



Cranbrook History Centre

Final Interpretive Concept

Submitted by Double Dare Design
In partnership with Don Enright Consulting

June 19, 2025

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Land acknowledgement

The Double Dare Design team lives, works and plays on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples. We give thanks by dedicating ourselves to the work of decolonization and the celebration of the rich cultures that are deeply embedded in this beautiful, ancient landscape.



Acknowledgements

This project would not be possible without the guidance of the Cranbrook History Centre staff, the board members of the Cranbrook Archives Museum and Landmark Society (CAMAL), the Ktunaxa community, and the Cranbrook community at large. They have been generous in sharing their knowledge and their vision for the Cranbrook History Centre.

This document features content gratefully gathered from the Cranbrook History Centre and their staff. This material serves as cultural touchpoints, historical references, design inspirations, and has helped to guide the interpretive planning and design approach for this project. In addition, we have gathered precedent images from other interpretive projects around North America. These serve to illustrate opportunities and provide inspiration for planning and designing elements at the Cranbrook History Centre. The sources of these images have been noted.

Introduction

In 2024, the Cranbrook History Centre engaged Double Dare Design to re-envision their visitor experience, with a particular focus on the development of a permanent exhibition in a currently unoccupied space in the building and a self-guided tour of the train collection. Double Dare has also conducted a high level assessment of the other public facing spaces that form part of the visitor experience.

Based on this analysis, this report outlines recommendations for visitor experience upgrades throughout the venue. Like all museums, regular updates to infrastructure, exhibitions and programs are necessary to engage the public and remain relevant to the Museum’s audiences.

In this report, we have:

- provided an analysis of who is visiting, why they visit and identified core target audiences
- set out the key goals and indicators for success of the renewal project
- outlined a thematic framework to organize the experience
- proposed potential storylines and developed a narrative of the future visitor experience
- gathered images from other venues that are similar to the experiences in the plan
- created floor plans that identify the location of interpretive experiences
- assembled a potential look and feel for future interpretive exhibits
- developed concept sketches of some of the interpretive experiences
- suggested accessibility improvements
- conducted a community survey and a virtual “town hall” to get community input for future exhibits
- provided an evaluation and prototyping framework for future exhibit development work
- outlined next steps for exhibit design and implementation
- developed cost estimates (submitted separately)

The planning and design team includes:

Melanie Greenaway	Creative Director, Double Dare Design
Don Enright	Interpretive Planner, Don Enright Consulting
Marjolaine Brabander	Exhibit Designer, Double Dare Design
Ria Kawaguchi	Graphic Designer, Kiko Communications

The planning & design team also received guidance and support from:

Honor Neve	Chief Curator, Cranbrook History Centre
Jared Teneese	Operations Manager, Cranbrook History Centre

Project background

The Cranbrook Archives Museum and Landmark Society began operating the Cranbrook Railway Museum in June 1976 to preserve Cranbrook’s railway heritage. In 2015, the museum was rebranded as the Cranbrook History Centre (CHC) after a community survey and analysis. Since then, a permanent roof over historic railcars and new palaeontology and history galleries have been added. The Centre has become a significant community asset, preserving diverse histories and boosting tourism.

In 2021, a Board committee investigated rebranding due to poor name recognition but found it financially unfeasible. Instead, they revised the Mandate, Mission, and Vision Statements to better reflect the Centre’s work. These new statements, approved in May 2021, were integrated into strategic planning to enhance community engagement and marketing.

Society mandate

The Cranbrook History Centre is a landmark site located in Cranbrook BC. We preserve and display internationally recognized palaeontology specimens, a nationally designated railcar collection, and serve as a repository for the history of Cranbrook and the East Kootenay region for all to explore and discover.

Mission

We believe in the power of history and science to ignite the imagination, stimulate curiosity, provide enjoyment, and engage communities through authentic programming, research, and dynamic displays. The Cranbrook History Centre brings the stories of the past to life.

Vision

To build community spirit and serve as a gateway to exploring the history, cultures and stories of the land and the people of Cranbrook, the East Kootenay, British Columbia and Canada.

Renewing the Centre¹

As a regional community museum, the Cranbrook History Centre is essential for preserving and sharing the region’s rich history and cultural heritage. The Centre’s goal in this interpretive planning process is to create an engaging and immersive experience for visitors that showcases the diverse stories and perspectives of our community. This interpretation plan is intended to be a key step in preparing for a major renovation, which will provide significant space for new experiences. The CHC aims to be a top cultural and educational institution in the BC Interior, offering an inclusive, year-round destination for visitors.

This plan will outline strategies to enhance the visitor experience, interpret historical artifacts and stories, and integrate innovative technologies. The plan will align with the mission and goals of the Cranbrook History Centre and address these key objectives:

- Assess the museum’s current interpretive framework, including exhibits, signage, and programs.
- Engage with stakeholders like community members, businesses, cultural organizations, and Indigenous communities to gather diverse perspectives.
- Develop a clear interpretive vision and thematic framework to guide the presentation of historical content and encourage meaningful visitor engagement.
- Identify opportunities for interactive elements, multimedia presentations, and hands-on activities to improve the visitor experience.
- Provide recommendations for exhibit design and layout, including storytelling techniques, visual aesthetics, and accessibility features.
- Outline strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of the interpretive plan and gather visitor feedback for future improvements.

The Cranbrook History Centre aims to become a landmark site with a fully accessible museum and complete Phase 2 of the Heritage Railcar Preservation Building. By 2026, it will be a welcoming space where diverse voices are heard and deeper connections with the community and landscape are fostered.

Project scope

The planning work focuses primarily on the following areas of the Centre:

- Entry experience
- Lobby and main floor displays
- Mid-level permanent and/or rotating exhibit gallery
- Model railway displays
- Historic railcar exhibit (indoor and outdoor)
- Parking lot

Project deliverables

Deliverables include:

- Local community engagement outcomes that inform the interpretive plan and design approach
- Interpretive plan
- Draft concept with plans, inspirational images, floor plans and sketches
- Presentation of draft concept
- Final package including cost estimates and next steps

¹Paraphrased from project request for proposals



Indicators of success

In the cultural attractions sector, there are different ways of judging the success of exhibits and programs. The prioritization of these varies from place to place and is rooted in the organization's mission or mandate and in the requirements of the current strategic and interpretive plans.

We asked participants in the staff and board workshop to rank ten key performance indicators, and we tabulated their responses as follows, from most important to least.

1. Visitor satisfaction
2. Visitor numbers, increased
3. Visitor learning and understanding
4. Revenue
5. Partner satisfaction and engagement
6. Social media coverage
7. Intention to change behaviour post-visit
8. Expert opinion of visitor experience
9. Length of time visitors engage with exhibits
10. Percentage of available visitors who stop and engage with a given exhibit

Project goals

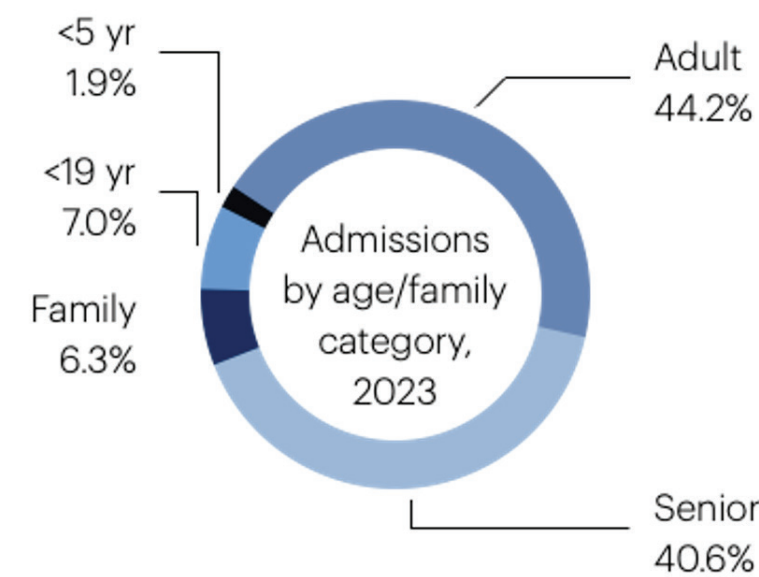
With a renewed interpretive offer and enhanced visitor experience design, we intend to...

1. Increase visitor engagement and satisfaction with varied, interactive, beautiful and up-to-date exhibits.
2. Increase revenue, attendance, and length of stay with a more attractive and compelling arrival experience and an expanded and more varied visitor offer.
3. Increase visitor learning and understanding through insightful and accessible exhibits featuring current, inclusive, thought-provoking, multi-modal content.
4. Deepen the Centre's collaborative relationship with Ktunaxa and other regional Indigenous nations.

Centre guests: what we know

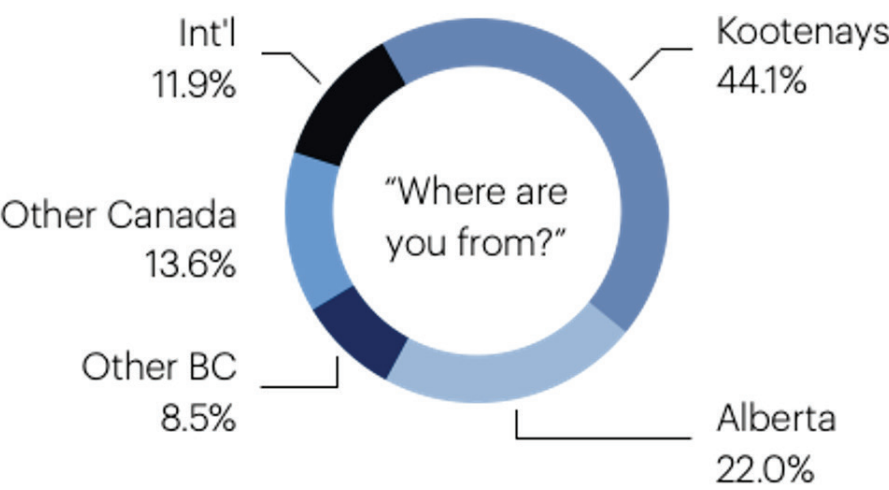
Adults are well-represented.

According to point of sale data for 2023 (n=2024), the Cranbrook History Centre appears to be popular with adults, with seniors particularly well represented. This adult representation is slightly higher than that of Cranbrook and the Kootenays.



The Centre appears to be well frequented by locals.

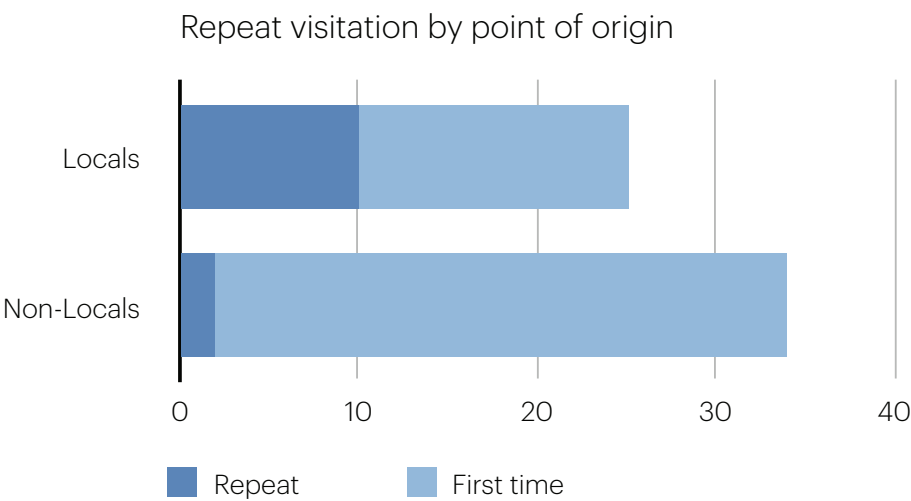
The Centre has not conducted a systematic visitor demographic survey; however since mid-2023, visitors have been able to volunteer some information about themselves in the form of a comment book (n=61.) Here we define "Kootenays" as those who identify their home as Cranbrook, Kimberly, or other nearby centres (Fernie, Wycliffe, others).



Locals are more likely to be repeat visitors.

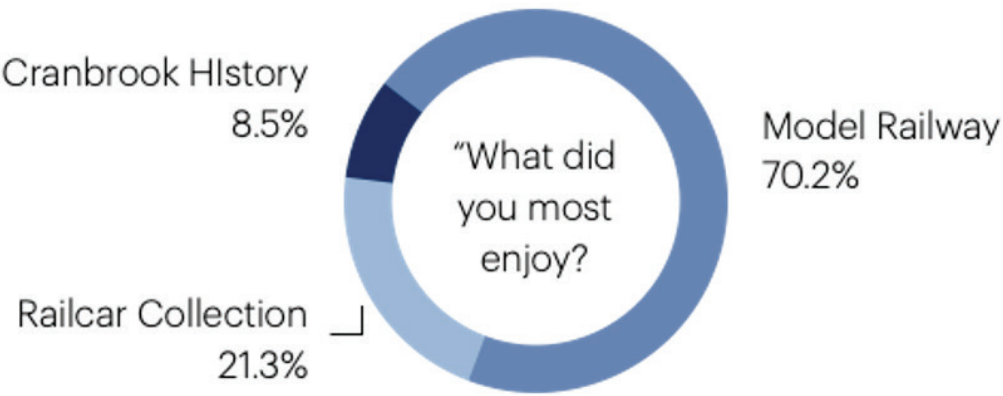
Might it be strategic to strive to have an even higher proportion of loyal repeat visitors?

Here we define "locals" as the East Kootenay region—mostly Cranbrook and Kimberly.



The model railway is popular.

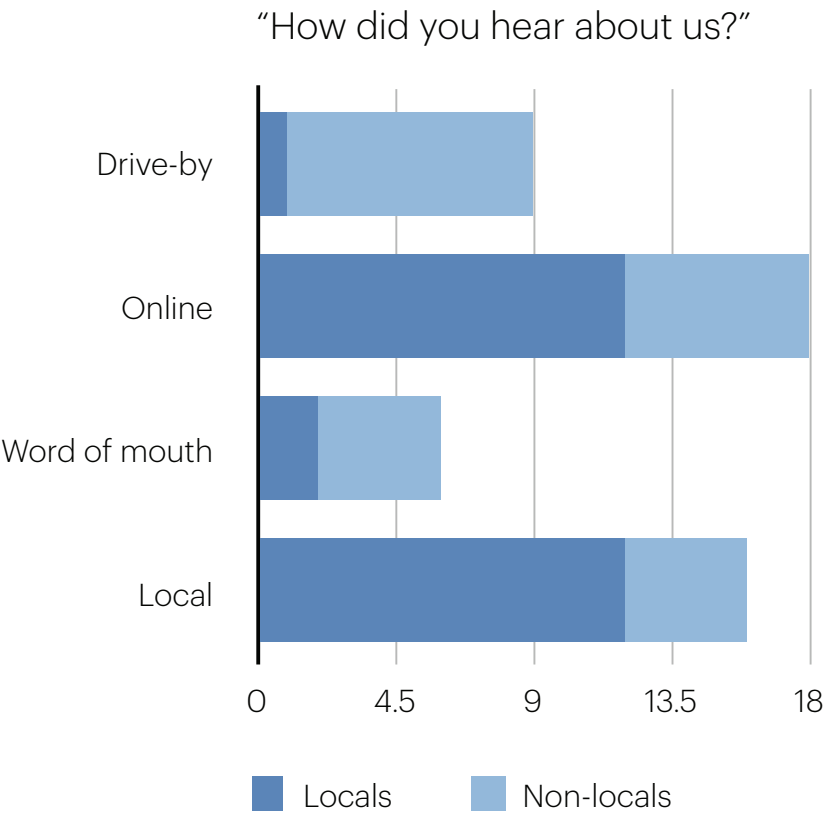
When asked what they most enjoyed, both locals and visitors were most likely to identify the model railway as the highlight. The Cranbrook History exhibit appears a distant third.



Online promotion appears important.

Non-locals appear to be inspired to visit by a drive past the centre; locals less so. The category below labeled “local” is meant to imply that as residents, they have heard of the site from multiple sources or always knew it was there.

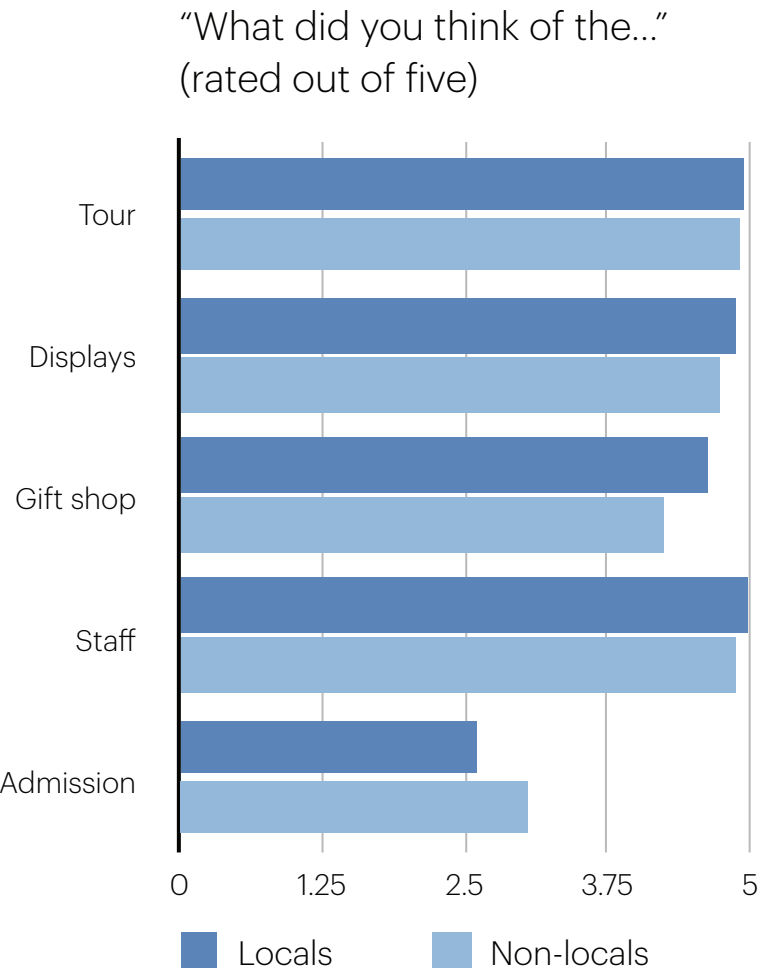
It might be desirable to try to increase the publicity by word of mouth among locals.



Visitor satisfaction is high.

The train tour is a hit; many visitors commented on it in the comments section.

A note about admissions: guests rated 1 as low price and 5 as high price; at the moment the rating lands about in the middle.





What they're saying online: Google reviews

We examined 213 Google Maps reviews of the Cranbrook History Centre. The results are summarized below.

Overall sentiment

The sentiment analysis of the reviews indicates a predominantly positive reception, with 89.4% of visitors expressing satisfaction with their experience. Neutral feedback accounts for 8.3%, while negative sentiment is relatively rare, at 2.3%.

General visitor experience

A significant portion of the feedback, 57.6%, pertains to the general visitor experience. Comments in this category often touch on the Centre's atmosphere, the educational value of the displays, and the overall enjoyment of the visit.

While the general tone was positive, there were suggestions for improvements in amenities and merchandise. One visitor mentioned, "Great times with trains always! But they need train patches!" indicating a desire for more or better-quality souvenirs.

Exhibits and displays

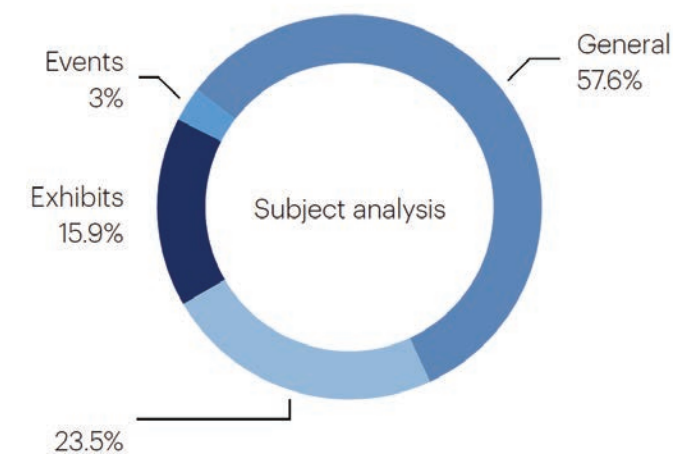
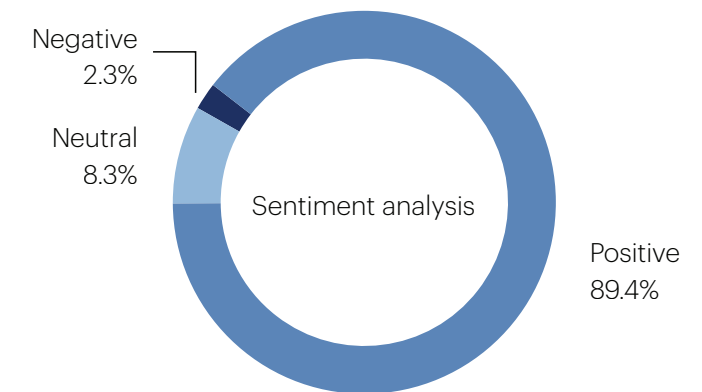
The Centre's exhibits and displays, particularly those featuring historical trains and model railways, were highlighted in 15.9% of the reviews. Visitors often praised the quality and curation of these exhibits, noting their educational and nostalgic value. However, there were some concerns about accessibility and value for money. For example, one review noted, "Enjoyed the model trains here, but the rail car tours weren't super appropriate for our little guys so we couldn't go in them. I felt like the admission was a little steep for what we got but not terrible."

Staff and tour guides

23.5% of the reviews focused on this aspect. This positive sentiment towards the staff suggests that they play a key role in enriching the visitor experience,

Events and special occasions

Though only mentioned in 3.0% of the reviews, the Centre's role as a venue for events, such as weddings, was highly praised.

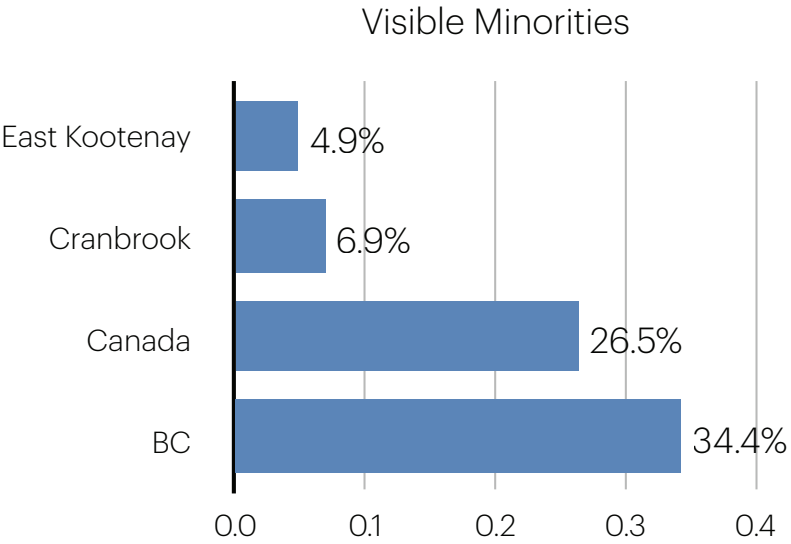


Who's not coming (yet)?

The Centre's annual visitation is about 8000 people. With Cranbrook's population at 20,499 and annual visitation to Cranbrook over 400,000, it's safe to say that the Centre has the potential for higher market penetration from both residents and tourists.

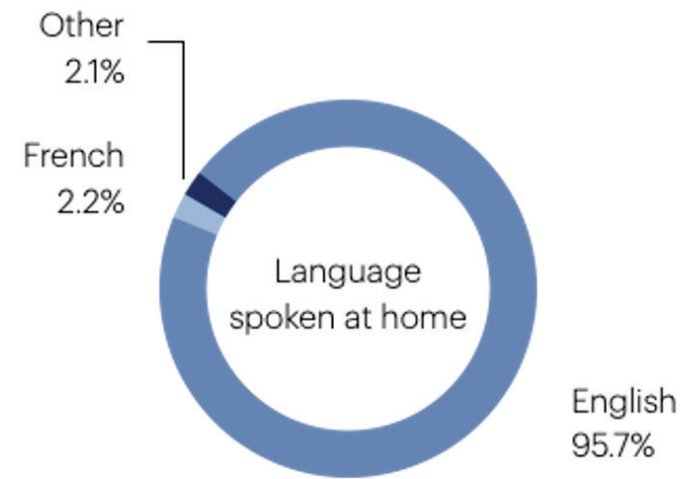
What do we know about the people of Cranbrook?

It's not particularly diverse, at least by British Columbia standards. The top visible minorities here are South Asian, Filipino, and Chinese.



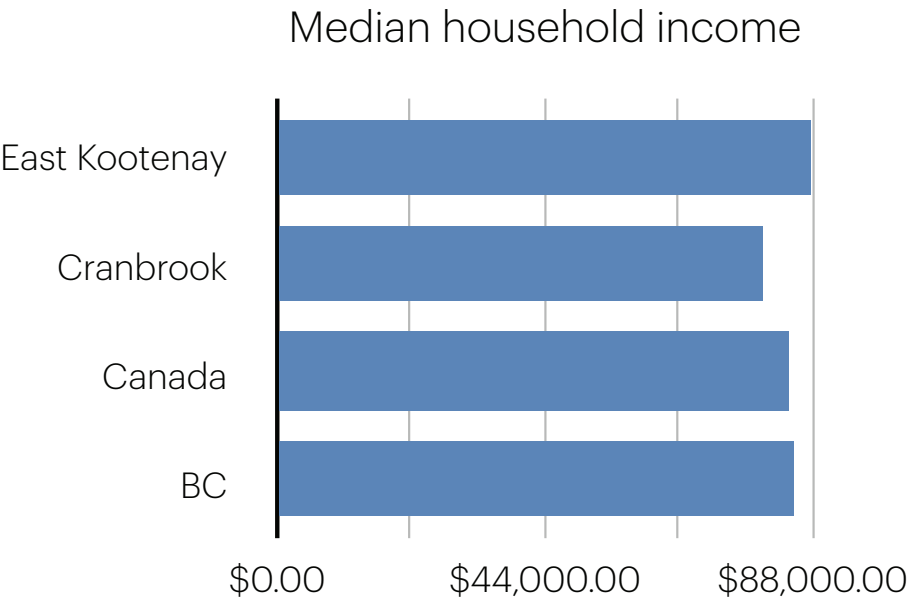
Most speak English at home.

"Other" languages included Punjabi, Hindi, Tagalog, and Mandarin.



Income is on par with the nation.

Annual income is just slightly lower than the rest of Canada, though that of the East Kootenay is a bit higher.

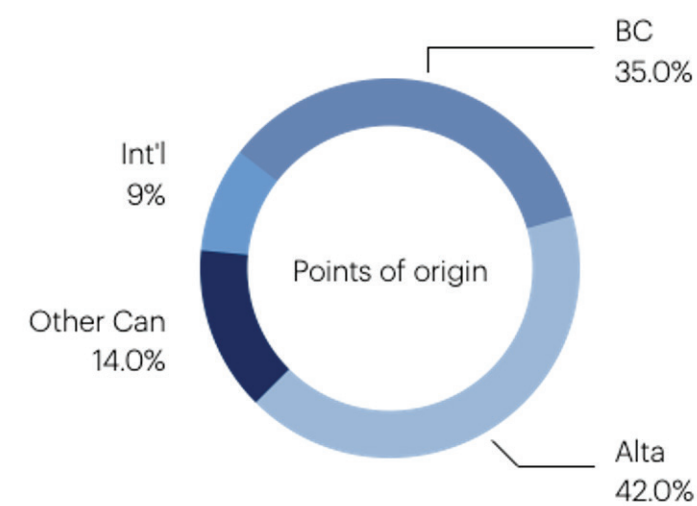


Visitors to Cranbrook

Alberta is a big source of visitors.

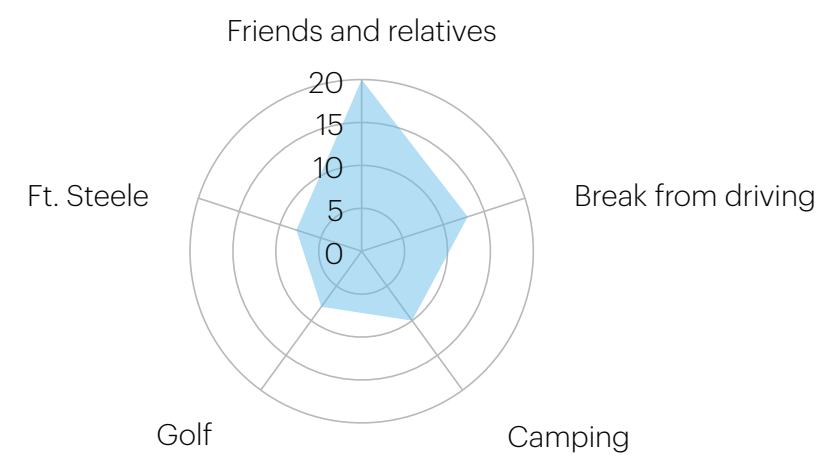
Of these, Calgary is the largest point of origin, followed by Lethbridge and Edmonton.

British Columbia's top points of origin are, in order, the Lower Mainland, East Kootenay, and West Kootenay.



Not just tourists

Many of our visitors' primary reason for visiting is not really tourism-related; many are visiting friends and relatives. This may be an opportunity for us; a History Centre visit is a good way to occupy visitors for a few hours.

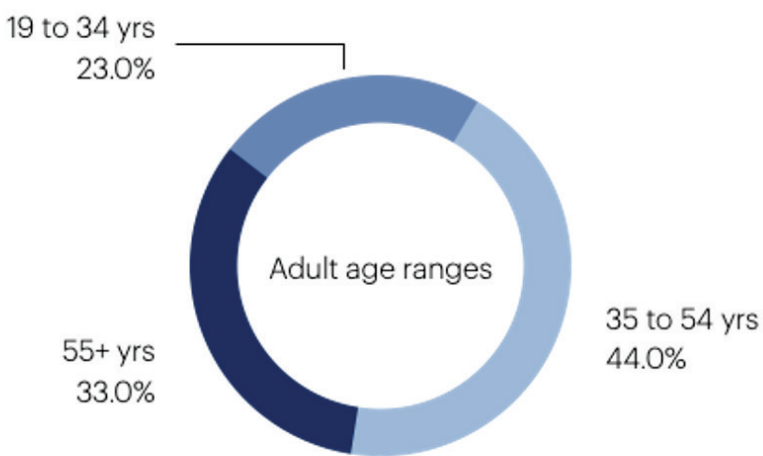


They're travelling in small groups.

Average group size in the 2022 survey was 2.6 people.

