their museum field trip”

“No, no, no. No virtual stuff. Again, why would one go to a museum to sit still in chairs and look at screens? It's insane”

“I don't like the idea of people going to a museum to use a computer or sit with people in a class, I didn't think that would attract many people, just a few. People want to go to the museum because it's something to do. It's something to look at, and interact with while walking with your family no matter what the weather is outside.”

Those participants that found benefit to including virtual exhibits focused on **specific exhibit ideas**, utilizing virtual exhibits for **demonstrations**, or integrating virtual experiences into the **museum website**:

"Virtual gum in the hair or crime lab. Money or tackle box or tattoo or medical scan unit"

“Virtual exploration of the aquifer, the bottom of the Mississippi River and the other 6 rivers.”

“These are all nice but I really enjoy the idea of watching experts working virtually.”

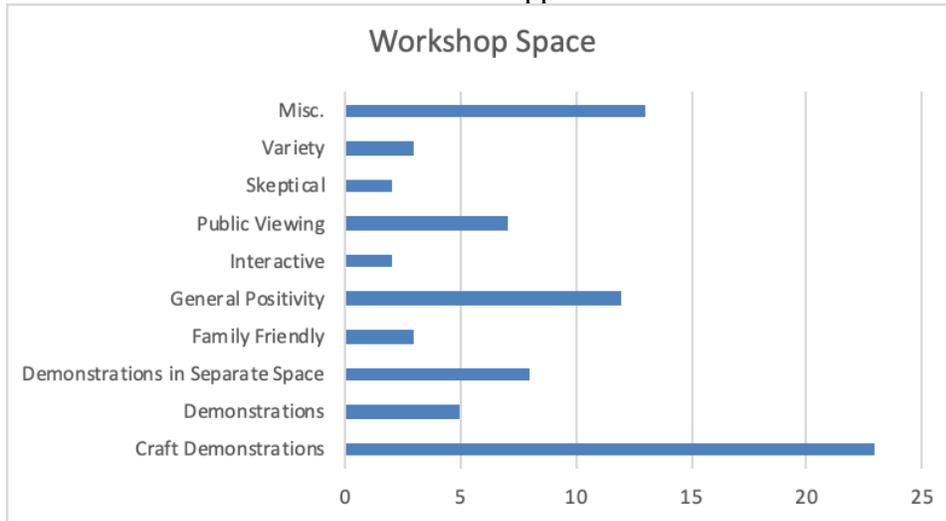
“I like virtual learning with experts and individual learning. Observing experts doesn’t allow for a question and answer portion unless that is provided at the end.”

"I think any museum will have to have an awesome website that features things NOT at the museum. I’ve seen some museums where their website is just a walk through their museum - which is cool, but then what is the point of a museum experience? I think a website should be complimentary with perhaps some of the same tech exhibits as would be at a museum.”

### Workshop Space

Participants felt the workshop spaces were a positive element and identified using the space for crafting as the most popular element, and indicated a preference for having a space separate from the exhibit area for demonstrations.

- A new museum needs space for programming. An area where participants can be exposed to demonstrations of local crafts or engage in hands-on workshops. Having this space could create additional revenue opportunities.



Survey respondents felt workshop spaces could best be utilized in **demonstrating and learning hard skills**:

“I would love a place to learn more of an actual craft.”

“I like the idea of learning skills, art-related, or historical skills. Classes for kids would be good too.”

“Having a space where skilled tradespeople can demonstrate and share their craft is a great idea. Prefer the small hands-on workshop over "lecture-hall" but there's a place for both.”

“Include expert led workshops that involve visitors in the experience.”

“Trade skills and expert craft persons would be cool! Not too into arts and crafts type of stuff.”

“Watching master craftspeople. Hands on using traditional or historical skills.”

“I think there would be value in offering a workshop space within the museum where more people may be drawn to learn more about what is offered. Also having separate space where people serious about the craft can experience it without distractions.”

“THE BLACKSMITH IDEA WOULD BE SO AWESOME!!”

“Workshops would be fun. Going to places like renaissance faires and Plymouth Plantation and places like that, trade skills like glassblowing and blacksmithing are always watched the most, but it’s the environment that makes it worthwhile. The demonstrators dress up and the room looks like it did way back when.”

“I think that these ideas could be cool. It would be interesting to see how local artists create art, and maybe there could be a class or space for people to create their own mini-version. I think maybe have the class only on specific days, where it could be considered a special event. Workshops could be like, how local farmers create their produce.”

“Love the idea of workshops by trades. I feel it’s a lost art and younger generations are getting back into that sort of thing. A large percentage of people KNOW technology, it doesn’t need to be overwhelming in a historical setting/place. Definitely innovative and interesting, but not overshadowing the point.”

“All of the above, but it is important to be aware of anxieties around people taking classes and feeling like their learning is on display. If it is a workspace for skilled trade workers, it would be really cool to have windows so the public could watch at certain times”

“Cultural diversity in art, textiles music. Early occupations in our area: logging, candy factories.”

“LOVE the in person classes. there are so many cool people in La Crosse that are very talented and know so many trades. blacksmithing is something they do in larger cities.”

“I think everything sounds amazing! I truly do not like a workshop that is closed off from the museum. With an open concept workshop people can observe what is going on, but do not have to join if they are not interested.”

“I think workshops would be a great addition, giving people the opportunity to learn crafts without needing to invest in full workshops of their own before doing so. And having experienced crafters give lessons would be most helpful.”

Respondents also pointed to the benefit, if including a workshop space, of ensuring it is a **separate space** from the main exhibit areas in the museum:

“All great, but group work spaces MUST be separate from the museum space. I find very few things more annoying about a museum visit than noisy groups of kids disrupting the experience. Make a space for them to be loud and have fun and not worry about tiptoeing around-- but keep it separate from the rest!”

“I think they are all great- watching an expert, trying a trade yourself, being able to walk past & see what workshop is taking place, but also having a separate room for any workshops that require more time/space/noise”

“The workshops would be separate from the rest of the museum and related to art mediums, though not a specific one”

“An isolated and designated space for kids workshops and some adult creative classes works well; I like the demo with seating for certain things and spaces for adults to learn and practice a skilled trade”

“I like the idea of a workshop space that is connected to the museum, but not sure if it would end up being the best set up. Could get loud for people enjoying the museum and make for more distractions for those in the workshop.”

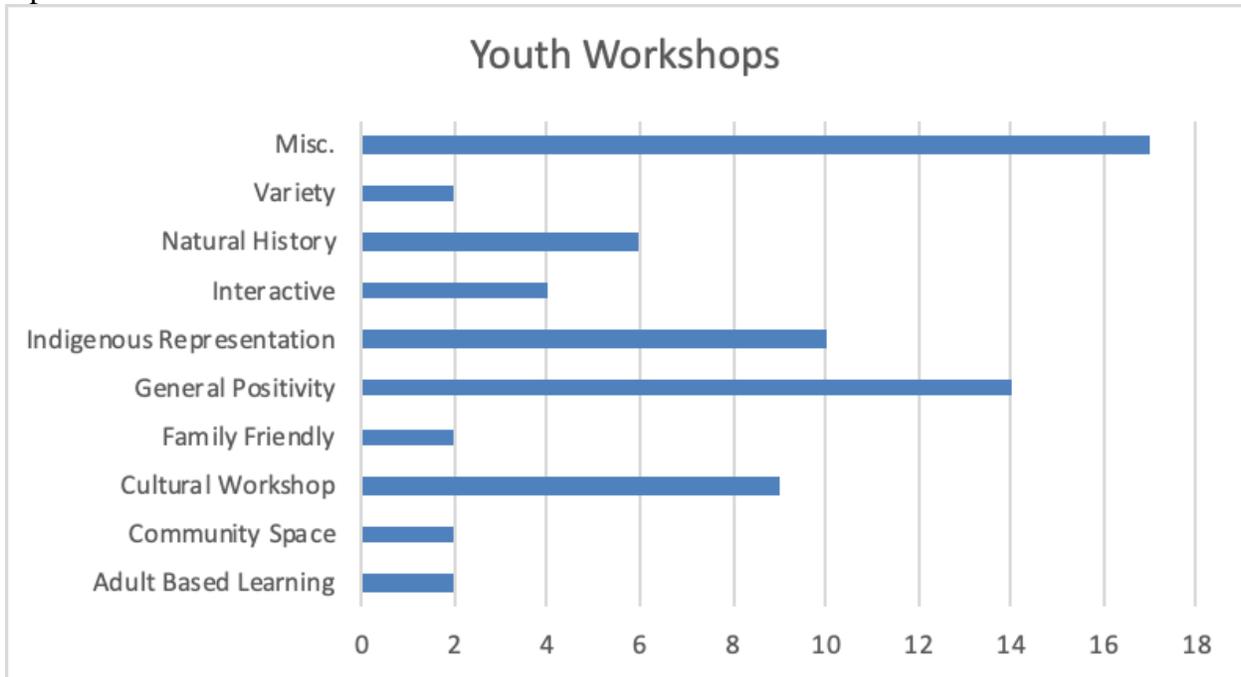
“classes can be an alternative source of income. have it separate from museum as your market may be different. I really like bringing in experts..consider historic home care classes.”

“If I were participating in a workshop I wouldn't want people flowing through.”

“I think they are all great- watching an expert, trying a trade yourself, being able to walk past & see what workshop is taking place, but also having a separate room for any workshops that require more time/space/noise”

### Youth Workshop Space

Participants were, like the general workshop space, positive about the inclusion of a youth workshop space. For this element, the inclusion cultural workshops and authentic cultural representation were also most favorable.



Survey respondents demonstrated an interest in **cultural workshops** and **nature-based workshops** most frequently

“I love all the above possibilities! I especially like culturally themed workshop. Hands on and tactile experiences are fantastic!”

“I love the group workshop space! Culturally workshops would also be fantastic! Hands on— YES!”

“We need more culturally diverse events and workshops”

“Incorporate Native American culture. That is so important to this area that is often neglected.”

“The history of the KKK in LaCrosse is something people should be educated on as we work towards the end of race-based marginalization. Also, in the development of the Native American exhibits, it might be nice to get input from Native American people so they are accurate and don’t fetishize a culture. The history of the land of LaCrosse would be interesting. Whose land did we steal? What promises were broken to that group? What are we doing about it?”

“I like all of these ideas. I think that the museum could be used to educate the public on the Native Americans who lived here, and the wildlife that is native to this part of the world. The adult workshop could be a monthly or bi-weekly paid event where adults

could go without kids. They would be able to explore the museum or make a craft and it could be themed around different things in La Crosse. There could be a night where you go to learn about how local artists create paintings, and the guests could paint with them.”

“Nature workshops are a high priority. Cultural awareness is also sorely needed here.”

“The culturally specific workshops would be valuable in celebrating the diversity of the people who live here now as well as those who were here in the past. Also, nature workshops would help us appreciate and celebrate the natural beauty of our area.”

“I like the group space and the nature-based workshops. You could have a lot of options for the types of classes/workshops in those spaces. They are all good ideas, but you probably won't have space for all of that. I also like the idea of culturally specific workshops. But I would think you could do those workshops in the group spaces or outdoors. Multipurpose, right?”

“I like the group space and the nature-based workshops. You could have a lot of options for the types of classes/workshops in those spaces. They are all good ideas, but you probably won't have space for all of that. I also like the idea of culturally specific workshops. But I would think you could do those workshops in the group spaces or outdoors. Multipurpose, right?”

“Museum should offer experiences not easily found elsewhere. Natural experiences are very important, fun, and healthy for everyone, and there are less and less opportunities for kids to experience them.”

“All are good. I think that it would be great to have some nature activities for all ages”

“The drop-in workshop and nature-based workshop seem more museum appropriate.”

Participants also described the importance of taking into account **local considerations** when determining what educational offerings to provide and how to offer them:

“I want it all: yes to everything on this page. Our region has a lot of craftspeople doing amazing things. LCHS already has "Folklife La Crosse," where artisans demonstrate their skills for the public, with hands-on lessons where applicable. I find they are very eager to share and love talking to the public about what they do. With more space and resources, we could tap into these communities much more.”

“Try not to overlap with already offered opportunities at the Children's Museum, which would only reduce numbers at both facilities making them unsustainable.”

“is this going to replace the children's museum? because that is kind of boring and is a huge space. It would be cool to just change it to a more interactive place for a little bit older kids (and adults, of course). The "Phoenix Sisters" you can find them on facebook, have actually been trying to do similar things like this. they have bellydancing classes, art, clothing swaps, and even a place for vendors to sell handmade gifts. it would be great

if they could be involved. right now they are applying for their non-profit status and putting a lot of their own person time into it. but they are some amazing women.”

“I think forming classes and clubs to join to fill these spaces can actually be pretty productive for a community.”

“Many of these activities don't require an expensive building. LaCrosse has many parks that could be used for many of these activities. Coordinating and publicizing could be aided by a museum staffer.”

Participants’ responses pointed to the importance of **adult-based** and **youth-based** educational opportunities:

“We could really use more adult based activities in the area”

“group workshop space would be great for field trips. Adult workshops are great as we already have a place for children with the Children's Museum”

“I love the idea of an adult workshop. Workshops for the kiddos are great, but I am not so sure they appreciate it as much as adults. Although a nature based workshop for kids or adults would be amazing. I think LaCrosse is based on a rural vibe while being urban. Its important to show that.”

“Museum should offer experiences not easily found elsewhere. Natural experiences are very important, fun, and healthy for everyone, and there are less and less opportunities for kids to experience them.”

“With the kids' individual workshop experience, I think it would be nice to have limits on the number of kids who can participate at one time so each child has a true opportunity to participate. So often the louder, more outgoing kids take over, and more quiet kids end up only being observers.”

“Group workshops sound like a great opportunity for students K-12. It would also be great to see culturally specific workshops.”

“As a K-12 teacher my students love hands on approaches and opportunities to engage with their learning”

Participants also indicated the need for **variety/flexibility** in the educational offerings including offering them as **special events**:

“All of the above! This would give people opportunity to find a type of educational opportunity that fits their needs and interests”

“I like having flexible workshops that can be group and then turn individual based on level of interest/attention. Both children and adult workshops should be offered”

“Love the nature, interactive, adult, group, and drop in workshops. Group would be nice for students”

“All are good options- and offering a variety of these, some regular operation, some special event, some seasonal special events is great.”

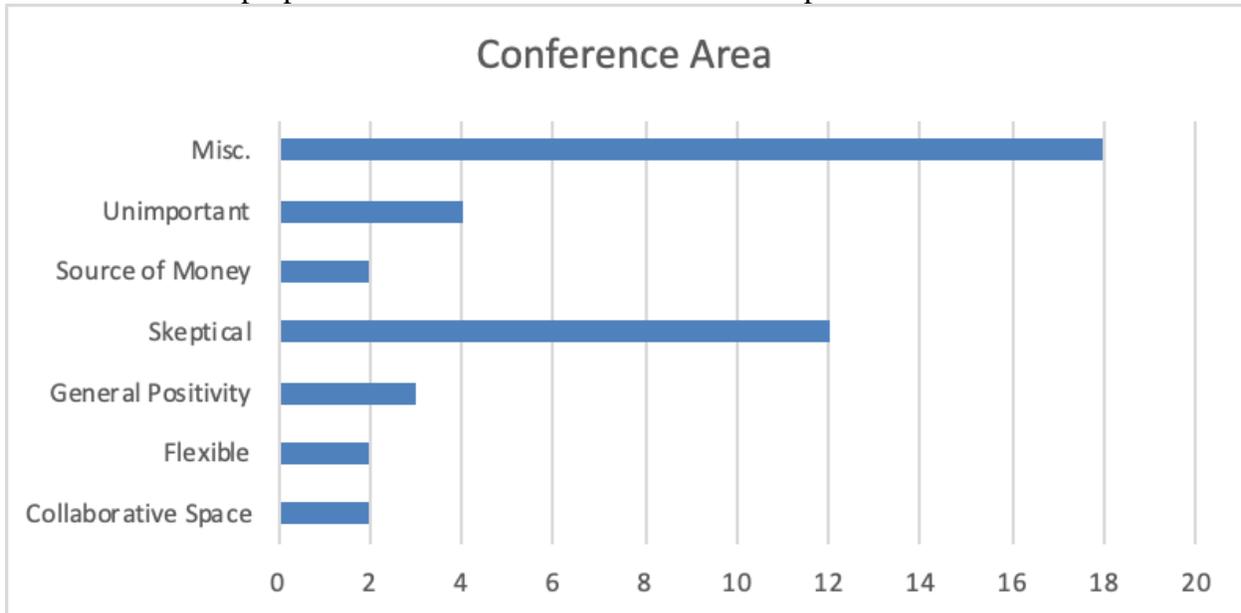
“These are good for events but might be difficult as permanent parts of the museum”

“I like all of these ideas. I think that the museum could be used to educate the public on the Native Americans who lived here, and the wildlife that is native to this part of the world. The adult workshop could be a monthly or bi-weekly paid event where adults could go without kids. They would be able to explore the museum or make a craft and it could be themed around different things in La Crosse. There could be a night where you go to learn about how local artists create paintings, and the guests could paint with them.

