



STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2026

Table of Contents

Board and Contact information	page 4
Executive Summary	page 5 - 6
Organizational Background	page 6
Baseline Conditions	page 6 - 9
Mission and Vision	page 9
Long-range Goals	page 9
Challenges, Goals, Areas of Focus 2022 – 2026	page 10
Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures	page 11 - 13
Overview by Year	page 13 - 14
Appendix A – Strategic Goals and Objectives by year	
Appendix B – Organization Brief (Updated August 2021)	
Appendix C – Addendum to SWOT Feedback (August 2021)	

Acknowledgements

The Strategic Planning Team would like to thank the following people and organizations for their assistance and input during our 2019 planning process: Mayor Crystal Dingler and the City of Ocean Shores; Washington State Parks; State Archives; Grays Harbor County Commissioners Raines and Ross; Grays Harbor Museum Association and its members; and the many staff, volunteers, committee chairs, and stakeholders who responded to our surveys and requests for information.

For the 2022 update, we extend our thanks to all of those who helped with the original planning effort as well as to our new staff, volunteers, and board members; their ongoing support is critical to our current and future success.



Board of Directors 2022

Nancy Eldridge, President

Mike Hrycko, Vice President

Jean Stevens, Treasurer

Holly Duffy, Secretary

Michael Darling, Immediate Past President

Jeannie Anderson

Dee Baker

Dennis Hogan

Brook Lilley

Jim Nagan

Cathey Peterson



Contact Information

Coastal Interpretive Center
hello@interpretivecenter.org
 1033 Catala Avenue S.E
 Ocean Shores, WA 98569.
www.interpretivecenter.org

(360) 289-4617

[Coastal Interpretive](#)

[Center | Facebook](#)

Executive Summary

Created in 1977 as **Coastal Adventures**, a Washington Sea Grant program, today's **Coastal Interpretive Center** (CIC), has operated under the auspices of multiple state agencies and more recently under the management of the City of Ocean Shores (the City). In 2012, the City turned over management and operations to the nonprofit group originally created to support the City owned and managed Interpretive Center. That group ultimately became the CIC Board of Directors.

Since taking over operations in 2012, the CIC Board invested in ongoing upgrades and improvements to the CIC building, grounds, and exhibits. It entered into a stewardship

agreement with the City to care for the Weatherwax property trail system, offered Center tours, tidepool tours, and forest tours for school groups of all ages, and developed and piloted several new classroom/field trip education program modules for 6th graders.

In 2019 a Strategic Planning Committee was formed, research efforts started, internal and external surveys and interviews conducted, and more than 500 comments were received, reviewed, and categorized. That effort resulted in a revised mission statement, a long-range vision, and clearly defined long-range goals. The immediate challenges to attaining those goals were identified and a five-year plan to address them was developed and approved by the Board in January 2020.

In March 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Directors recognized the potential impact, closed operations to the public, and reassessed the priorities and time frame laid out in their freshly adopted Strategic Plan. The goal to accomplish a full renovation of the building's interior, including the upgrade of exhibits, was moved from 2023 to 2020. From March 2020 to May 2021 the board, volunteers, and staff worked together to open the narrow hallways; replace the dark paneling with light paint; install new flooring, museum quality lighting, and an updated HVAC system; and upgrade the restroom to ADA standards. Concurrently, all interior displays were either upgraded or completely replaced with new and professionally created exhibits.

This plan is intended to be a working reference document, a touchstone, to ensure that strategic priorities are being accomplished in a sequential and timely manner as conditions allow. It is meant to be updated and modified as goals are achieved, conditions change, or unforeseen opportunities present themselves. As we discovered in 2020, not every future outcome or opportunity can be predicted, but the CIC Board is more confident than ever that by having a unified vision and working together to achieve mutually agreed upon strategic objectives, the world-class interpretive center outlined in the vision statement can and will be developed.

Organizational Background

In 1977 a Washington Sea Grant program called ***Ocean Adventures*** created an interpretive center in Ocean Shores. In 1984 Washington State Parks, working in

collaboration with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Ocean Shores, and other State agencies took over this program and opened the ***Ocean Shores Environmental Interpretive Center***.

State Parks operated the Center until 1997 when the City of Ocean Shores assumed responsibility for operations. In 2012 the Ocean Shores Interpretive Center Association (OSICA) contracted with the City to take over responsibility for management and operations. Since then, it has changed its identity from OSICA to the CIC Board of Directors, changed the Center's name to the ***Coastal Interpretive Center***, accomplished a full interior renovation, and upgraded or completely replaced its interior exhibits. It has also expanded educational programs for local youth, developed an annual promotions plan, and assumed a stewardship role for the City's 121-acre Weatherwax property and trail system.