26% of these travelled with children (a potential opportunity for us, as we are under-represented in this group.).

Age breakdown was as follows:



Proposed target audiences for this plan



Tourist couples

This is probably our largest single audience group, judging from the limited data we have.

Visiting adults may have relatively low subjected matter knowledge, and may need help with understanding the local context: what do we mean by “Kootenays”, who are Ktunaxa, etc. They may be most attracted to introductory information aimed at their level: the train tours, introductory panels, zone overviews, etc.

Tourists look for museum experiences that give them an authentic feeling for the place they’re visiting: stories of the East Kootenay, of Cranbrook, of local wildlife, events, people.

Visiting adults enjoy meeting locals and are likely to be genuinely curious about the guides and other staff who work here. They enjoy a personal touch to their visit and tend to respond well to personal programming.



Families, Cranbrook and visiting

Family audiences are seeking to educate and entertain the children, above all else.

Local families may have high repeat visitation and are likely to return for the new events and activities, while tourist families may be attracted to anything hands-on and interactive.

The centre has not been particularly successful with family audiences in the past, and this group represents a tremendous growth potential, especially with the potential variety and interactivity of new exhibits that we propose here.

In addition to fun, interactive exhibits, we may need to court this audience with more family-friendly tours and other programs.



Local history buffs

Local history buffs have a high interest and knowledge in their history, and are likely to read virtually everything we place in front of them.

They are likely to return for special events that feature local experts or traveling exhibitions, and are also likely to be among our best brand ambassadors in terms of bringing their visiting friends and relatives to the centre.

This group may include train buffs in particular who appreciate any new exhibitions or programs featuring the historic rail cars collection.

This audience will also serve as a source of future volunteers, donors, and board members.



Vision

The Cranbrook History Centre is a place where visitors can immerse themselves in the stories that have shaped Cranbrook and the East Kootenay. Through engaging exhibits, immersive experiences, and welcoming spaces, the Centre helps people connect with the region's history in meaningful ways.

The visitor experience starts with the building's evocative architecture highlighted in an improved parking lot setting, paying tribute to Cranbrook's railway heritage. Inside, exhibits take visitors on a journey through time, from the ancient Cambrian seas to modern-day Cranbrook. Each gallery offers a mix of multimedia, artifacts, and hands-on activities designed to educate and inspire curiosity.

A key part of the Centre's vision is working in partnership with the Ktunaxa Nation. This collaboration ensures that the culture and history of the Ktunaxa people are shared in an authentic and respectful way, giving visitors the chance to learn about the deep connections between the Ktunaxa and the land.

The Centre's exhibits also showcase the beauty and diversity of the East Kootenay, the risks taken by early settlers, and the growth of Cranbrook into the community it is today. Visitors of all ages will find something to engage with, from the natural world displays to interactive features that bring the past to life.

The Centre aims to be a welcoming space for locals and tourists alike, offering a variety of programming—from travelling exhibitions to a dedicated discovery space for families. With outdoor spaces, a spectacular historic rail car collection, model train displays, and curated exhibits, there is always something new to experience.

The Cranbrook History Centre is a place where history is not just preserved but shared in ways that are engaging and accessible. It is a hub for learning, exploring, and connecting with the stories that make Cranbrook and the East Kootenay unique.

Thematic framework

Theme Statement

The story of the Cranbrook area is some 500 million years old. It is as ancient as the rock itself; as old as the creatures fossilized within the East Kootenay mountains.

It is a story as enduring as the Ktunaxa people, who for countless generations have lived here and cared for this place—on whose unceded territory we live today.

The story of Cranbrook is as old—and as new—as the ribbons of steel and asphalt that sliced through this mountainous landscape. It is a story of luxury trains and rattling boxcars; of loggers and miners and the dreams they brought with them; of entrepreneurs and innovators and the community they helped forge. It is a story of transient industries and resilient workers—and of generations of families who chose to stay and call Cranbrook home.

Subthemes

1. Stories in stone: a paleontology legacy
2. The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness
3. The enduring culture of the Ktunaxa
4. Railways and risk-takers:
5. Industry and change in the 20th century
6. Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow



Potential storylines

1. Stories in stone

- Understanding the scale of geologic time
- Mountain formation
- Trilobites and other Cambrian fauna
- Cretaceous fossils
- Local fossil finders

2. The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

- What is a biogeoclimatic zone
- Emblematic animals and plants of the East Kootenay
- Local climate and weather
- Skulls and what they tell us
- Notable local research and discoveries, geography and biology
- Rare species found here

3. The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

- Five regional First Nations
- Settlement on the Tamarack Mall site
- Ktunaxa creation story
- Ktunaxa language
- Contemporary success stories, art music and other
- Ktunaxa craft and technology
- The residential school
- The Indian Act and ongoing implications
- The reserve pass system
- The 1960s scoop and recent social worker scoop
- Racism today

4. Railways and risk-takers:

- Henry Seelye
- Col James Baker
- Early town, Cosmopolitan and Cranbrook hotels
- Seat of gov't and new gov't buildings 1904
- Relocation of hospital to Cranbrook
- Early newspapers
- Cranbrook brewery
- Cranbrook Ed
- Black porters and their story

5. Industry and change in the 20th century

- Early 20th century business and architecture
- Girls' Band
- Boys' and girls' camp
- Logging
- The railway
- Luxury train travel
- The Soo luxury car set
- Cranbrook and the World Wars
- Lost communities (Wardner, Lumberton, Perry Creek, etc)
- The Trans-Canada luxury car set
- History of Chinatown

6. Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

- Cranbrook athletes
- Cranbrook artists, performers, writers today
- Notable entrepreneurs, success stories

A zoned approach

Organizing exhibitions into zones helps create a more engaging and effective visitor experience. Interpretation works best when it revolves around a central idea, supported by a few strong sub-themes. By dividing the exhibition into thematic zones, each area can explore a specific subject in depth while contributing to the larger story.

Each zone has its own focus, and often its own distinctive look and feel, allowing visitors to connect with the content in varied and memorable ways. At the same time, the zones are carefully designed to reinforce the exhibition’s overall thesis and to leave visitors with a unified impression of the experience. This approach ensures the exhibition feels cohesive while giving visitors a sense of progression as they move through it.

Thematic zones also help to manage the flow of visitors and allow for flexibility in design, creating spaces that are immersive, accessible, and welcoming. By breaking the experience into clearly defined sections, visitors can navigate the exhibition more easily, making it both enjoyable and meaningful.

A key part of developing an interpretive floor plan is to map the desired experience onto the existing space to see where there is compatibility between the experience and the space’s inherent characteristics.

We consider such things as:

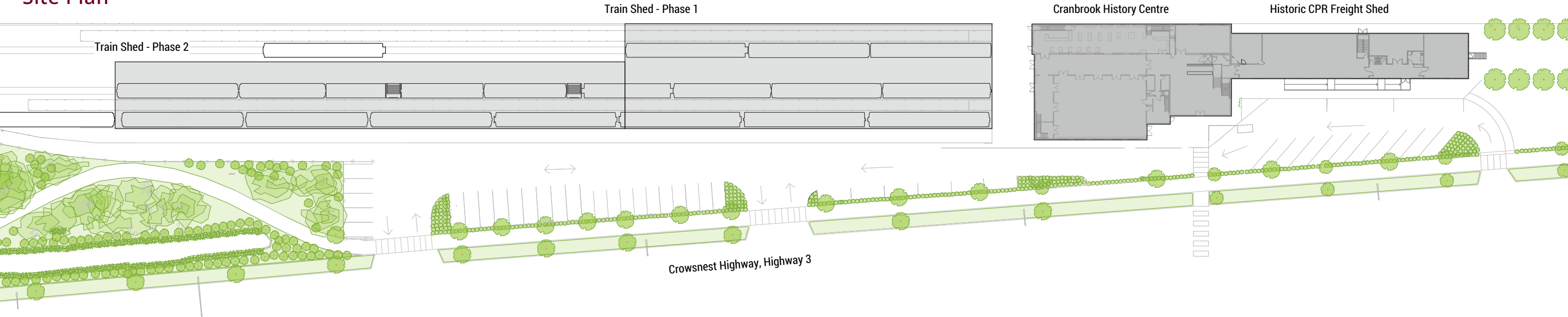
- chronology (does the story need to be told in a particular order)
- desirable sightlines (what do visitors need to see next)
- harmonious space uses (loud vs quiet, active vs passive, etc), and
- space requirements for demanding activities or iconic pieces from the collection (eg: paleontology collection, full size train cars, etc)
- requirements for general operations

For the future exhibits at the Cranbrook History Centre, we propose a plan in which visitors are free to choose their own path. In exhibition areas, views will be carefully curated to entice visitors to explore the space.

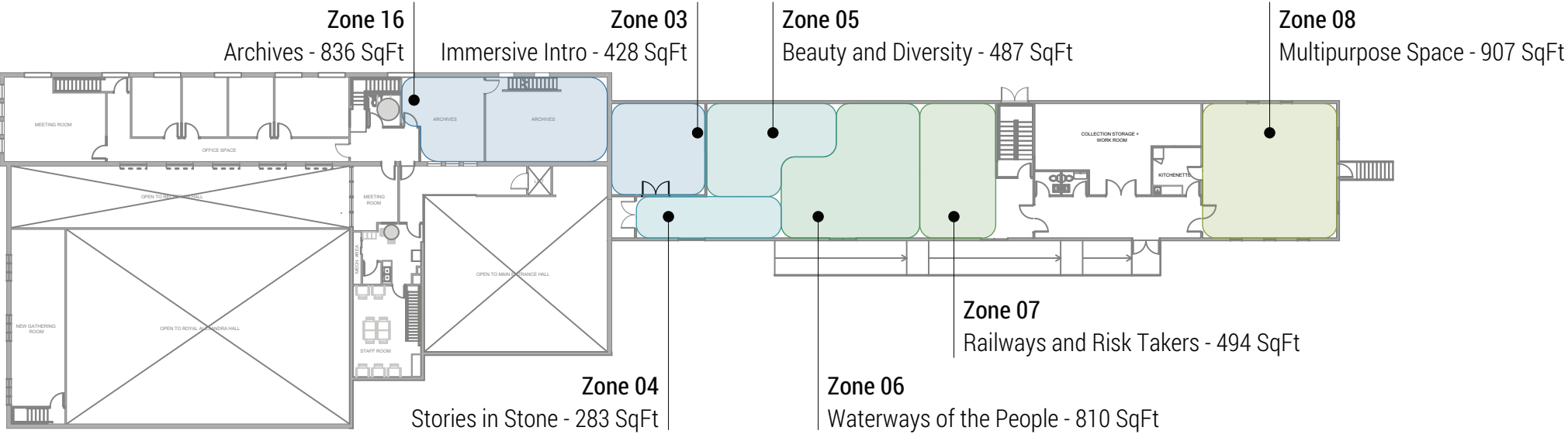
In the following pages, we present each exhibit zone in detail, including conceptual sketches, layout plans, and descriptions of the interpretive products and their intended purpose within the visitor experience.

Note: Concept drawings for parking lot makeover is not in the scope of this project. To be done by others—see matrix on PG 76.

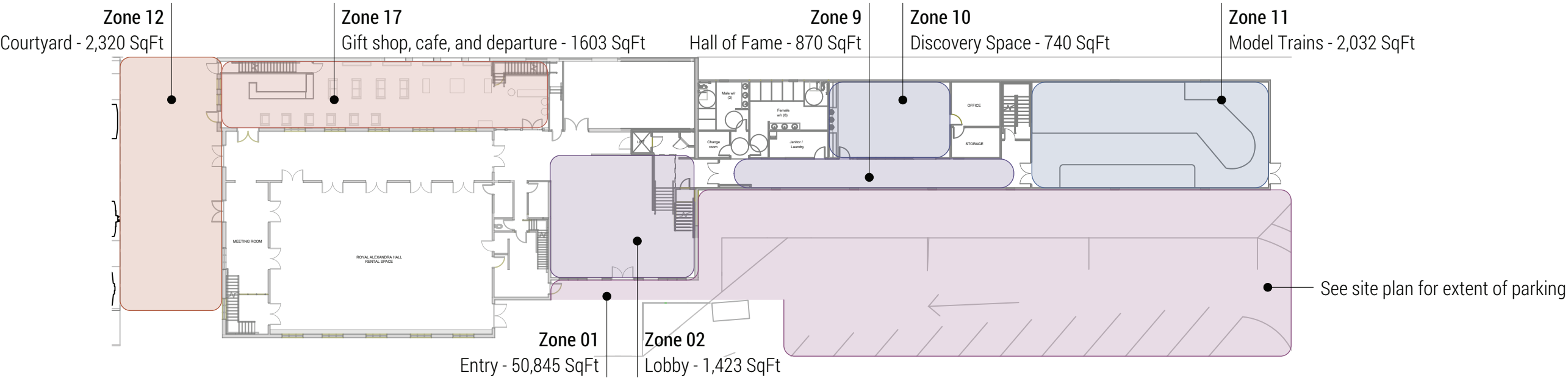
Site Plan



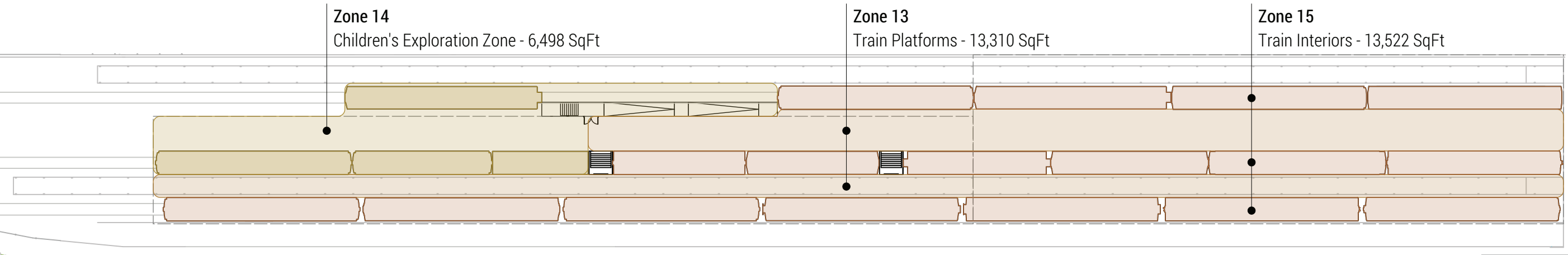
Interpretive Zones



PLAN 1 - Second Floor



PLAN 2 - First Floor

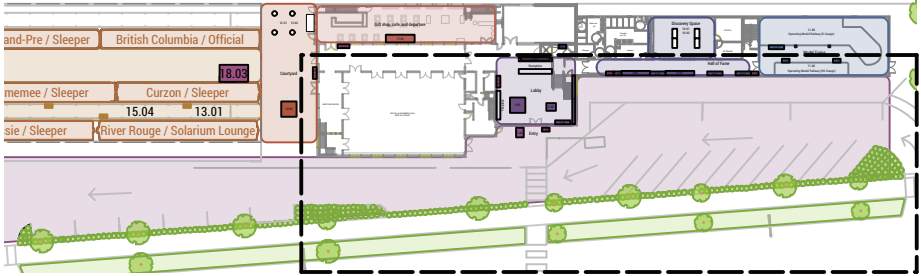


PLAN 3 - Train Tracks

1.0 Parking lot and entry

Visitors arrive at the parking lot and appreciate the Centre’s vintage urban train station architecture—particularly in its newly spruced-up surroundings. The parking lot and landscaping has been refreshed and re-paved, complete with EV chargers. A tasteful video display outlines current programs and events; and thematic way finding signs confirm to the visitors that they have come to the right place.

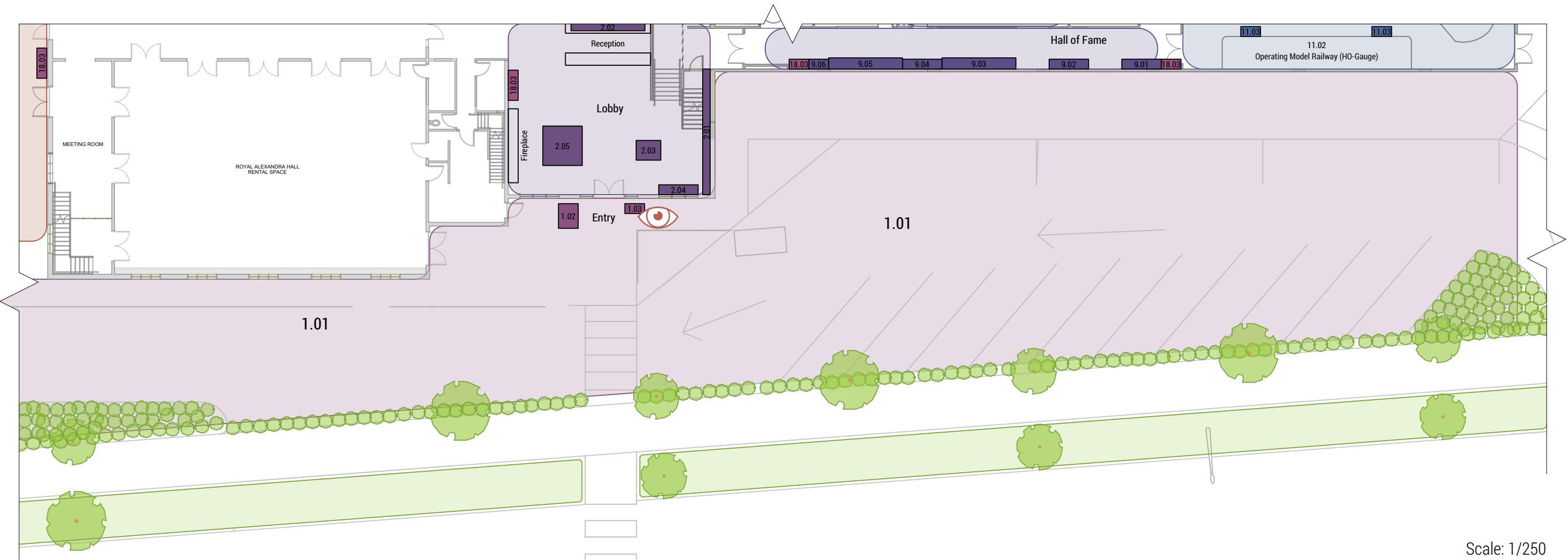
Note: Concept drawings for parking lot makeover is not in the scope of this project. To be done by others—see matrix on PG 76.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

Artifact Display	Immersive Environment
Physical Interactive	Video
Digital Interactive	Audio
Interpretive Panel	Interpretive Playground
Diorama	Feedback Station



Scale: 1/250

1.01 Parking lot makeover

Visitors arrive at the parking lot and appreciate the Centre’s vintage urban train station architecture—particularly in its newly spruced-up surroundings. The parking lot and landscaping has been refreshed and re-paved, complete with EV chargers. A tasteful video display outlines current programs and events; and thematic way finding signs confirm to the visitors that they have come to the right place.

Target audience

Family visitors
Tourist couples

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Landscaping



1.02 Thematic artwork and sculpture

Sculptural elements —possibly integrating into a greater city Art Walk—help convey the museum’s railway and local historic themes.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Public art

Niimaamaa—Sculpture by Jaimie Isaac, KC Adams and Val T Vint—2018, The Forks , Winnipeg, Canada



Penny Hardy, Blown Away sculpture

1.03 Outdoor video display

A tasteful video display in a secure housing just outside the entrance promotes upcoming events and programs.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Linear video

Sawmill Sid Gendron and Richard Posa, The Dance, Mississauga, 2022



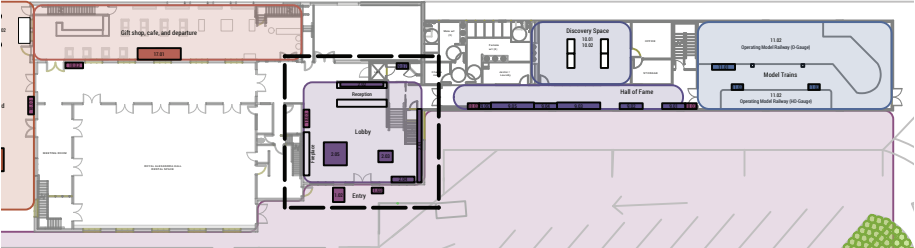
2.0 Lobby

Just inside the lobby doors, visitors are greeted by desk staff who welcome them and outline the programs and exhibits on offer. Across the lobby is a spectacular historic mantel around which comfortable couch and armchair seating is arranged. Above the mantel, or projected onto it, is a theme statement encapsulating the essence of Cranbrook in its East Kootenay setting. A territorial welcome from Ktunaxa lets visitors know in whose territory they are living or visiting.

Thematic way finding, evoking the stories of the centre, invite visitors toward the exhibition galleries.



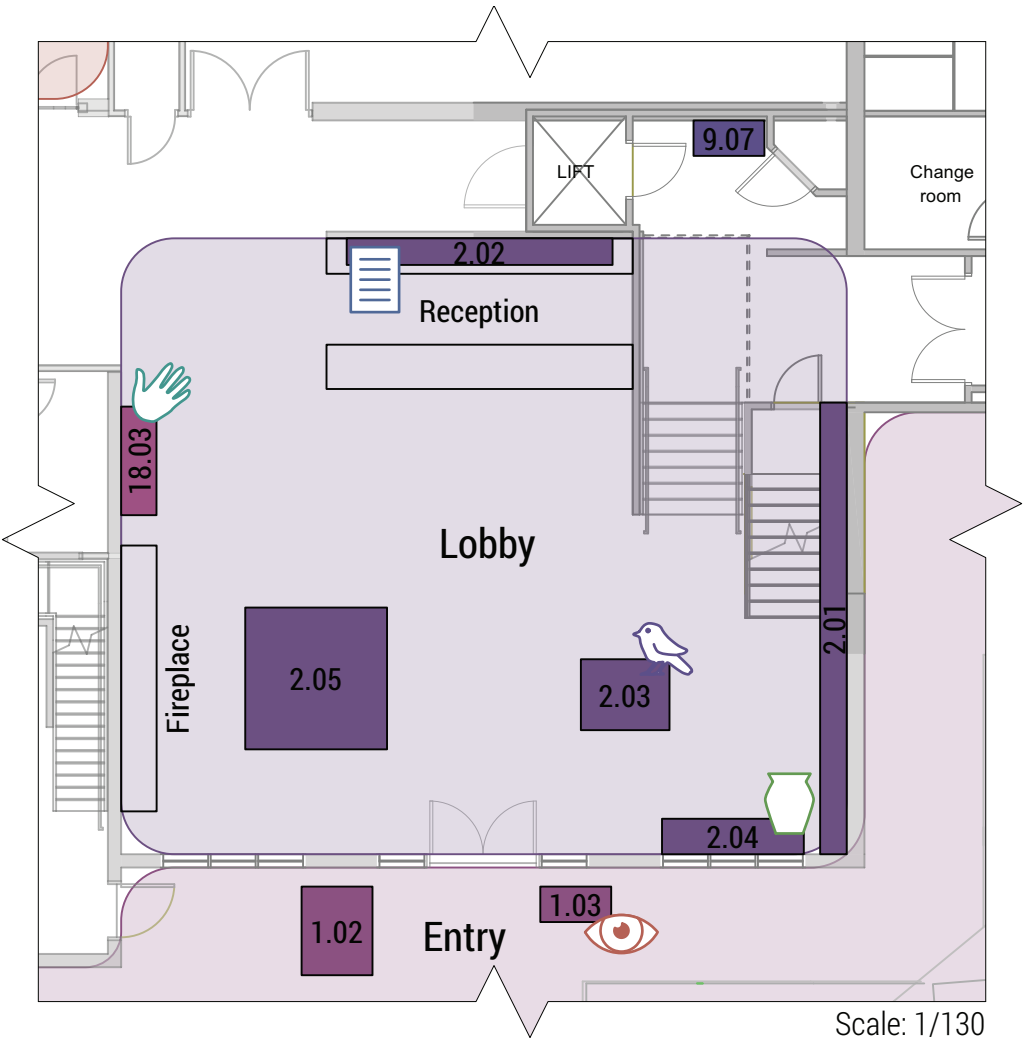
Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, California.



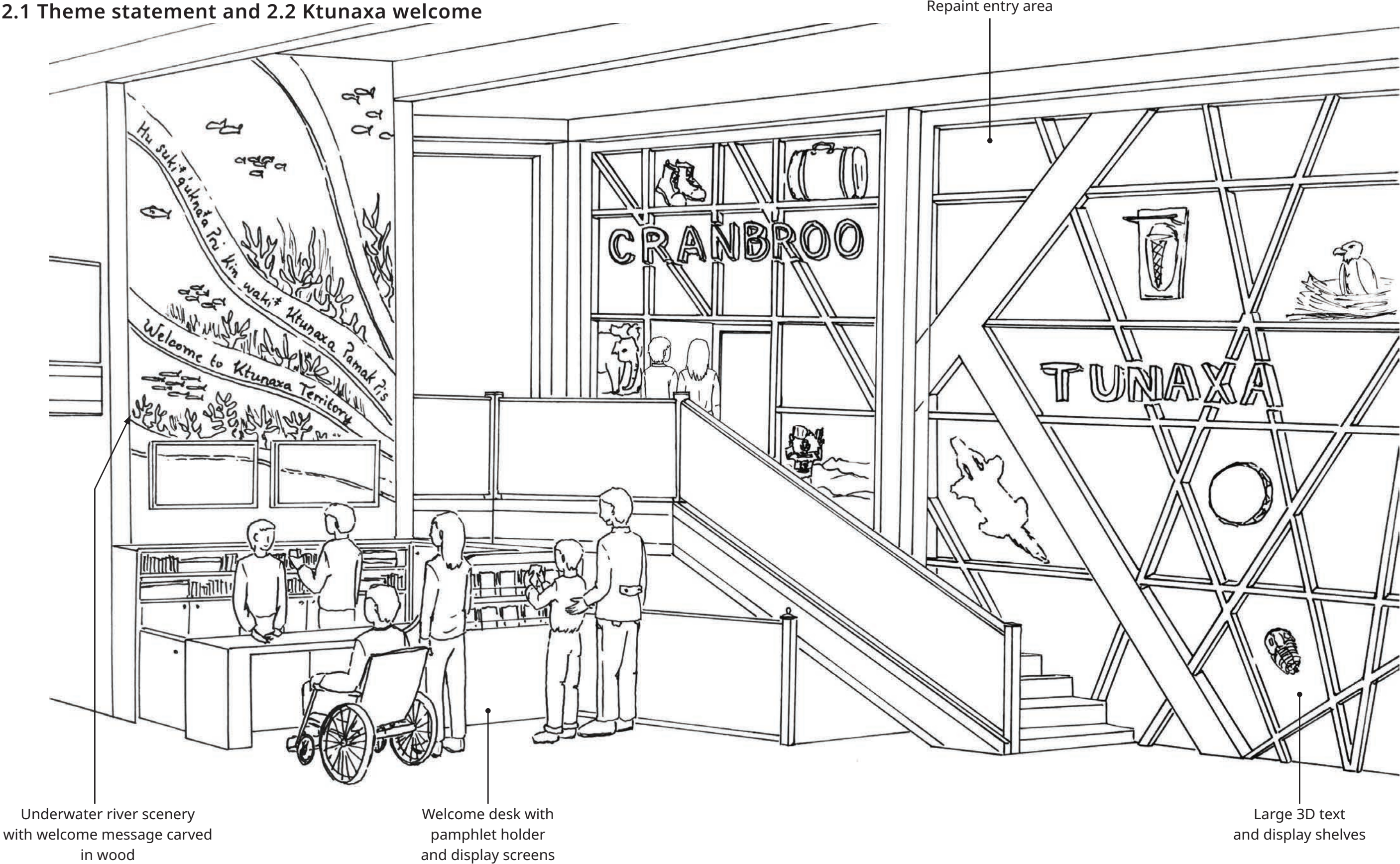
KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

- Artifact Display
- Physical Interactive
- Digital Interactive
- Interpretive Panel
- Diorama
- Immersive Environment
- Video
- Audio
- Interpretive Playground
- Feedback Station



2.1 Theme statement and 2.2 Ktunaxa welcome



2.01 Theme statement

Visitor enter and are warmly greeted by staff. A large 3d text framework highlights the name Cranbrook BC, and a panel within it features the theme / essence of place statement. Within the text framework are niches for displaying small objects that allude to the elements within the statement.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Interpretive panels

2.02 Ktunaxa Welcome

On the wall, a prominent welcome message from Ktunaxa lets visitors know in whose territory they are visiting or living.

Target audience

Local history buffs
Tourist couples
Family visitors

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Interpretive panels

2.03 East Kootenay table top diorama

To one side, a tabletop model or diorama shows in touchable, topographic relief what the East Kootenay setting looks like.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Model or maquette

Malibu Creek State Park Visitor Center, Agoura Hills, US



2.04 Artifact of the week

A featured showcase highlights a document or artifact of the week. A captivating label explains its significance and suggests where visitors can learn more about the subject elsewhere within the museum.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

(Multiple themes)

Type

Artifact exhibit

2.05 Fireplace seating

A beautiful historic mantel is framed by comfy couch seating, where visitors can relax, read, and wait for their family members to finish their tours.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Family visitors

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Immersive environment



Chevalvert

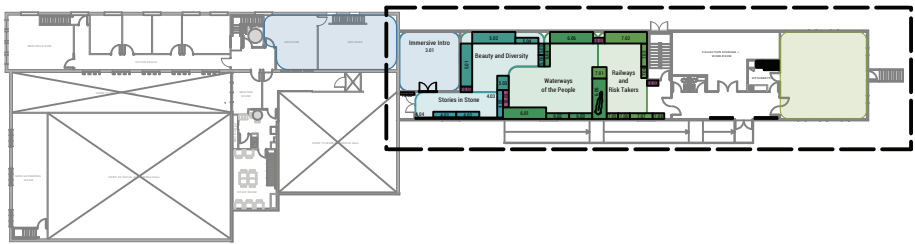


3.0 Immersive intro

The must-see stop of any visit is a multimedia space. Visitors are fully surrounded by the sights and sounds of the Cranbrook and East Kootenay area from the distant past to the present, including the Ktunaxa creation story. Through immersive video, sounds, music, and narration they understand the themes and periods that have shaped what Cranbrook is today.