### Conference Space

For conference space, participants responded similar to virtual exhibits, skeptical of the need for the inclusion of dedicated conference space in the museum and indicated it may be unimportant to the new museum.

- A new museum will not necessarily need a separate conference space, but rather one or more multipurpose rooms that can be used for workshops or other events.



When asked about the possibility of conferences spaces in the museum, participants were **skeptical**:

“I feel ambivalent about this. The library has these types of spaces.”

“Is there a need for more spaces like this in La Crosse? Or is it seen as a potential revenue stream by renting space? If the answer to both is yes, then it makes sense. If not, it may not be used enough to justify expense.”

“These images all show good work spaces for various needs, but I'm not as sure they'd all be good use of museum space. The first- lecture hall- absolutely. That would be a great place to host an evening lecture or something. A small, interactive meeting room... maybe the museum hosts meetings like this for organizations, but most agencies or companies have this available in their own work spaces, same with the third... A few spaces like this for museum staff and their own partner meetings are great, but this doesn't seem like something the museum should go out of it's way to offer to others- the lecture hall- yes, regular meeting rooms? Not unless being a full conference center is a goal.”

“Meeting spaces may not be a wise use of space in the 21 century..isnt there already enough of this in la crosse?”

“I guess I wonder a little if the goal is to create a museum or a school, a conference hall. Can it be all three?”

“I personally don't imagine conferences and meetings rooms being much a draw for a museum. People have plenty of meetings and conferences in workplaces.”

“Be careful with trying to include everything in one space! Meetings can often conflict with teaching and learning experiences! Do not try to be all things for all people! Try to do a few things exceptionally right!”

Those in favor felt it would be important to have **dedicated meeting rooms**:

“Meeting rooms are good to include and don't need to be too large. Having a computer projector or tv will be valuable to provide closer views.”

“Formal lecture areas are nice for speaker events”

“Modern meeting rooms would be better and lecture halls should be used for conferences”

“I wouldn't want a board room, because that's boring and why would you go to a museum to sit in a room that can be found everywhere else? But the others see like they could be really useful and effective”

“The museum's meeting rooms could be separate from the rest of the museum, but present media in an artistic way. Perhaps projectors could be included in sculptures.”

“Personally I think since this is a museum, and museums are designed to foster creative thinking and interacting with and discussing culture and the world, a room like the one with televisions would be the best. The tables set up around gives everyone an equal position and fosters community and communication. The TVs, windows, and counter space offers different areas to brainstorm or work in smaller groups.”

Other respondents felt it was important to maintain **flexibility** in potential conference spaces:

“Different multi-use spaces would invite many organizations into the facility, as well invite a variety of different classes and presentations.”

“It would depend on the meeting or conference whether the auditorium or medium room would be appropriate. I can see applications for both, including for various types of workshops in either room. Could it be possible to have one of each, or somehow combine the best features of both into one space that can be reconfigured as needed?”

“I think allowing the conference spaces to be manipulated by moving around furniture would allow the people to use them to make it feel unique to them. Space should be

collaborative, so the whiteboards are good and so are the conference tables where people can sit all together and see everyone.”

“Provide a meeting space that is flexible for different meeting types (lecture, tv, whiteboard participation).”

“I would think workshop rooms could also be used for meetings.”

“I think any room would work. Not sure which teams/people would be using them”

Still other participants felt an **auditorium** would be the most useful space:

“I’m not sure how much use you’d get in the smaller conference spaces for outside groups. But I can see bigger groups needing a place to have a presentation. But it depends on the type of businesses that are in the area. What are their needs? I would think it depends more on what this area needs than anything else.”

“There should be an auditorium for artists to present as well as for immersive experiences”

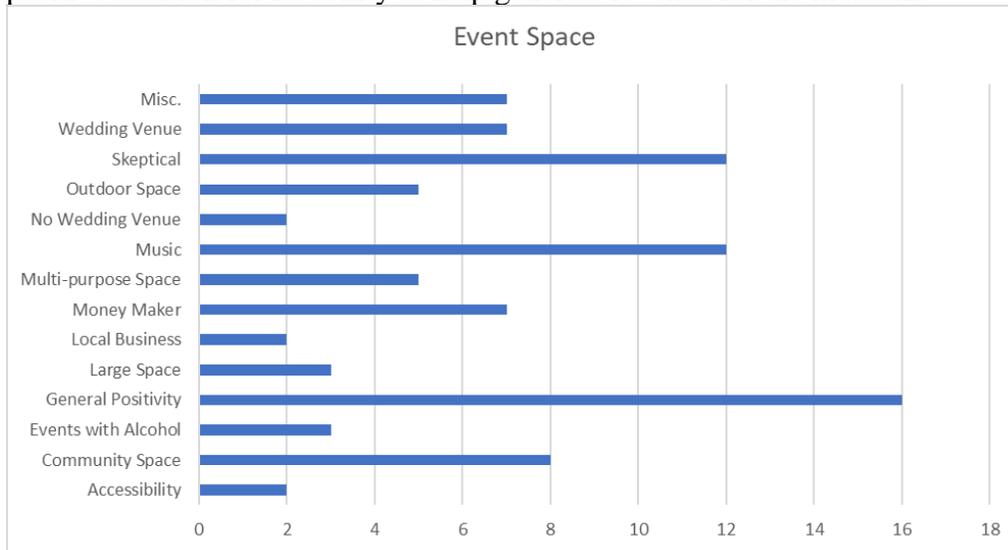
“TVs waste meeting time. It always takes forever to get them to work how you want. An auditorium is the most useful. It’s easy to find other kinds of meeting areas.”

“The last pic is a poor use of space. If there’s a presenter, the audience members should be equidistant from a speaker (or a screen, for a projected presentation). Televisions are ok for a smallish meeting room, but the ones shown here (picture 2) don’t look useful. Take a look at the auditorium in the library for a flexible space.

“I don’t see a need for meeting rooms in a museum. A conference hall would be nice for speakers, artists and more.”

### Event Space

When asked for their opinions on event space in a potential new museum, participants were nearly split on their desire for the inclusion of event space. Those who indicated support for the event space identified general community use, music events, and weddings as the most popular uses for such a space. A similar number of respondents also felt an event space would be a positive addition for its ability to help generate revenue for the museum.



The most salient themes that emerged when participants were asked about the inclusion of a possible event space, was the ability to host **music, group bookings** and **community events**:

“As much music as possible”

“ALL OF THESE ARE GREAT!! maybe if it’s possible have a set up that can come out for concerts that can somehow accommodate bigger bands that never come here because it’s either too small or for some other reason.”

“Love trying to meet all of these needs but youth groups and music tours most of all”

“I would love to see one larger space that could be used for music, special events, or fund raisers. Possibly with a small stage.

“I really love the idea of more venues for weddings, and music. I think we have enough places to hold youth meetings already.”

“Small concerts for local artists, weddings, tours would all be super-cool events for the museum.”

“The museum should have music outside in a communal space with outdoor art exhibits. The museum should also host events including weddings and private events as well as tours and community events.”

“Music provides another dimension to the experience. Special events can draw new visitors to the museum and boost museum revenue.”

“Tying in the arts is smart and music outside in the summer draws interest and tourists. I’m not happy about wedding but I don’t know why you would want to limit the reason for space rental”

“Events that bring in the public for things like wine & cheese night; or opening it up for groups to fundraise, could bring in some money. A community concert could be nice.”

“When I was planning my wedding, I LOVED the idea of having my reception at a museum!”

“coming together as a community is always nice. maybe have different local businesses come as well to share what they do, or what goods that they produce. Humane Society, local craftspeople, churches, service opportunities...”

“I would love to see the museum used for all the reasons listed above. I think it would be great for the community if the museum became a "hot spot" for events.

"I like the idea of the museum being a place that could host VIP kind of events. Classy fundraisers or other cultural types of evenings after closing for the day could be a fun way to open up the museum and get a different vibe for a different crowd. I don’t think a concert would be great. There are plenty of places for bands in La Crosse. A small musical group performing outside the museum or even inside during an event or a Friday / Saturday afternoon would be nice.”

Survey respondents also pointed to the importance event space could play in providing the museum an additional **revenue source** and pointed the importance of **flexibility**:

“No museum hosts private special events, such as wedding receptions, because they feel it fulfills their mission. They do it because it brings in needed revenue. I marked them as green, "like," because I know we will need to do this also, and should plan for some attractive public spaces that can be adapted to the purpose WITHOUT endangering artifacts.”

“I like the idea of different uses for different time periods- evening events for the use of the space vs daytime events for education. Concerts on the grounds outside are great if the museum is in a place where that works is an added bonus.

“I think indoor and outdoor concerts would be a great addition. I like the simple feel of the last indoor stage as I have been to a concert in a similar venue and fell in love with the venue. Weddings, public events, and concerts would help with revenue for the museum and would be a great opportunity for the community.”

“Private events could provide a revenue stream, but should be limited so they don't interfere with public accessibility to the museum and/or regular museum hours.”

“There definitely has to be some sort of hosting space. Museums can only charge so much for admission! Hosting weddings and other events could help fund. However, the

museum experience and exhibits should be primary focus and meeting spaces should be melded around them”

“I love all of these ideas. I said in a previous answer it would be great to have a space outside for events. I also think it's great to hold receptions and private events in the museum. Also a great way to get revenue for the museum to keep it updated.”

“I think all of the above would be great ways to gather the community and even make money for the prospective museum”

“I could see hosting small events in order to raise museum awareness, and to raise extra money by renting out space/selling museum time packages.”

“Utilizing the museum for a variety of special events is good. It can raise awareness and help fund the museum.”

In contrast to the positive feedback, other participants were **skeptical** of the benefit of including event space in the museum:

“Using museum space as an event space is fine. What's the effect on other local event spaces? Is there a need for another event venue?”

“I'd like to see the museum be kept open for public use as much as possible. There are PLENTY of venues in the Coulee Region for private events such as weddings, miscellaneous events, and certainly music (although very small performances such as shown in the photo would be fine).”

“Not every public property needs to provide for private events. The La Crosse Center, the Omni Center, the Myrick Park Center, plus high end hotels and restaurants offer plenty of options for those. I believe this museum should keep its focus, mission, and access for the public as its primary goals.”

“It's not fun to plan a trip to a museum to find it closed for a private party.”

“Live groups outside the museum, may be nice for weekends or holidays otherwise no.”

“Do we need more event spaces? There are places hosting the above activities already.”

“Again, do not try to be all things! Wedding receptions, private parties etc. Exclude what the main purpose is!”

## Visitor Survey

To understand perceptions of whether there would be interest in visiting a new area museum and what would motivate people to visit it a survey was conducted. This section provides the results of that survey.

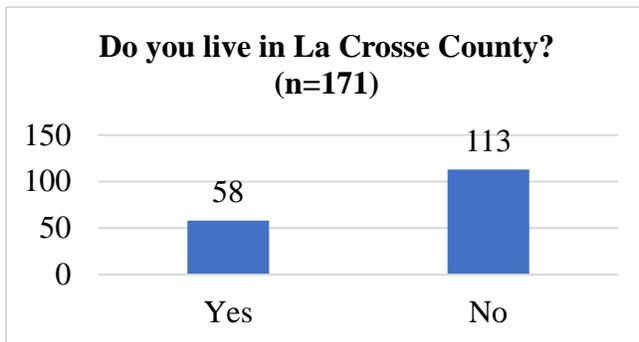
Goal: Identify visitor (tourist) perceptions and attitudes towards museums

### *La Crosse Visitor Survey*

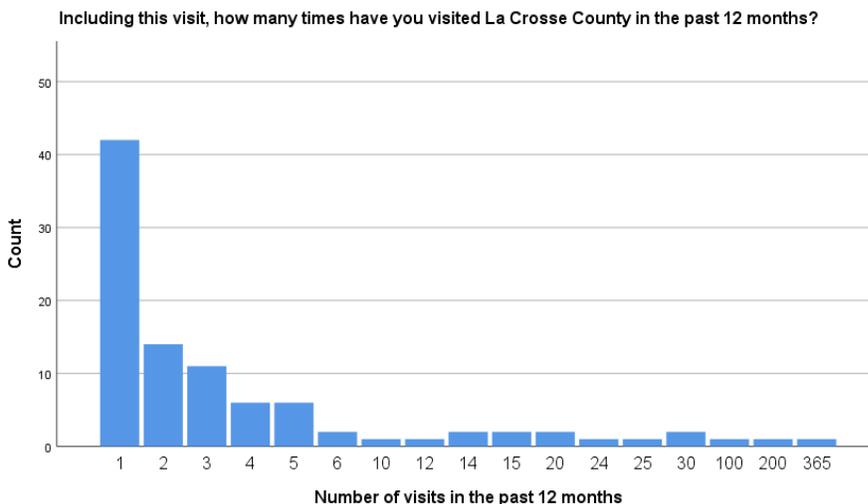
A visitor study was conducted fall 2019 to further identify interest in and motivation to visit a potential new La Crosse area museum. Students from a UW-La Crosse Recreation Management evaluations course sampled visitors at Riverside Park and Granddads Bluff to ask about what they were doing while in La Crosse, and perceptions regarding visiting museums. In total 171 individuals participated in the survey.

### *Visit Characteristics*

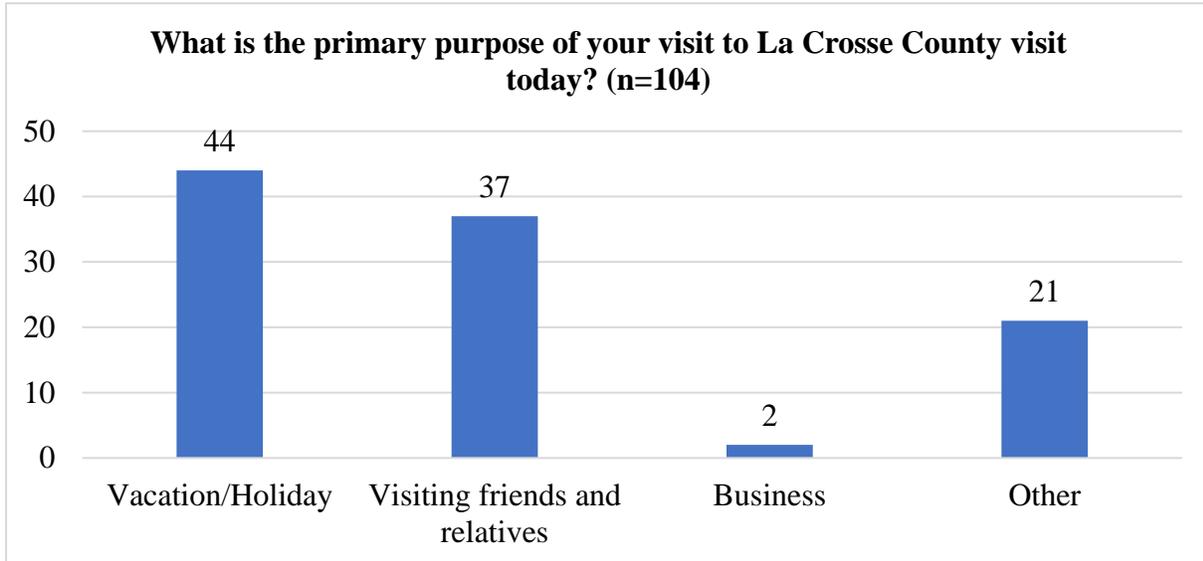
The majority of participants live outside of La Crosse County (66.1%).



This was most participants first visit to La Crosse County in the past 12 months. Of the 96 participants responding, 43.8% were here for the first time in the past 12 months.