Baseline Conditions

Since assuming management responsibility from the City in 2012, the CIC Board of Directors has depended on a small cadre of dedicated volunteers and staff to move forward with extensive improvements to the facilities and exhibits while maintaining strict budgetary and expenditure controls.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2012-2021

Governance and Operations

- Assumed management and operation of the ***Coastal Interpretive Center*** .
- Maintain year-round operation of the Center, open for visitors on weekends from Labor Day to Memorial Day, and five to seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Established Standing Committees to provide oversight, leadership and labor.
- Upgraded Damon's Outpost to focus on environmental books and gifts for all ages.
- Developed and maintains a strong relationship with the City of Ocean Shores.
- Entered into a stewardship contract with the City of Ocean Shores to care for the Weatherwax Trail system.
- Created new CIC communications platforms including "Glimpses" newsletter, CIC Facebook pages, Instagram account and website, and weekly blogs on the website.

Funding and Financials

- Ongoing, financially sound operations with no debt.
- Implemented annual giving campaign and membership drive.
- Reorganized retail operations to increase profitability.
- Implemented a fee structure for admissions.

Communications

- Launched a new CIC website in July 2020—19,137 visitors and 37,667 page views as of September 2021
- Created a blogging cadre in July 2020 that uploads a weekly blog on the website—total views for a blog range from 15 to 3,490 as of September 2021
- Created “Glimpses” newsletter—742 subscribers as of September 2021
- Created CIC Facebook page—1,313 followers as of September 2021
- Created CIC Instagram account—477 followers as of September 2021
- Created CIC YouTube page—approximately 2500 views as of September 2021
- Created annual promotions plan including radio and print/social media

Programs

- Created and implemented three science modules for K-12 students.
- Developed and delivers the popular Glimpses Lecture Series.
- Developed and maintains a working relationship with the North Beach School District.
- Updated and delivered Center tours and tidepool field trip programs for school groups of all ages.
- Developed and delivered education programs to support the City of Ocean Shores Summer Fun program.
- Maintains ongoing rain gauge data from several monitoring locations in Ocean Shores

Facilities and exhibits

- Completed extensive remodel of building interior.

- Maximized space utilization to create additional storage space for collections.
- Completed extensive upgrade of exhibits and exhibit galleries.
- Designed, created, and installed new exhibits.
- Partnered with the City for exterior maintenance of the building
- Installed an indigenous plant water garden

From 2012 to 2021 the Board kept admission to the Center by donation only. Hands-on education programs and field trips for youth were delivered using volunteer staff and donated transportation with no cost to schools. During the planning process, the CIC recognized that this approach, while laudable, would not be sustainable over the long-term. Developing sustainable funding to ensure ongoing operations is imperative. In 2020, the Board made the hard decision to implement a minimal admission fee to the Center along with transitioning to a “fee for service” model for the educational programs and tours.

When COVID-19 struck in early 2020, the Board proactively examined their recently adopted strategic plan and made the decision to fast forward the interior renovation of the building and upgrade of the exhibits. The completion of this major milestone out of sequence has resulted in the need to review and revise the plan and its timeline but not the overarching strategic goals. They remain: 1) Pursue Organizational Excellence, 2) Expand CIC’s base of support, 3) Increase CIC revenues and 4) Explore options and take steps to address lack of capacity at the current facility.

Mission

To educate the public about the natural and cultural history of Washington’s Pacific Coast and inspire the joy and wonder of nature.

The Coastal Interpretive Center considers “Washington Pacific Coast” to include the area from the Columbia River northward to Cape Flattery and eastward from the continental shelf to watersheds draining into the Pacific Ocean.

Long-range Vision

The Coastal Interpretive Center will be a world-class interpretive center with high-quality programs, exhibits, and facilities where both the general public and the scientific community will feel equally engaged and empowered.

Long-range Goals

Based on this vision for the future, the following long-range goals have been identified:

- Adequate professional staffing with a robust volunteer program.
- High-quality, regionally and/or nationally recognized programs and activities.
- Professional, engaging, high-quality exhibits, both in content and presentation.
- Collaborating with others in meaningful research related to the CIC mission.
- Operations supported by a sustainable business model.
- The CIC is financially secure.
- Region-wide reputation as a “must-see” Pacific Coast attraction.
- CIC facilities have sufficient room for projected expansion.
- Collect, display, curate, and provide access to biological, geological, and cultural materials that support the CIC mission.

2022 - 2026 Challenges

The CIC Board has identified the following as the most significant challenges the organization must address over the next five years to realize its long-range goals.

- **Impacts of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Weak organizational structures**
- **Weak communications**
- **Limited base of support**
- **Lack of facilities to support CIC programs and projected growth**
- **Insufficient funding to support needed expansion**

Strategic Goals

Based on these challenges, the CIC Board identified four Strategic Goals.

1. Pursue Organizational Excellence

2. **Expand CIC base of support**
3. **Increase CIC revenues**
4. **Explore options and take steps to address lack of capacity at the current facility**

Primary Areas of Focus

Governance - Attaining and adopting “Best Practices.”

Communications - Improving internal and external communications and messaging, communications platforms, and expanding the CIC communications network.

Programs - Improving and expanding CIC programs and participant demographics.

Sustainable funding - Developing models and supporting systems that will increase revenues, support ongoing revenue generating activities and events including transitioning education programs to a fee-for-services model.