Sacred Defenders of the Universe, Telus Spark Calgary



KEY PLAN - Second Floor

- LEGEND
- Artifact Display

Physical Interactive

Digital Interactive

Interpretive Panel

Diorama

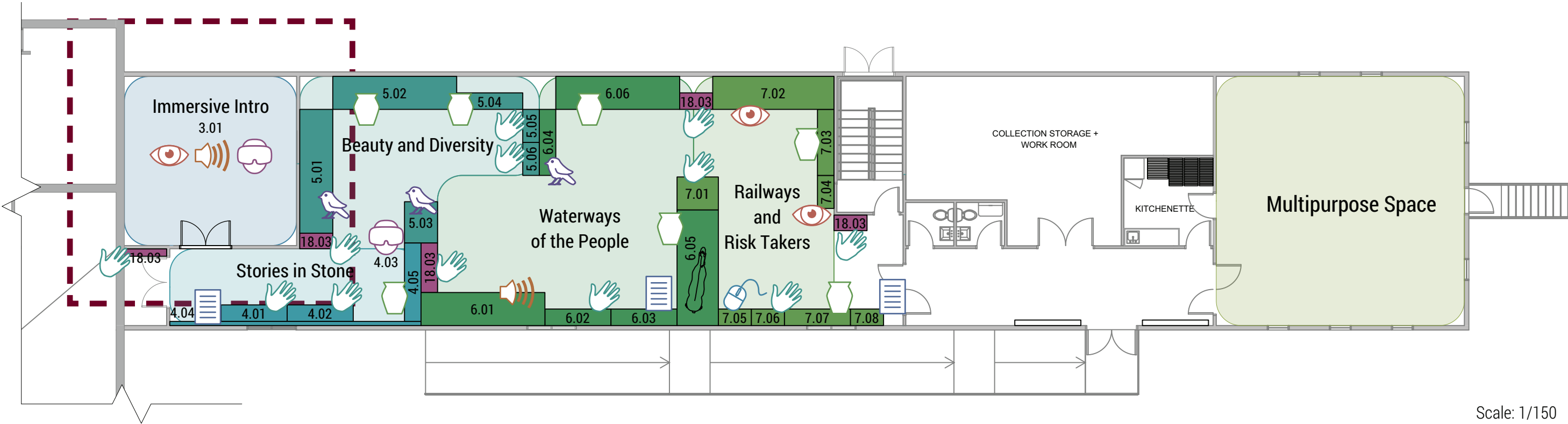
Immersive Environment

Video

Audio

Interpretive Playground

Feedback Station



Scale: 1/150

3.1 Immersive multimedia intro



Sanctuary: The Dakota Bear Ancient Forest Experience, MOA, Vancouver, BC

3.01 Immersive multimedia intro

At the beginning of the exhibition zone, a digital extravaganza surrounds visitors and introduces them to the themes and historic periods that will make up the rest of their visit.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Immersive environment



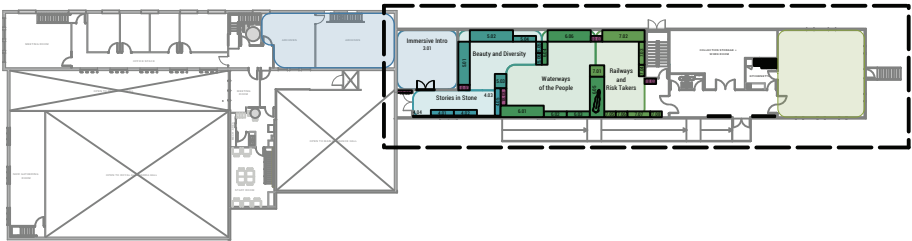
Sanctuary: The Dakota Bear Ancient Forest Experience, MOA, Vancouver, BC



Unceded Voices of the Land for Venice Biennale, 2018.
Douglas Cardinal, Ouri Scott, Patrick Stewart and Alfred Waugh

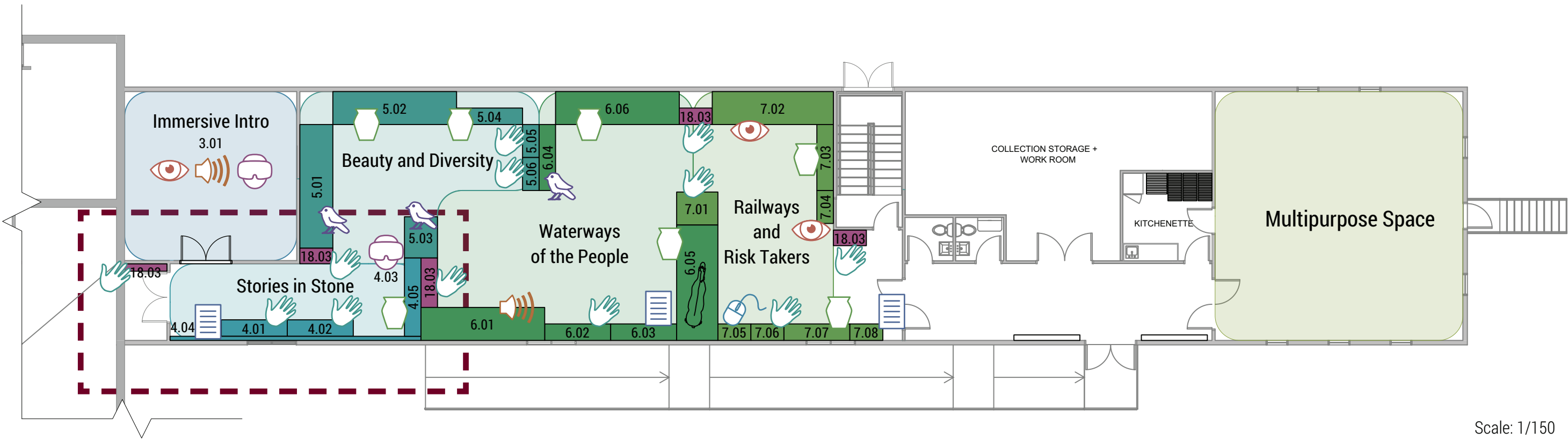
4.0 Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Departing the multimedia experience, visitors enter a mysteriously-lit gallery that evokes an ancient undersea world as visitors explore what this area might have been like hundreds of millions of years ago. Fossils and 3D reproductions of strange ancient animals paint a picture of the Cambrian life that is recorded within the region’s mountains.



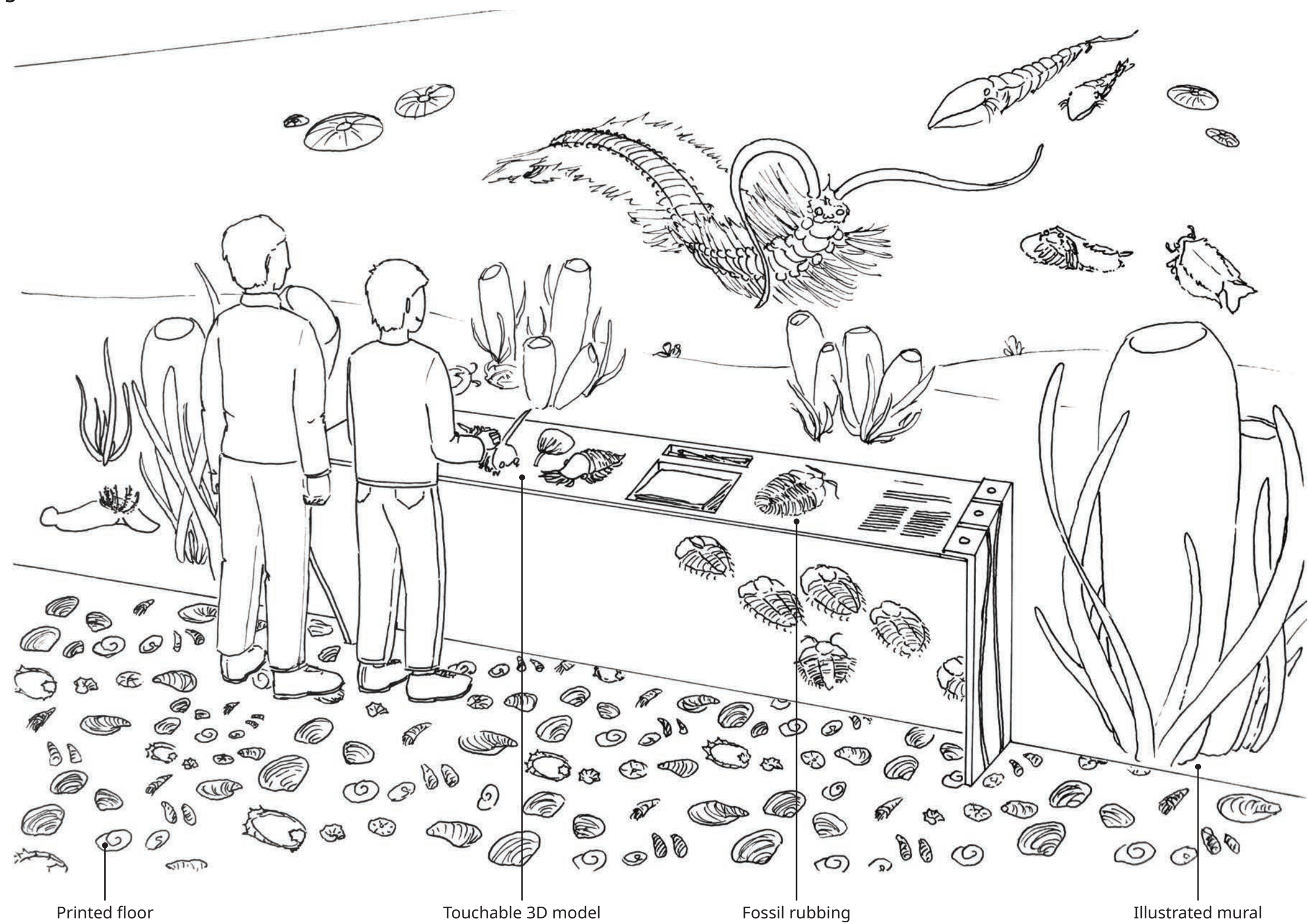
KEY PLAN - Second Floor

- LEGEND
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



Scale: 1/150

4.1 Fossil rubbings and 4.2 3D models of Cambrian critters



4.01 Fossil rubbings

Some of the museum’s more significant fossils have been reproduced through 3D printing, and visitors can make their own rubbing—taking it home along with some information about the fossil’s history.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Type

Physical interactive

4.02 3D models of Cambrian critters

Through 3D touchable reproductions, visitors have a hands-on encounter with some of the sci-fi-esque shapes and lifestyles of Cambrian invertebrate fauna.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Type

Physical interactive

4.03 Walkover sea bed

Glancing down at the floor, visitors notice to their delight that, through trompe-l’oeil art or similar technique, they’re ‘walking on water’ across an ancient Cambrian sea bed.

Target audience

Family visitors

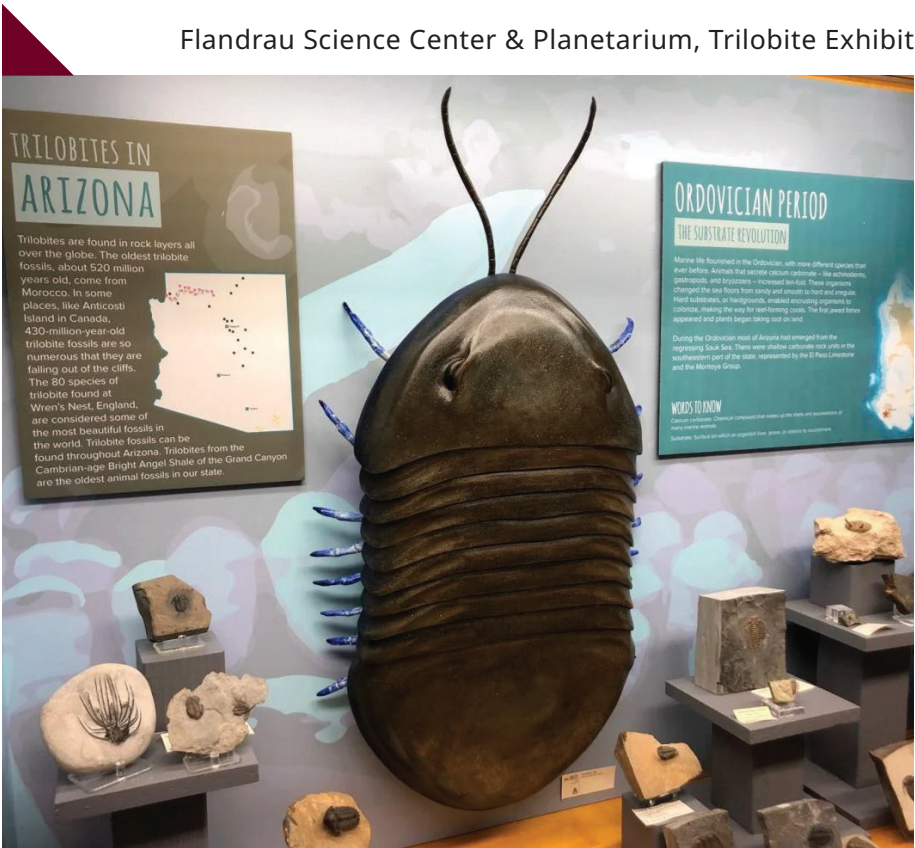
Tourist couples

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Type

Immersive environment



4.04 Undersea wall mural

An entire wall is painted as the undersea Cambrian environment; nearby another mural shows the mountain environment it is today.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Type

Mural



4.05 Updateable artifact case

A spectacular artifact case, built so items can be easily switched out and updated, showcases the Centre’s fossil collection.

Target audience

- Local history buffs
- Tourist couples

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

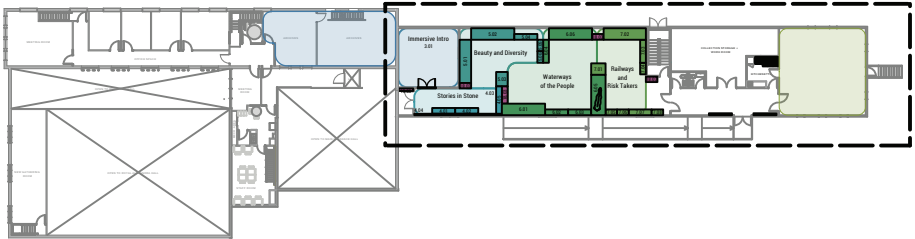
Type

Artifact exhibit



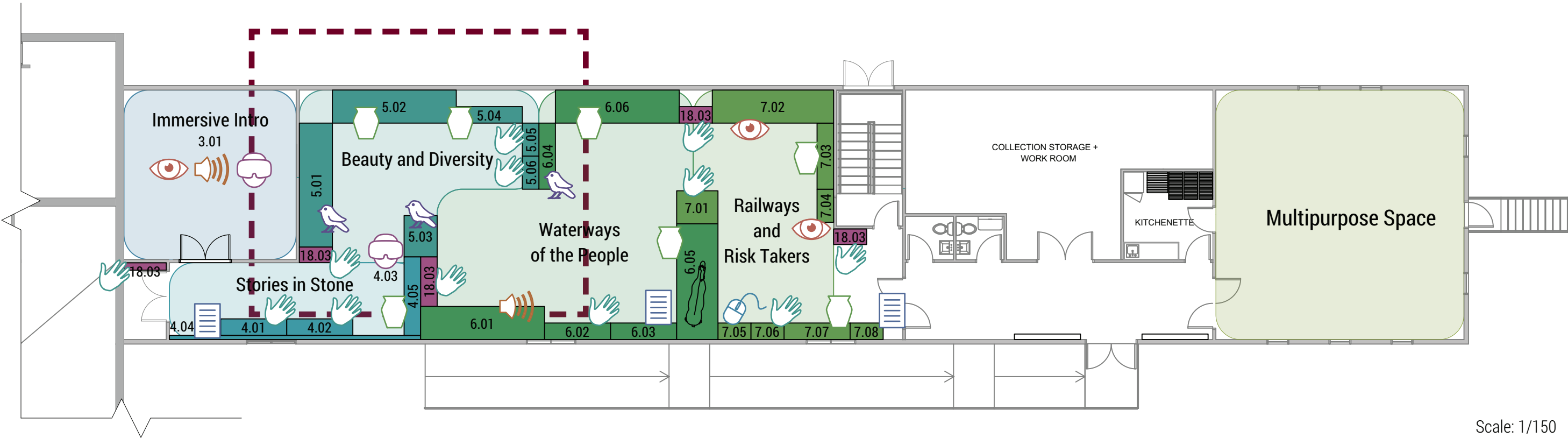
5.0 The beauty and diversity of the Kootenays wilderness

The next gallery feels bright and natural, as visitors encounter images, video, and reproductions of the plant and animal life of the East Kootenay. Some reproductions are touchable; some are embedded in classic dioramas representing elk, bears, and other local fauna. Ktunaxa-language text identifies flora and fauna in that language.



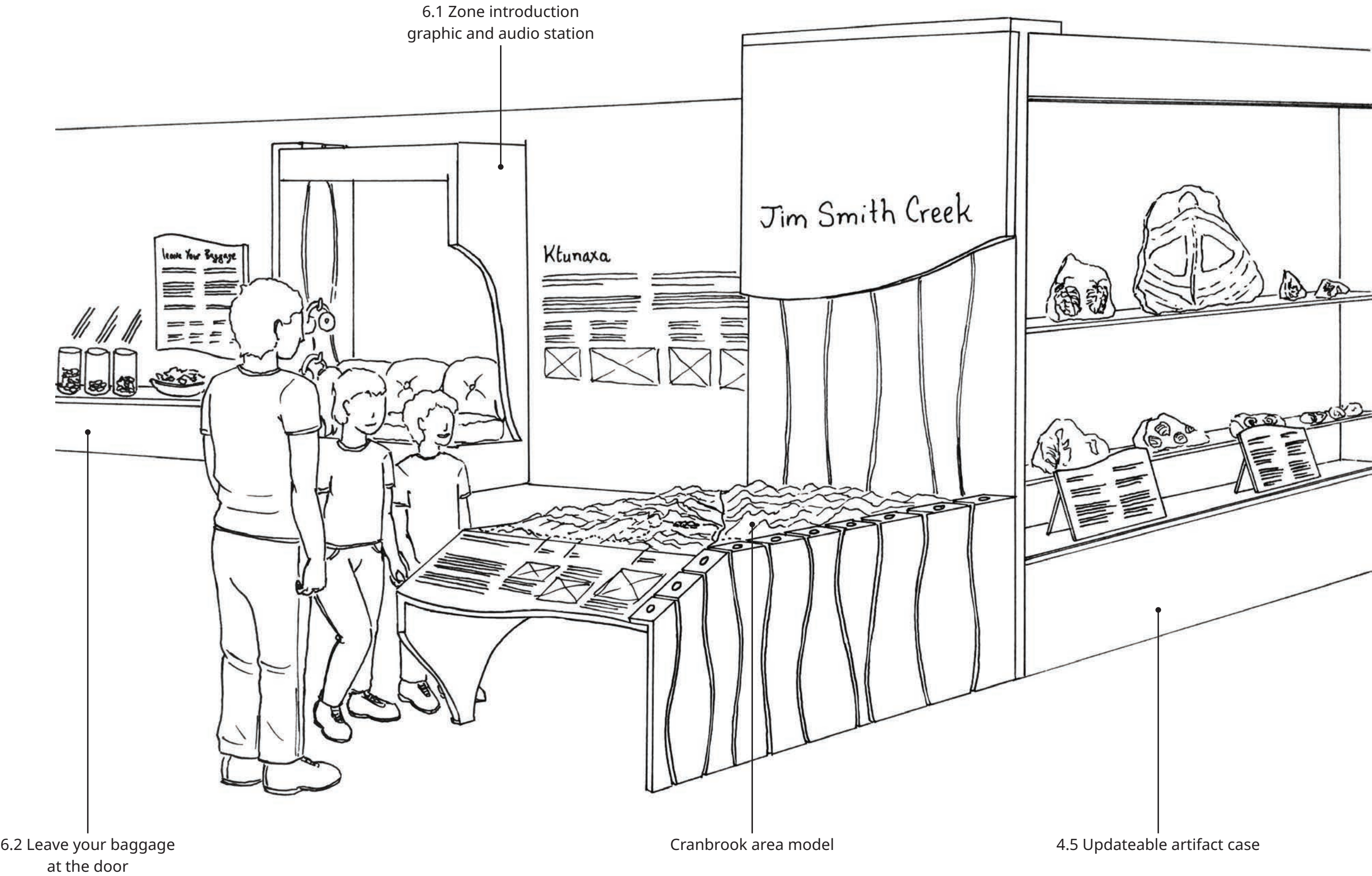
KEY PLAN - Second Floor

- LEGEND
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



Scale: 1/150

5.3 Jim Smith Creek exhibit



5.01 Three dioramas

An introductory panel introduces the beauty and diversity of the East Kootenay wilderness. Three small dioramas represent three environments emblematic of this mountain area: first, one that contrasts the ancient Cambrian environment with a comparable locale today; others feature, perhaps, a montane valley bottom, the alpine, a wetland or river, etc.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Diorama

5.02 The wildlife of the East Kootenay

Photos, video, feely boxes, 3D tracks, and taxidermy—along with Ktunaxa-language labels—lend a nature-centre hands-on feel to this introduction to the remarkable wildlife of the East Kootenay region.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Interpretive toys

5.03 Jim Smith Creek exhibit

A tabletop model focuses on the Jim Smith Creek site in the context of the area’s riverways, train lines, and traditional Ktunaxa trails, including Ktunaxa-language labels.

Target audience

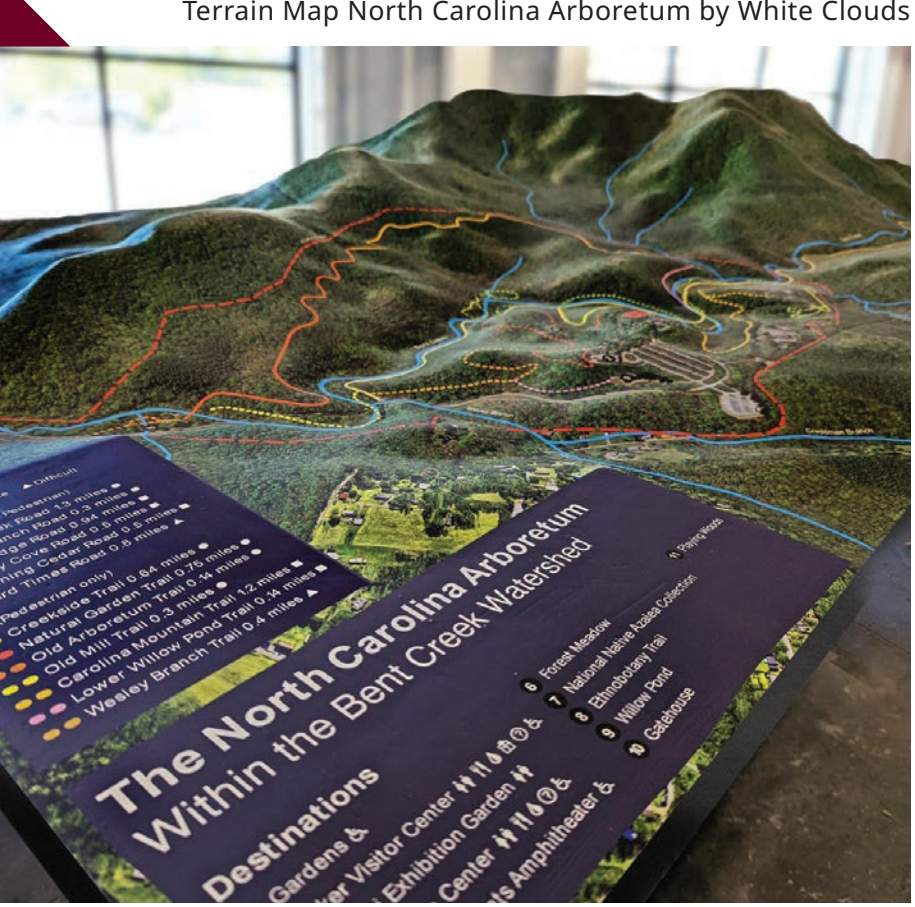
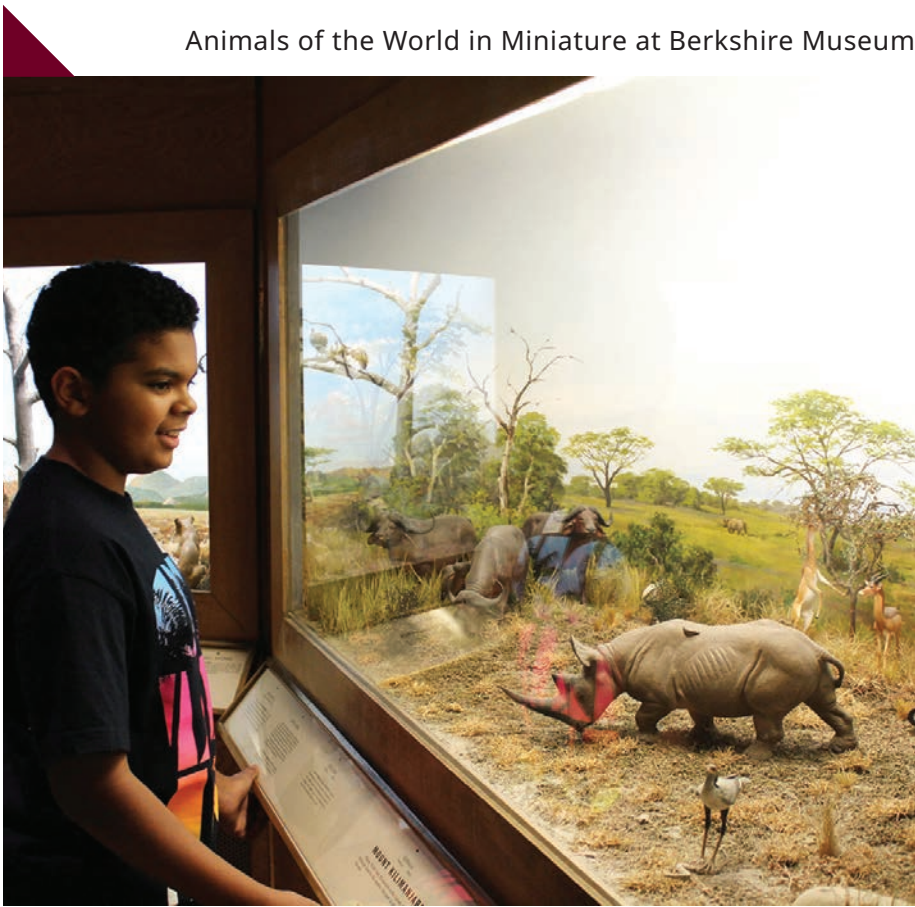
Local history buffs

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Model or maquette



5.04 Touchable biofacts

Animal skulls help tell the story of the wildlife here and the people who study them; in front of them plastic ‘bone clone’ replicas allow families to explore by touch.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Taxidermy/biofact

5.05 Biofact feely box

A feely box entices young people to reach in and guess what kind of natural surface they’re touching: cottonwood fluff, bear fur, a shed snake skin, etc.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Physical interactive

5.06 Match the critter or plant to its life zone

A simple interactive exhibit challenges visitors to match local plants and animals to their life zone in the East Kootenay, from dry forests to high alpine meadows to river channels.