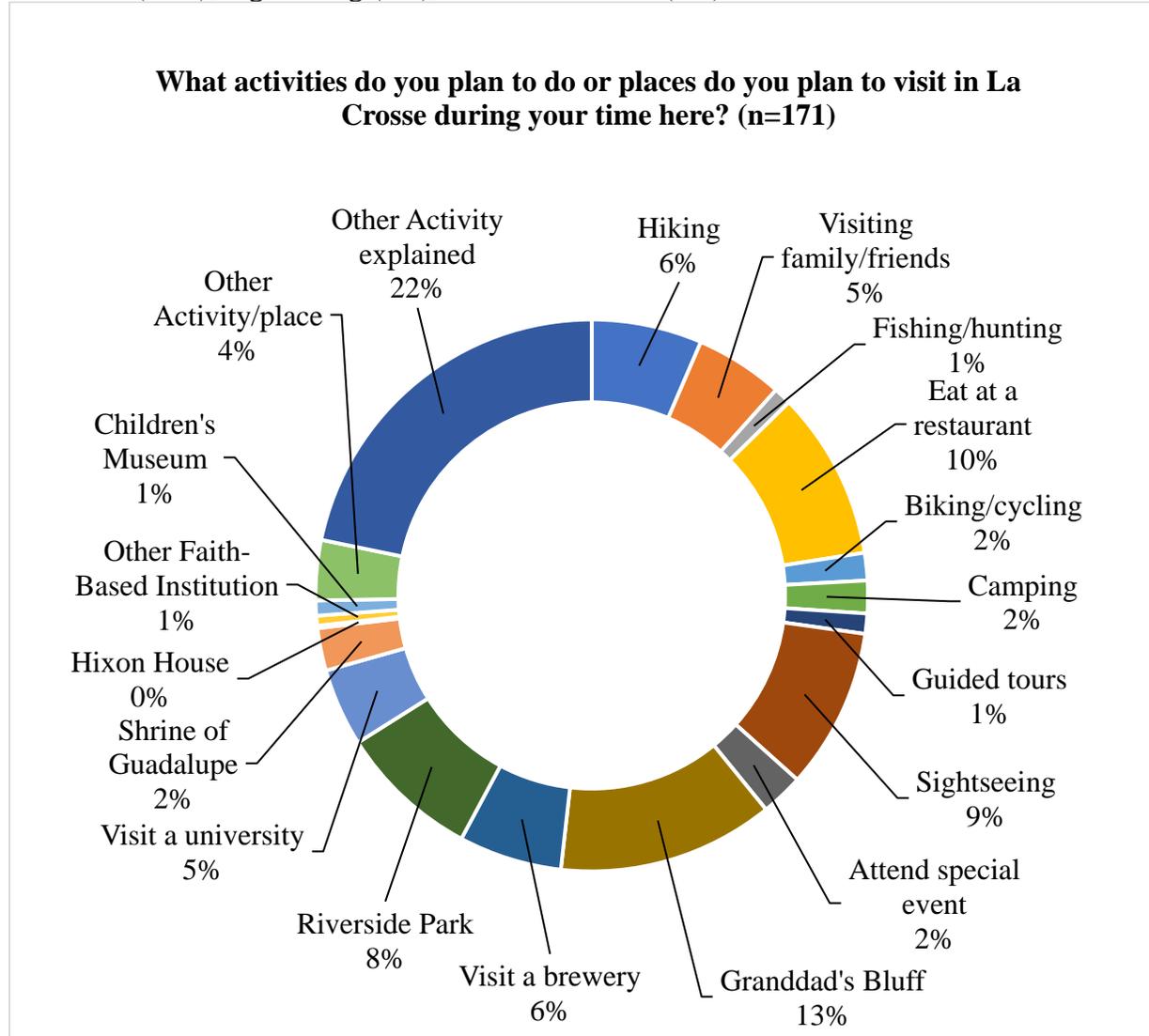


The majority of people visit the La Crosse County for a vacation/holiday (42.3%) or to visit friends and relatives (35.6%).



<b>Other purpose explained:</b>	
Boat trip	see a UW musical
college	soccer
Day out	soccer tourney
Fall colors	Saturday visit
getting a dog from Holmen, WI	Student visit
Mayo	visit UWL
railfanning	visiting students
road trip	walk & lunch
scenery	work

The main activities that people plan to do or places to visit are Granddad’s Bluff (13%), Eat at a restaurant (10%), Sightseeing (9%), or Riverside Park (8%).

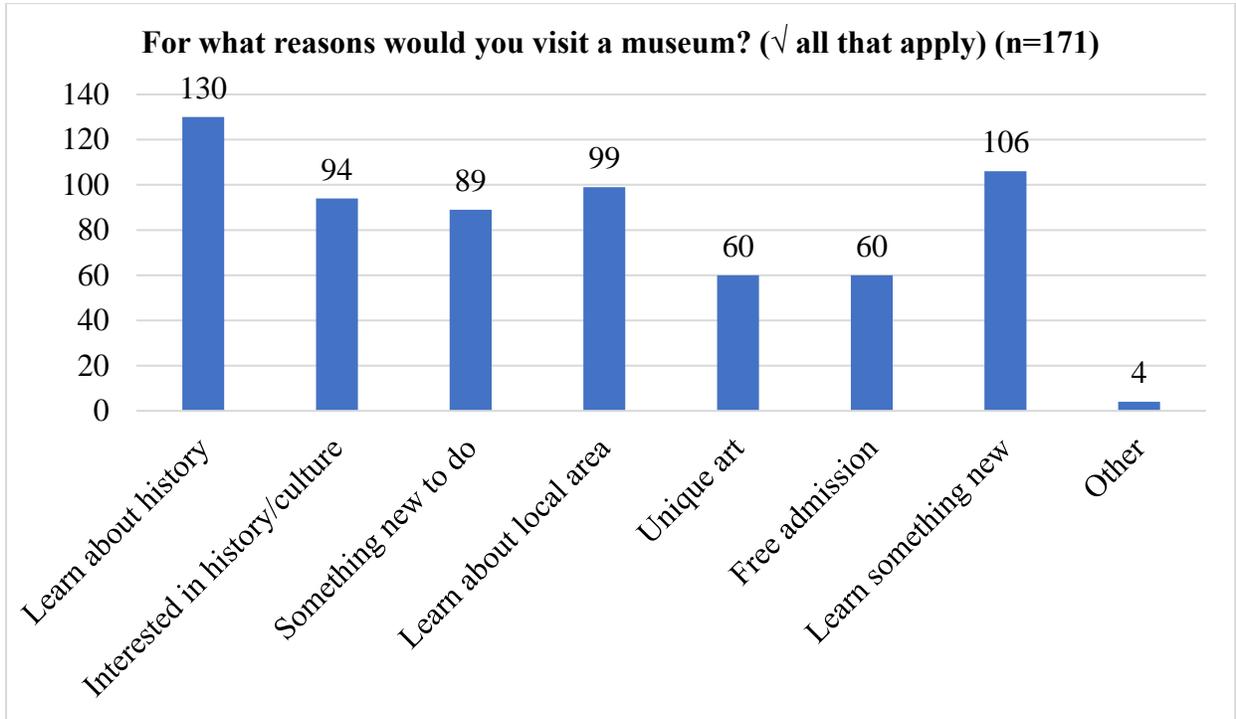


<b>Other Activity explained:</b>	
apple orchard	La Crosse Queen
bars, massage	La Crosse Queen Diner Cruise
Choose??	massage, bars
driving, winery	Movie
escape room	Railfanning
fam	river
football game	river boat
football game, family	theater
grounded	Wild Cat Mount
Hixon Park	work

### ***Museum Perceptions***

To better understand interest in visiting a museum we asked participants to tell us why they visit museum, how frequently they visited museums in the past three years, which museums they've visited most recently, and their thoughts on visiting a new historic and cultural museum in the La Crosse area if one existed.

The main reason for people visiting museums is to learn about history (76%), to learn something new (62%), or to learn about the local area (57.9%).



**Other reason specified:**

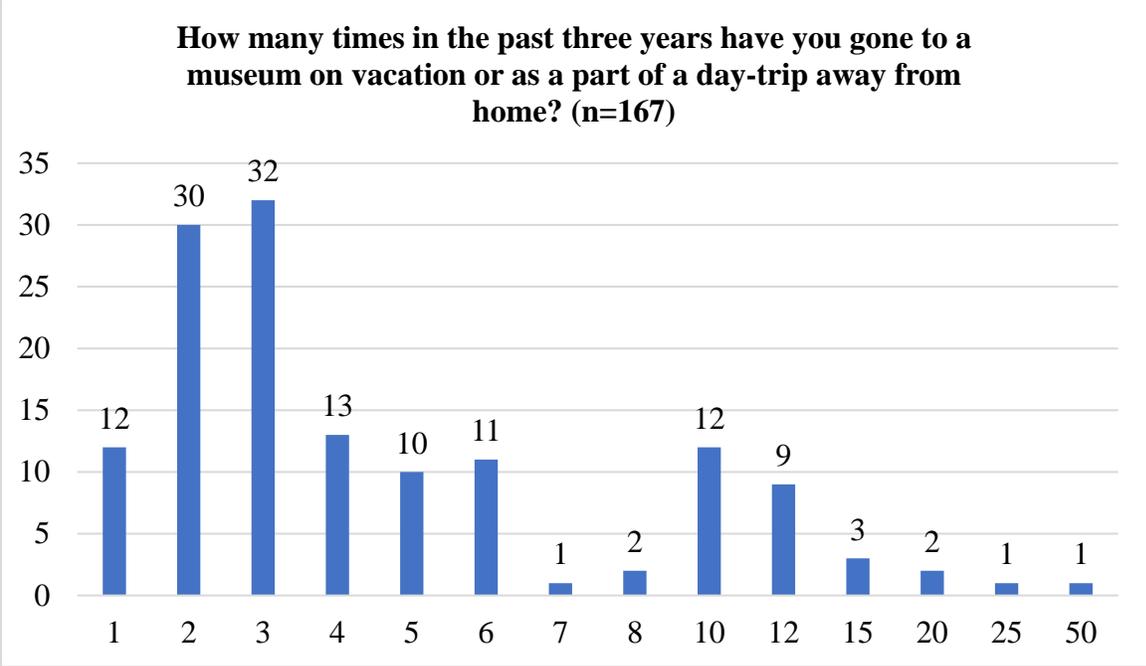
4

children

different perspectives

interest in science, children

The majority of times visiting a museum is two (18%) to three (19.2%) times in the past three years. On average, participants have visited a museum four times in the past three years.

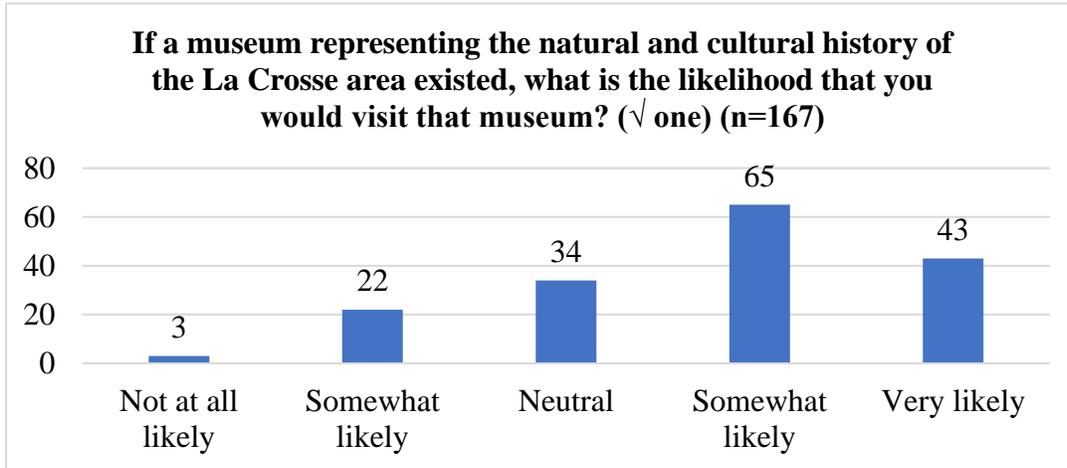


If you answered 1 or more to the previous question, what was the last museum you visited?  
(n=132)

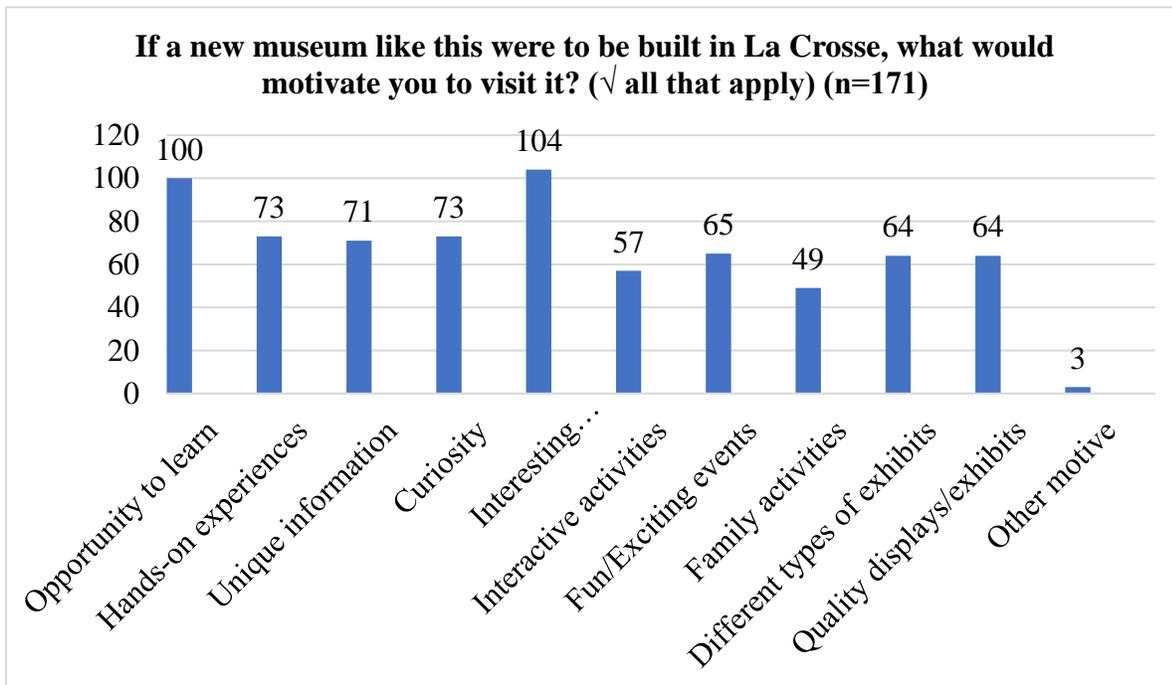
<b>Museums Listed</b>			
Aquarium	Field Museum Chicago	Milw Art Museum	Puerto Rico History
Art Institute	Freshing Fishing	Milw Public Museum	Riverside
Art institute Chicago	Ft Atkinson	Milwaukee	San Franz Alcatraz
Art Museum in Milwaukee	Fulton IL	Milwaukee mus	Savannah
Art museum in Winona	GB museum	Milwaukee Public Museum	Science & Industry
Cable Natural History	Geology Museum in Madison, WI	Milwaukee WI	Science Industry
Cairo (Egypt)	Gerard Ford Museum	Minnesota History	Science mus MN
Car	Glaire Park	Minnesota History Museum	Science Museum
Chicago Art Institute	Grand lareye	Minnesota Mining Museum	Shedd Aquarium
Chicago Art Museum	Grand Portage	Mississippi River Dubuque IA	Ship museum Sault Ste. Marie MI
Chicago Art, Music Hall of Fame DC/Smithsonian	Grand Rapids Art Mueseum	Mississippi River Museum	Smithsonian Air & Space
Chicago Industry	Harley Davidson Museum	Mke Public Museum	somewhere in Switzerland
Chicago Planetarium	Hermitage, St Petersburg Russia	MMA	SPAH Museum
Chihuly Garden & Glass in Seattle, WA	Historical	MMAM	St. Louis
children's	History Museum Kenosha	MN Science, Chicago Field	St. Louis Art Museum
Children's	holocaust	MPG Museum & Modern Art	St. Paul
Children's Museum La Crosse	in Florida	Mpls Hist	St. petersburg Hermitage
Children's Museum Madison, Field Museum Chicago	in Greece	Museum of Russian Art-Minneapolis	Titanic in Belfast
Children's museum of lax	in Mass.	Museum of the Rockies	Titanic-Belfast
Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center	Institute of Art in Chicago	Nashville at History of rock roll	Trade Exchange
Clingmans Dome Gatlinburg TN	John Michael Koiter Sheboygan	Natural History	Trolley Museum, Fort Smith History
Clingmans Dome Gattlenburg	Kansas City	Natural History Chicago	Vatican Museum
Cody-Wyoming	La Crosse Children's Museum	Natural History in Chicago	Walker Art Museum
Colorado Museum	La Crosse Historical Society	Natural History Museum, NY	War Eagle
D.C.	Lavendar Farm History Museum, WA	Neuille	WW1 in K.C.
Dahl Auto	Liberty Bell	New Orleans WW2	WW1 in Kansas City
Dall Remember	Liberty Bell Museum	Niagra Falls	Yawke Woodson Wausau
DC	Lincoln	Olympic Nat. Forest Visitor Center	
Discovery Milwaukee	Lincoln-Springfield	Onalaska Lib	
Duluth	Marine Museum	Paine Art Museum	
EAA	Marine Museum in Winona	Polish	
	McGregor, IA		

Overall, 64.6% of respondents indicated they would be somewhat (38.9%) or very (25.7%) likely to visit in new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum if it existed.