Facilities - Improving current facilities while laying the groundwork for a new facility.

Collections – Assess, catalog, and professionally store, display and provide access to the CIC collections.

Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures 2022 - 2026

Goal 1 - Pursue Organizational Excellence

1. Reestablish CIC standing committees with clearly defined responsibilities.
2. Transition operations from standing committees to staff-driven.
3. Review and update all CIC policies and procedures to align with Best Practices.
4. Improve internal and external communications.
5. Build Leadership capacity within the Board and committees.
6. Provide staff training and develop staff positions as time and funding allow.

Key Performance measures

- Active committees work with staff to develop annual work plans and support staff efforts to implement them.
- There is sufficient staff to support CIC programs and activities.
- Budget processes are aligned with operations planning processes.
- All CIC policies are reviewed, formally adopted, and dated by the Board.
- Annual Promotions Plan is developed, implemented, and tracked.
- There is consistent expansion of CIC communications networks (digital & database counts)
- There are annual leadership training or workshop opportunities for board and committee members.
- Appropriate training for staff has been fully fleshed out and implemented.
- Welcome orientation, training materials, and opportunities to learn more about CIC and its mission are provided to all new staff, volunteers, board and committee members within one month of their formal involvement with CIC.

Goal 2 - Expand CIC base of support

1. Engage with and improve relationships with School Districts, City, County, State, Tribal, and Federal entities.
2. Increase opportunities for community participation and support of CIC programs and activities.
3. Provide consistent, high quality, engaging, and informative content across all CIC communications platforms.
4. Develop and utilize evaluation tools and surveys to gather, analyze, and apply feedback to improve CIC operations and activities.
5. Expand outreach and fundraising efforts to include broader audiences.
6. Expand strategic partnerships.

Key Performance Measures

- Committee communication reports and individual contact reports are properly filed in a database.
- Audience demographics and program delivery areas have been expanded.

- Number of programs and activities aligned with Washington state standards have increased and improved.
- Number of participants in established programs and activities have increased.
- There is ongoing review and improvement of CIC operations and activities.
- Content provided to Communications Committee has increased and is consistent.
- There are increased “clicks,” “Likes,” and “viewer counts” on CIC communication platforms.
- A successful annual fundraising plan is developed, implemented, and tracked.
- There is an increase in active partner participation.
- There is consistent and timely production of annual reports and formal presentations to the City.

Goal 3 - Increase CIC revenues

1. Increase earned income from programs, admissions, retail sales, and other activities.
2. Increase fundraising income through implementation of annual fundraising plans.
3. Increase funding through public and private sector sources and grants.
4. Expand program offerings and client base.

Key Performance Measures

- Increase in program income.
- Expansion of program demographics.
- Increase in admissions and entry donation income.
- Increase in retail sales and other earned income activities.
- Successfully plan and implement annual fundraising events and activities.
- Increase in membership and sponsorship income.
- Increase in annual giving campaign income.
- Increase in income from public and private sector sources and grants.

Goal 4 - Explore options and take steps to address lack of capacity at the current facility

1. Complete needs assessment and develop recommendations for Board action as appropriate.
2. Continue to explore options for acquiring additional property and/or facilities.

Key Performance Measures

- Report from facilities assessment team with recommendations.
- Board review and adoption of assessment report with authorization for next steps.
- Case statement is created and preliminary planning has begun.
- Establish facilities capital plan for Phase 2 of CIC facilities upgrades.

Overview by Year

2022 - Will be a year of recovery and improvement that will include: ongoing review and refinement of CIC policies and procedures, further expansion and refinement of communication networks with focused messaging, as well as building capacity within the CIC Board and its committees. A two year initiative to upgrade of CIC education programs for youth will launch in the fall. It will also be a year for celebrating CIC's 45/10 Anniversary, facility and exhibits upgrades, new activities for adults and families.

2023 – Will see continued focus on improving communications, marketing and annual fundraising efforts. CIC will begin piloting new educational programs and teacher workshops. Design work on *Going Coastal Phase 2* will be underway.

2024 – Will see *Growing Coastal Phase 2* construction in full swing. New education programs and materials will be finalized and marketed to schools throughout Grays Harbor County. Continued expansion of support networks, program partners and client base will ensure CIC fundraising efforts are continued successes.

2025 – Will be a year of self-assessment and improvement across all departments. *Growing Coastal Phase 2* will be drawing to a close. Strong partnerships with City, QIN, Seabrook, OCNMS, M-WA NHA, State Parks, DNR, Fish and Wildlife, GH College, Evergreen, and UW help strengthen CIC program offerings and credibility.

2026 – Will be a big year for the CIC. Showcasing the successful completion of *Growing Coastal Phase 2* and “Two Cultures / First Contact.” *Growing Coastal Phase 3*

gains critical support and momentum. Planning efforts to celebrate CIC's 50th Anniversary in 2027 will begin in January 2026.

Rising Tide

Les Bolton, nonprofit consulting
RisingTideBolton@gmail.com