Target audience

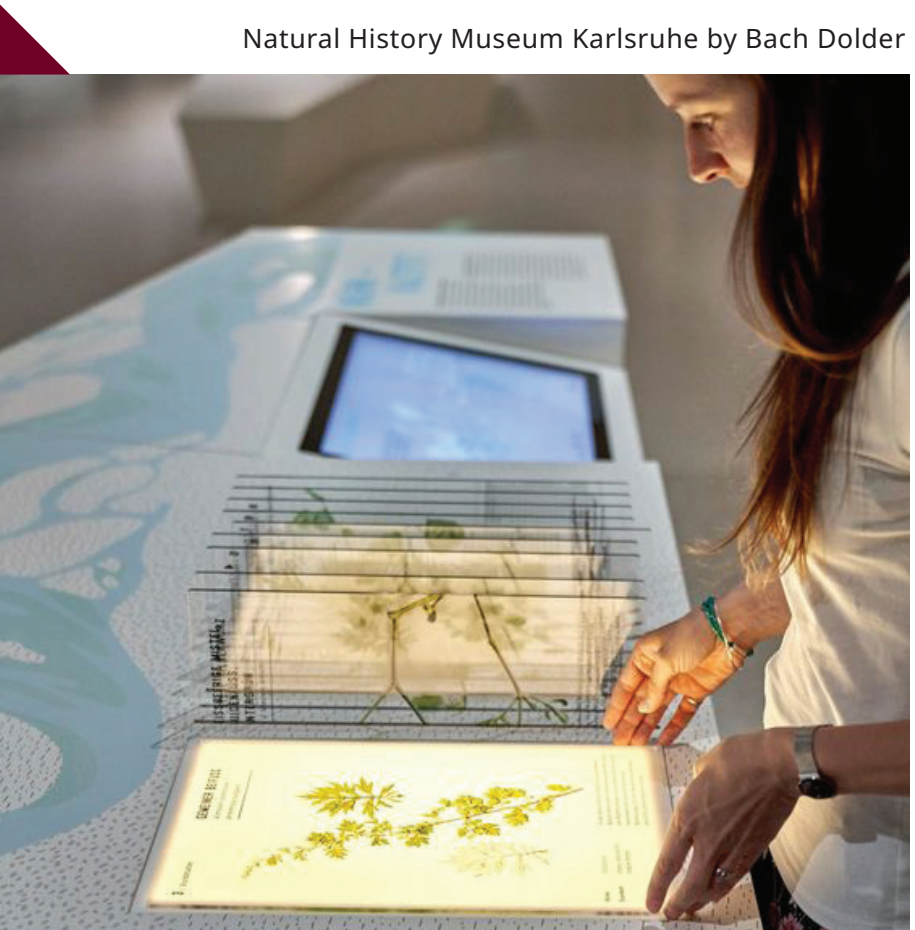
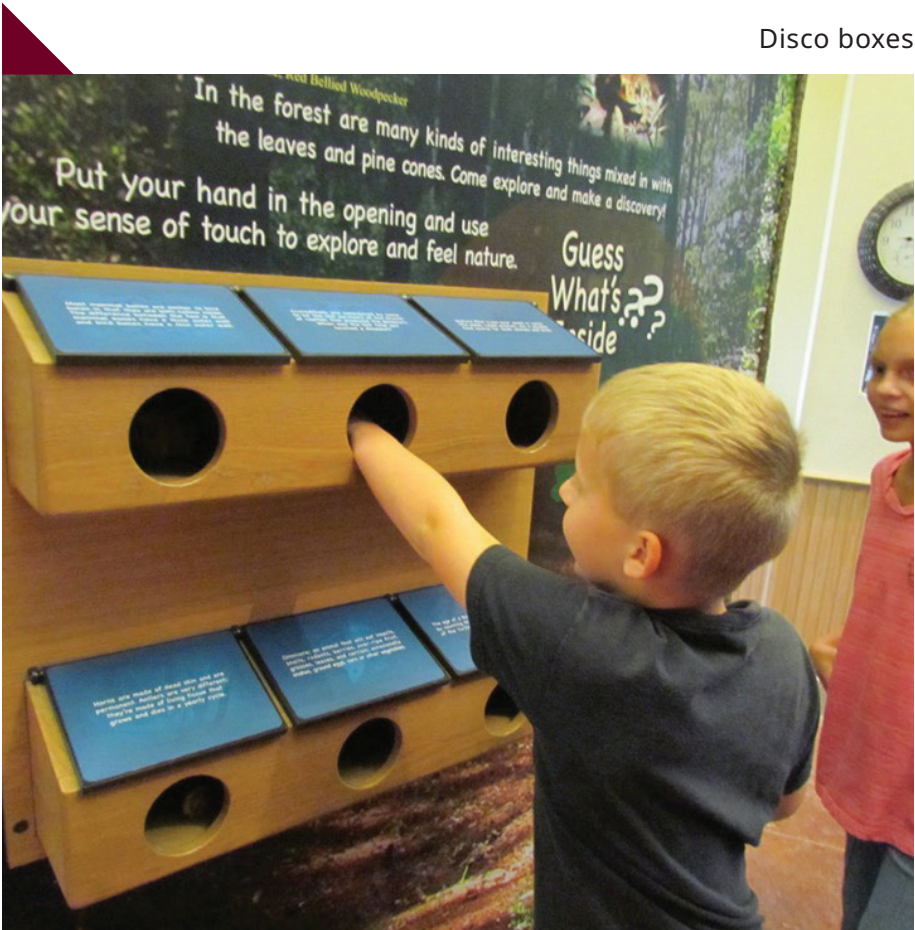
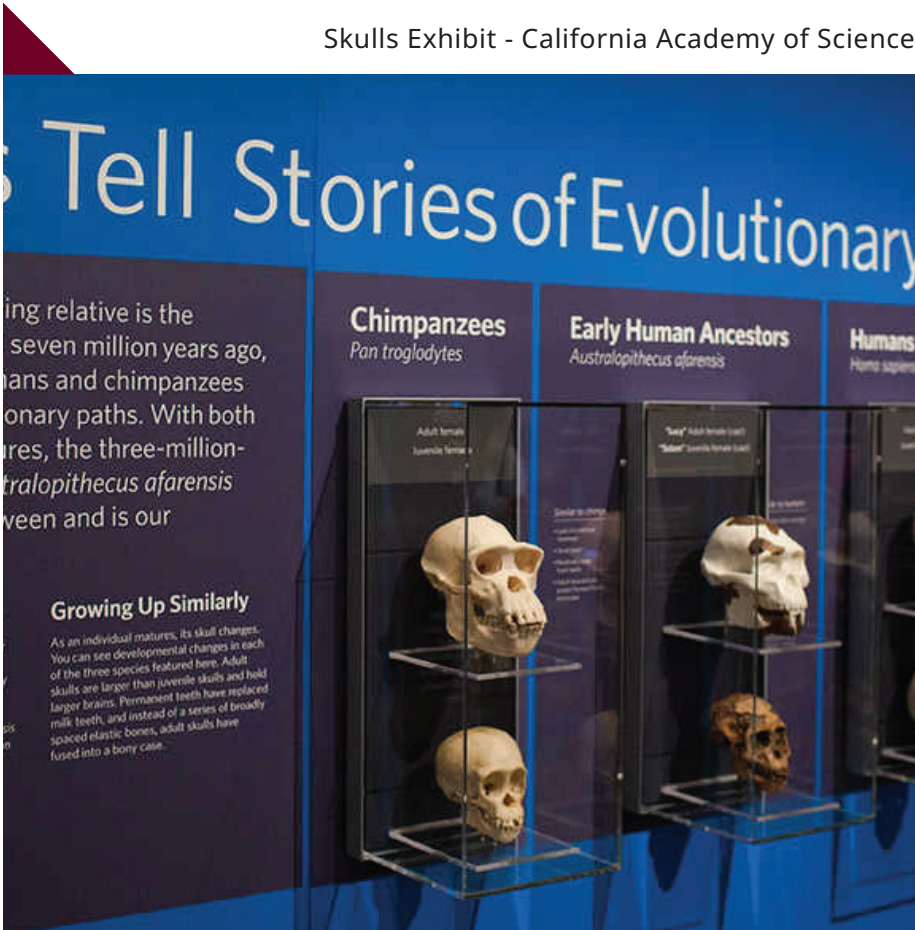
Family visitors

Theme

The beauty and diversity of the Kootenay wilderness

Type

Physical interactive

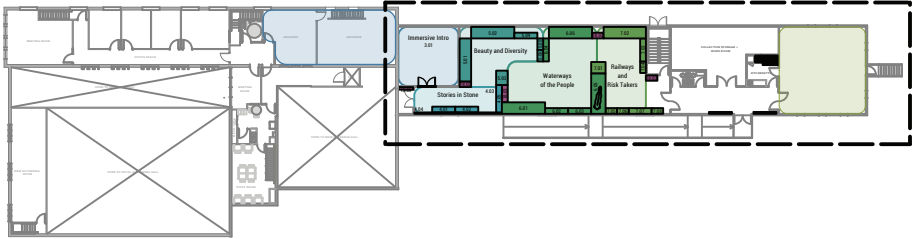


6.0 Waterways of the people

A spacious gallery introduces visitors to the Ktunaxa people. In a space co-developed and curated with the Nation, visitors encounter the Ktunaxa language, both written and spoken, and understand their history and culture. Elements in this space encourage visitors to see the interpretive centre at St. Eugene and other local Indigenous attractions. To be developed in partnership.



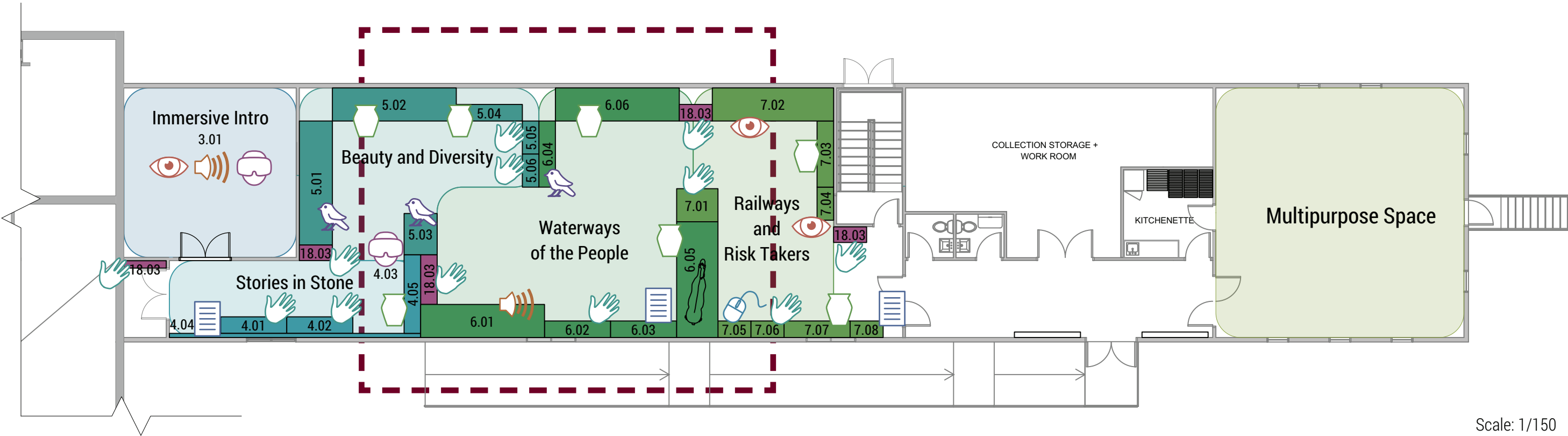
Ktunaxa Nation communities and gathered at St. Eugene Mission Resort



KEY PLAN - Second Floor

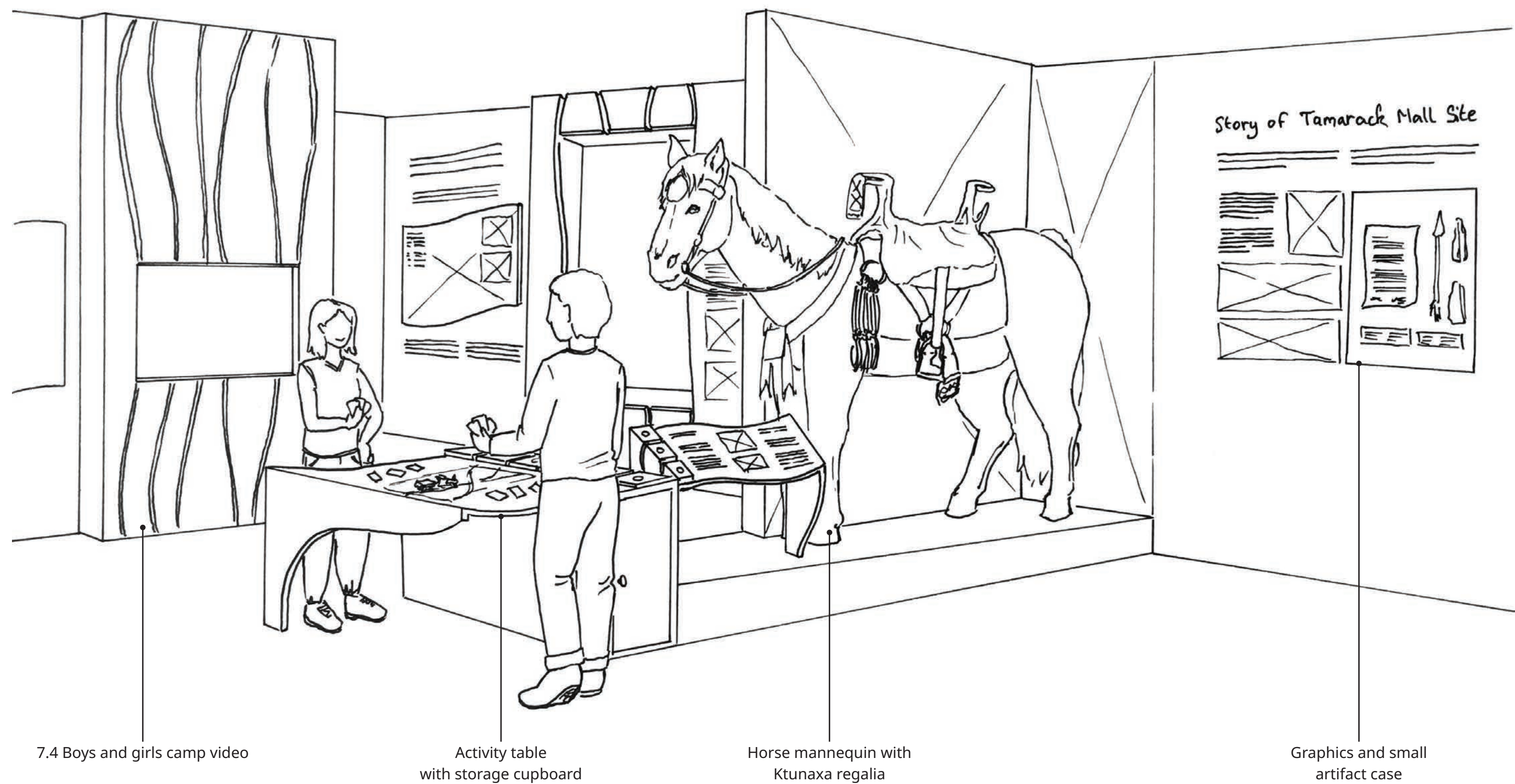
LEGEND

Artifact Display	Immersive Environment
Physical Interactive	Video
Digital Interactive	Audio
Interpretive Panel	Interpretive Playground
Diorama	Feedback Station



Scale: 1/150

7.1 Transportation over time and 6.5 Six legged creatures story



7.4 Boys and girls camp video

Activity table
with storage cupboard

Horse mannequin with
Ktunaxa regalia

Graphics and small
artifact case

6.01 Zone introduction

A large vinyl or graphic panel introduces visitors to Ktunaxa—in the nation's own words and language. A listening station allows visitors to hear elders speak.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Tourist couples

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Interpretive panels

6.02 Leave your baggage at the door

A hands-on activity asks visitors to identify some of their preconceptions and prejudices about Indigenous people and leave them behind, physically, at this station.

Target audience

Family visitors

Local history buffs

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Physical interactive

6.03 Story of Tamarack Mall site

Images and artifacts show that Ktunaxa lived right in what is now the heart of Cranbrook.

Target audience

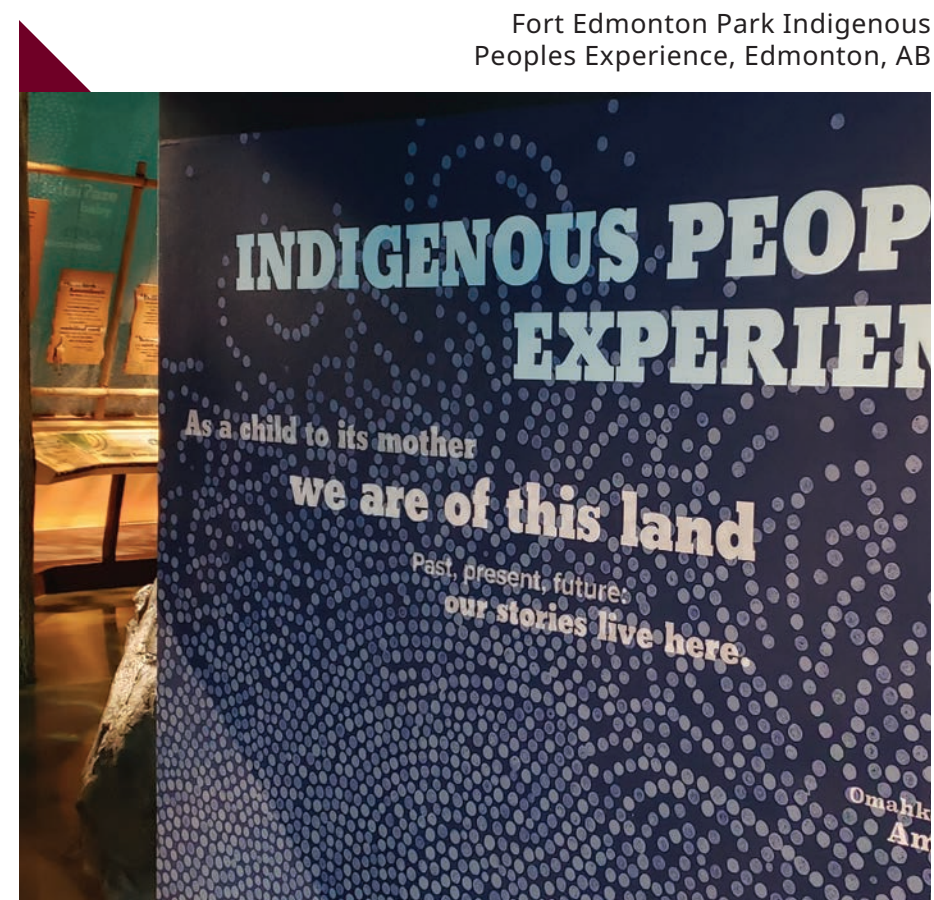
Local history buffs

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Interpretive panels



6.04 Tipis and tulis

Images, models, and Ktunaxa language (as partners deem appropriate) highlight traditional dwellings and the differences between them.

Target audience

- Tourist couples
- Family visitors

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Immersive environment



6.05 Six legged creatures story

Images, audio, and possibly large reproductions tell the story of Ktunaxa becoming some of the first horse riders in the west—and being perceived as six-legged creatures. Text explains the importance of dogs before the horse era.

Target audience

- Local history buffs

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Artifact exhibit



6.06 Sturgeon-nosed canoe exhibit

An authentic sturgeon-nosed canoe is on display, with images and text that talk about this Indigenous technology and how it is used. Images compare it with the build of a modern-style canoe.

Target audience

- Tourist couples
- Local history buffs

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

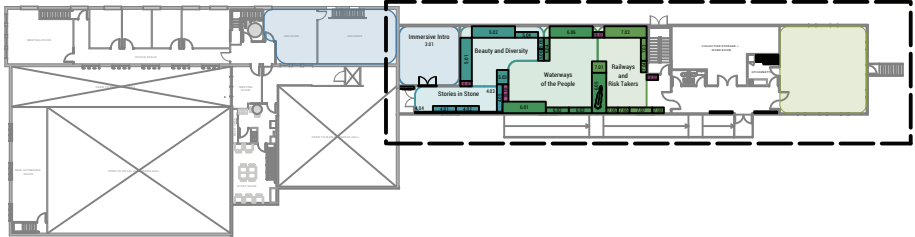
Type

Artifact exhibit



7.0 Railways and risk takers

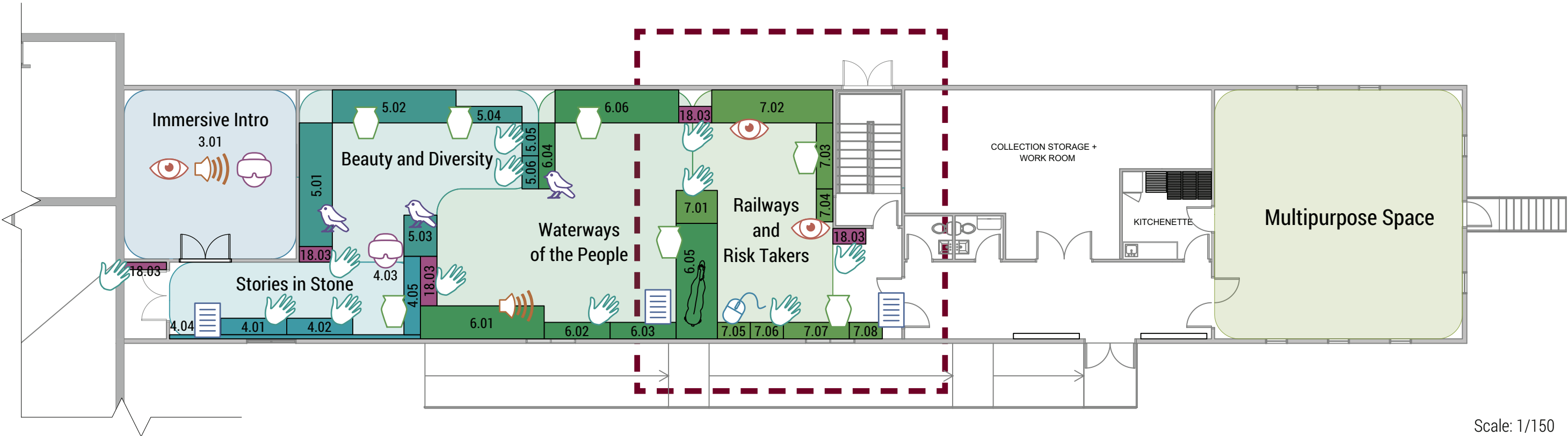
Next, Cranbrook’s early exploration and settlement period comes to life in this gallery telling the story of the railways, the mounted police, early settlers, and the development of early Cranbrook. The story of modern Cranbrook continues in this gallery with images, artifacts, and interactive exhibits that highlight some of the events and larger-than-life personalities that defined Cranbrook through the 20th century.



KEY PLAN - Second Floor

LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



Scale: 1/150

7.01 Transportation over time

An activity table-top station with storage provides a flexible programming spot for docents to showcase props, games, puzzles, and artifacts.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk takers

Type

Physical interactive

7.02 Speaking masks: a day in the life

Mannequins become illuminated and through audio talk about their time as railway workers, farmers, mothers, etc. At least one of these features Ktunaxa history and language.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Digital/analog exhibit

7.03 St. Eugene profile

Interpretive panels tell the story of the colonial initiatives that led to the establishment and operation of St. Eugene residential school. Text encourages visitors to visit the interpretive centre at the site today.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

Artifact exhibit

Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered Exhibition, V & A Museum of Childhood - London UK



Stitching History from the Holocaust at the Jewish Museum Milwaukee



Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories, Heard Museum



7.04 Boys and girls camp video

A video screen highlights the popular boys’ and girls’ camps from the mid-20th century.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Linear video

7.05 Animated newspapers

Early historic newspaper cuttings become animated digital stories, Harry Potter style, highlighting the stories of Cranbrook during the World Wars.

Target audience

Family visitors

Local history buffs

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Digital interactive

7.06 Giant flip book

A person-sized flip book asks the visitor, “Where were you on this day in history?” Visitors explore front-page news through Cranbrook newspapers.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

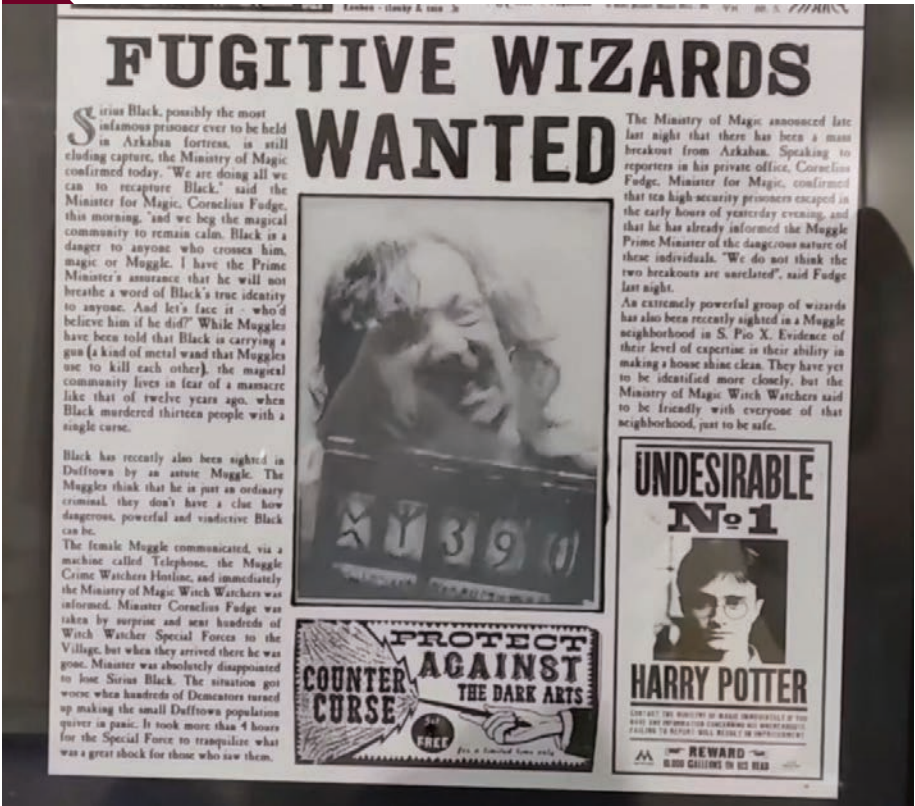
Type

Physical interactive

Audio installations Mesopotamia Inventing Our World at ROM



Animated Newspaper, Harry Potter Film



Power of Poison Exhibit, Indianapolis, Indiana, US



7.07 Chinatown exhibit

Objects and interpretive panels tell the story of Chinatown, Chinese immigration and settlement, and the lived experience of that community.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Artifact exhibit

Chinatown Storytelling Centre, Vancouver BC



7.08 Forgotten communities

Images, maps, and text tell the stories of lost communities once part of a vital regional economy. Wardner, Lumberton, Perry Creek and other towns come to life again through stories.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

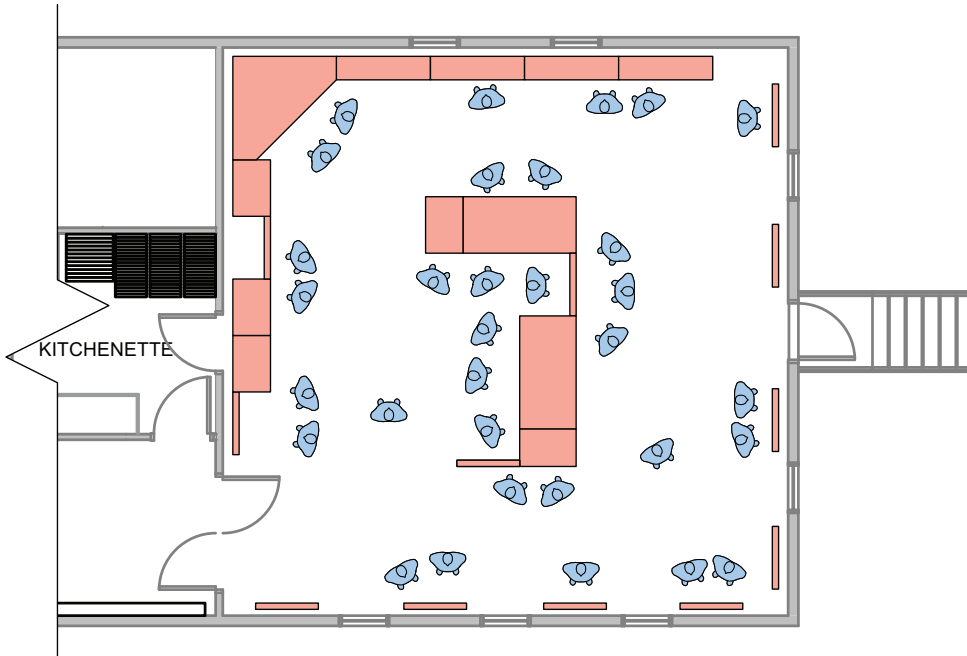
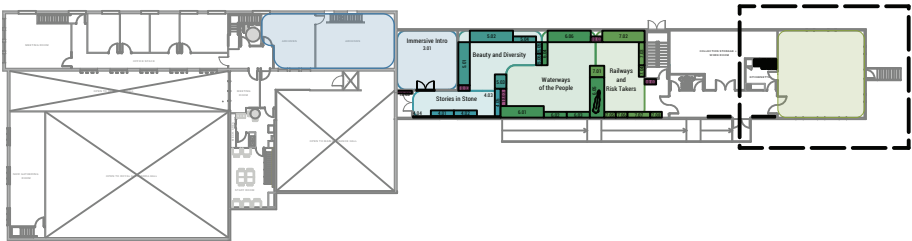
Interpretive panels

Old Town Hotel at Perry Creek, circa 1888, BC Archives



8.0 Multipurpose room

A gallery space within the centre has been dedicated to traveling exhibitions, offering something new to local visitors each time they come. Between touring shows, the room may become an education space, a showcase for artifacts of the week, or a staff working space.



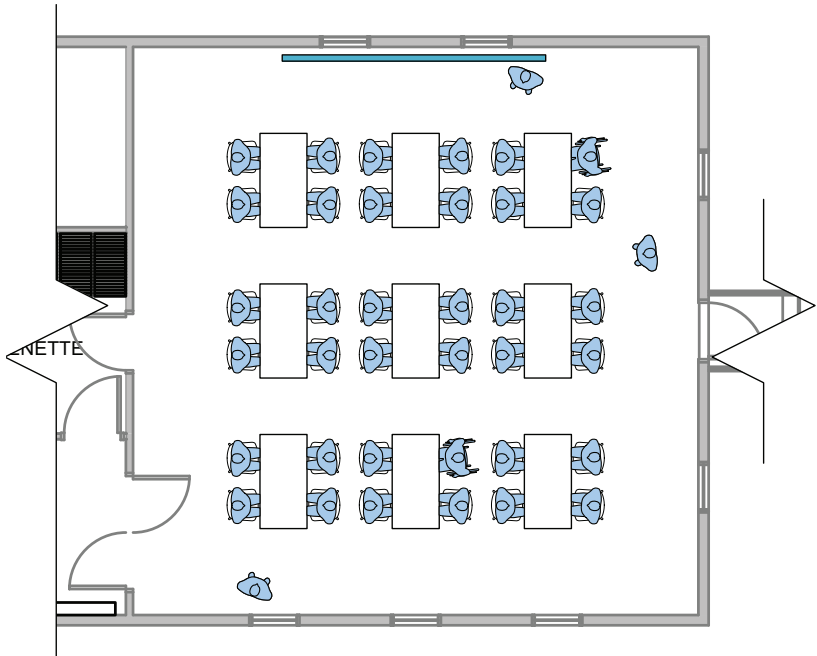
Layout 1: Temporary Exhibit

30 to 35 visitors
Fictional exhibit layout



Layout 2: Theatre or Meeting

60 visitors, 1 presenter

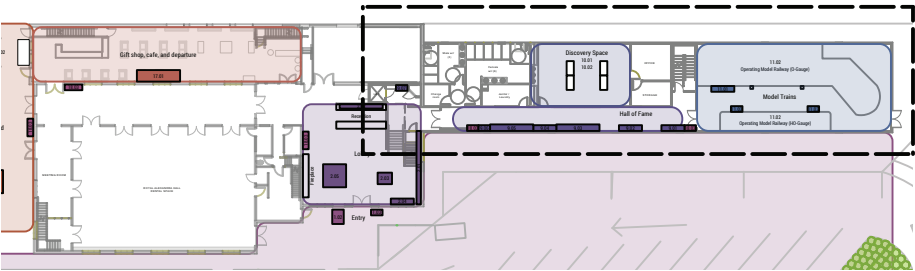


Layout 3: Class

36 visitors, three presenters

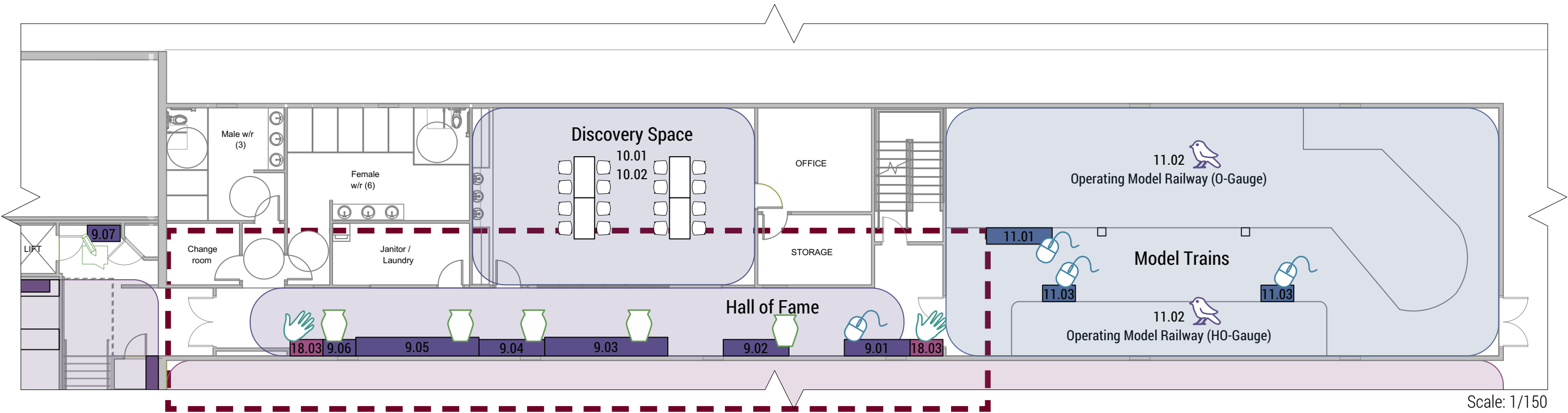
9.0 Hall of fame

A bright and lively corridor space showcases the spirit of Cranbrook through its people and their accomplishments in sports, arts, tourism, business, philanthropy come to life in a hall of fame. Through video, images, and sound (including Ktunaxa language) visitors see Cranbrook’s accomplishments and points of pride—and have their say in the kind of Cranbrook they’d like to see in the future.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

- LEGEND
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



9.5 Hall of fame stories and 9.4 Cranbrook quilt



Quilt display

Artifact case
for changing exhibits

9.01 Animated portraits

Portraits on the wall come to life, sometimes through subtle eye movements, sometimes through characters talking about their lives and accomplishments in the East Kootenay.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Digital interactive

9.02 Cranbrook and the World Wars

Through objects, images, and text, visitors feel pride and connection to those who served in the World Wars.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Artifact exhibit

9.03 Athletic history of Cranbrook

Pennants, medals, sports gear, uniforms, video, and interpretive panels showcase Cranbrook’s athletic triumphs and trials over the years.