- 68.3% of La Crosse County residents indicated they were either somewhat or very likely to visit the new museum if it existed
- 62.6% of non-residents indicated they were either somewhat or very likely to visit the new museum if it existed



The main thing that would motivate visitors to visit a museum is the opportunity to learn (58.5%) and for interesting displays/exhibits (60.8%).



Two responses were listed as ‘other motives’ – “Science” and “Under-represented perspectives”

### *Participant Characteristics*

The majority of participants in this survey were from Wisconsin, followed by the surrounding states of Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa.

<b>Participant Zip Code (n=163)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Wisconsin	69.9%
Minnesota	14.1%
Illinois	9.8%
Iowa	3.7%
Missouri (n=2)	1.2%
Other (n=2)	1.2%

The two other participants were from Tennessee and France.

### **Demographics**

<b>Gender Identification (n=169)</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Male	56.2%	
Female	42.6%	
Prefer not to say	1.2%	
<b>Age (n=170)</b>		<b>42.36</b>
17-23	21.1%	
24-34	16%	
35-44	16%	
45-54	16.1%	
55-64	22.3%	
65-74	6.6%	
75-83	2.4%	

## UW-La Crosse Student Survey

La Crosse area college students represent a potentially large interest group. A survey of UWL students was conducted to gauge their interest in visiting a new museum if it existed, and what would motivate them to visit. This analysis is of a student survey taken by 234 participants.

Most participants have Wisconsin zip codes but live outside of the La Crosse County. Most respondents are females, freshmen, and 20-years old. Most participants have had either friends or family visit them at some point in time when at school, with visits mostly ranging from two to three times within a 12-month span. Going out to eat, taking a hike, and visiting Granddad's Bluff are of the most popular things to do when visiting La Crosse and participants are looking for something new to do. They are somewhat likely to visit the museum, based upon their wants and within a new museum.

### *Participant Characteristics*

An online survey was distributed in an email to students that attend the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.

234 individuals participated in the survey.

19.2% of participants live in the La Crosse County.

80.8% of participants live outside the La Crosse County.

<b>Participant Zip Code</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Wisconsin	78%
Minnesota	17%
Illinois	4%
Other	1%

- There were participants from 140 different zip codes.
- Participants reside in 3 different states with one international participant from France.

### **Demographics**

The next page presents demographic information gathered from participants followed by comparison data representative of the entire UWL student population. The participants sampled in this student were more likely to identify as female (60.3%) when compared to the student population as a whole (56.7%). As a representation of class standing more Freshman (29.6%) participated in this study compared to the proportion of Freshman representing the whole student population (23.9%), but overall participation was fairly evenly distributed across the undergraduate level.

## Demographics

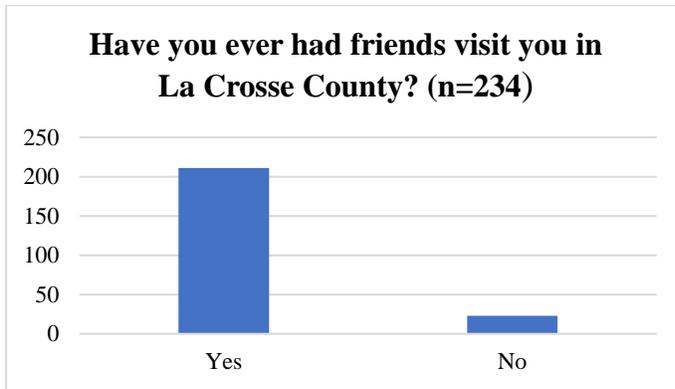
	Percent	Mean
<b>Year in School (n=233)</b>		
Freshman	29.6%	
Sophomore	22.7%	
Junior	21.9%	
Senior	22.7%	
Grad Student	2.6%	
Other	.4%	
<b>Age (n=221)</b>		
18	9.5%	20.45
19	29%	
20	21.7%	
21	19%	
22	14.5%	
23	2.7%	
24-50	3.8%	
<b>Gender Identification (n=223)</b>		
Male	34.6%	
Female	60.3%	
Prefer not to answer	.4%	

<b>UWL Fall 2019 Student Demographics</b>		
	Number of Student	Percent of Student Population
<b>Gender Identification</b>		
Male	4583	43.3%
Female	5997	56.7%
<b>Year in School</b>		
Freshman	2453	23.9%
Sophomore	2186	21.3%
Junior	2106	20.5%
Senior	2634	25.6%
Graduate	897	8.7%
	10276	
Data compiled from UWL's Institutional Research Fact Book: <a href="https://www.uwlax.edu/institutional-research/data-resources/fact-book/">https://www.uwlax.edu/institutional-research/data-resources/fact-book/</a>		

### Visiting Friends and Relatives

We asked students to indicate how frequently friends and/or family visit them while they here, what they do when friends/family visit, and who primarily makes the decisions regarding what they do while in town. The goal was to collect information that could be used to better direct marketing resources if a new museum were built.

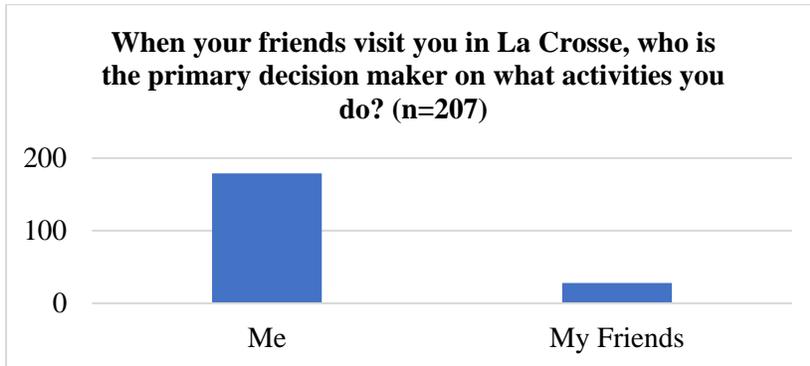
We first asked participants about friends visiting. 90.2% of students have had friends visit them in the La Crosse County.



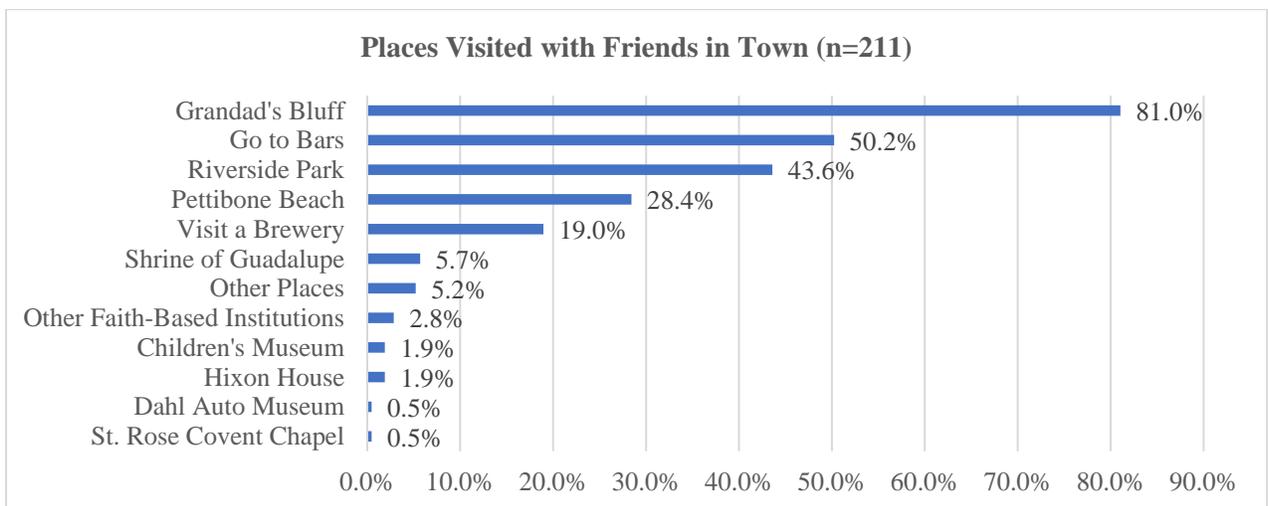
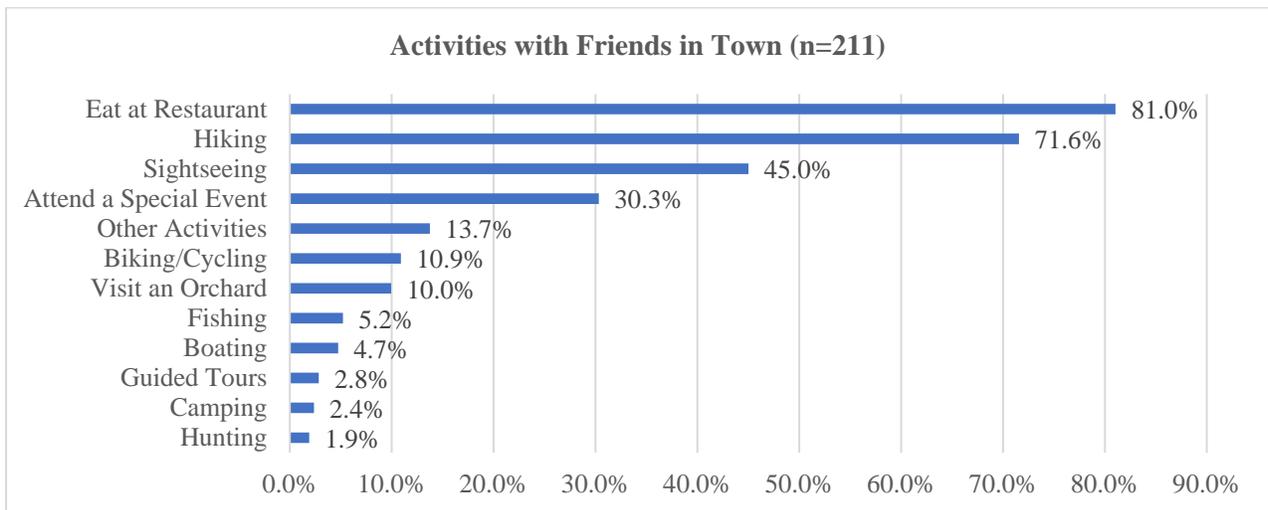
On average, students had friends visit them 5.26 times in the La Crosse County, with most people having their friends visit them from two to five times in a 12-month span.



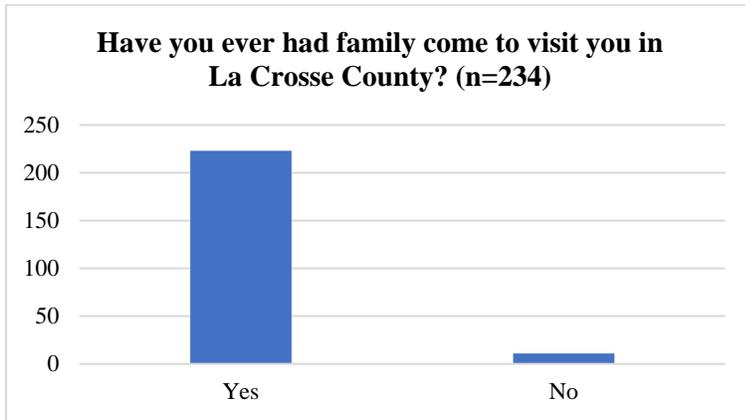
UWL students are usually the decision makers with the percentage being 86.5% of choices being made. When promoting opportunities for something college students can do when friends visit, it would be best to focus efforts locally as the students here are the primary decision makers.



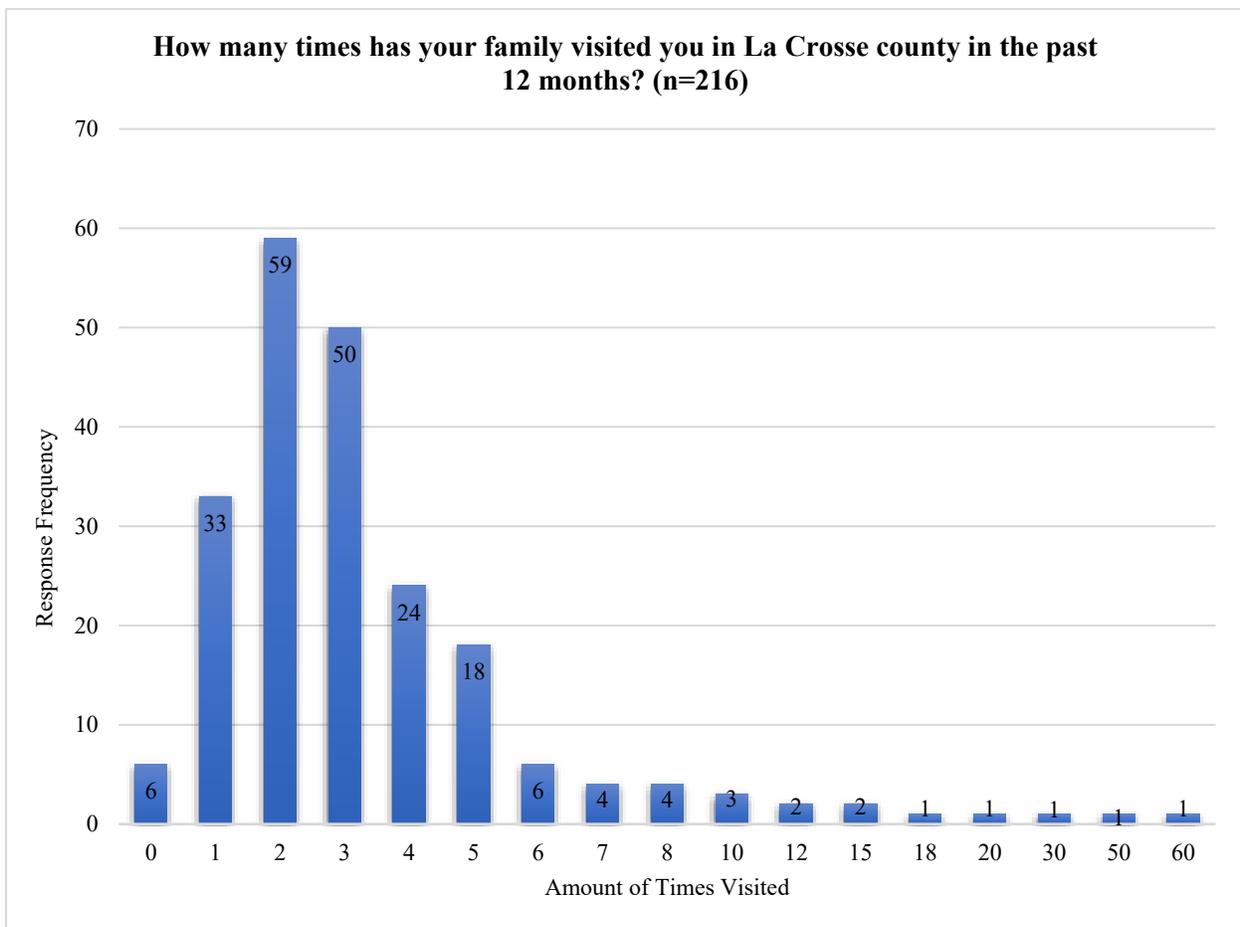
When friends visit UWL students, the popular activities include eating at a restaurant (81%) and hiking (71.6%). Granddad’s Bluff (81%) and local bars (50.2%) are the popular places to visit.



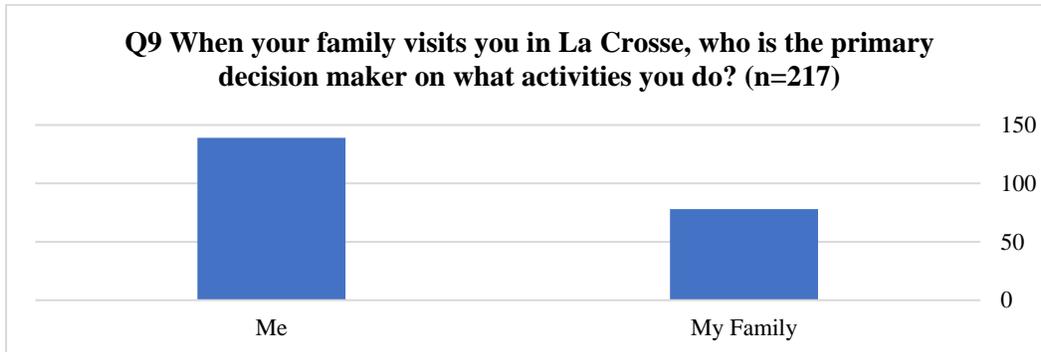
Next we asked participants specifically about family visiting. 95.3% of students have had family visit them in the La Crosse county.



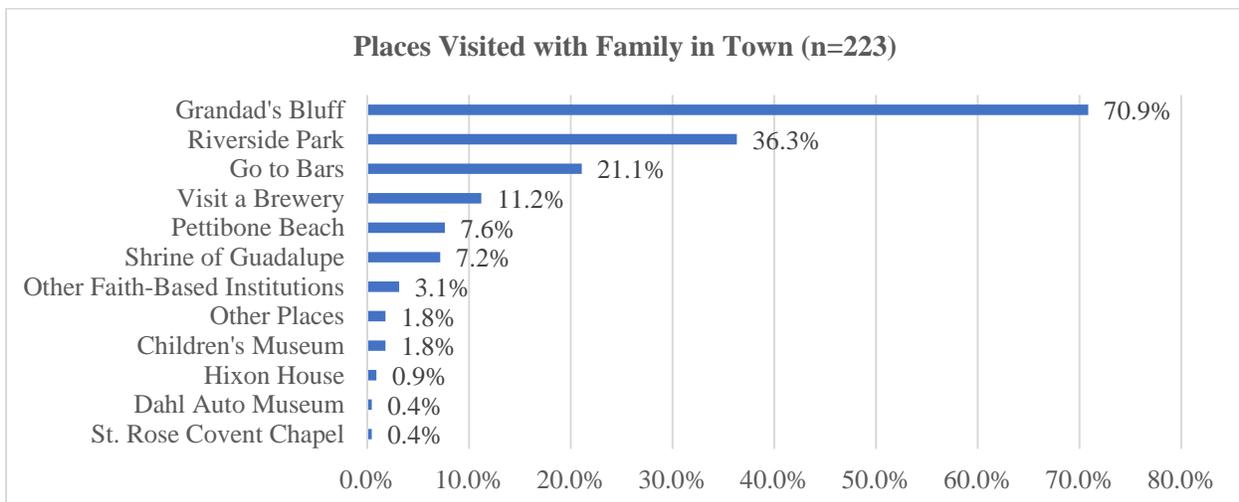
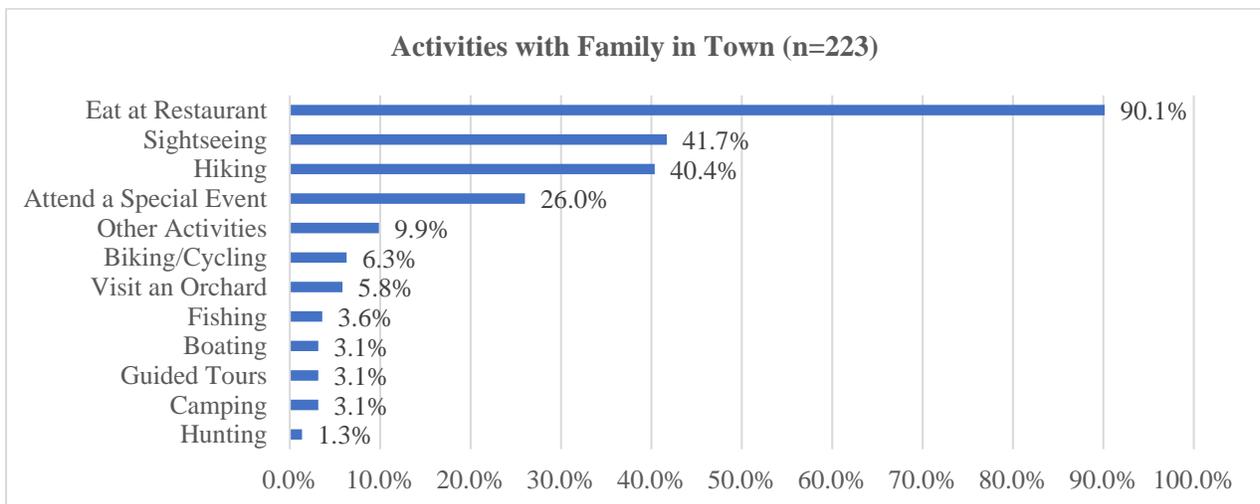
On average, students had family visit them 4 times (m=3.91) a year, with most people having their family visit them from one to four times in a 12-month span.



64.1% of UWL students are usually the decision makers when family visit. However, when students do have visitors come to town, visiting family (35.9%) are more frequently decision makers than visiting friends (13.5%).

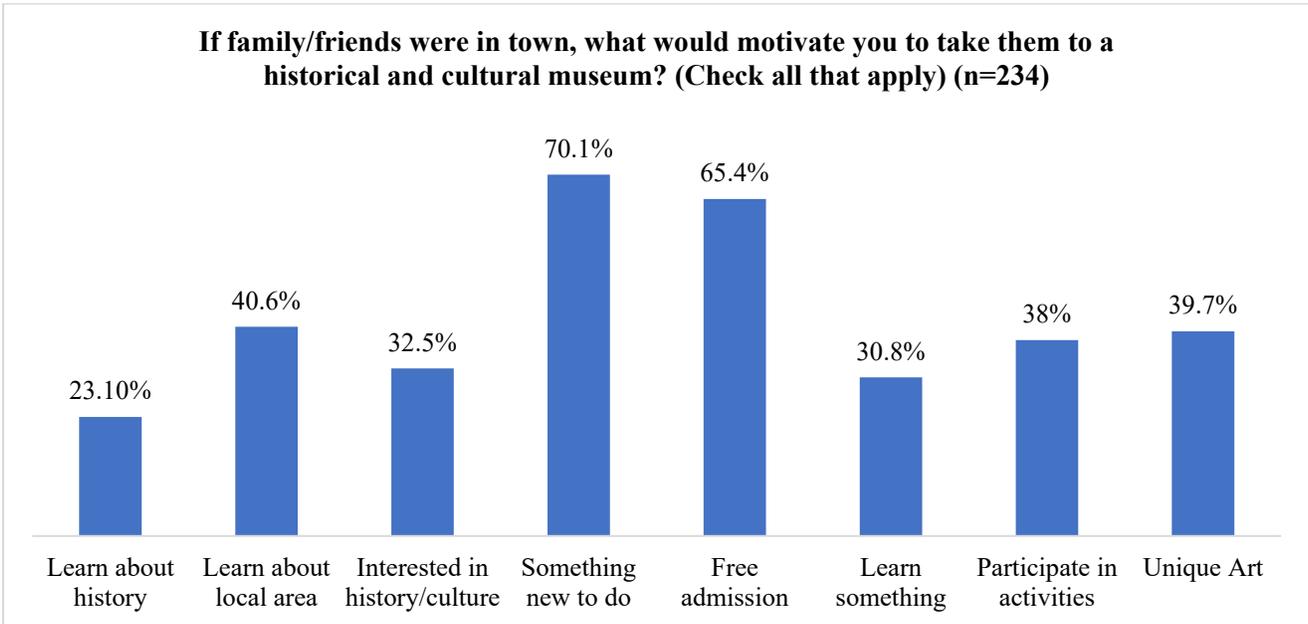


When family visit UWL students, the popular activities include eating at a restaurant (90.1%) and sightseeing (41.7%). Granddad's Bluff (70.9%) and Riverside Park (36.3%) are the popular places to visit.

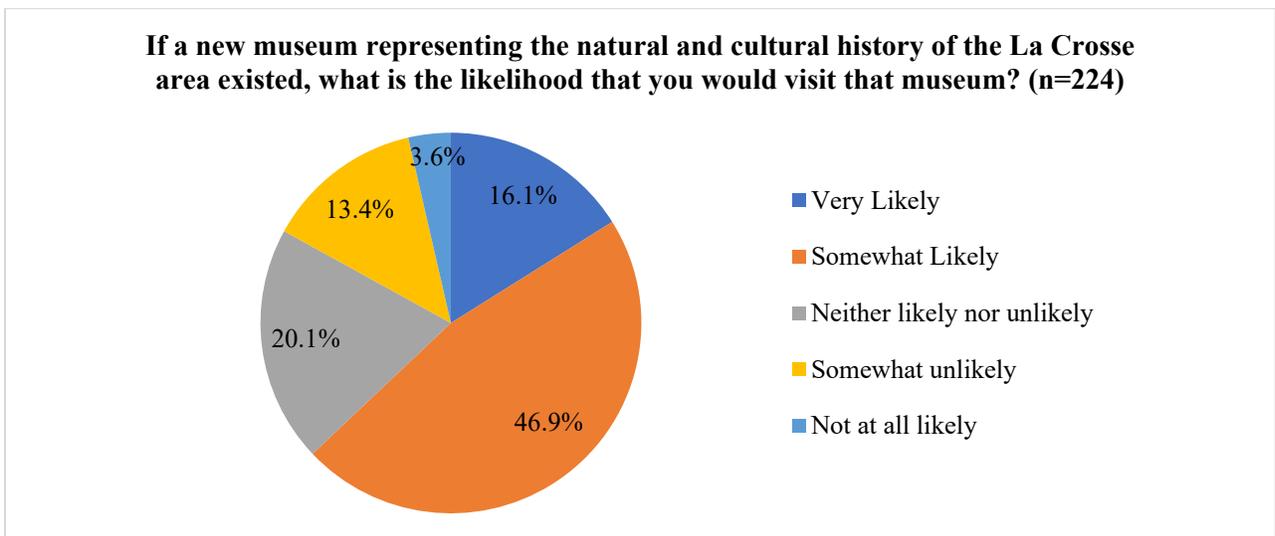


**Motivation & Likelihood to Visit a New Museum**

Nearly three-fourths (70.1%) of student participants would be motivated to take friends/family to a historic and cultural museum because it’s something new to do. Sightseeing was among the top three activities students take friends and family to do when they are in town. A new museum has the potential to be added to students new, must see list. Sightseeing is commonly associated with free or low-cost activities, something students are looking for in the activities they choose (65.4% motivated by free admission).



63% of students surveyed indicated they would be somewhat (46.9%) or very likely (16.1%) to visit a new museum if it existed (n=224). Only 3.6% said they would not at all likely visit the museum. Results highlight the opportunities that exist to not only bring college students into the museum, but increase visitation by having them select it as a place to visit and activity to do while friends and family are in town.



### ***What Students want from a New Museum***

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to provide an open-ended response to the question “If there was a new museum in La Crosse, what would you like to see in it or be able to do there?” Their responses are categorized into the follow 5 themes:

1. Art, Art Displays, and Artifacts
  - a. Artistic ways of displaying and/or interacting with culture and history.
2. History and Development of La Crosse
  - a. Many students are not too familiar with the history of the area and are curious.
3. Interactive and Hands-on exhibits
  - a. A common theme – Doing, not just seeing.
4. Educational and Learning opportunities
  - a. Expressing an interest in learning about the place that is new to them, and the people that live(d) here was a common theme.
5. Geography and Natural History of La Crosse and the Driftless Region
  - a. As evident by what students do with family and friends in the area, and emphasis on the natural aspects of the area is a must.

### **Unedited open-ended responses:**

- Make it interactive
- History of La Crosse
- A lot of cultural history and local history as to who grew up here and how we got to 2019 La Crosse.
- Interactive exhibits!
- Be able to see all the exhibits and be able to get food or a coffee somewhere while there.
- Museum that offers interesting displays that have a wide variety that keeps everyone entertained and informed
- Interactive/hands-on, special events/days, La Crosse history, specific time/event in history that La Crosse was a part of, past & present comparison
- Pictures and different activities or special activities
- Sports and development of the city
- Art pieces
- See art, but also make it interactive too
- Historical pieces and historical images
- Look at interesting history artifacts
- The history of la crosse/ photographs and art from Lax and maybe some interactive exhibits that showcase things that could be big attractions in the lax area
- I'd want to see unique and interesting things.
- Free admission, maybe stuff regarding the Mississippi/marsh wildlife.
- I would like to either see art or history, maybe about the drift less region
- I don't know a lot about the history of La Crosse or the surrounding area. Maybe displays talking about the local wildlife.
- Learn about la crosse culture
- Learn about the different cultures in the area
- I would like to see something interesting and unique. Maybe something interactive with the visitors

- Something new
- I would like to see something about the history of architecture in this area. In addition I would like to see something about the Native American population that resided in this area in the past.
- Not sure, maybe like things about how the city started, and the college
- interactive pieces
- Have engaging activities in it
- Information about the land itself, Native Americans that are still living in the area, Hmong people in the area. Interactive activities and art from local artists
- See historical stuff about la crosse or participate in interactive activities
- Art
- Native history of the Ho Chunk people
- Cultural history sounds really interesting
- Something similar to the Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque
- I would like to learn more history about the downtown area. I feel like there's a lot of hidden gems that not a lot of people know about.
- Seeing new art would be fascinating and enjoyable
- ho chunk history
- Hands-on activities. Similar to the museums that they have in St. Louis. At the science museum it is free and offers activities for all age ranges from young kids to older adults.
- I'd like to see things about the landscape and the different cultures of the area
- I think it would be cool for it to tell the story of the driftless region. The only reason that I know about the history of the driftless region that La Crosse is in is because I took an environmental studies course for a gen ed requirement, and I found it very fascinating.
- I'd like to see pictures of La Crosse when it was first established and the progress that led us to now
- Cultural and natural history, as well as local artworks
- free or not expensive admissions, interactive activities, visually pleasing/unique
- I think a science/history museum would be very cool, talking about the culture and history of the area, how la crosse came to be, discuss the history of the bluffs and Mississippi river. We live in such a beautiful area, it would be cool to have a museum that showed how this area has evolved, especially when talking about the bluffs.
- Talk about the Bluffs and the Mississippi
- go on a date
- A museum showing the heritage of La Crosse
- I would want to be able to ask someone questions or have someone around to talk about things on display.
- Interactive activities and maybe tours to keep me engaged.
- Support of local artists, ACCURATE history of la crosse and its people, interactive exhibits
- I dont know much about the history of lacrosse, but I know the university is on native grounds so i would like to learn why
- Art
- Interactive sites. I am from Milwaukee and have been to the Milwaukee Public Museum a lot of times and when they renovated Old Streets of Milwaukee with more interactive things like pushing buttons to see things light up and explain them or adding screens with

visual affects to make it feel more like the old Milwaukee. I like to be able to do the more hands on activities instead of just looking the whole time.