Target audience

Family visitors

Local history buffs

Theme

Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

Type

Artifact exhibit

Nice Smile under Classic Portrait by Flower Hakka



National Veterans Museum in Ohio



BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum



9.04 Cranbrook Quilt

One wall features the Cranbrook Quilt and the community effort that led to the creation of this work of documentary folk art.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

Type

Artifact exhibit

9.05 Hall of fame stories

A particular section of the exhibit showcases Cranbrook’s accomplishments: the bugle band, Micheal Plourde (donated fossil collection), Rotary and Lions clubs, Sweethearts, etc. The exhibit contains modular elements that can be updated by staff.

Target audience

Family visitors

Local history buffs

Theme

Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

Type

Linear video

9.06 Recognizing community object donations

A mini rotating exhibit showcases a community donation to the Centre’s collection. Museum labels interpret the object and gratefully acknowledge the donor.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Artifact exhibit



9.07 Feedback station

A feedback station encourages visitors to offer thoughts, memories, and feelings on Cranbrook and its stories. Centre staff vet and post up-to-date comments.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples
- Local history buffs

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

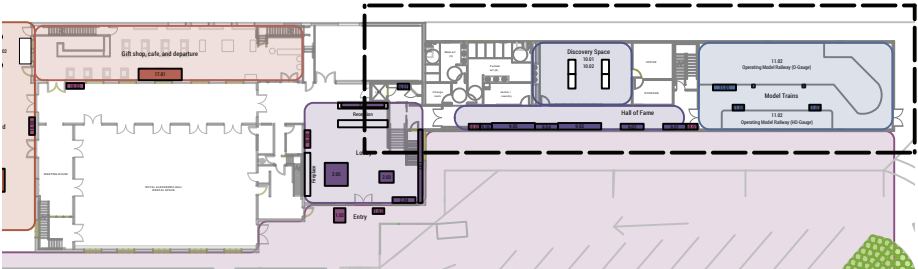
Type

Feedback stations



10.0 Discovery space

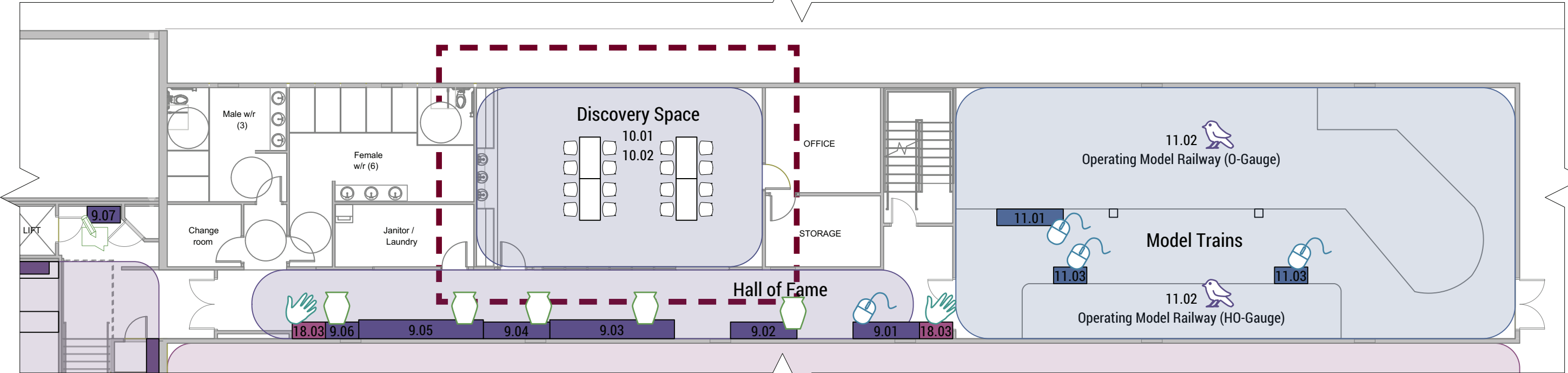
Downstairs, a colourful space with a bright glass wall has been dedicated to activities, games, and educational programming for school groups and families with younger children.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



Scale: 1/150

10.01 Make a creature cast to take home

In a hosted activity, families use casting material to choose, learn about, and create a trilobite or other Cambrian creature of their choice. Alternately, they make casts of dinosaur or other tracks.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Type

Interactive program

10.02 Historical skills workshop

Members and other local folks take part in traditional skills workshops of different kinds: making snowshoes, weaving and sewing, carving, etc.

Target audience

Family visitors

Local history buffs

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

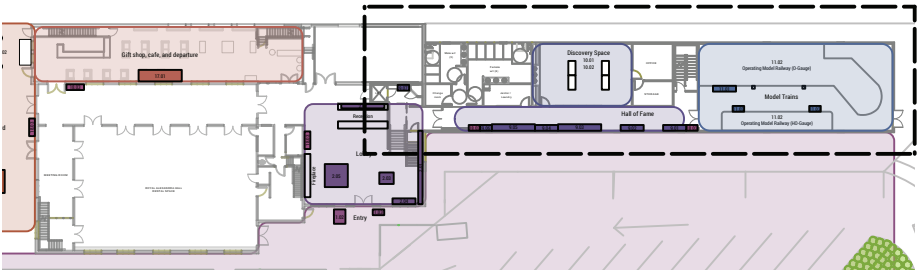
Type

Interactive program



11.0 Model trains

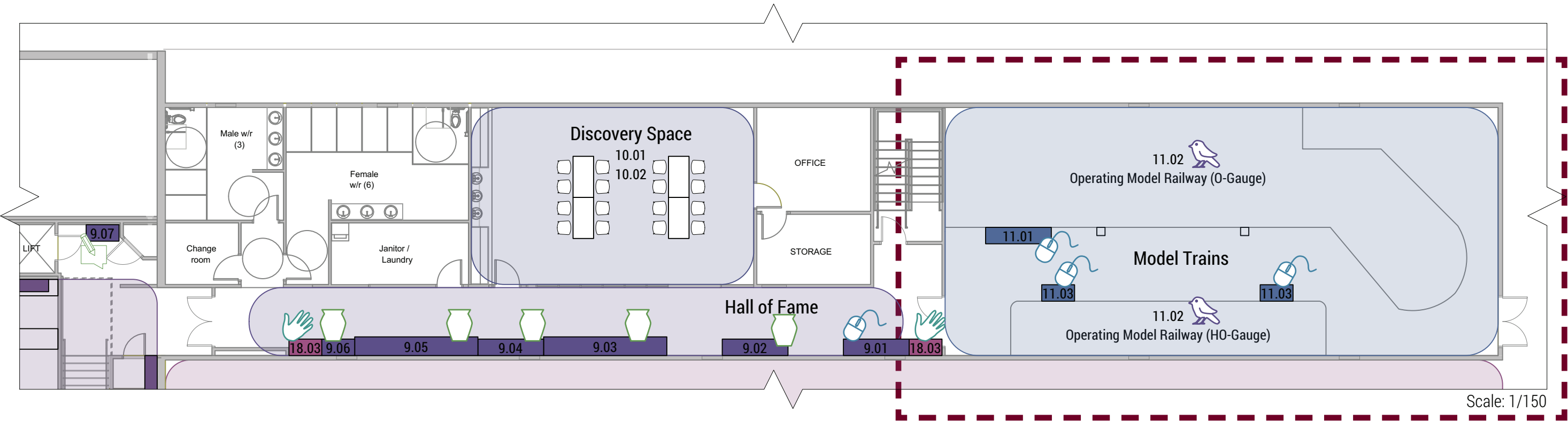
The model train gallery is another must-see part of any trip to the Cranbrook History Centre. Visitors discover that beautiful new lighting has been added—and they can now have close-up views from the front of the moving train, or down into some of the mini-buildings through subtly placed cameras within the model.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |



11.01 Model train views

Clevery-hidden small cameras allow visitors to get new views into the amazing model train environment—including an engineer’s eye view from the front of one of the trains.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Digital interactive

11.02 Model train lighting

New lighting over the model train area brings the model itself into new detail and showcases the workmanship and creativity of the space.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Immersive environment

11.03 Then and now curtain slider

Small digital touch screens feature various spots in Cranbrook today—and ask visitors to slide the images to one side where they reveal the exact spots from the same angle, decades ago. Labels or other info may connect the photo with an element in the Model Railroad.

Target audience

- Local history buffs
- Tourist couples

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Digital interactive

The Canadian Railway Museum, Exporail



Model Train Diorama KC Rail Museum

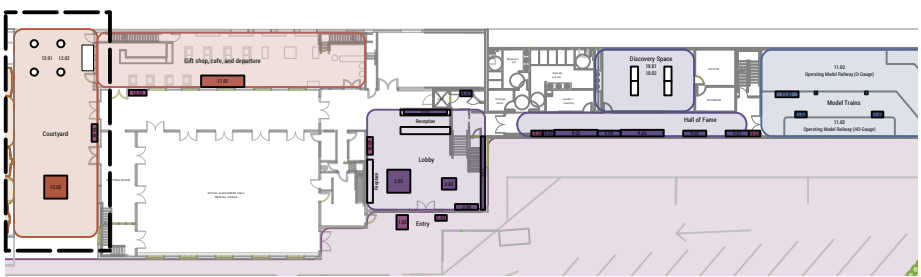
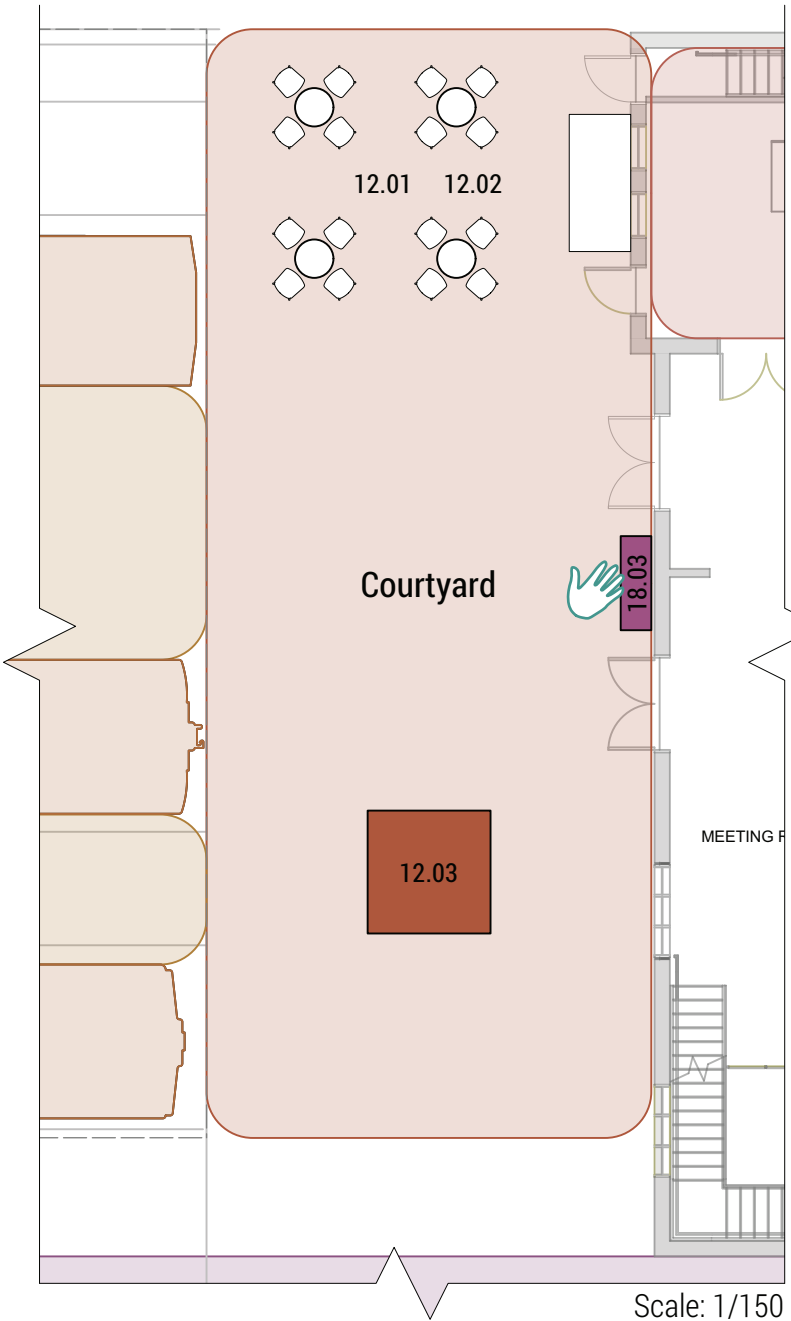


Then and Now Early Telephone Companies, The Spokesman Review



12.0 Courtyard

The outdoor space between the Centre and the historic trains has been remodeled into a beautiful courtyard, with bistro tables and chairs, coffee or food truck style service, a small stage for local performers and speakers, and original artwork commemorating workers who helped create the region’s railways.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |

12.01 Edible Cranbrook experience

A special event partners with a local restaurateur to feature locally-grown delicacies, with Cranbrook History Centre staff providing context around the history and stories behind the agriculture.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

Type

Culinary program

12.02 Courtyard bistro

The space between the centre and the historic trains becomes a charming outdoor bistro space with tables and a small stage.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

Halls of fame: Cranbrook today and tomorrow

Type

Themed infrastructure/amenities

12.03 Railway workers memorial

In the courtyard, a commissioned artwork offers a memorial to railway workers in the region.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Public art



Morchella Market, Facebook

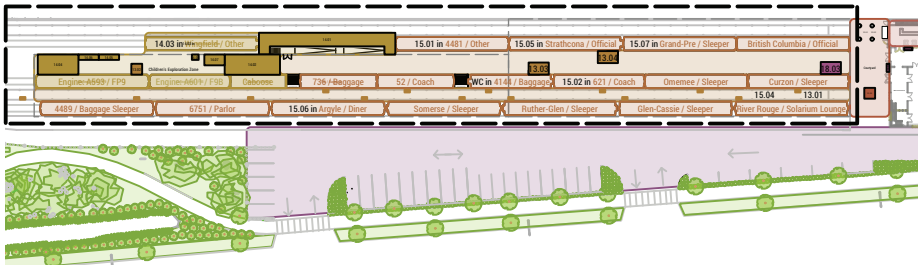


Chinese Railroad Workers Memorial, Toronto, Ontario

13.0 Train platforms

On the platforms between the historic train cars are a series of interpretive panels highlighting the significance of this remarkable train collection. The panels are in a historical sequence, and create a self-guided story walk along the platform.

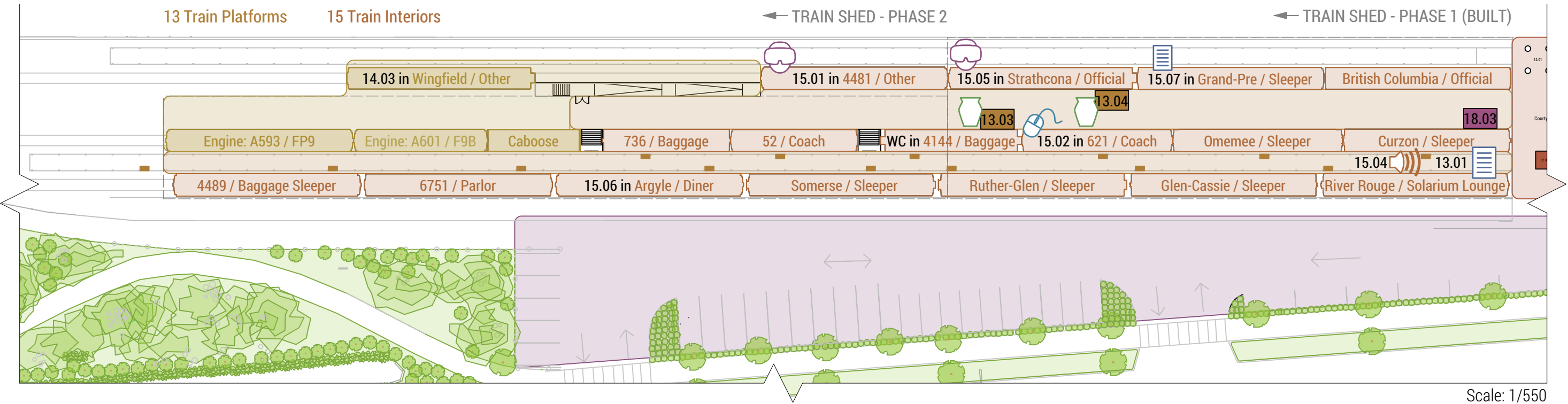
NOTE
The train cars and spacing between them are not to scale.



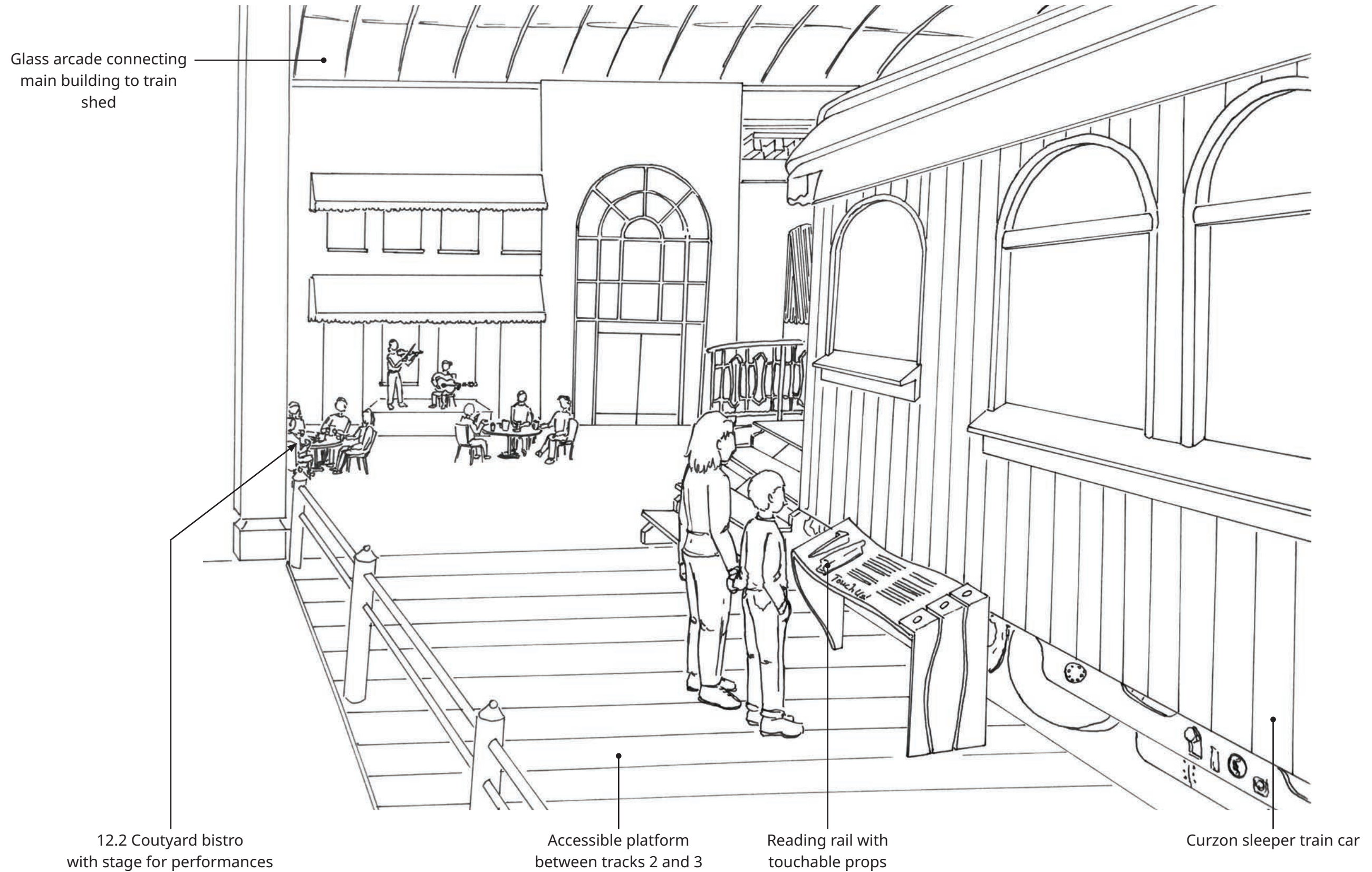
KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

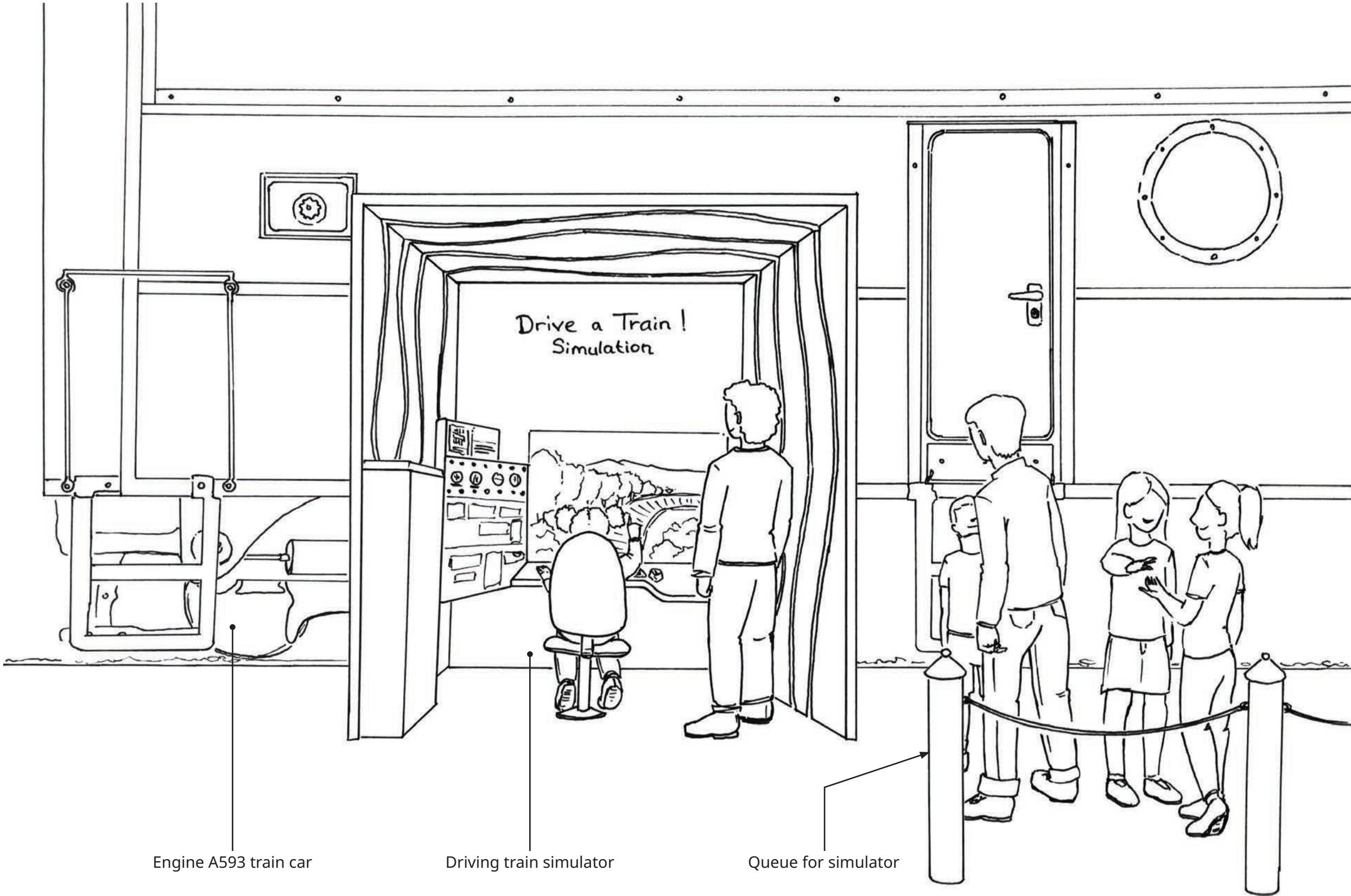
Artifact Display	Immersive Environment
Physical Interactive	Video
Digital Interactive	Audio
Interpretive Panel	Interpretive Playground
Diorama	Feedback Station



13.1 Platform interpretive panels



13.2 Train driving simulation



Engine A593 train car

Driving train simulator

Queue for simulator

13.01 Platform interpretive panels

Interpretive panels provide context for the rail car collection and its history. They begin by exploring the social context—covering topics such as women, class, Black workers, and rail culture—before addressing the railway’s construction, including the seizure of Ktunaxa land and the contribution of Chinese workers. Another panel highlights how the CPR connected the world, and the final panel reflects on the end of the era of luxury rail travel.

Target audience

- Local history buffs
- Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Interpretive panels

13.02 Train driving simulation

In (or near) engine car 593/FP9, an interactive digital screen offers visitors the experience of ‘driving’ a train along some famous routes including those through Cranbrook.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Digital interactive

13.03 Trunks display

The “Worldly Possessions” display will feature a collection of 19th-century passenger trunks, each representing a distinct historical perspective: a Residential School student, a Colonist/ settler, and an immigrant. These trunks will be packed to reflect the belongings typical of each group, offering a glimpse into their journeys and experiences. The display may include large trunks and luggage carts from the museum’s collection.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples

Theme

The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

Type

3D Exhibit



13.04 Elephant escapees

Near the Strathcona car, a reproduction of an elephant skull introduces the story of the circus elephants that once traveled here by rail and escaped in Cranbrook in the early 20th century.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Tourist couples

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

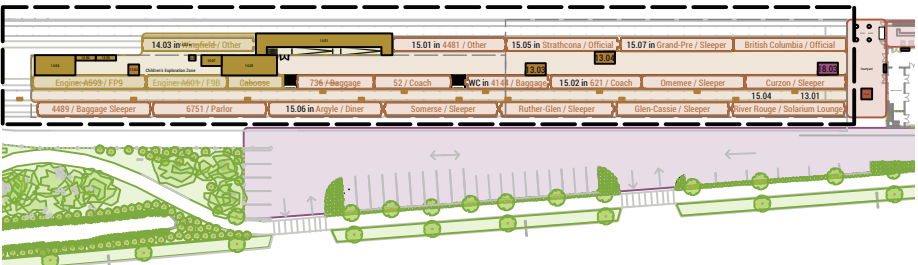
Type

Taxidermy/biofact



14.0 Children's exploration zone

Not far from popular rail cars, a train themed play area beckons families with younger children. A dedicated rail car becomes a mini children's train exhibit and hands-on space, and filling out the zone, an open programming space facilitates family programs and events.

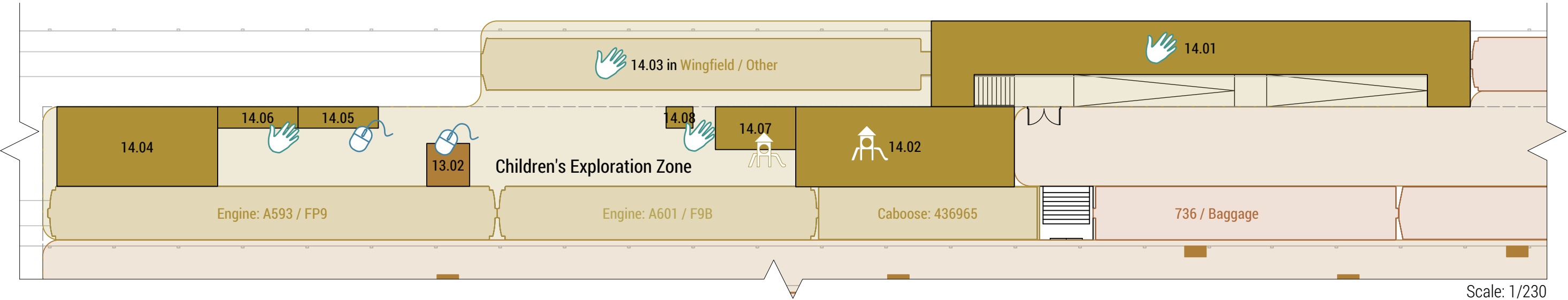


KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

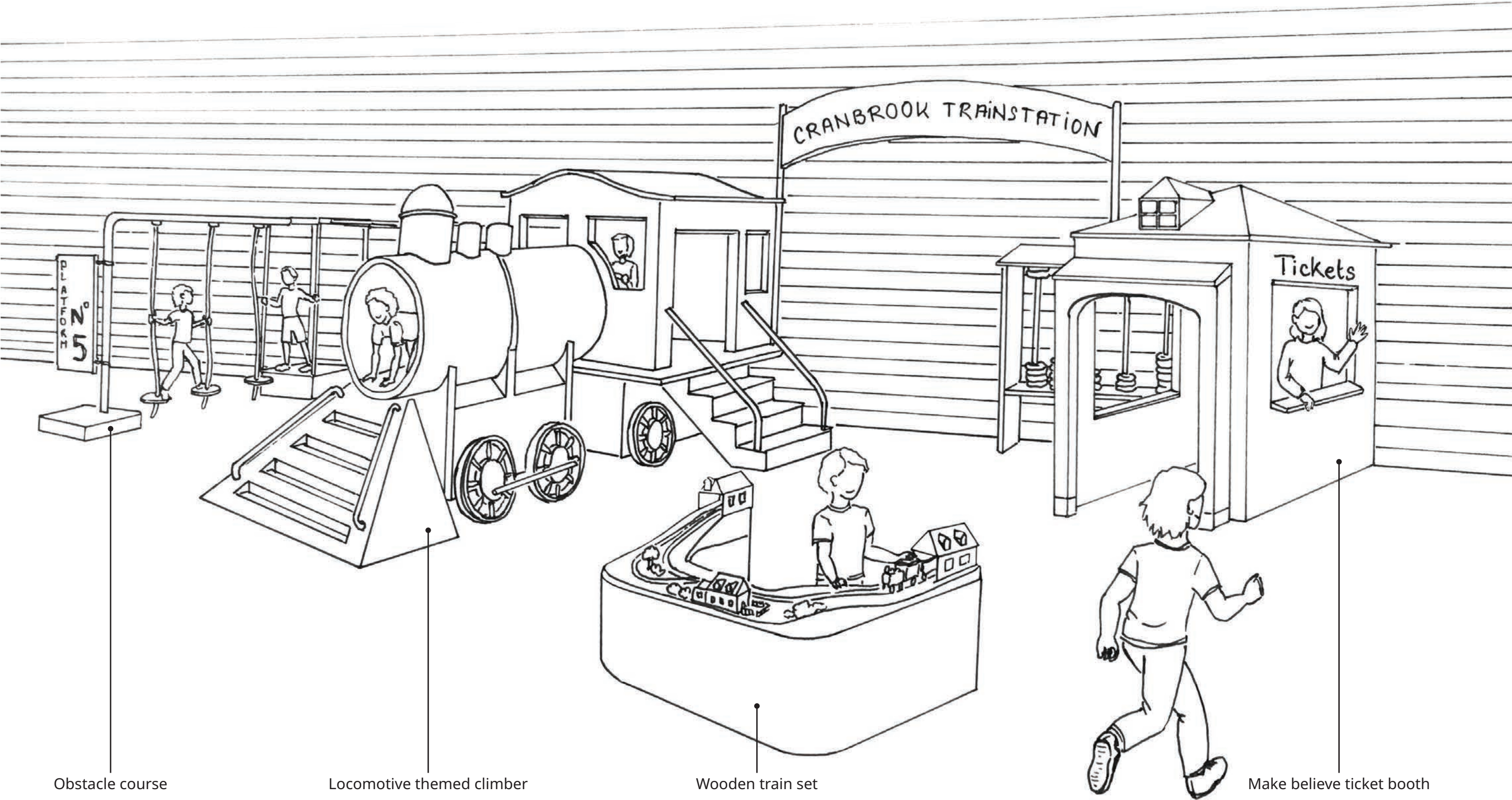
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| Artifact Display | Immersive Environment |
| Physical Interactive | Video |
| Digital Interactive | Audio |
| Interpretive Panel | Interpretive Playground |
| Diorama | Feedback Station |

NOTE
The train cars and spacing between them are not to scale.