- art
- Learn but also have a good time and not just feel like I am going on a school learning trip.
- Interactive activities
- Historical things about La Crosse and other places to visit
- Participate in activities
- Learn about the beginning of la crosse
- History of buildings and people and the landscape
- Get to know more about the history of La Crosse; make it interactive
- Learn about important people in La Crosse history.
- The city of La Crosse from when it first started compared to now
- art, old time pictures, history of grandads
- I would want to learn about the history of not only La Crosse as a whole but individual aspects of La Crosse (Grandad's Bluff, UW-LA, etc). It would be interesting to have interactive parts of the museum like employees who act/dress like old civilians from many years ago that share information about specific areas that they would have been (like Disney princesses at Disney World!).
- Art, interactive pieces, facts about the area, old pictures of places around la Crosse that are well know
- Anything!
- It would be interesting to have some hands on activities. I would also be interested in seeing local art, history of La Crosse, and learn about nature in La Crosse.
- The town history and history of the university.
- I would like to see interactive activities or interactive exhibits within the museum.
- I think to learn about the cultural of La Crosse would be intersting
- Learn about how it built up
- I would really enjoy a museum that offered tactile exhibits, as well as exhibits that could be explored.
- Story of the driftless
- I would like to see the history of the breweries and the bluffs and everything else that La Crosse is known for.
- I would like to see interactive displays.
- learn more about the natural environment of la crosse
- interactive displays
- Cultural activities, art
- Artifacts and cool stories
- Learn more about what role the Mississippi River played in the development and industrialization of La Crosse and how it will continue to do so in the future.
- Experience interesting art and other visual aspects.
- interactive
- I would like to learn about the history of the people, the land, and especially the university and other colleges in the area. I would like to go for free, or at least have he option of a student discount.
- art and history museum

- Interactive ways of learning!
- the history of la crosse and what the campus used to look like
- History of downtown
- I would like to see interactive exhibits. I like doing activities to help learn new information.
- Historical landmarks and art
- Work by local artists
- Interactive learning options, easily accessible by all, modern ways of learning about the history
- Look at different styles of art.
- learn about history of the city
- Animal interaction, booze, cool exhibits
- art & culture
- It'd be cool to see the history/development of La Crosse
- Make sure it is very interactive and hands on so I am engaged and not just looking at different things
- Art exhibits
- Art. Fun music. Drinks. Entertainment
- History of La Crosse, maybe some information about the university too
- I would like to see iconic artifacts about the native land and stories connected to them.
- History of Crime in La Crosse
- history of settlement and history of business of La Crosse.
- Have an interactive yet intriguing experience
- I would like a museum about the history of the Marsh, river, and other outdoor scenery.
- I would like to see a more science focused museum instead of history
- I would be interested in seeing the history of the bluffs or any important history for La Crosse, example, the Hmong community.
- Cool art.
- Animals
- Interactive activities
- I look like to see amazing art and how it has contributed to La Crosse
- Interactive activities
- Learn about the history of La Crosse and be able to learn about different events going on
- it would be cool to see history related to UWL
- things that represent la crosse history
- I think it would be interesting to see stuff about the history of La Crosse. For example, how the city was started.
- The history of the Mississippi river and the grandad bluffs. Also history about what the university has contributed to various fields of science
- History of the breweries around La Crosse
- La Crosse Historical Information
- have cool stuff, interactive things
- just learn about the history of lacrosse & the college
- I'm interested in anything history, I would like to see anything interactive
- Hands on activity
- Art

- A butterfly garden
- I would like to see art and a unique structure of building that will attract people to come and take pictures in.
- Have interactive activities
- Boats on the Mississippi art la crosse over the years
- look at stuff
- Hands-on interactions
- Interesting facts about La Crosse and UWL
- History and culture of La Crosse
- Native American history
- It would be cool if there would be interactive parts in the museum.
- artifacts as well as history of the area
- I would like to see art pieces as well as certain exhibits displaying things that pertain to La Crosse.
- History of the major landmarks, historic people, and the history of the native tribes that were in this area.
- I'm not to sure what would be included, I'm not to familiar with lacrosse's history. I personal like when their is a bunch of historical things to look at or cool stuff like at the Deke Slayton museum in sparta.
- I would like to see minority/ethnic groups represented.
- See the history of the native people
- art
- More modern culture. I would like something interactive or maybe videos that play during the tour. I wouldn't necessarily need it to be free but there would need to be an incentive I think to go
- Artifacts that represent the are of La Crosse, art work made in La Crosse
- some type of an interactive history museum of Wisconsin or the La Crosse area
- Learn about the history of La Crosse and show more in depth aspects of the city and what there is to do there.
- Lots of art and some activities for children
- I'm not a fan of art museums so as long as it wasn't just an all art based museum i'd be interested in it
- Interactive art activities
- idk
- Learn of the land
- Interesting land made artifacts
- The history of the Indians who lived in the area
- Demonstrations and technology. Animals and geographical artifacts.
- Art

## Comparable Museum & City Data

This section presents information that was gathered from regional cities comparable to La Crosse and museums within those cities. This information is presented to provide perspective on what a new, feasible La Crosse historic and cultural museum would need in-terms of space and revenue sources.

Goal: Obtain information from other museums to assess feasibility of a new La Crosse Museum

The museum task force conducted three site visits to regional museums in 2019: 1) The Chippewa Valley Museum in Eau Claire, WI, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, IA, and Vesterheim – The National Norwegian-American Historical Museum & Heritage Center in Decorah, IA. An overview of information the task force was able to collect in addition community statistics are presented below.

In addition to the information collected by the task force, researchers looked at museums in the region in cities comparable to La Crosse. According to [a New York Times search engine designed to find your city’s twin based on job mix](#), Eau Claire, WI and Appleton, WI are two of the most similar metro areas to La Crosse with a museum. Therefore, data is presented below providing a snapshot of Appleton and the History Museum at the Castle. The Peer City Identification Tool (developed by the Chicago Fed) shows La Crosse is similar to Dubuque, IA and Cedar Rapids, IA in the areas of “Resilience” (Economic diversification and Labor force conditions). Therefore, we also examined the City of Cedar Rapids and the African American Museum of Iowa.

<b>La Crosse, Wisconsin</b>	
Population	51,866
Share of metropolitan area population	38%
<b>Demographics</b>	
Average Age	28.3
Percentage of population under 18	14.5%
<b>Race</b>	
White	90.1%
Asian	3.9%
Black or African American	2.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2.1%
Two or More Races	2.4%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	48.2%
Female	51.8%
<b>% of families with children</b>	
Median family income	\$64,193
Labor share (%) of manufacturing	11.1%
2019 County tourism direct spending	\$281,400,000

**Chippewa Valley Museum - Eau Claire, Wisconsin**

Eau Claire is one of the most comparable cities in the region to La Crosse and the Chippewa Valley Museum is close in size to a potential new La Crosse area museum.

According to their [website](#), the Chippewa Valley Museum’s income comes from the following sources: earned income (17%), special gifts and grants (29 %), membership (20 %), local government (city and county combined, 22%), and investment return, fundraising, events, and other (13%). This museum highlights the importance of adequate storage spaces. At any given time only 13% of their 23,000-object collection is on display.

According to their FY2019 annual report, “3,923 students from 81 school groups visit Chippewa Valley Museum on field trips...and...6,820 visitors took part in one or more of the museum’s 84 workshops, lectures, and other outreach offerings.”

<b>Eau Claire, Wisconsin</b>		<b>Chippewa Valley Museum</b>	
Population	68,086	Total square footage*	
Share of metropolitan area population	40.9%	Exhibit square footage*	32,000
Demographics		Storage space square footage*	4,000
Average Age	36.7		
Percentage of population under 18	18.7%	Initial funding*	\$1,000,000
Race		Admission	
White	90.9%	Standard adult admission fee	\$7.00
Asian	5.0%	Individual annual membership	\$30
Black or African American	1.1%		
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6%	Total Membership Revenue	\$84,861
Hispanic or Latino	2.4%		
Two or More Races	1.9%	Annual visitors	21,244 (FY2019)
Gender		Earned Income	\$84,160
Male	48.7%		
Female	51.3%	Staffing	
		Full- & part-time staff	9
% of families with children	48.7%	# of volunteers(#hours)	332 (9,584)
Median family income	\$73,313		
Labor share (%) of manufacturing	12.2%		
2019 County tourism direct spending	\$259,000,000		

\*Exact numbers or estimates are provided if the information was available from a task force visit or online.

*National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium – Dubuque, Iowa*

<b>Dubuque, Iowa</b>		<b>National Mississippi River Museum &amp; Aquarium</b>	
Population	58,340	Total square footage*	
Share of metropolitan area population	60.3%	Exhibit square footage*	80,000
Demographics		Storage space square footage*	12,000
Average Age	35.5		
Percentage of population under 18	24.4%	Initial funding*	\$25,000,000
Race		Admission	
White	84.4%	Standard adult admission fee	\$19.95
Asian	7.4%	Individual annual membership	\$55
Black or African American	3.1%		
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6%	Annual visitors	250,000
Hispanic or Latino	5.7%	Staffing	
Two or More Races	2.2%	Full- & part-time staff	40
Gender		# of volunteers(#hours)	
Male	49.2%		
Female	50.8%		
% of families with children	44.4%		
Median family income	\$67,436		
Labor share (%) of manufacturing	14.1%		
2018 County tourism direct spending	\$365,750,000		

\*Exact numbers or estimates are provided if the information was available from a task force visit or online.

***National Norwegian-American Historical Museum & Heritage Center – Decorah, Iowa***

The Vesterheim Museum has two primary buildings. A main building with four floors (which includes the basement) primarily used for exhibits and some storage, and an education building (four floors including basement) with classrooms, workshop space, a museum store, and office space.

<b>Decorah, Iowa**</b>		<b>National Norwegian-American Historical Museum &amp; Heritage Center</b>	
Population	7,850	Total square footage*	
Share of metropolitan area population		Exhibit square footage*	
Demographics		Storage space square footage*	
Average Age	30.4		
Percentage of population under 18	12.5%	Funding*	\$2 million budget
Race		Admission	
White	95.0%	Standard adult admission fee	\$10
Asian	1.2%	Individual annual membership	\$39
Black or African American	2.3%		
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	Annual visitors	
Hispanic or Latino	2.8%	Staffing	
Two or More Races	0.8%	Full- & part-time staff	25 staff total
Gender		# of volunteers(#hours)	300 annual volunteers
Male	47.1%		
Female	52.9%		
% of families with children			
Median family income			
2018 County tourism direct spending	\$33,840,000		

\*Exact numbers or estimates are provided if the information was available from a task force visit or online.

\*\*Decorah, Iowa is not considered a peer city due to its much smaller population (~8,000).

*History Museum at the Castle – Appleton, Wisconsin*

<b>Appleton, Wisconsin</b>		<b>History Museum at the Castle</b>	
Population	74,234	Total square footage*	
Share of metropolitan area population	43.7%	Exhibit square footage*	
Demographics		Storage space square footage*	
Average Age	35.5		
Percentage of population under 18	24.4%	Initial funding*	
Race		Admission	
White	84.4%	Standard adult admission fee	\$10
Asian	7.4%	Individual annual membership	\$45
Black or African American	3.1%		
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6%	Annual visitors	42,000
Hispanic or Latino	5.7%	Staffing	
Two or More Races	2.2%	Full- & part-time staff	4 staff total
Gender		# of volunteers(#hours)	
Male	49.2%		
Female	50.8%		
% of families with children	50.5%		
Median family income	\$72,253		
Labor share (%) of manufacturing	21.3%		
2019 County tourism direct spending	\$375,200,000**		

\*Exact numbers or estimates are provided if the information was available from a task force visit or online.

\*\*City is also partially in Calumet, and Winnebago counties.

*African American Museum of Iowa – Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

Cedar Rapids, Iowa		African American Museum of Iowa	
Population	131,360	Total square footage*	
Share of metropolitan area population	49%	Exhibit square footage*	
Demographics		Storage space square footage*	
Average Age	38.7	Initial funding*	
Percentage of population under 18	22.9%	Admission	
Race		Standard adult admission fee	\$6
White	84.7%	Individual annual membership	\$35
Asian	3.4%		
Black or African American	7.1%	Annual visitors	30,000**
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	Staffing	
Hispanic or Latino	3.7%	Full- & part-time staff	7 staff total
Two or More Races	3.4%	# of volunteers(#hours)	
Gender			
Male	49%		
Female	51%		
% of families with children	50.5%		
Median family income	\$76,662		
Labor share (%) of manufacturing	15.7%		
2018 County tourism direct spending	\$873,810,000		

\*Exact numbers or estimates are provided if the information was available from a task force visit or online.

\*\*Includes traveling tours

***Insights Based on Comparisons***

After examining available information from comparable cities and museums in the region there are a few insights a new La Crosse are museum might take into consideration.

- Comparable museum typically have an individual admission fee ranging from \$6-\$10. Based on information gathered from this study regarding the potential content and design of the new museum as well as participant input, management should **consider setting a standard individual admission around \$10**. It is likely student visits will increase if discounts are offered. Findings from our student survey and prior research support this. According to Brida, Dalle Nogare, and Scuderi’s findings “...students are found to already exhibit a strong interest in visiting museums. This suggests that given their slack time constraints, students may be receptive to discounted tickets, as is common in many cultural institutions” (2016, p. 280).
- Varying levels of memberships (e.g., individual, household, senior, student, and multiple levels of donations/sponsorship) are an important source of community funding. Individual annual memberships at comparable museums range from \$30-\$45.

**Household/family memberships are a popular option for local community**, often offered at a cost of \$5-\$10 less than the cost of two individual memberships.

- Comparable museums in the region see **20,000-40,000 visits annually**. This includes local community visitors and out-of-town tourists. Across the museums looked at anywhere from 60-85% of visitors were adults, and 15-40% under the age of 18. In one of the most comparable cities, Eau Claire, the Chippewa Valley Museum identified 69% as adults and 31% as students/youth. A new museum in La Crosse could expect to see visitor numbers above 30,000 especially in the earlier years, but potentially closer to 20,000 as years progress. Building a strong membership base and have rotating exhibits are a few ways to maintain higher levels of visitation and encourage repeat visitation.
- **Volunteers will be essential**. Most comparable museums operate at a lower cost by having strong volunteer network. Personnel is a significant portion of a museums operating expense. Most comparable museums have fewer than 10 full- and part-time staff, and rely on additional volunteers to operate the facility.
- Attendance and memberships alone do not cover expenses. Additional income will need to come from grants, fundraisers and special events, and other types of investments and/or gifts. Staff in particular will be needed to apply for programming and exhibit related grants as well as to organize special events and fundraisers.

A table of all information compiled on museums in the region from task force visits, communication with individual museums, and online research is included in Appendix B at the end of this report. Appendix B also includes information gathered by UWL museum studies students on other regional museums.

### **References (in addition to Task Force & student notes)**

- African American Museum of Iowa (n.d.). Retrieved July 08, 2020, from <https://blackiowa.org/>
- Brida, J. G., Dalle Nogare, C., & Scuderi, R. (2016). *Frequency of museum attendance: motivation matters*. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 40(3), 261-283.
- Chippewa Valley Museum (2019). 2019 Annual Report.  
<https://www.cvmuseum.com/documents/2019-Annual-Report.pdf>
- Chippewa Valley Museum (n.d.). FAQs: Things Worth Knowing. Retrieved July 8, 2020, from <https://www.cvmuseum.com/about-us/faqs/>
- County Total Economic Impact 2019*[Excel]. (2020) Wisconsin Department of Tourism. Retrieved from <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/research/economic-impact>
- Data USA. (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from <https://datausa.io/>
- The Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties 2018* (Tech.). (2019, August). Retrieved July 8, 2020, from Iowa Economic Development Authority Iowa Tourism Office website: [https://www.traveliowa.com/userdocs/pages/2018\\_Iowa\\_Economic\\_Impact\\_of\\_Tourism.pdf](https://www.traveliowa.com/userdocs/pages/2018_Iowa_Economic_Impact_of_Tourism.pdf)
- History Museum at the Castle. (n.d.). Retrieved July 08, 2020, from <http://www.myhistorymuseum.org/>
- Kolko, J., & Katz, J. (2018, April 03). What Is Your City's Twin? Retrieved July 7, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/03/upshot/what-is-your-citys-twin.html?mtrref=undefined>
- Peer City Identification Tool. (n.d.). Retrieved July 7, 2020, from <https://www.chicagofed.org/region/community-development/data/pcit>

National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. (n.d.). Buy Tickets. Retrieved July 8, 2020, from <https://www.rivermuseum.com/buy-tickets>

U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States. (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

Vesterheim. (2017, July 03). Visit. Retrieved July 08, 2020, from <https://vesterheim.org/visit/>

## **La Crosse Potential New Museum Site Analysis**

Data from all prior sections was taken into consideration to review options and generate potential estimates for a new La Crosse area historic and cultural museum.