Scale: 1/230

14.2 Train-themed playground



Obstacle course

Locomotive themed climber

Wooden train set

Make believe ticket booth

14.01 Viewing platform

An elevated viewing platform with scopes at adult, child, and wheelchair level allow visitors to focus their attention on the original CPR roundhouse across the tracks. A panel, or possibly a small model of the roundhouse, identifies and interprets what the visitors are looking at.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Local history buffs
- Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Hands-on (not digital) exhibit



14.02 Train-themed playground

A train-themed play area lets children burn off steam by sliding, climbing, crawling, and generally exploring stylized rail cars, engines, cabooses and other railway-related items. Nearby, parents have a spot to rest and watch the kids play.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Interpretive playground



14.03 Children’s rail car

The Wingfield rail car has been outfitted as a mini-children’s museum, with interactive objects, pictures, interactive items, and simple digital displays to help them understand the area’s railway history.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Children’s zone



14.04 Programming space

A programming space offers a versatile environment for birthday parties, education programs, presentations, and other events.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Themed program space



14.05 Photo booth

A green-screen photo booth, coupled with character dressup costumes, allows families to situate themselves in a variety of historic local settings—and send a photo to their friends.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Digital interactive



14.06 Dressup station

A dressup station allows young people to imagine they are early historic figures like railway workers, pioneer mothers and fathers, explorers, miners, etc.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Dressup and photo



14.07 Children’s play area

Through felt boards, building blocks, toy train sets large and small, a story corner, and other hands-on activities young children encounter the museum’s themes while they play.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Interpretive playground



Mini Train Town, Children’s Museum of Sonoma County

14.08 Whack-a-pothole

Young visitors and their adults cooperate in keeping a “road” playing surface pothole-free. Potholes drop out of the surface of the road in jigsaw-puzzle shapes. Visitors must find the right piece to plug the pothole before another one emerges.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Physical interactive

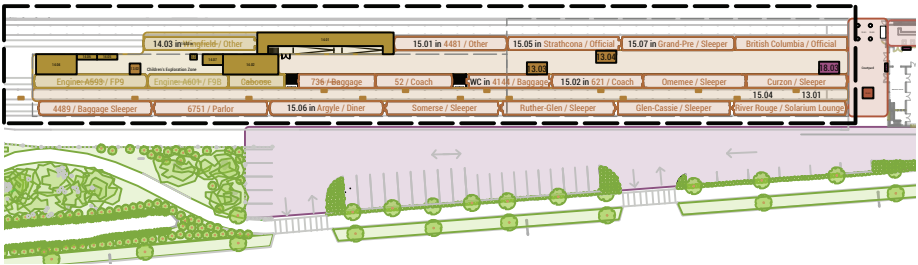


Whackamole

15.0 Train interiors

The interior of the historic trains remains a highlight of the visit, offered as part of a guided tour with the Centre’s talented guides. New experiences surprise the visitor with augmented reality views of some of the cars; haunting historic sounds and voices in surprising spots here and there; and more.

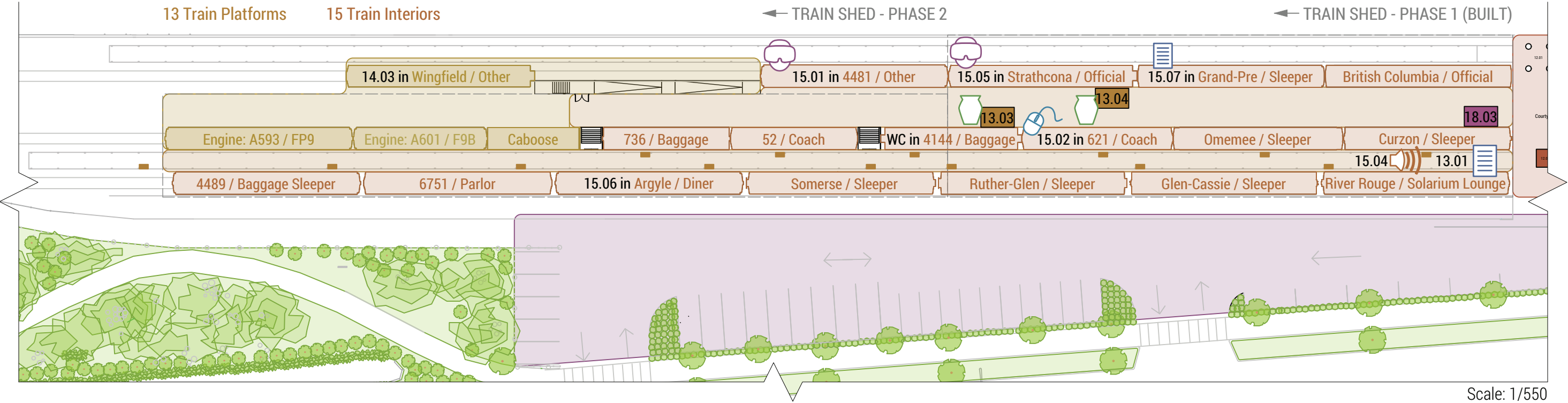
NOTE
The train cars and spacing between them are not to scale.



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

Artifact Display	Immersive Environment
Physical Interactive	Video
Digital Interactive	Audio
Interpretive Panel	Interpretive Playground
Diorama	Feedback Station



Scale: 1/550

15.01 Accessible rail car

Car 4481 has been restored in such a way that it is universally accessible. Changes include an extension to the Heritage Railcar Preservation Building.

Target audience

- Family visitors
- Local history buffs

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Immersive environment

15.02 Time travel train car

Car 621 has been converted into an immersive augmented reality or projection experience, where guests sit as passengers and witness eons of change pass by them through the train’s ‘windows’.

Target audience

- Tourist couples
- Family visitors

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Digital interactive



15.03 Specialized train tours

The Centre’s interpretive staff use their talents and specialized knowledge to create unique historic rail car tours on specific themes, available on request, or at certain times of day in busy season.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Guided tours

15.04 Audio effects in train

As visitors circulate through the historic train cars, subtle sounds seem to whisper in their ears—and feature voices, ambient sounds, and historic music.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Sound ambience

15.05 Explorable train car

The Strathcona car has a “please touch” sign, with drawers filled with faux artifacts, letters, clothes, books, and other items that simulate a luxury passenger’s luggage.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Immersive environment

Specialized train tours, Toronto Railway Museum



Specialized train tours, Fraser Valley Heritage Rail



Indiana State Museum



15.06 Thematic high tea

The Argyle Car features high tea experience, with decor, menu, and perhaps costumes inspired by the luxury rail car era.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Culinary program



15.07 Restoration exhibit

The Grand Pré car features images and stories about how this and other rail cars have been painstakingly restored.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Type

Interpretive panels



16.0 Archives

The Archives are open for visit by appointment, or for drop-in visits on busy days where staff have curated a table top exhibit on topical themes—and chat with visitors about the stories and images featured.

16.01 Archives feature weekly

Each week an item from the archives is placed on display and written up as a feature on the Centre’s website.

Target audience

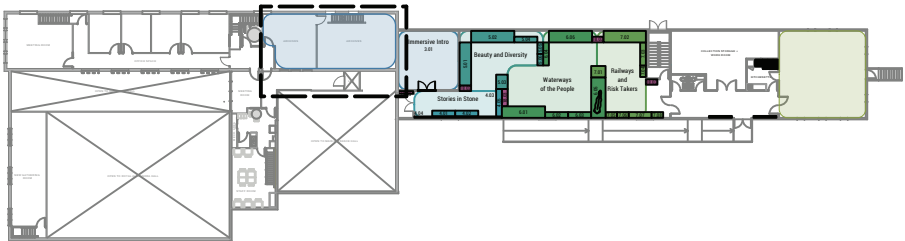
Local history buffs

Theme

Industry and change in the 20th century
Railways and risk-takers

Type

Artifact exhibit



KEY PLAN - Second Floor

Artefact of the Week 2021 - 26. Canada Plaque,
Albert County Museum & RB Bennett Centre

Artefact of the Week 2021

#26. Canada Plaque

Date: 1827
Location: Hopewell Cape, N.B.



This embossed copper plaque in a wooden frame commemorates 60 years of Canadian confederation in 1927, a relatively unusual time-marking celebration. This is due to the fact that plans by the Canadian government to hold a major event to mark the 50th anniversary of Confederation in 1917 were overshadowed by the First World War.

17.0 Gift shop and departure

As visitors spend time in the cafe, they see an innovative kind of 'guest book' in the form of a nail-board weaving activity. Each person, with their own thread, connects where they are from, what kind of group they're travelling with, and which exhibit area was their favourite.

17.01 Identity weaving

As visitors spend time in the cafe, an exhibit on the wall invites them to weave a strand of yarn among different posts that indicate their place of origin, their age, their feelings about the exhibit, etc. The end result is a large community weaving.

Target audience

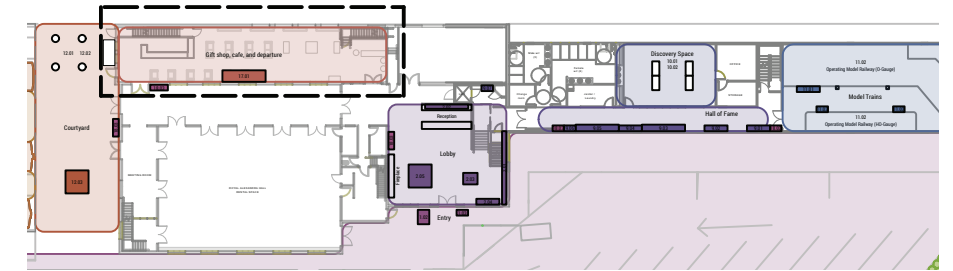
Tourist couples
Family visitors

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)











Type

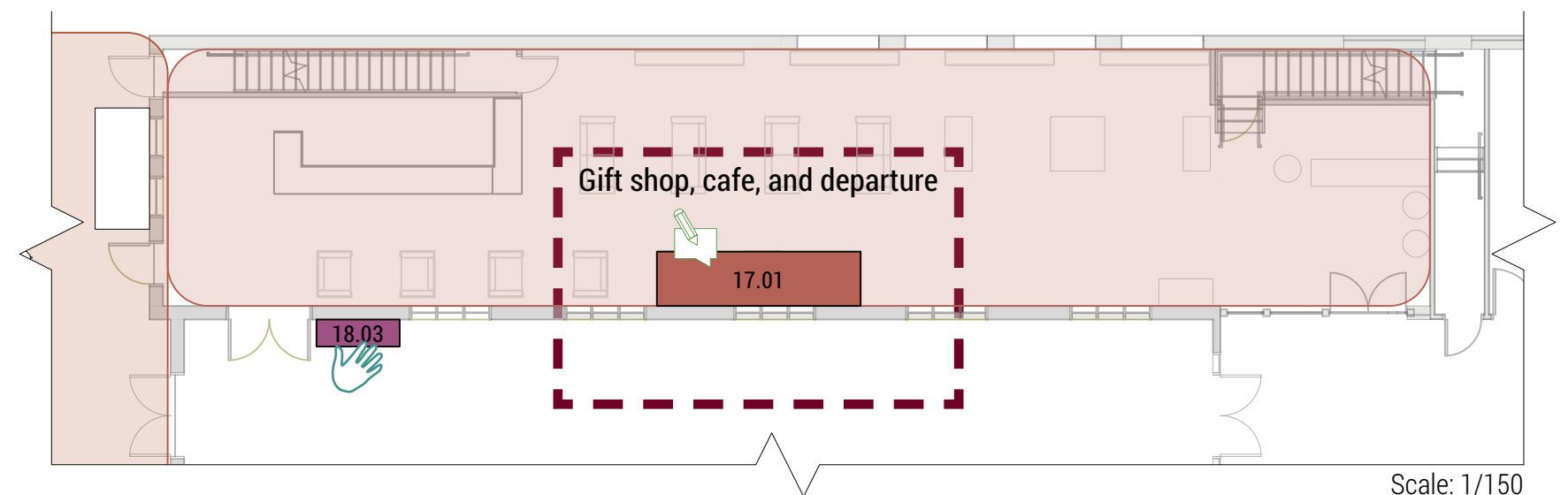
Feedback stations



KEY PLAN - First Floor

LEGEND

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|---|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Artifact Display |  | Immersive Environment |
|  | Physical Interactive |  | Video |
|  | Digital Interactive |  | Audio |
|  | Interpretive Panel |  | Interpretive Playground |
|  | Diorama |  | Feedback Station |



18.0 Cross-zone experiences

This zone includes visitor experiences that have the potential to cross multiple zones.

18.01 Treasure hunt

Families with young children pick up a treasure hunt at the front desk and discover hidden facts, images, and objects throughout the gallery to check off their list.

Target audience

Family visitors

Theme

(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Treasure hunt

18.02 First-person interpretation

At select special events, centre interpreters circulate not only costume, but in first-person character representing different eras and places in the region’s history.

Target audience

Family visitors

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers

Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

First-person programming

Treasure Hunt at the Louvre



Boston Field Trips, Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum Group Tours



18.03 3D timeline

A tactile 3D timeline attached to the wall or the floor leads visitors from one area to the next as they read prominent dates and events in the community’s history.

Target audience

Local history buffs

Theme

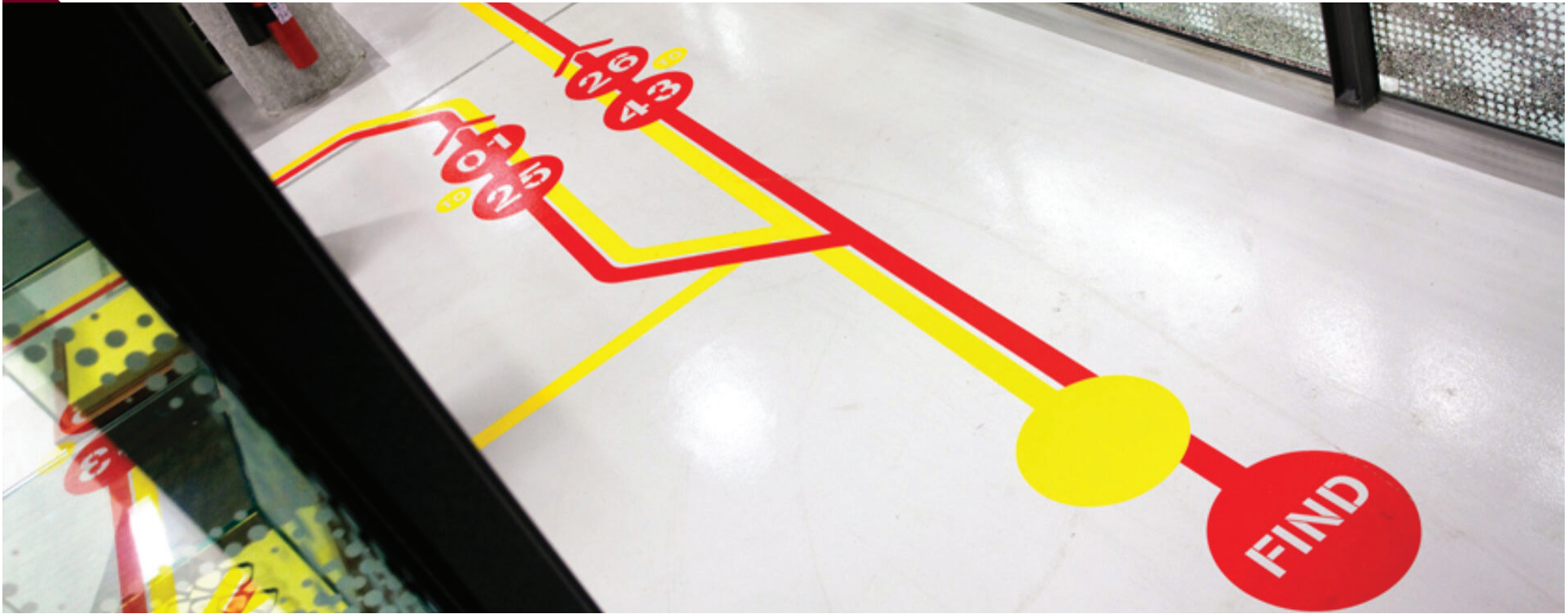
(multiple themes and main theme)

Type

Timeline



University of Technology in Haymarket Sydney



San Fransisco Museum of Craft Design

18.04 Thematic wayfinding

With the newly-expanded galleries comes a thematic wayfinding system, with clear directional signs designed in keeping with the historic periods of the Centre’s stories. Trains, trilobites, historic tools, and other elements may show up in the shapes and colours of the way finding signs.

Target audience

Tourist couples

Theme

Railways and risk-takers
Industry and change in the 20th century

Type

Thematic wayfinding

Dinosaur Gallery, Wayfinding Graphics



Exhibit design approach

An exhibit design approach offers guidelines for the physical manifestation of an interpretive plan. This approach will inform any future exhibit design developments undertaken by the Cranbrook History Centre.

A complete design approach includes suggestions for creating a welcoming environment for visitors, how to organize the experience and help visitors make sense of what activities they can participate in, defining the location of interpretive elements throughout the space in a meaningful manner, recommending a particular pacing and flow to the visitor experience, ensuring a comfortable distribution of media and types of interactivity, and curating the tone and pacing of the experience.

Space planning considerations have been addressed in the Exhibit Zone section of this report. The rest of the Exhibit Design Approach will focus on recommendations for aesthetics and accessibility.

Visual language of exhibits

With a design approach, we consider the aesthetic and experiential aspects of the exhibition:

- What are the physical materials and finishes that help define a sense of place
- What are the core characteristics of the space that helps to tell the story
- What are the media and display techniques that are appropriate to the content

The future exhibit gallery at the Cranbrook History Centre will be a welcoming, dynamic space featuring vibrant, organic designs and numerous hands-on interactive elements. It should be clean and well-structured, providing clear cues to visitors about the potential experiences they can engage with. Digital interactives and video will be used strategically to transport visitors back through time or to hear stories from others in their community. The experience will be punctuated with moments of theatricality and drama that provide context for rich displays of the Centre’s collection of historic images and artifacts.

The exhibits should be an elegant and eclectic reflection of materials and styles from the thematic framework, while clearly being a contemporary product:

- A colour palette based on the environment of the East Kootneys - mountains, lakes and forests - with possible stone accents
- Wood and heavy steel elements associated with the industrial heritage in the area
- The materials and craftsmanship that is evident in the historic train car collection - beautiful wood inlays, brass hardware, luxury fabrics
- A nod to the outdoor recreational scene with sporty type, active photography and dynamic line work that invokes the relationship of the City to the river



Wood / Heavy Steel
Inlays / Brass / Luxury Fabrics

Colours
Sky / Lake / Forest
Mountain ochre / Flower colours

Precedent Images

Accessibility recommendations

Accessibility is crucial to all aspects of the visitor experience, but a few critical barriers that significantly impact visitors at the Cranbrook History Centre: the site's elongated nature, wayfinding difficulties, elevator restrictions, and accessibility limitations of the train collection. In this section, we make some practical and actionable recommendations.

Navigating the site

The site's elongated nature poses some challenges. The Cranbrook History Centre spans three buildings; the main building, the historic CPR Freight Shed, and the extension of the train shed. Together, the completed buildings will span approximately 280 meters (930 feet), exceeding the length of a standard city block in Cranbrook. This distance can be challenging for visitors to travel by foot. This distance is even greater when adding in distances visitors must walk from the parking lot, which is designed to run the length of the building site. [Include a site plan with this section]

Offering varied seating throughout the buildings will give visitors opportunities to rest. Seating options should include designs with and without armrests and backs, as well as arrangements for individuals and small groups. When developing the architectural plans for the future train shed expansion, the History Centre could also consider a secondary entrance near the train shed to shorten travel distances for visitors who have restricted mobility. The Centre should ensure level, obstacle-free pathways in the parking lot and adjacent entrances, eliminating uneven ground and tripping hazards to improve safety.

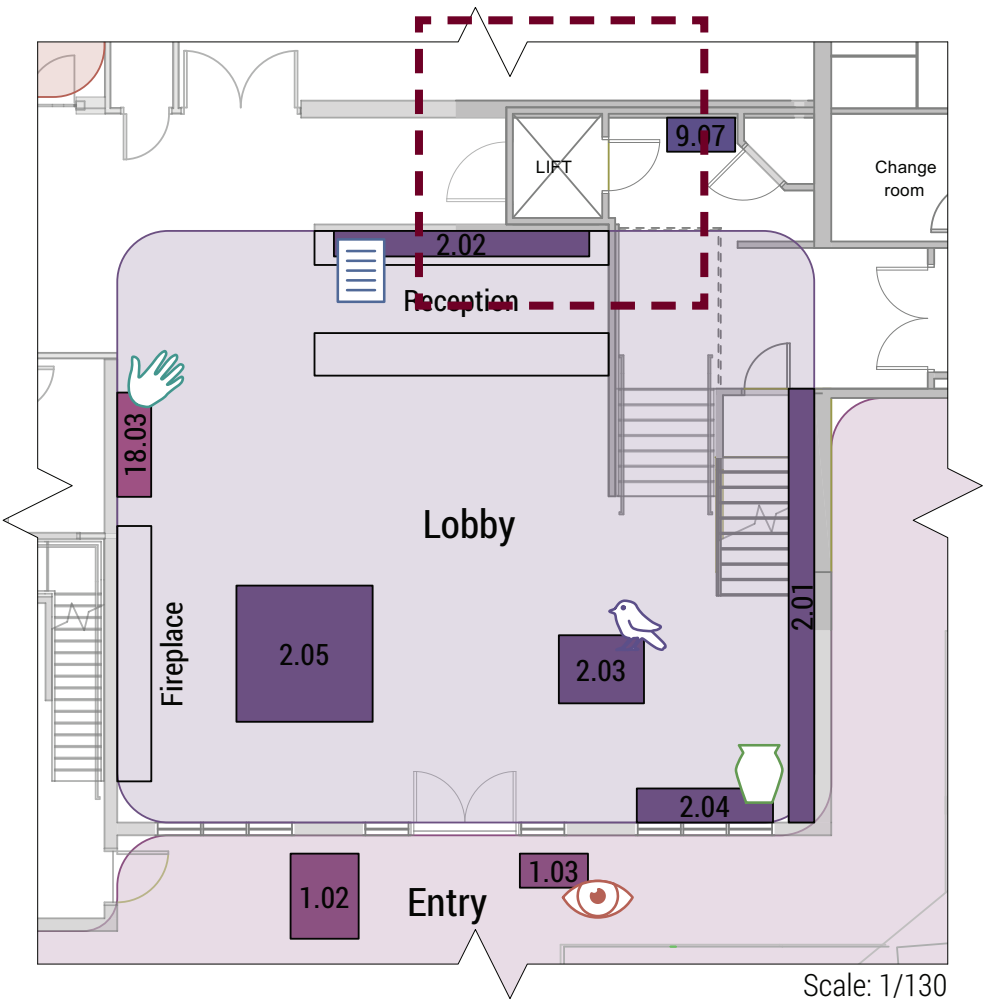
New wayfinding

The distributed nature of the site also poses some wayfinding challenges, with offerings on different floors in different buildings. In addition to staff providing verbal directions to visitors, a comprehensive wayfinding program will help visitors to:

- identify where they are in the site
- choose a destination
- chart a path to the destination
- confirm they are on the correct path
- confirm that they have arrived at the desired destination
- return to their original location
- Information, directional, and location signs should also meet general accessibility guidelines for visibility, legibility, and logical presentation.

Elevator upgrades

An additional accessibility challenge for visitors and staff is the existing elevator. Although the elevator can technically travel to each floor of the building, a key is required to operate it, which must be obtained from a staff member. The added effort required to gain access to the elevator creates a barrier to movement between floors. When developing the architectural plans for the future expansion of the permanent gallery and the lobby renovation, the History Centre should consider options to upgrade the elevator, allowing visitors and staff to travel to the updated exhibits in the historic freight shed unimpeded. While digging an elevator pit under the building would be costly, the accessibility benefits of this upgrade would be substantial. It is also recommended that the existing text on the elevator doors saying "Handicapped lift" be simply changed to "Elevator."



Improving historic train access

The final challenge addressed in this report is restricted access to the historic train interiors, limiting the number of guests able to participate in future self-guided tours. Climbing up the steep stairs into the trains is difficult for many visitors. While efforts have been made to put in platforms along the 1st track, once inside the trains, the doorways are too narrow for mobility devices to be used. Improving the view into the cars from the platform outside would provide an alternate method for visitors to participate in this experience.

There are trade-offs between preserving historical authenticity versus improving accessibility. The modifications required to make the train collection accessible to mobility devices would cause irreversible damage. However, the History Centre has identified one car that can be modified: Baggage Car 4481. This car is currently located far from the main building on Track 1. It could be relocated to Track 3 to shorten travel distances for visitors. A ramp up to the entrance level of the car will be required. The ramp could also serve as a viewing platform for the CPR Roundhouse and provide stroller-friendly access to the children's exhibits in the Wingfield car.

Adopting accessibility standards for exhibits

In addition to these recommendations, it is best practice to adopt universal accessibility principals when developing the future exhibits. There are not many established standards for the accessible design of exhibits, and the recommendations change frequently, leading to standards that are out of date.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date standards we're aware of were published in 2018 by Ingenium, Canada's National science centre. The Cranbrook History Centre should consider adopting this National standard for future exhibit design work.

Examples of accessibility considerations for future exhibit development activities:

1. Physical accessibility

- Wheelchair accessibility: Ensure all pathways, exhibit spaces,

and interactive elements are wheelchair accessible, including ramps and doorways wide enough for all mobility devices.

- Flooring: Choose non-slip, smooth flooring materials that are comfortable for all users, including those with mobility aids.
- Accessible restrooms: Ensure that restrooms are accessible, with adequate space for mobility devices and appropriate features like grab bars.

2. Visual accessibility

- High contrast visuals: Use high contrast between text and backgrounds to assist visitors with low vision. Ensure text size can be adjusted or offered in large print.
- Tactile elements: Integrate tactile exhibits (e.g., braille labels, textured surfaces) for visually impaired visitors to engage with the content.
- Graphics at reading height: Ensure all graphic panels and text are placed at appropriate heights for easy viewing and reading by visitors of varying abilities, including those in wheelchairs.

3. Auditory accessibility

- Hearing loop systems: Install hearing loops or provide assistive listening devices to help visitors with hearing impairments engage with audio content, or for interacting with staff at the reception desk.
- Control: Allow users to adjust playback and volume levels on multimedia or interactive exhibits.
- Multilingual and captioned audio: Provide captioning, sign language interpretation, and multilingual audio for video and interactive content to accommodate diverse audiences.

4. Sensory accessibility

- Sensory overload considerations: Avoid overwhelming sensory inputs that may be discomforting for visitors with sensory sensitivities or neurodiverse conditions.
- Quiet spaces: Designate quiet areas for visitors to rest and recover from sensory overload.
- Scent-free policy: Minimize strong scents

or chemical odors in the exhibit space to accommodate those with scent sensitivities.

5. Interactive accessibility

- Easy-to-use interactives: Ensure all interactive exhibits are easy to use for people with varying levels of dexterity and strength, with clear instructions. Key elements, like touchable items, should be within reach. Visitors should be able to manipulate interactives with a closed fist.
- Multiple interaction modes: Provide different modes of interaction to accommodate diverse abilities.

6. Cognitive accessibility in interpretive writing

- Clarity: Cognitive accessibility ensures interpretive content engages diverse audiences through clear and concise writing. A readability level around Grade 8, measured with tools like the Flesch-Kincaid index, helps achieve this by using short sentences and simple language to explain complex topics.
- Structure: Interpretive writing often includes a short, engaging title (5–8 words), a clear subtitle summarizing the main idea, and concise body text (80–90 words) that supports the theme. Longer content is divided with subtitles, avoiding text blocks over 200 words.
- Plain language: Effective writing uses analogies instead of precise numbers (e.g., “as tall as a 25-storey building”) and avoids acronyms, which can create barriers. Plain language and relatable examples make content accessible and memorable.

By considering accessibility during the exhibit design phases, the visitor experience can be enhanced for all audiences.

Next steps for accessibility improvements

These recommendations are made from a visitor experience perspective and should not be considered a substitute for a full accessibility audit. Next steps for accessibility improvements could include: complete an accessibility audit, assess the future costs and set priorities as part of a phased implementation strategy.

Next steps for implementation

This section lays out a practical path for implementing visitor experience improvements at the Cranbrook History Centre. It outlines how infrastructure improvements set the stage for future interpretive experiences, organizes the work into potential phases based on CAMAL's priorities, identifies key project dependencies that affect the sequence of work, and points out opportunities to bundle construction activities across zones to maximize efficiency and minimize disruptions to visitors.