### ***Part 1 – New Museum Needs***

The La Crosse County Historical Society’s current artifacts are stored in approximately 5,800 square feet of space in four different locations (including objects held at the former Riverside Museum). On average, comparable museums examined in this study had approximately 6 feet of exhibit space to every one foot of storage space. Depending on the final design, a new museum may only have 12-20% of objects on display at any given time. Pending objects selected for permanent vs. temporary exhibits, optimal facility size would include an estimated 20,000-30,000 sqft of exhibit space, 4,000-6,000 sqft of storage space, 1,500-3,000 sqft additional event space (workshops, special events, etc.), and 300-1,000 sqft of administrative space. Adequate space at any one new site could range from 27,000-38,000 sqft. Additionally, an outdoor space providing the opportunity for visitors to congregate and additional objects to be displayed would be ideal.

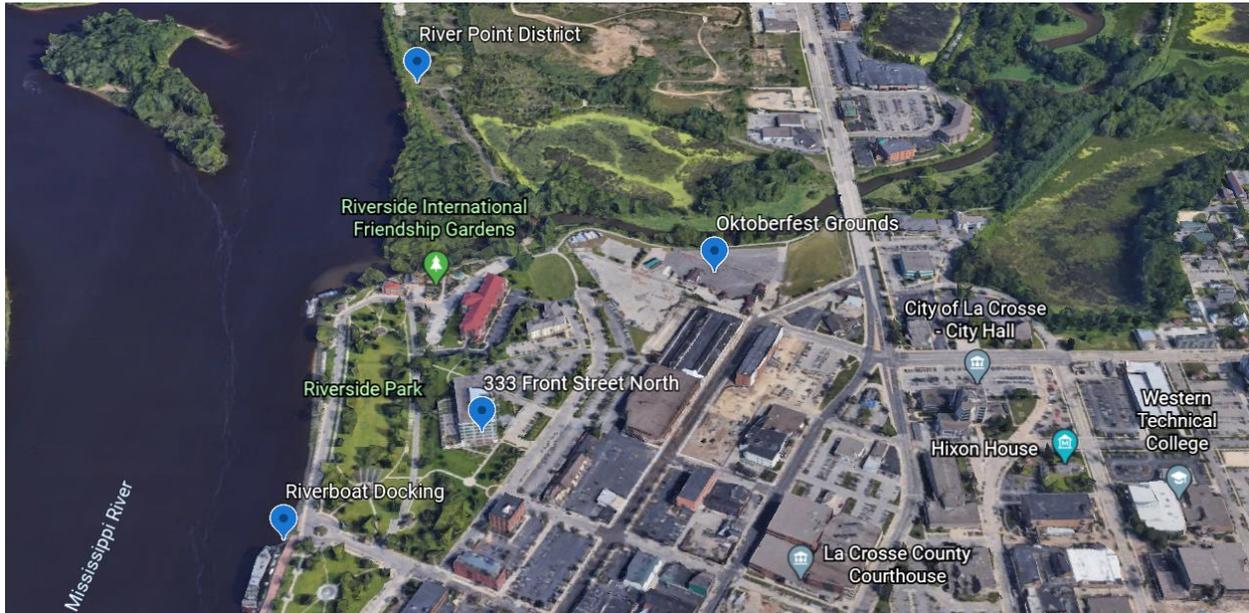
### ***Part 2 – Site Analysis, Opportunities & Challenges***

#### **Site Analysis**

The La Crosse Historical & Cultural Museum Task Force identified two existing sites near downtown La Crosse as having the potential to meet the needs of a new La Crosse museum: 1) an existing building at 333 Front Street North, and 2) new development in the River Point District. These sites align with stakeholder recommendations, including public input, that a location near downtown La Crosse and the river would be an optimal location for a new museum.

**Site – 333 North Front Street**

Most recently known as the CenturyLink Inc. office building, the seven-floor building was purchased by Weber Group, LLC January 2020. According to the Cahalan and Vian (2019), in the early 2000’s CenturyLink had more than 500 employees working in the building, but less than 200 worked there immediately prior to the sale. At least four of the seven floors are or will be occupied by other tenants, including one floor still being leased by CenturyLink.



Opportunities & Strengths	Potential Challenges
Reuse of existing building space	Obtaining funding to acquire & develop space prior to other tenants moving in
< 5 minute walk from Riverside Park & Downtown La Crosse businesses. Greater opportunity to attract recreational visitors, riverboat travelers, increase foot traffic	Unknown renovation roadblocks and costs
Parking – Both onsite and nearby street and ramp parking.	Lacks historic charm – While an existing building, at only two decades old it does not have the historic architecture/design of other buildings in the downtown area.
Renovations are being made to make the building more energy efficient.	Access to floor space – Floor availability could limit types of items and exhibits able to be displayed.
Potential to accommodate outdoor displays and outdoor gatherings	Shared spaces with other tenants
Since building is only twenty years old renovation costs would be lower than renovating a historic building	Lease cost and terms
Near major festivals and other events	Availability of storage space in addition to exhibit space

### Site – River Point District

According to the River Point District website the location is a “mixed-use waterfront neighborhood where abundant natural surroundings create opportunities for unique community amenities and inspiring development. Located in central La Crosse at the point where the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse Rivers meet, River Point District will establish a dynamic, inclusive neighborhood at the center point of the city’s urban districts and seamlessly connect the community to the rivers and downtown. The neighborhood will eventually provide 800+ residential units and dedicated locations for offices, shops and restaurants.”

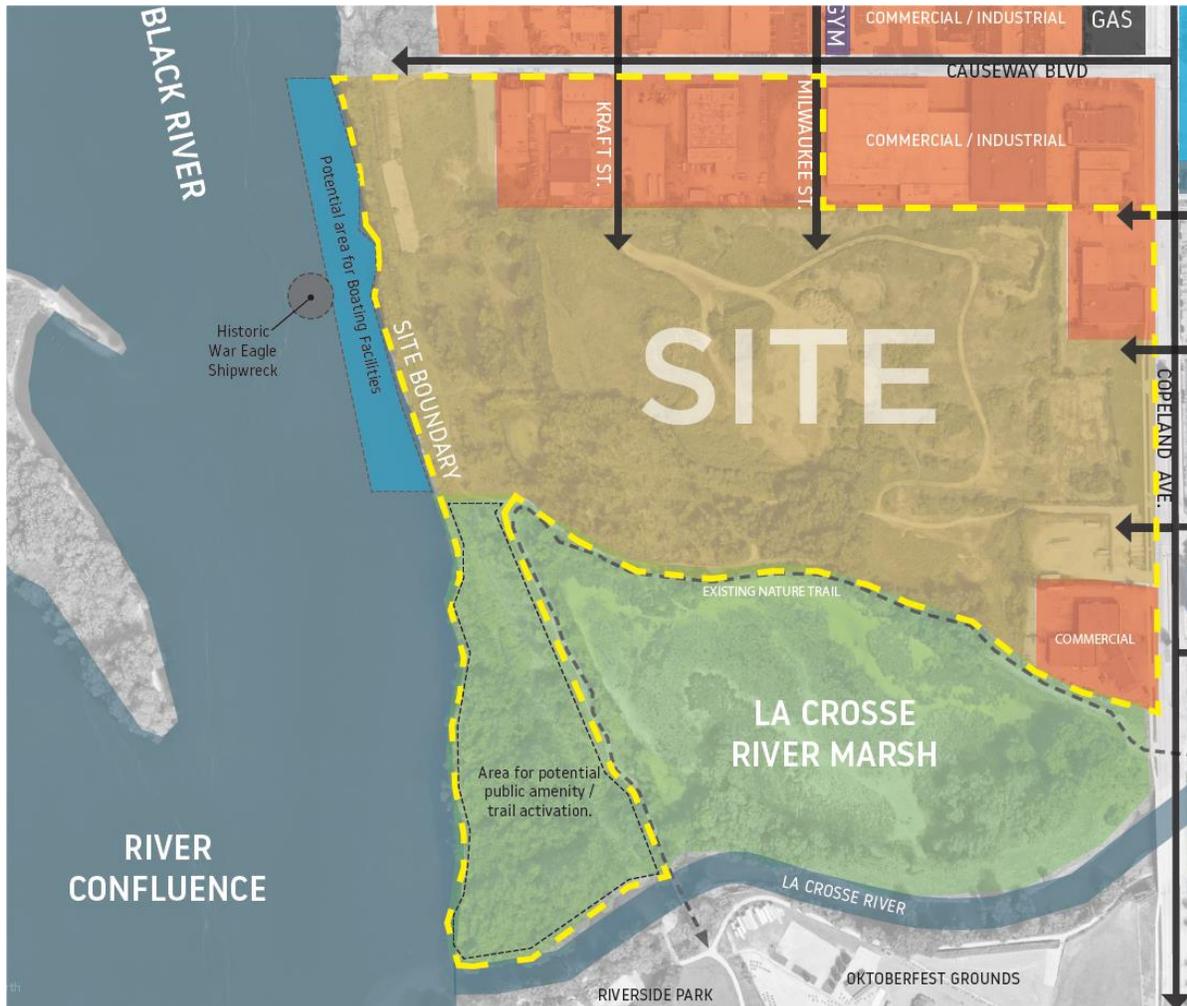


Image Credit: Riverside North Planned Development document, September 2019, SEH

At the time of this report it is estimated that the River Point District will be ready for development in 2021. The area is currently in the early stages of Phase 1 – grading, erosion control, and placement of fill to raise above the floodplain.

<b>Opportunities &amp; Strengths</b>	<b>Potential Challenge</b>
Near the Black River – Creates opportunities to better tie in natural history of the area, logging history, and in close proximity to where the War Eagle sank	Distance from Riverside Park – May be more difficult to attract short-term riverboat visitors
Programming – Nearby greenspace and the Black River create opportunities for outdoor programming	While anticipated to be a popular new development, will most likely not see as much foot traffic as a location closer to downtown.
Energy efficiency of new construction could lower annual operating costs	Parking – The district is being designed for increased walkability, which could increase walk-in traffic, but might limit parking availability and access for tour bus traffic.
New development of greenspace, store fronts, and boat access will draw visitors to the area	New construction – Does not represent the history of the area
Opportunity to customize space during development	May not have access to enough square footage to accommodate exhibit space, admin. space, and storage. Could require maintaining off-site storage.
Potential space suitable for large items, large open (high ceiling) admissions area	Unknown purchase/lease terms at the time this report was prepared.

### ***Part 3 – Site Comparisons & Insights***

#### **Comparisons**

- Both sites identified by the task force have pros and cons. 333 North Front Street is more likely to attract more non-local visitors (tourists) due to its proximity to downtown and Riverside Park. However, access to floor space could limit the exhibits on display, and renovating the space could lead to higher costs. The River Pointe District site presents the opportunity to have a blank canvas and more readily design a space that meets the needs of a new museum. However, it is farther away from local attractions which could deter more spontaneous visits (especially from short-term riverboat tourists).
- There is a lot of interest in having a new museum that represents the history and cultures of the area. Either location would be expected to generate similar levels of membership and donations, and attendance from local community members.
- The development costs to meet the museum’s needs and operation costs once it opens depends on several factors, many of which can be better estimated following architectural renderings and exhibit designs.
- Typically, the costs to operate in a renovated building can be higher due to aged systems (e.g., HVAC, electrical, security) in place. However, if those systems at 333 North Front Street are being updated as stated the difference in operating costs between the two sites could be minimal.

## **Insights**

- A site should be selected where an open museum setting can be created. Prior research has found that an open museum setting provides a more satisfying visitor experience and results in a greater likelihood that visitors will become repeat visitors (Kottasz, 2006). Open settings are less structured by management, facilitating opportunities for discovery and interaction with exhibits. Participants in this study appear to echo a desire for a similar setting and opportunities.
- Cost estimate: There is not enough information at this point to present a realistic cost estimate. Prior research has shown that cost per square foot for building a new museum varies drastically, whether renovating an existing building or new construction. Variations arise due to a range of factors including the quality of construction materials, final finishes, the need for system updates, and unforeseen expenses. Initial costs will also depend on decisions regarding types of exhibits and exhibit features. Operational costs will vary depending on the number of temporary exhibits and frequency of rotation. Temporary exhibits in comparable museums are on display anywhere from three months to two years. Data compiled by Grabitske (2010) on 34 history related museums built in the U.S. between 2003 and 2010 cost \$645.50 per square foot. Adjusted for inflation using the RSMMeans Historical Cost Index that cost is estimated to be \$841/sqft as of 2020. Thus, a 20,000 sqft museum could cost around \$16 million while a 40,000 sqft museum could cost approximately \$32 million.
  - Exhibit designs in particular vary greatly ranging from less than \$100 per sqft for graphic floor/wall designs to more than \$600 per sqft for interactive exhibits (Walhimer, 2011). This cost is not only an initial cost, but a reoccurring cost every time temporary exhibits are changed.
  - Costs of renovating an existing building could be lower if mechanical systems are up-to-date.

## **References**

- Cahalan, S. & Vian, J. Crosse Tribune. (2019, December 15). Don Weber hopes 750 will work in CenturyLink building within three years. Retrieved July 08, 2020, from [https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/don-weber-hopes-750-will-work-in-centurylink-building-within-three-years/article\\_7fddd76c-b7a4-533e-86a2-aafb324c3cd0.html](https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/don-weber-hopes-750-will-work-in-centurylink-building-within-three-years/article_7fddd76c-b7a4-533e-86a2-aafb324c3cd0.html)
- Grabitske, D. (2010, July 28). Museums Cost How Much? Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <http://discussions.mnhs.org/mnlocalhistory/blog/2010/07/28/museums-cost-how-much/>
- Historical Cost Indexes [PDF]. (n.d.). RSMMeans data from Gordian. Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.rsmmeansonline.com/references/unit/refpdf/hci.pdf>
- Kottasz, R. (2006). Understanding the influences of atmospheric cues on the emotional responses and behaviours of museum visitors. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 16(1-2), 95-121.
- Walhimer, M. (2011). How Much Do Museum Exhibitions Cost? Retrieved August 12, 2020, from <https://www.museumplanner.org/how-much-do-exhibits-cost/>

## Appendix A: Study Proposal



### La Crosse Historical & Cultural Museum Feasibility Study

The mission of the UW-La Crosse Tourism Research Institute is to conduct and facilitate tourism and recreation related research activities. Our vision is to operate as a resource for organizations looking to conduct research, provide faculty a resource hub for collaboration and partnership building, and provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in research activities.

The purpose of this proposal is to identify the areas in which UWL researchers can assist with the completion of a La Crosse Historical & Cultural Museum Feasibility Study. It summarizes identified key objectives throughout the study that the research team can undertake and complete, outlines a projected timeline of completion, lists UWL personnel who would be involved in its completion, and presents an estimated project budget based on resources needed to meet project goals and objectives.

#### Museum Feasibility Study Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been initially identified for the project.

Goal 1: Meet with Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives for initial project discussion

Objective: Affirm and/or refine project goals and objectives

Objective: Identify list of stakeholder groups to involve in the process

Objective: Identify resources available through Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives to help meet project objectives

Goal 1 Timeframe: August 2019

Goal 2: Involve local stakeholders

Objective 1: Conduct visioning workshops with city officials and other key stakeholder groups.

Objective 2: Identify resources (expertise, available exhibits, etc.) that local stakeholders can contribute to museum

Objective 3: Hold open meetings to identify public perceptions regarding the idea of a new historical and cultural museum.

\*Goal 2 Timeframe: September 2019 – May 2020

Goal 3: Identify visitor (tourist) perceptions and attitudes towards museums

Objective 1: Through secondary data analysis research visitor perceptions and attitudes towards museums (i.e., reasons for visiting, desired exhibits, etc.)

Objective 2: Sample La Crosse visitors to identify perceptions and attitudes towards visiting a new La Crosse museum

\*Goal 3 Timeframe: September 2019 – May 2020

*\* An initial round of data collected for goals 3 & 4 in October and November would be analyzed and presented to the Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representative December 2019. This data could be provided to an Exhibit Designer to create initial conceptual designs to have available for a second round of public input sessions held in April 2020.*

Goal 4: Obtain information from other museums to assess feasibility of a new La Crosse Museum

Objective 1: Conduct site visits to comparable museums in region to gather data and insight on operations, including use of exhibit space, storage, and staffing. This information will be used to make assessments and estimates in Goal 5.