CAMAL will need to undertake a study to determine the extent of closures required to maintain safety during these major projects.

Infrastructure requirements

Before implementing all the visitor experience improvements described in this report, multiple infrastructure projects must first be completed to prepare the site. CAMAL has already begun identifying and tackling some of these improvements. It is not within the scope of this project to identify timelines or budgets for infrastructure improvements. These projects are mentioned only to show how they are required to address CAMAL's visitor experience priorities.

During the implementation of these larger infrastructure projects, CAMAL may wish to hire a project manager to handle the day-to-day work on site, allowing staff to continue managing public-facing operations elsewhere on the site.

Self-guided train tour

To support the self-guided train tour in Zones 11 to 15, it is necessary to extend and enclose the existing train shed. This will protect the train car collection from further exposure to the elements and improve visitor safety with the installation of boardwalks, power, lighting, and accessibility upgrades — all necessary to support the installation of interior-grade interpretive exhibits.

Significant effort has already been spent designing the building shell and raising funds for construction. Phase 1 of the train shed is complete, and plans are in place to finish the remaining construction. The architectural plans for Phase 2 should be revisited to reflect the updated visitor experience concept.

Courtyard connector

To support the development of Zone 12 (courtyard) and improve seasonal accessibility between the train shed and the main building, the architectural design of the completed shed must allow for a future connection between the two buildings.

Once enclosed, the courtyard space may also need to function as a secondary entrance for special events. This may require upgrades to the exterior walkways connecting the courtyard to the parking lot to ensure safe and accessible visitor flow. The architectural team should also consider the indoor requirements such as a mobile admissions counter, visitor queuing, plus special event equipment and related infrastructure.

New exhibition spaces

To make way for new exhibits elsewhere on site, it is necessary to expand the usable space within existing buildings. CAMAL has undertaken preliminary architectural studies to address current deficiencies that prevent full occupancy of the upper floors of the main building and the historic Freight Shed. This report recommends additional architectural modifications that should be incorporated into the plans. Further coordination will be required during future exhibit design development to confirm wall layouts, power, data, lighting, and finishes for floors, walls, and ceilings.

Access to multipurpose room

For visitors to enjoy programs or traveling exhibits in the Multipurpose Room (Zone 8), base building improvements related to the legal occupancy permitting process must be completed, as well improvements to at least one of three potential access points:

- Main access: Through the adjacent areas in Zones 3 to 7.
- Secondary access: Via the staircase from the model train area.
- Third access: Via an exterior staircase or ramp from the parking lot, as shown in the future building update plans.

New access points should be designed to accessibility standards.

Phases and sequence of work

The implementation of the Cranbrook History Centre visitor experience improvements will proceed in accordance to institutional priorities, as funding becomes available and as staff capacity allows.

A project phasing table has been developed to guide implementation. This table should be used as a planning tool to prioritize work, track dependencies across zones, and coordinate design consultants. The table outlines a potential way to sequence and bundle implementation activities.

Although listed sequentially, some phases may overlap depending on site conditions, funding, and staffing, and will need to be evaluated by CAMAL on a case-by-case basis.

Opportunities and constraints are noted in the “Visitor Experience Development Notes” column of the table.

Each zone requires varying levels of infrastructure support. The phase prerequisites (dependencies) are outlined in the table; some phases can be completed independently, while others depend on prior work being completed.

These infrastructure supports will require design work by base building design consultants. The “Exhibit Infrastructure Scope of Work” column should guide CAMAL's engagement of the appropriate professionals. It is recommended that exhibition designers collaborate closely with these consultants to ensure infrastructure meets exhibit performance requirements and that design efforts are coordinated.

Given the complexity of the site and the range of improvements required, phasing recommendations should be reviewed periodically to adapt to changes in funding, staffing, site conditions, or unforeseen construction challenges.

The scope of work does not include demolition or removal of existing exhibits; it is assumed CAMAL will be responsible for this work.

Phase	Zones	Visitor experience development notes	Phase Prerequisites	Exhibit infrastructure scope of work
1	Entry / Parking Lot Zone 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outdoor sign at the door can be developed independently of other elements. The improvements to pedestrian walkways outside the entrance could be done concurrently with lobby improvements to minimize required closures to the main entrance. The large scale artwork should be installed after other outdoor improvements have been implemented, to avoid damage to the artwork. 	<p>Can be developed independent of other phases.</p> <p>If excavation is required to provide power and data to freestanding road signs, consider coordinating this around repaving activities.</p>	<p>Electrical engineer: add power and data for outdoor lighting, signs and screens.</p> <p>Civil engineer: repave parking; realign parking entrances and exits; add EV charging stations.</p> <p>Landscape architect: remove trees to improve view of building; improve landscaping in planters; improve pedestrian walkways; regrade brick pavers.</p> <p>Signage designer: Replace road signs; add video sign</p> <p>Structural engineer: provide footing for large artwork and freestanding signs.</p>
2	Lobby Zone 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will require a temporary alternate visitor entrance to the centre. Some exterior upgrades immediately outside the entrance will require a temporary secondary visitor entrance. These upgrades could happen concurrently with lobby improvements to minimize entrance closures. 	<p>Can be developed independent of other phases.</p>	<p>Interior designer: do colour study and repaint walls; replace staircase handrails with contemporary railing; replace chandelier with contemporary lighting; move fireplace and put in seating; move power and data as required for new reception, exhibits.</p> <p>Architect / engineers upgrade elevator; update storage area behind elevator to improve accessibility, lighting and power.</p>
3	Self-guided train tour Zone 13 to 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding is already in place for building the extension of the train shed enclosure. Once this is complete, these exhibits can be developed. Due to the distributed nature of the exhibits, and the stand-alone nature of the experiences, CAMAL will be able to be undertake the development of the exhibits in discrete stages, as staff capacity and funds allow. 	<p>Can be developed independent of other phases.</p>	<p>Architect / engineers: build extended train shed enclosure; repave second platform; build passageways between platforms; build platform between Wingfield and train car 4481; install power and data for exhibits; install accessible washroom.</p> <p>Conservator: Prepare train cars for exhibits</p>

Phase	Zones	Visitor experience development notes	Phase Prerequisites	Exhibit infrastructure scope of work
4	Multipurpose room Zone 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be finished in conjunction with adjacent collections preparation and storage areas. Flexible track lighting could be installed concurrently with other areas in the historic Freight Shed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd floor occupancy is required. Finish adjacent collections areas, kitchen, and washrooms. Upgrade stairs between floors. Finishing this area is a prerequisite for some other exhibition phases and is required for the development of the 2nd floor administrative areas in the main building. 	Architect / engineers demolish existing features; realign details for adjacent collection, kitchen and washroom areas; refinish walls, floors & ceilings; fix windows; install PA system; install virtual conference and presentation equipment; install flexible power and data for changing exhibits; install modular lighting; add lighting presets for special events; relocate glass panels from Royal Alexandra Hall.
5	Immersive intro Zone 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be in a self-contained space. Could be built and operated ahead of Zones 4 to 7 because of its proximity to the 2nd floor entrance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd floor occupancy is required before this can be installed. Public access to 2nd floor requires elevator upgrades to be complete. The multipurpose room should be finished to a level suitable for preparing and storing display items, and for staging during exhibit installation. 	Architect / engineers: demolish existing walls; provide power, data and supports for mounting projectors; paint walls with appropriate projection paint; install exhibition lighting; remodel space with input from av and exhibition design.
6	Main exhibition gallery Zones 4 to 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All zones are in a contiguous space and exhibits are highly integrated. Exhibits in these zone should be designed and built concurrently. The planning, design and installation of exhibits in these zones should be done concurrently as they are highly integrated. Exhibition lighting could be designed and installed concurrently with lighting in Multipurpose room and model trains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd floor occupancy is required before this can be installed. Public access to 2nd floor requires elevator upgrades to be complete. The multipurpose room should be finished to a level suitable for preparing and storing display items, and for staging during exhibit installation. 	Architect / engineers: demolish existing walls; build and finish new walls; finish floors and ceilings; run power and data for av and digital interactives; install exhibition lighting; remodel space with input from av and exhibition design.
7	Model train area Zone 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition lighting could be designed and installed concurrently with lighting in Multipurpose Room and Main Exhibition Gallery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be developed independent of other phases. 	Architect / engineers: run power and data for digital experiences; install new exhibition lighting.

Phase	Zones	Visitor experience development notes	Phase Prerequisites	Exhibit infrastructure scope of work
8	Hall of Fame and Discovery Space Zone 9 and 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Due to the proximity of these two spaces, and the need to move collections to before making infrastructure improvements, these spaces should be developed concurrently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2nd floor occupancy of historic Freight Shed is required so that collections can be moved upstairs before demolition and renovation activities.	Architect / engineers: remove double doors and wall to Model Trains; remodel washrooms; add glass wall and offices to Discovery Space; remove existing exhibits; refinish walls, ceilings and floors; reconfigure power, data, and mechanical as required; install new exhibition lighting.
9	Courtyard Zone 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can be developed independently of other phases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires covered courtyard connecting train shed to main building.Requires footings for large scale artwork.	Architect / engineers: build stage in courtyard; add power and data for sound system and other special event equipment; add lighting presets for special events; coordinate footings, power and lighting requirements for large scale artwork. Interior Designer: install tables and chairs.
10	Café & Gift Shop Zone 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Café and gift shop should be developed concurrently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can be developed independent of other phases.Would benefit from the completion of the courtyard to provide extra seating for café.	Architect / engineers: Add water supply and plumbing for café; upgrade power for refrigeration; design and build cafe; redesign and remodel gift shop. Note: this scope of work assumes that food will not be prepared on site, which could require upgrades to sprinklers, phase 3 power, and ventilation.

Collections related dependencies

While it is beyond the scope of this project to outline all the dependencies of the various projects that CAMAL is working on, many future exhibits depend on having a suitable area to prepare collections for display. Ensuring readiness of these support areas will help unlock later phases of development.

While no phases of work are dependent on finishing the second-floor administrative area, doing so would enable CAMAL to hire additional staff to assist with preparing the collection for display.

To support the readiness of the collection for future exhibits, the recommended sequence of work is:

- Finish the collection storage area (plus adjacent areas) and obtain an occupancy permit for the second floor of the historic Freight Shed.
- Move the collection from the administration area and other distributed storage spaces across the site.
- Finish the administrative area and obtain an occupancy permit for the second floor of the Main Building.

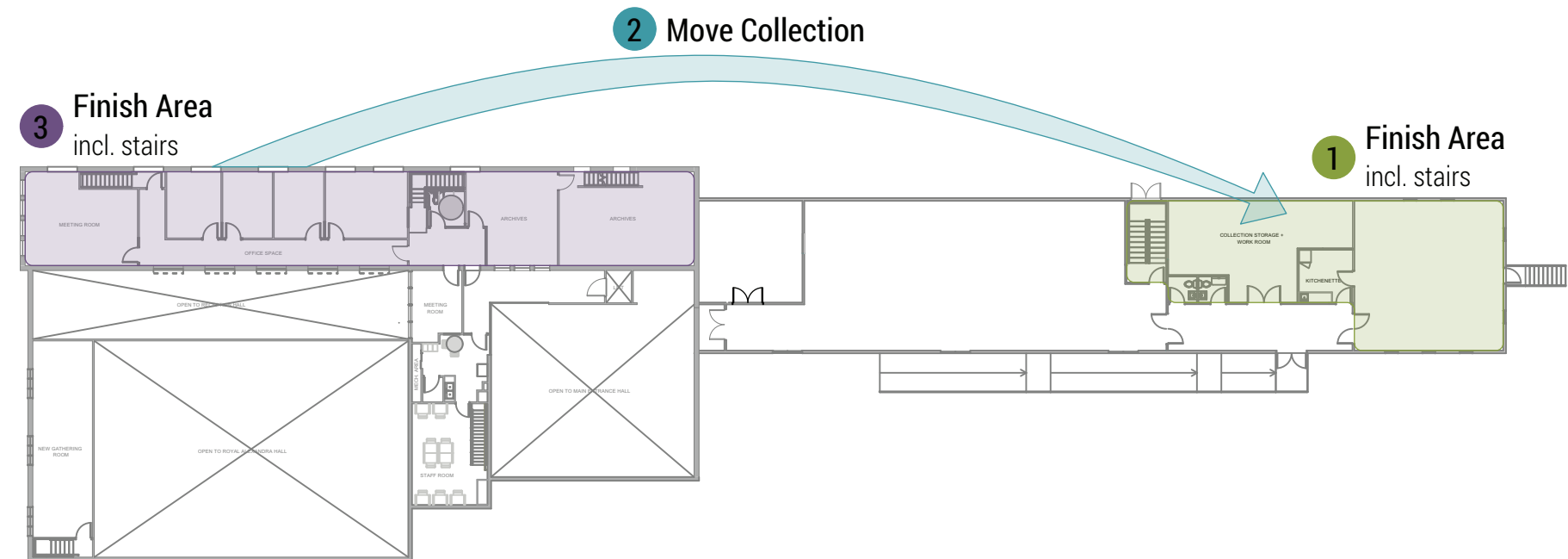
It may also be convenient to use the Multipurpose Room as a staging ground while moving the collection, for exhibit installation activities in the first- and second-floor exhibition zones, and for storing inventory during the renovation of the gift shop.

Concurrent development activities

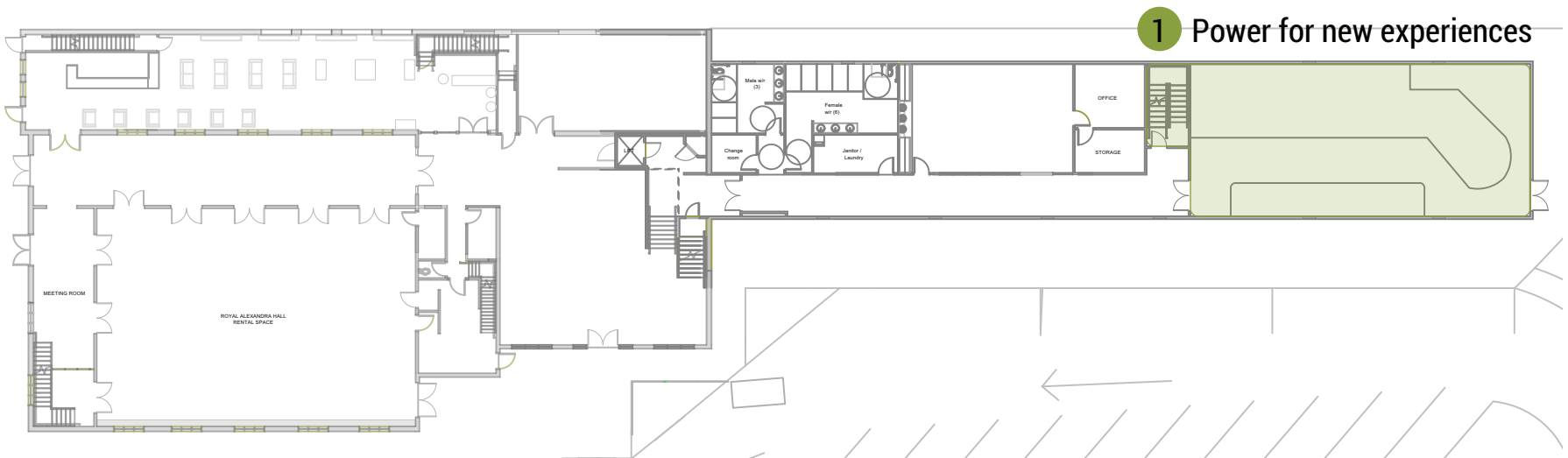
Due to the complexity of the site, the varied site conditions from space to space, and the wide range of infrastructure improvements that are required, there are certain infrastructure upgrades that could be developed at the same time across zones and experiences, to take advantage of scales of efficiency by having contractors address similar scopes of work in multiple areas.

1. Historic Freight Shed power and data upgrades

While the 2nd floor power and data upgrades are being installed to support the future exhibition gallery, additional power and data could be put in place for future lighting and digital experiences in the model train room.



PLAN 1 - Second Floor



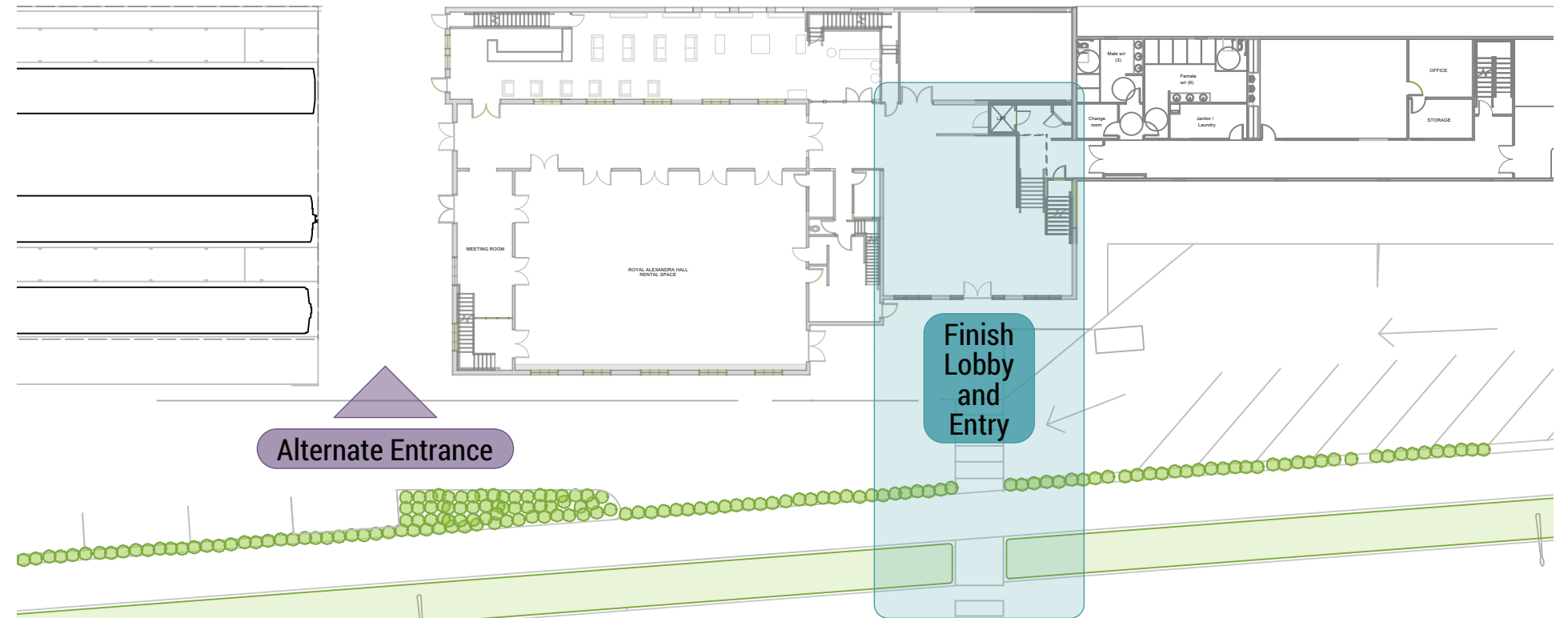
PLAN 2 - First Floor

Scale: 1/400

2. Entry and lobby improvements

Repaving activities to improve pedestrian access at the Entry and renovations to the Lobby area will require closing the main entrance. To minimize disruptions to the visitor welcome experience, these activities should be undertaken concurrently.

A temporary alternate entrance must be established, and signage will be required to direct visitors. Construction zones must be fenced off to maintain public safety.



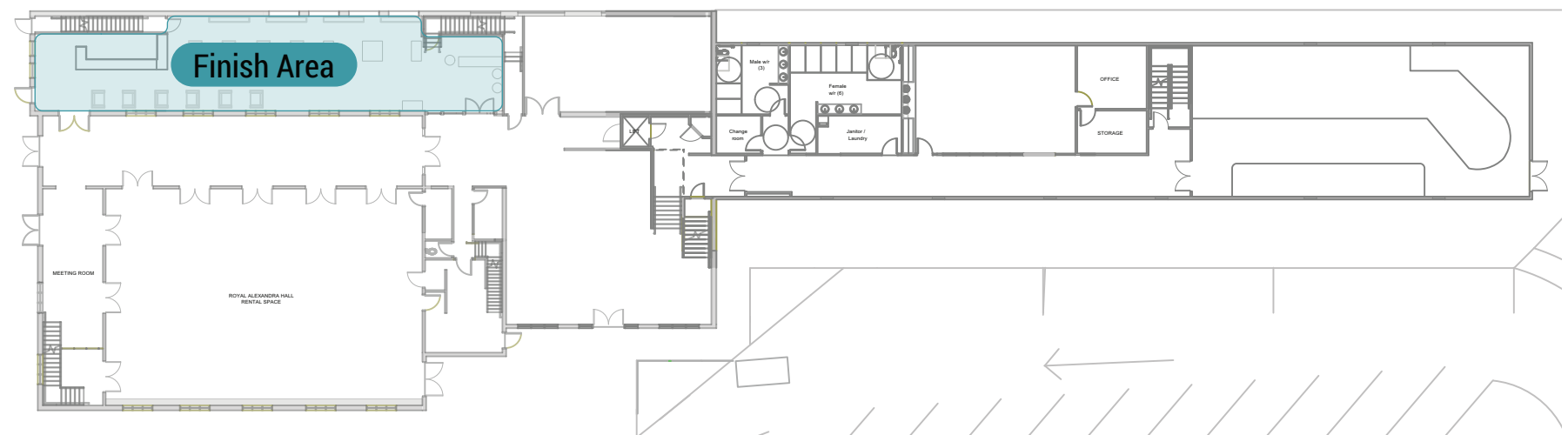
PLAN 2 - First Floor

Scale: 1/400

3. Cafe and gift shop renovations

Due to the interconnected nature of the cafe and gift shop, and to minimize disruption to visitor amenities, these functions should be upgraded as a single zone.

It may be possible to set up a temporary “pop-up” gift shop in the lobby. The Multipurpose room may be an area to store gift shop inventory during the renovation.



PLAN 2 - First Floor

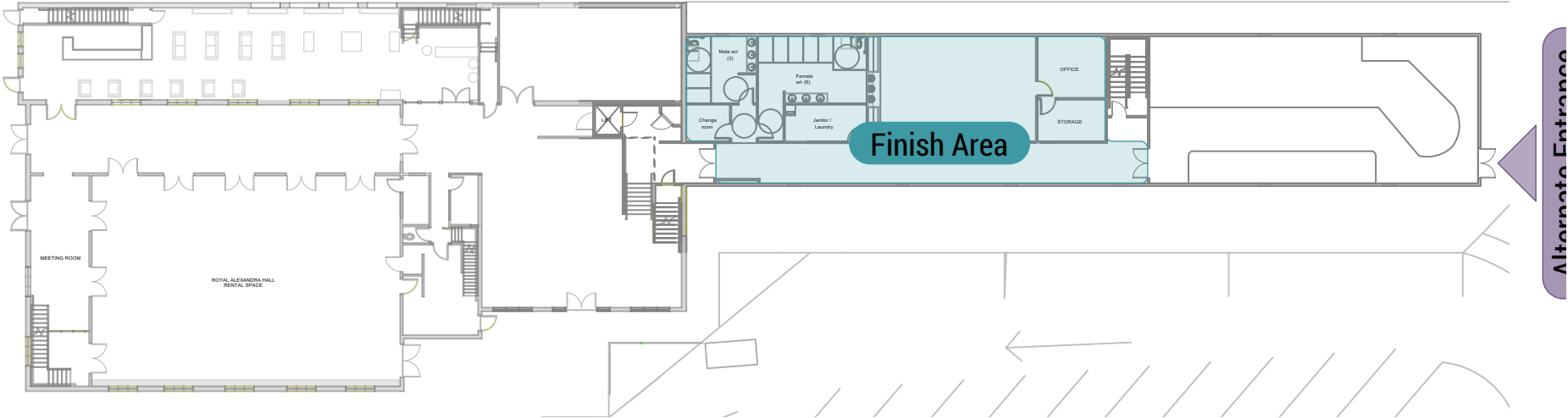
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4. Hall of Fame and Discovery Space

Before installing the glass wall and making other architectural improvements, existing exhibits must be removed from both zones. It would be efficient to install new exhibition furnishings at the same time.

Developing these areas together will also help minimize disruption to visitor access to the model train area. During construction and installation, a temporary alternate entrance will be needed, along with signage to direct visitors.

It would be wise to assess the existing display cases in this area to determine if they are worth re-using.



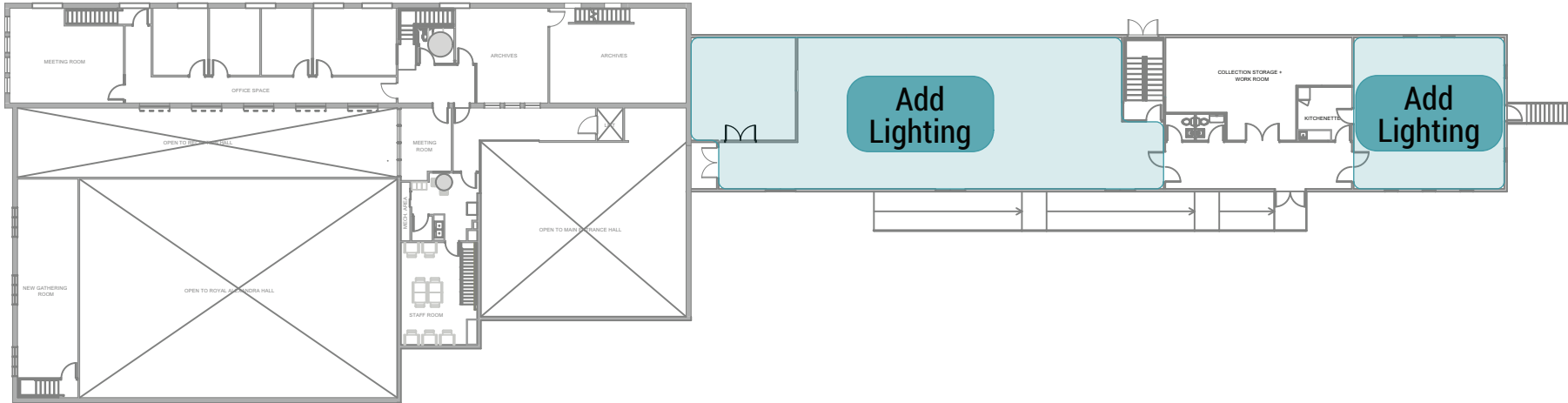
PLAN 2 - First Floor

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5. Exhibition lighting

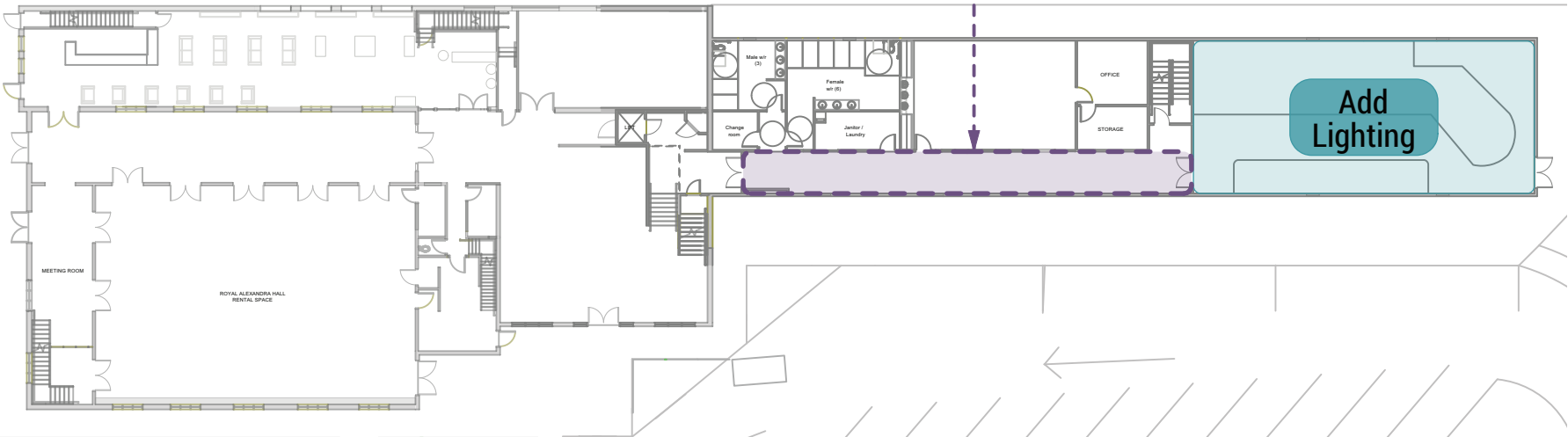
Multiple exhibition areas in the historic Freight Shed require new lighting infrastructure. It may be advantageous to undertake this work at the same time to reduce design fees, minimize shipping costs, and control the cost of deploying electricians and lighting installation crews.

This design work should be coordinated with exhibition designers, exhibition lighting designers and architects.



PLAN 1 - Second Floor

NOTE: Hall of Fame
Assess area for for possible inclusion



PLAN 2 - First Floor

Scale: 1/400

Design stage		
Phase	Activities	Client Inputs
Interpretive Plan	Establishes goals, audience, Big Idea, themes, messages, and visitor experience narrative.	Workshops Community feedback
Concept Design	Communicates how the Big Idea will come to life. Expressed through floor plans, precedent images, plus sketches of feature exhibits.	General content inputs Content summary docs List of potential assets
Schematic Design	Identifies all the individual components that make up the exhibit. Includes content matrix, graphic templates, and drawings for all core exhibit components.	SME and community inputs Image, media and artifact sourcing
Design Development	Develops all the individual components that make up the exhibit. Includes draft text, draft panel layouts, detailed exhibit drawings, plus lighting and media plans.	Fact checking Image, media and artifact sourcing
Final Design	Final details for all exhibit elements are ready for hand-over to production, including final drawings and specifications, final text and panel artwork, and direction for developing all interactives, software, and linear media (audio and video).	Language translations Commissioned photography or illustrations Credits and captions for sourced images
Implementation stage		
Pre-production	Shop drawings Production ready art Samples & prototypes	High resolution images for reproduction Objects and artifacts ready for mount making
Production / Fabrication	Millwork & graphics Physical interactives Model making and mount making Media and digital interactive production	Content input for media Translations for media Content input for digital Translations for digital
Installation	Packing, crating and shipping Installing and testing Installing objects, artifacts and artworks Focusing lights, setting audio levels Remedial work and final commissioning Training staff and opening events	Site preparation Site coordination of trades Objects, artifacts and artworks ready for installation

Exhibit development process

The Cranbrook History Centre project is currently in the planning phase. The next stages will follow two distinct streams of work:

- Design: schematics, design development, and final design
- Implementation: pre-production, fabrication, shipping, installation, and handover

Procurement models

Depending on funding, the project can follow different procurement models that can have a slight impact on the final design stages of the development process.