Objective 2: Use secondary data analysis to obtain additional information from comparable existing museums regarding:

- a. Size and scope (define the market area)
- b. Evaluate characteristics of the defined market area (demographics, etc.)
- c. Research comparable areas with existing museums
- d. Evaluate funding sources & expenses of existing museums
- e. Research partnership opportunities

Goal 4 Timeframe: September 2019 – January 2020

Goal 5: Use primary and secondary data collected to conduct a site analysis of a potential La Crosse museum

Objective: Work with Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives to identify potential site of the new museum

Objective: Identify opportunities and constraints of site.

Objective: Use data collected through study and for site to make financial projections.

- a. Operating Revenues
  - Identify potential revenue sources
  - Identify revenue estimates based on projected revenue obtained from identified sources.
- b. Expenses
  - Estimate costs of renovations or new construction pending identified potential sites
  - Estimate display design and fabrication
  - Estimated operating expenses

Goal 5 Timeframe: December 2019 – June 2020

Goal 6: Provide a final evaluation and summary of feasibility

Objective 1: Use data collected to make final recommendations via written report for the Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives of La Crosse.

Objective 2: Presentation of findings to the Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives of La Crosse. Present at July 2020 meeting.

Goal 6 Timeframe: May – July 2020

## **Research Team**

### *Area of Involvement: Tourism & Recreation Studies*

Dan Plunkett, Co-Project Director, Ph.D. Community Resources and Development, Arizona State University

- Involvement: Coordinate involvement between departments; provide regular updates on progress to the Task Force, Advisory Committee, and City representatives; principal on design of visitor study; assist with secondary data collection and analysis; and, overseeing completion of project as a whole

Kate Evans, Co-Project Director, Ph.D. Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, Clemson University

- Involvement: Principal on civic engagement processes; instructor leading REC 351 students through the process of involving stakeholders and organizing public input session

### *Area of Involvement: Archeology & Anthropology*

Constance Arzigian, PhD in Anthropology (Archaeology)

- Involvement: Principal on identifying and visiting comparable museum sites for data collection; instructor of record guiding independent study students in the creation of a museum studies class, who will also assist with data collection for this project

Katherine Stevenson, PhD in Anthropology (Archaeology)

- Involvement: Archeology consultant with extensive experience in western Wisconsin and the La Crosse area; resource for identifying local key stakeholders

Bonnie Jancik, MEPD Masters of Education - Professional Development

- Involvement: Archeology consultant with expertise in education and public outreach; resource for identifying local key stakeholders

Michael Bednarchuk, M.A. Museum Studies, University of Leicester

- Involvement: Archeology consultant with experience in curation and collections management; assisting with secondary data collection and site analysis

### *Area of Involvement: Economics*

SaraJane Parsons, M.A. Economics, Michigan State University

- Involvement: Expertise in data collection and analysis using large databases; will guide economic and business students in conducting a portion of the market analysis research

### *Area of Involvement: History*

Víctor M. Macías-González, Ph.D. Latin American History and Letters, Texas Christian University  
 Gerald Iguchi, Ph.D. History, University of California at San Diego  
 Tiffany Trimmer, Ph.D. History, Northeastern University

- Involvement: All three history consultants will provide assistance with question design, and analysis and interpretation of stakeholder data collection

*Student Involvement*

Course Involvement Fall 2019 & Spring 2020

- REC 340: Evaluation Methods and Practices
  - Approximately 35 students over two semesters will assist with primary data collection by surveying two markets – tourists and local college students.
- REC 351: Civic Engagement in the Recreation Profession
  - Approximately 30 students over two semesters will assist with primary data collection by holding local stakeholder focus groups and public input sessions

Individual Student Involvement

- Archaeology & Anthropology Independent Study students helping to design an on-line Museum Studies course can assist with development and implementation of a survey instrument to assess other museums, both larger and of comparable size to the proposed La Crosse facility. Internship students may further be able to assist with completing project objectives.
- Economics/Business
  - Up to 5 students are currently interested in assisting with the collection of primary and secondary market analysis data. These students have the opportunity to apply for UWL grant/scholarship funding to complete research and present their findings.

In total, this project would involve an estimated 60-70 UWL students.

**La Crosse Historical & Cultural Museum Feasibility Study  
 Estimated Project Budget**

Based on project time estimates and resource needs to complete the identified study goals and objectives, the project budget is estimated as follow:

August 2019 – July 2020

1.	Personnel – Faculty and Student Research Assistants	\$8,400
2.	UWL & Tourism Research Institute Fringe and Indirect Costs	\$5,527
3.	Travel Related Expenses – Rental Van and Gas	\$750
4.	Materials & Supplies – Input Session Supplies, Printing, Media Promotion, and Visitor Study Participant Incentives	\$1,510
	<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>	<b>\$16,187</b>

**Appendix B: Comparable Museum Raw Data**

	<b>Dubuque NMRM Visit Notes</b>	<b>Chippewa Valley Museum</b>	<b>Norwegian-American Historical Museum</b>	<b>History Museum at the Castle (Appleton)</b>	<b>African American Museum of Iowa</b>	<b>Dodge County Historical Society</b>	<b>Vernon County Historical Society</b>	<b>Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center</b>
Website	<a href="https://www.rivermuseum.com">https://www.rivermuseum.com</a>	<a href="https://www.cvmuseum.com">https://www.cvmuseum.com</a>	<a href="https://vesterheim.org">https://vesterheim.org</a>	<a href="http://www.myhistorymuseum.org/home.html">http://www.myhistorymuseum.org/home.html</a>		<a href="http://dodgecountyhistory.com/about.php">http://dodgecountyhistory.com/about.php</a>	<a href="http://www.vernoncountyhistory.org">http://www.vernoncountyhistory.org</a>	<a href="http://www.norskedalen.org">http://www.norskedalen.org</a>
Initial Funds	\$25,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,000,000	\$100,000				
Grants	\$6,000,000	\$1,000,000		\$28,250 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism through its grant program to help advertise the exhibit and draw in more visitors; \$10,000 community foundation grant for 3 month exhibit				
Rent: City owned building				Owned and operated by the Outagamie County Historical Society (OCHS)		\$2.50 a year		
Yearly Operating Budget	\$2,000,000					\$75,000		

Operational Info.				Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday to public (6 hours/day) - Covid hours - Typically Tues-Sun.				
Daily operating costs:Average	\$9,000							
Yearly operating costs: Utilities	\$500,000							
Yearly marketing	\$250,000					\$500		
Total square footage				~30,000 estimate	17000			
Exhibit space/Exhibits (sq feet)	80,000	32,000				5,000		
Storage space (sq feet)	12,000	4,000				1,000		
New exhibit costs (per square foot)	\$300							
Revenue	\$100,000							
Admission Fees: Standard Adult	\$19.95	\$7.00	\$10.00	10			\$3.00	\$6.00
Admission Fees: Senior	\$17.95		\$8.00					\$3.00
Admission Fees: Youth	\$14.95	\$4.00	\$5.00	7.5				
Admission Fees: Student		\$4.00		4.5			\$1.00	
Admission: Adult group				9				

Admission: Youth w/ group not school				6.5				
Museum Membership	Individual \$55, dual \$85, Family \$140, grandparent \$140, River advocate \$200, River ambassador \$250, River Patron \$500, River Champion \$1,000,	Individual \$30, Household \$50, Friend \$100, Pathfinder \$250, History Maker \$500, Leader \$1,000, Patron \$2,500, Triple Play \$170	Basic \$39, Household \$54, Friend \$125, Supporter \$250, Sponsor \$500, Sustaining Fellow \$1,000, Director's Circle \$2,500			Membership donations: roughly 400 Historical Society members donate annually between \$20.00 and \$2,000 on average.	Individual \$20, Family \$30, Supporting \$50, Business \$75	Individuals \$35, Families \$50, Students (K-college) \$25, Trailblazer \$125, Pathfinder \$300, Pioneer \$600, Life member \$1,500
Membership: Individual	\$55	\$30	\$39	45			\$20	\$35
Membership: Family/household	\$140	\$50	\$54	85			\$30	\$50
Membership: Students								\$25
Membership: Senior				35				
Membership & sponsors: Support level 1	\$200	\$100	\$125	65		\$20	\$50	\$125
Membership & sponsors: Support level 2	\$250	\$250	\$250	200			\$75	\$300
Membership & sponsors: Support level 3	\$500	\$500	\$500	1500				\$600
Membership & sponsors: Support level 4	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000					\$1,500

Membership & sponsors: Support level 5		\$2,500	\$2,500			\$2,000		
Annual Visitors	250,000			42,000	~30,000 but includes traveling tours			
Attendance: Adults	44%	14612 (68.7%)						
Attendance: Seniors	14%							
Attendance: Students/Youth	42%	6632 (31.3%)		5700 (13.5%)				
Revenue from City to support operating costs	\$0	Combined \$100,000	\$0					
Revenue from County to support operating costs								
Employees: Full-time	40	9	Full time and part time staff		7	Museum curator is the only paid employee		10 unspecified FT/PT
Employees: Part-time								
Volunteers		yes		320		4-5 part-time		Hundreds
Volunteer Hours				4800				
Staff Salaries and Budget		50%						
Diversity/Inclusion	People of color represent 11% of visitors.							
Classes offered			90 different classes of Norwegian Folk Art					
# of programs/year				180				

Rental Rates: During museum hours				450-1500				
Rental Rates: after hours				1000-1500				
Total event space				5300 square feet	2700			
Event capacity based on space				50-165 per room (2 rooms)	200-240 based on seating type			
Capacity				450				
Tour guide to public ratio	20:01							

## **Museums Studies Students Information Collected**

UWL museum studies students collected information from several regional museums. Much of the details are included in the table on the preceding pages. Their feedback and notes are provided in their entirety here.

Student responses to what they think is important in museums

Equally accessible to all abilities-not just physically accessible with handicapped ramps, but also having content available for the limited of hearing (printed signs), limited vision (audio tours and hands-on things), kids and adults (different levels of tours/content/audio tours for each).

Flow of the museum should not emphasize one particular culture or narrative to the exclusion of others (so don't put Greek statues front and center, and native American art in the back room)

Hands-on activities appropriate for kids but also interesting to adults.

Virtual presence for those who can't visit.

Space to move through exhibits

Feedback from museums:

Asked them:

Size of collections (general estimate of cubic feet is fine)

Square footage of exhibit space:

Estimate of your ideal space needs for exhibition:

Estimate of your ideal space needs for curation:

Types of Funding sources (for example-municipal, museum grants, donations, entrance fees, private donors)

Estimates of annual operating budget (if that's available for public distribution)

Membership numbers, and if there's a cost

Number of paid staff

Number of volunteers (many will be part-time or ad hoc, that's fine)

Comments on the museum and perceived needs:

## Dodge County Historical Society.

Dodge County Historical Society  
105 Park Ave  
Beaver Dam, WI, 53916

**Website:** <http://www2.powercom.net/~dchs/Index.htm>

**Phone:** 920-887-1266

**Email:** [kurtsampson1968@gmail.com](mailto:kurtsampson1968@gmail.com)

Our Museum is the former Williams Free Library in the heart of Beaver Dam's downtown. A beautiful, original fountain marks this historic landmark. The museum houses three floors of displays. The building was erected in 1890 and is in the Romanesque style.

Kurt Sampson (curator) responded:

- We have about a \$75,000 annual budget.
- We have an endowment of about \$800,000 that is in the market and fluctuates as the market goes. This was built up over many years through donation mostly.
- [The Curator is] the only paid employee.
- We get money through membership donations. We have about 400 Historical Society members to donate annually between \$20.00 to \$2,000 on average. We have different membership levels and we send out notices at least twice a year, plus a newsletter. This cost about \$500.00 annually.
- The City of Beaver Dam owns our building and we pay them \$2.50 a year for rent.
- We are charged with helping to maintain the building and to help with repair costs. Usually big repairs are split 50/50 with the city.
- We have on average about 4-5 volunteers at any given time. All Part-time.
- We have a Board of Directors of about 12 people. This stays steady ever since I have been here for the past 11 years.
- We have about 5000 square feet of exhibit space in the Old William's Free Library building we are housed in. Not enough space.
- Storage is about 1000 square feet. Not enough space.
- Collections size is hard to estimate. But we fill up every space we have with artifacts in both storage and exhibition space. Archaeology, Victorian, Old One Room School house, Industrial history, extensive military. We also have our archival room which is mostly pictures, books, and family and business histories.
- We could use twice as much storage space. I imagine in a Large community like La Crosse you would need extensive space for both storage and exhibition.
- We are always looking for more exhibition space and archival room space.
- We have recently been going through our collections and deaccessioning items, and in some cases just throwing items away that we collected over the years that don't fit our mission and collection scope because of the lack of storage space.

<http://dodgecountyhistory.com/about.php>

Observations: Their rooms are packed with lots and lots of material, just to find space to display it, with very little opportunity for explanation. Because it's an old building, there are lots of smaller rooms, which makes flow difficult, and makes it hard to display large items without overwhelming the space. They could easily use 10-15,000 square feet (2-3 times as much as existing)

They are open Wednesday through Saturday, 1-4 pm; active volunteer program and interest in the historic archives.

Inquiry pending: Number of visitors per day/month/annual?

## Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center

<https://www.norskedalen.org/>

Lori Dubczak could not speak to much because of confidentiality issues but had this to say:

“Much of what you're asking is confidential, but I'll share with you what I can: we do have a fee-based membership; we do have admission fees for non-members; we do several events to raise funding; we look for funding sources that support our mission in general and/or specific projects whether it be private donors, foundations, etc.; we have three galleries plus offices, a commercial kitchen and a gift shop in the Visitors' Center, and yet we don't have anywhere near the space we need for exhibits or curation; we have 10 staff members, all with specific specialties as well as a willingness to work in non-specialty capacities, and yet it's not enough in many ways; hundreds of volunteers. I can't share anything about our operating budget, I'm afraid, nor anything more specific about our funding sources.”

Observations: They have a number of small historic cabins and buildings that have been moved onto their property, which is set in the countryside in Vernon County near Coon Valley. But their main exhibit area for artifacts is limited and crowded.

- Adult \$6
- Children (K-12) \$3
- Family Rate (2 adults with children under 18) \$15
- Pre-K children, members of the Friends of Norskedalen, and visitors going only to the gift shop are complimentary!

## Vernon County Historical Society

<http://vernoncountyhistory.org/>

They operate four museums, including a church, one-room schoolhouse and historic house, as well as a regular museum

Their website reports:

- The Vernon County Museum located at 410 S. Center Avenue in Viroqua, built during 1918 and 1919, was a training school for teachers. The Teachers College or "County Normal School" as it was called, was under the jurisdiction of the County Board of Supervisors.
- The students were required to complete a one-year program until 1937 when it was changed to a two-year course. As part of the program, a (Model) School, was included for future teachers to work with actual students until 1965. In 1972 only four-year college degreed teachers were being licensed. Therefore, the teacher's college was closed after graduating nearly 2,000 teachers. No permanent use was made of the building until 1989 when it was purchased by the Vernon County Historical Society to be used as a museum.
- Today the Historical Society has genealogy and a local history research area. Exhibits include the teaching classroom, archaeology, military history, a general store, the Astronaut Mark Lee Space exhibit and agricultural exhibits such as the tobacco exhibit, which was an important agricultural product in Vernon County for many years.
- The museum is also fully wheelchair-accessible from the first-floor entryway, research area, conference room and restroom to all of the second and third floor exhibits - Thanks to the new elevator!
- Suggested donation of \$3 for adults and \$1 for students for touring the museum.

Suggested donation of \$5 for doing research

- June - August: Monday -Friday 12:00-4:00 PM, Saturday 10:00-2:00 PM
- September - October: Monday - Friday 12:00-4:00 PM
- November - March: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 12:00-4:00 PM
- April - May: Monday - Friday 12:00-4:00 PM

Observations: they are very crowded, and space flow is challenging because of the many small rooms that make up the building. Meeting space is regularly used for presentations and is a small facility that limits total attendance and probably restricts the nature of the activities that can be undertaken. Exhibit spaces have limited interpretation, emphasis on displaying lots of different items, such as with the agricultural tools. Rooms don't provide much space to move around.

## General observations

Preexisting buildings with many smaller rooms pose problems with flow, accessibility, and probably with installation and maintenance.

Exhibit cases put things behind glass, but also allow more valuable items to be put on display without endangering them from people touching, breaking or stealing them.