- Design-Bid-Build: The exhibit designer completes all construction drawings and specifications before the project is tendered for fabrication. This model suits projects where funding is secured incrementally.
- Design-Build: The exhibit designer and fabricator are selected at the same time. The fabricator completes the final drawings with the input of the design team. This approach reduces the amount of detailed documentation needed, streamlines transitions between phases, and avoids delays from introducing a multi-month tender process in the middle of the project. More suited to larger budgets.

Opportunities for community contributions

The development process can include opportunities for students and community members to contribute by participating in a Community Advisory Committee.

Committee members could contribute in:

- Early content and story development workshops
- Focus groups for prototyping and testing
- Participation in media and creative content

A charter for the committee should be developed at the outset of the project. The charter should outline the nature of committee activities, clarify roles and responsibilities, set clear expectations for commitments, and outline approval processes for committee-authored contributions.

Schematic design

This phase refines the exhibit layout and outlines all the major exhibit elements based on the approved concept. Preliminary content, graphics, and media treatments are developed, and visitor experience requirements are carefully considered.

Often, special client-required presentation needs are also met: realistic and transportable scale models, rendered illustrations, computer models and walk-throughs, as budget allows.

Tasks:

- Review interpretive plan and concept designs
- Conduct research and interviews with subject matter experts
- Hold a workshop with the community advisory committee to gather input on interpretive themes, stories, and exhibit ideas
- Incorporate feedback from community engagement into draft schematic designs
- Develop content matrix and text samples
- Create initial 3D models and drawings
- Develop graphic templates
- Coordinate preliminary infrastructure requirements with architectural team
- Update fabrication budget and schedule

Deliverables: Draft exhibition drawings; draft content and graphics package; preliminary fabrication estimate and schedule.

Design development

During design development, the schematic designs are revised and detailed. Major creative and technical issues are resolved, and the practicality of key exhibit components are tested through mock-ups before moving to final design.

Tasks:

- Respond to client feedback on schematic designs
- Develop first drafts of exhibit content and graphics
- Add detail to exhibit components and update drawings
- Conduct technical checks for constructability and cost
- Prepare preliminary lighting and media treatments
- Prepare preliminary finishes, and material schedules
- Build paper or cardboard mock-ups
- Organize focus groups with community advisory committee to review mock-ups of draft text, graphics and interactives
- Confirm final infrastructure needs with architectural team
- Update fabrication budget and schedule

Deliverables: Updated exhibition plans, elevations and 3D models; draft text and graphics package; preliminary lighting and media reports; mock-ups of key components; updated fabrication estimate and schedule.

Final design

Final design resolves all outstanding creative and technical issues. A full set of detailed documentation is prepared, including working drawings, specifications, graphics, and media elements. To prepare the exhibit for procurement or final coordination with suppliers, the documents address performance specifications for all interactive components, materials and finishes, hardware selection, artifact and object layouts, and technology integration.

Tasks:

- Respond to client feedback
- Finalize technical drawings and specifications
- Acquire high-resolution image assets and illustrations
- Finalize panel text, translations, and graphic layouts
- Finalize media, software, and interactivity packages
- Prepare final bid documentation for owner’s tender process
- Update fabrication budget and schedule

Deliverables: Final CAD drawings and specifications; final artifact layouts; final text and graphics package; final lighting plans; design direction for interactives and media; updated fabrication estimate and schedule.

Pre-production

Pre-production transitions the project from design to fabrication. Designers and contractors work closely together to ensure a streamlined process that progresses seamlessly and ensures the final product matches design intentions.

Fabrication Tasks:

- Site visit and measurements
- Prepare shop drawings, material and print samples

Design Tasks:

- Finalize production-ready graphic files based on shop drawings
- Review submissions from fabricators

Deliverables: Shop drawings; material and finish samples; production-ready graphic files.

Media production

Media production, including audio, video & digital interactives, runs in parallel with fabrication. Early in the process, hardware and software specifications are confirmed and integrated into the shop drawings. Content outlines from the final design documents are transformed into scripts and interactive wire frames.

Media Production Tasks:

- Coordinate technical specifications with fabricator
- Coordinate opportunities for community advisory committee to contribute artwork, photography, or voice recordings for media elements
- Develop media storyboards, scripts, rough cuts, and final cuts
- Develop interactive wireframes, alpha and beta tests

Design Tasks:

- Review development of media and interactive elements

Deliverables: Hardware and software specifications; media storyboards and scripts; rough and final cuts; wireframes and software prototypes.

Fabrication

Once shop drawings and artwork are approved, the project moves into fabrication. Materials are ordered, cut, assembled and finished. Fabricators build exhibits, produce graphics, prepare artifact mounts, and integrate equipment. The design team monitors progress, addresses issues, and provides supplementary information as needed.

Fabrication Tasks:

- Manage fabrication of exhibit elements
- Develop prototypes of physical interactives
- Produce graphics
- Order and install hardware and equipment
- Write progress reports

Design Tasks:

- Review fabrication reports
- Resolve design issues and issue supplementary information
- Review change notices and change orders

Deliverables: Fabrication progress reports; approved change orders and supplementary sketches; manufactured exhibits.

Shipping and installation

Prior to delivering and installing the final exhibit elements, the installers coordinate site-preparation requirements and associated staging details with the owner. Exhibits are fully documented and prepared for their journey to the site. The installation manager also travels to the site to ensure that the installation runs smoothly and efficiently.

Final adjustments are made onsite with support from the design team. A final walk-through identifies any deficiencies, followed by commissioning, training, and handover of exhibits.

Installation Tasks:

- Coordinate site preparation with owner
- Pack, crate, and ship exhibits
- Install exhibit furnishings and test exhibit equipment
- Load and test interactive software and linear media
- Install graphics artifact and objects
- Focus lighting and set audio levels
- Fix deficiencies and do final commissioning
- Conduct staff training and commissioning

Design Tasks:

- Support installation and final walk-through
- Identify deficiencies and assist in remediation

Deliverables: Installed and commissioned exhibits; warranties; operations manuals and as-built documentation.

Evaluation framework

This evaluation framework offers methods for measuring the success of visitor experiences at the Cranbrook History Centre.

It outlines four possible steps that can be used at different points during the project:

- 1. **Preliminary review** (of existing data)
- 2. **Front-end evaluation** (before design),
- 3. **Formative evaluation** (prototype and soft launch testing), and
- 4. **Summative evaluation** (after launch).

Each goal has clear, manageable indicators of success. Each visitor experience product is paired with a recommended outcome.

CHC staff can adapt or combine methods based on needs, audience feedback, and shifting priorities.

As noted earlier, the Centre could form a Community Advisory Committee of students and community members. They may become one of the focus groups through which you evaluate these goals; alternately they may become interviewers, testers, or analysts to help you gather and process these evaluations.

Goal	Indicator
Engagement & satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dwell time• diligent visitor %• return rate• unsolicited comments• satisfaction interviews
Revenue, attendance, length of stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gate revenue• attendance stats• dwell time
Learning & understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learning and understanding interviews
Indigenous collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• partner feedback• participation rates

Goal 1: Increase visitor engagement

Increase visitor engagement and satisfaction with varied, interactive, beautiful, and up-to-date exhibits.

Primary indicators

- Dwell time
- Percent of diligent visitors (those who stop to attend to the content)
- Visitor return rate
- Unsolicited visitor comments
- Visitor satisfaction interviews

Evaluation approach

1. Preliminary Review
 - Review existing visitor surveys, comment cards, timing studies (if any).
2. Front-End Evaluation
 - Conduct short interviews or surveys to establish baseline satisfaction and engagement patterns of existing exhibits.
 - Timing and tracking observation of visitor dwell times and diligent behaviour.
3. Formative Evaluation
 - Prototype testing of new exhibits with timing and tracking methods.
 - Gather visitor comments and feedback during prototype testing.
4. Summative Evaluation
 - Post-launch timing and tracking of dwell times and diligent visitor rates.
 - Satisfaction interviews (targeted around new exhibits).
 - Monitor unsolicited comments (social media, TripAdvisor, on-site comment cards).

Experiences for increased visitor engagement

- 1.04 Thematic wayfinding
- 2.05 Fireplace seating
- 3.01 Immersive multimedia intro
- 4.03 Walkover sea bed
- 5.02 The wildlife of the East Kootenay
- 6.02 Leave your baggage at the door
- 6.06 Sturgeon-nosed canoe exhibit
- 7.02 Speaking mannequins: a day in the life
- 7.05 Animated newspapers
- 9.01 Animated portraits
- 9.04 Cranbrook quilt
- 9.07 Feedback station
- 11.01 Model train views
- 11.02 Model train lighting
- 11.03 Then and now curtain slider
- 12.03 Railway workers memorial
- 13.02 Train driving simulation
- 13.04 Elephant escapees
- 14.05 Photo booth
- 14.06 Dress-up station
- 14.07 Children’s play area
- 15.01 Accessible rail car
- 15.02 Time travel train car
- 15.04 Audio effects in train
- 17.01 Identity weaving
- 18.03 3D timeline

Goal 2: Increase revenue and attendance

Increase revenue, attendance, and length of stay with a more attractive and compelling arrival experience and an expanded and more varied visitor offer.

Primary indicators

- Gate revenue and attendance statistics
- Dwell time (measured at arrival and across site)

Evaluation approach

1. Preliminary Review
 - Review existing attendance, revenue, and site time statistics.
2. Front-End Evaluation
 - Conduct visitor observation focused on arrival experiences (where bottlenecks or drop-offs occur).
 - Light competitor benchmarking- how are similar audiences behaving at other attractions? .
3. Formative Evaluation
 - Soft launch observation of updated arrival experience (time from arrival to first stop, dwell time at initial points).
4. Summative Evaluation
 - Compare post-launch attendance and revenue stats to baseline.
 - Compare observed dwell time patterns before and after improvements.

Note: No need for formal visitor surveys here unless an arrival-specific issue emerges.

Experiences for increased attendance

- 1.01 Parking lot makeover
- 1.02 Thematic artwork and sculpture
- 1.03 Outdoor video display
- 10.01 Make a creature cast to take home
- 10.02 Historical skills workshop
- 12.01 Edible Cranbrook experience
- 12.02 Courtyard bistro
- 14.02 Train-themed playground
- 14.03 Children’s rail car
- 14.08 Whack-a-pothole
- 15.03 Specialized train tours
- 15.06 Thematic high tea
- 18.01 Treasure hunt
- 18.02 First-person interpretation

Goal 3: Increase visitor learning

Increase visitor learning and understanding through insightful and accessible interpretation featuring current, inclusive, thought-provoking, multi-modal content.

Primary Indicators

- Learning and understanding interviews (before, during, after)

Evaluation approach

1. Preliminary Review
 - Review existing feedback on interpretation (if any).
 - Review readability and inclusivity of current text panels.
2. Front-End Evaluation
 - Conduct short interviews to understand visitors’ baseline knowledge and perspectives.
3. Formative Evaluation
 - Test draft interpretive media for understanding and accessibility.
 - Short interviews or quick quizzes after prototype exposure.
4. Summative Evaluation
 - Post-visit interviews focusing on what visitors remember and what new understandings they gained.

Note: Observation alone isn’t enough for learning outcomes; interviews or open-ended surveys are essential.

Experiences for increased learning

- 2.01 Theme statement
- 2.03 East Kootenays table top diorama
- 2.04 Artifact of the week
- 4.01 Fossil rubbings
- 4.02 3D models of Cambrian critters
- 4.04 Undersea wall mural
- 4.05 Updateable artifact case
- 5.01 Three dioramas
- 5.03 Jim Smith Creek exhibit
- 5.04 Touchable biofacts
- 5.05 Biofact feely box
- 5.06 Match the critter or plant to its life zone
- 6.03 Story of Tamarack Mall site
- 7.01 Transportation over time
- 7.04 Boys and girls camp video
- 7.06 Giant flip book
- 7.07 Chinatown exhibit
- 7.08 Forgotten communities
- 9.02 Cranbrook and the world wars
- 9.05 Hall of fame stories
- 9.06 Recognizing community object donations
- 13.01 Platform interpretive panels
- 13.03 Trunks display
- 14.01 Viewing platform
- 14.04 Programming space
- 15.05 Explorable train car
- 15.07 Restoration exhibit
- 16.01 Archives feature weekly

Goal 4: Deepen relationship with Ktunaxa

Deepen the Centre’s collaborative relationship with Ktunaxa and other regional Indigenous nations.

Primary Indicators

- Partner feedback on process and outcomes
- Participation rates in collaborative ventures

Evaluation Approach

1. Preliminary Review
 - Review records of past collaborations (MOUs, meeting notes, project outputs).
2. Front-End Evaluation
 - Establish early expectations with Indigenous partners: what success looks like from their perspective.
3. Formative Evaluation
 - Conduct informal relationship health check-ins during project milestones.
 - Track participation levels across meetings, reviews, and project activities.
4. Summative Evaluation
 - Partner feedback surveys or interviews at project end.
 - Document collaborative outputs (e.g., co-curated exhibits, programs, narratives).

Note: Evaluation of this goal should be co-designed with partners if possible.

Experiences for collaborating with Ktunaxa

- 2.02 Ktunaxa Welcome
- 6.01 Zone introduction
- 6.03 Story of Tamarack Mall site
- 6.04 Tipis and tulis
- 6.05 Six legged creatures story
- 7.03 St. Eugene profile
- 9.03 Athletic history of Cranbrook

Final thoughts

Data collection notes

The following methods are recommended for collecting data to support the evaluation framework. These techniques assume basic familiarity with visitor studies practices.

Timing and tracking (dwell time and engagement)

- Select a manageable sample of visitors during regular hours.
- Record the time visitors enter and exit the exhibit or lobby.
- Use a simple observation sheet to note where visitors stop and how long they engage with key elements.
- Calculate average dwell times and percentage of visitors who stop at multiple exhibits (“diligent visitors”).

Visitor satisfaction and learning interviews

- Conduct short, friendly intercept interviews at the exit.
- Focus questions on core indicators: satisfaction, engagement, learning, and understanding.
- Limit interviews to 3–5 minutes per visitor to maximize participation.
- Record responses immediately, using short notes or simple digital forms.

Revenue and attendance tracking

- Use existing admission and revenue recording systems.
- Track attendance by time period (daily, monthly) to allow comparison to previous years.
- Where possible, track revenue separately for admissions, special exhibits, and retail sales for more detailed analysis.

Partner feedback collection

- Use a combination of informal conversations and structured feedback at project milestones.
- Offer partners the option of providing written, verbal, or facilitated feedback based on their preference.
- Focus feedback on collaboration quality, decision-making processes, and satisfaction with outcomes.

The Cranbrook History Centre is ready for a thoughtful and meaningful renewal.

As a landmark institution for Cranbrook and the East Kootenay region, the Centre plays a vital role in preserving and sharing the rich, layered histories of the land and its people. With a refreshed focus on immersive storytelling, accessibility, and community collaboration, the Centre will strengthen its role as a place of learning, connection, and pride.

This plan outlines a clear path forward: it identifies key audiences, proposes a thematic framework to guide interpretation, recommends exhibition upgrades, and sets out strategies for accessibility, evaluation, and long-term growth. It also emphasizes the importance of working closely with the Ktunaxa Nation and other partners to ensure many voices are reflected and honoured throughout the visitor experience. Community input gathered through engagement activities has been instrumental in shaping this vision and ensuring that it reflects the

needs and aspirations of those it serves.

The Centre’s next steps include enhancing curb appeal to draw more visitors from the highway, introducing a self-guided tour of the heritage railcar collection, and expanding the historic freight shed to make room for new exhibitions and programs. These improvements will enrich the visitor experience and will create flexible and sustainable spaces that can evolve over time.

The Centre’s strengths—its iconic railcar collection, deep community roots, and talented, dedicated staff—offer a strong foundation for this work. With thoughtful implementation, the Cranbrook History Centre will be a place where the past deepens understanding of the present, sparks curiosity about the future, and welcomes a wider, more diverse community of visitors for generations to come. Through this renewal, the Centre will continue to grow as a dynamic cultural destination and a proud reflection of the region’s spirit.



Appendix A: Community engagement: What we heard

During the week of July 15-19, 2024, the Double Dare Design team met with community members in a series of creative workshops. There were four sessions: one with staff and board members; another offered to City Council, one with members and the community at large, and one with members of Ktunaxa nation.

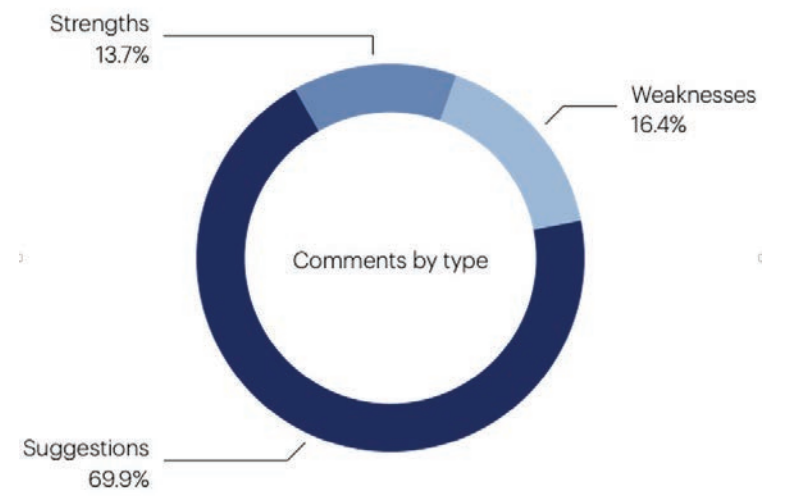
Through about 20 hours of conversation, we logged and analyzed about 4000 words of feedback. Community comments included 204 constructive suggestions about how we might renew and revitalize the visitor experience at the Cranbrook History Centre.

How have we used this information?

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats directly inform our measurable outcomes for this project: we want to capitalize on strengths and opportunities, fix our weaknesses, and counter any threats.

Suggestions about themes or messages inform the thematic framework from which we draw the stories for our exhibitions and programs.

Suggestions about digital activities, interactive elements, graphic panels, and other elements influence the visitor experience products that we propose in the last section of our plan.

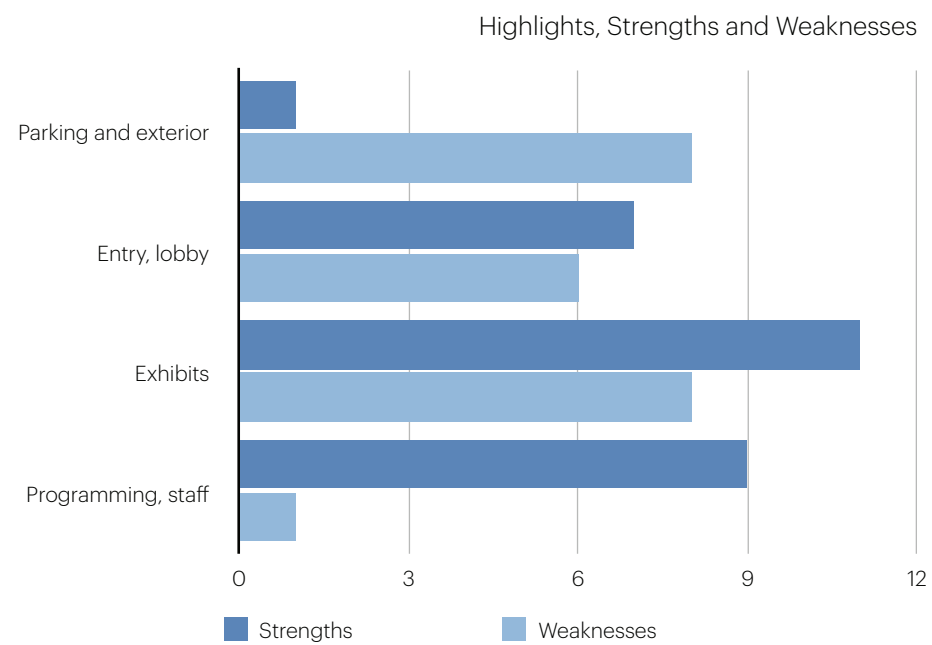


Questions asked

Conversation was lively and spontaneous and didn't strictly follow the questions posed. That said, the discussion broadly went as follows:

- 1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the current visitor experience, including
 - 1. Parking and exterior
 - 2. Lobby and welcome
 - 3. Programs and events
 - 4. Historic train collection
 - 5. Model Railway
- 2. If you could fix/change one thing at the Centre, what would it be?
- 3. How should we measure success?
- 4. What audiences are missing or under-represented?
- 5. What stories are under-represented?
- 6. If you could tell the stories of Cranbrook and area with objects, with images, with a single book—how would you do it?
- 7. What does a perfect visit to the Centre look like?
- 8. What is the role of digital experience at the Centre?

Participants were also asked to comment on a selection of images of museum exhibitions and highlight those that they felt represented the best potential for the Centre.





Summary of comments

Parking and entry

Scale and impact

- The scale of the museum is impressive and unexpected when driving into town, indicating a significant and noteworthy presence.

Parking and landscaping

- The parking lot is a notable weakness, appearing rough and poorly maintained.
- Issues include:
 - Patches from city water main repairs left unfinished.
 - Big gaps in parking stalls filled with rock.
 - Excessive plants and trees obstructing the view of the building.
 - Overall threadbare and cheap appearance of the front area, including sinking pavers and a badly painted sign along the fence.

Building appearance

- The exterior of the building and surrounding areas were described negatively:
- The sides of the building look dated.
- The fence is uninviting and affected by inadequate snow stops on the sheds.
- To some, the building appeared as a “big scary ominous building that looks closed,” making it unclear if the museum is open or not.

Signage and presentation

- The signage outside the door does not seem to alleviate the unwelcoming appearance.
- Suggestions for improvement include:
 - Adding a video display featuring wildlife, operating hours, and interior views of trains.
 - Incorporating artwork and sculptures along the front of the building to hint at the museum’s offerings.





Lobby and welcome

Aesthetics and first impressions

- The front lobby's design, including the mantel, creates a strong first impression.
- Some felt that the colour and detail in the lobby make it feel special and appealing; others don't like the prevalence of purple..
- The spaciousness and grand appearance of the lobby provide a 'wow factor' for visitors.

Children's experience

- Children enjoy the vast space, it's a "big giant building" where they can run and explore.
- The lobby allows kids to move freely and experience the space in a fun and engaging way.

Guest experience

- Visitors feel welcomed upon arrival, with immediate access to amenities like bathrooms, tours, gift shops, and seating areas.
- The design and layout of the Centre are visually appealing and easy to navigate.

Desk location and efficiency

- The current location of the desk is deemed inefficient—but moving it to a more appropriate spot could impede the view of the mantel.

Lighting issues

- Some felt that the lighting in the lobby is subpar and needs reworking to improve the overall ambiance and functionality.

Institutional feel

- Some participants felt that the building looks more institutional than welcoming, which might not align with the community-focused image desired.

Blend of old and new

- There is a concern about finding the right balance between maintaining the historical aspect and incorporating modern elements. The entry lobby's current grand appearance may not fully convey the Centre's contemporary activities.

Comfort and atmosphere

- The abundance of hard surfaces in the lobby makes it feel less welcoming. Adding more comfortable elements could improve the overall atmosphere.

Map placement

- While the maps are a visual strength, their placement is a weakness as they are positioned too high for easy viewing by all visitors.

Exhibits

Diverse offerings and appeal

- The Centre’s exhibitions started with a single focus but have expanded to offer a variety of tangible and intangible experiences. This includes fossils, rocks, inventions, and history, catering to diverse interests and age groups.
- There is a positive reception to the diverse objects on display, offering a taste of everything the Centre has to offer, which keeps visitors engaged and wanting to know more.

Opportunities for interaction and conversation

- Exhibits provide opportunities for conversations and deeper engagement, with stories that open up talking points.
- The interactive paleo room, where children can pull on drawers and see things happen, is particularly appreciated by young visitors and their parents.

Experience design and flow

- The flow of the two main exhibition areas, the paleo and history hallways, is praised. The exhibits are well-organized, making it easy for visitors to navigate without needing a map.
- The spaciousness and room to walk around are strengths, allowing visitors to feel welcomed and comfortable.

Innovative use of technology

- The use of QR codes for interactive experiences, digital displays, touch screens, and virtual reality are seen as potentially exciting and innovative ways to engage visitors.
- The potential for digital and holographic displays to add depth to the exhibits, as well as integrating audio and sound to create immersive experiences, was highlighted.

Special features and unique experiences

- The unique nature of the exhibitions, such as the detailed craftsmanship in the objects and the sensory experiences (e.g., scents replicating historical settings), adds a special touch to the visitor experience.
- There is enthusiasm for rotating exhibits and the potential to broaden the storytelling interest, creating more varied and dynamic experiences.

Accessibility and inclusivity

- There is a need for more focus on accessibility, particularly for visually and hearing-impaired visitors. The current setup lacks tactile experiences and accessible navigation tools.
- The Centre could do more to cater to neurodiverse visitors, such as offering audio-guided tours, touch tables, and designed spaces in collaboration with neurodiverse individuals.

Interactive and tactile elements

- Some visitors feel that the exhibitions are too passive, with not enough tactile elements. Suggestions include adding touchable skulls, skins, and more hands-on displays.
- The paleo room, while somewhat interactive with the drawers, could benefit from more space and breathing room for exhibits.

Engagement and dwell time

- While the Centre offers a lot of interesting exhibits, there is feedback that the experience can sometimes feel like a “one-and-done” attraction. Making the experience and increasing the dwell time and could help.
- Suggestions for improving engagement include integrating new materials and technology, adding more hands-on and interactive displays, and creating a more vibrant visitor experience through guided tours that blend real and virtual elements.

Text-heavy displays

- The exhibitions have a lot of text, which can be overwhelming for some visitors.

Improvements in design

- The transition from the front lobby to the main exhibition space could be improved to create a more seamless and welcoming experience.
- The current use of concrete and glass makes the space feel like a bunker, and incorporating more textures and elements that are not behind glass could make it feel more inviting.



Programming

Variety and diversity of programs

- The Centre offers a wide range of programs appealing to different age groups and interests. This includes historical tours, educational workshops, and unique events like the haunted Halloween train and wildlife events.
- Visitors appreciate the diversity of topics covered in adult programs, such as wreath-making workshops, historical talks, and cultural events.

Special events

- Special events like the Mother’s Day Tea, murder mystery nights, and dinner theatre are highly praised for their planning and execution.
- Memorable experiences are created through live reenactments, historical plays, and seasonal events which draw in repeat visitors.

Interactive and engaging activities

- Programs designed for children, such as the Jr. Engineer badge and interactive paleo room activities, are effective in keeping young visitors engaged and excited.
- The Centre’s efforts to provide hands-on learning experiences, such as the model railway mentorship program, are well received and attract diverse audiences.

Community engagement

- The Centre’s programming fosters community engagement by offering a platform for local stories, guest speakers, and historians.
- Events that celebrate and involve community performances, like the children’s presentations and local history celebrations, are appreciated.
- A model train mentorship program involves youth and helps ensure the exhibit’s future.

Historical coverage and multicultural representation

- There is a sentiment that the Centre should do more to highlight the remaining built historical aspects of Cranbrook, as there is less of it than desired.
- The discontinuation of multicultural festivals is noted, and there is a desire to revive these events to reflect demographic changes and celebrate cultural diversity.

Program accessibility and inclusivity

- While many programs are praised, there is a call for more inclusivity and accessibility in the programming. This includes offerings that cater to people with special needs and diverse backgrounds.

Need for more interactive and hands-on workshops

- Some visitors feel that there should be more workshops where they can learn historical crafts and skills, creating new and lasting impressions similar to past events like the dinner theatre and wildlife event.



The Staff

Engaged and sincere interaction

- The staff at the Centre are highly commended for their immediate and sincere engagement with visitors. This personal approach is reflected in their positive interactions, whether in person or over the phone.

Strength of interpretive staff

- The interpretive staff are noted for their strength and initiative. They excel in historical research, particularly with photos, and contribute significantly to the Centre's educational value.

Visitor satisfaction

- Participants suggested that visitors are consistently amazed by their experiences at the Centre. The genuine, non-scripted interactions contribute to a memorable visit.

Self-guided visits

- The non-train exhibits offer the flexibility for visitors to explore on their own without the need for a guide, which is appreciated by those who prefer a more independent experience.



The Trains

Overall impression

- The train shed roof is described as impressive in size from the outside.
- There is a general appreciation for the uniqueness of the Trans-Canada passenger set, viewed as the potential jewel of the Centre if well-interpreted.

Engaging experiences

- Train staff interaction: A staff member on the train received high praise for making the experience fun and engaging.

Condition and perception

- The trains could be in better shape, especially when viewed from afar.
- There is a perception issue where the trains are seen as overwhelming, leading some people to believe the Centre is solely focused on trains.

Innovative ideas

- Several innovative suggestions for enhancing the train exhibits:
 - Accessible railcar
 - Immersive railcar simulation (without damaging the heritage value of railcar)
 - Working railcar
 - Escape Room in the train
 - More interactive elements
 - Train driving experience
 - Art integration
 - Conference Centre built on top of dug-out trains



Themes

Diverse histories and communities

- The history of Cranbrook, including its connections to different communities such as Chinatown, was mentioned positively. Emphasizing the contributions and experiences of various cultural groups, including Chinese and Italian railway workers and black porters was highlighted as important.

Historical context and cohesion

- Participants appreciated the notion of creating a cohesive narrative that ties together different periods of Cranbrook's history, from paleo times to the era of human settlers.
- There was support for focusing on significant historical events and themes, such as the settlement and diversification of the community, resource extraction, urbanization, and the evolution of recreation.

Engaging and interactive displays

- The concept of immersive and interpretive displays that provide a snapshot in time and highlight different aspects of transportation, commerce, and daily life in historical Cranbrook received positive feedback.
- Suggestions for interactive experiences, such as a day in the life during different historical periods and interpretive displays on geological history, were welcomed.

Broader themes and mandates

- There was an appreciation for the Centre's mandate to explore broader themes beyond the immediate history of Cranbrook. This includes delving into stories of glaciation, regional histories, and the boom and bust cycles from the late 1960s to the 1970s.

Lack of cohesive narrative

- Some participants felt that the current displays lack cohesion and do not effectively tell the unified story of Cranbrook's history. They expressed a desire for more cohesive ways of presenting the three distinct time frames of Cranbrook's history: paleo, human settlement, and modern times.

Incomplete historical representation

- There was concern about missing significant historical narratives, such as the stories of boys' and girls' camps and the history of Jim Smith Creek. Participants felt these gaps need to be addressed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the area's history.

Focus on broader themes

- While some participants appreciated the idea of exploring broader themes, others felt that the centre should maintain a focus on the specific history of Cranbrook. There was a call for balancing the mandate with the need to delve into local history in greater depth.





“If you could tell the story of Cranbrook and area with just a few objects, what would they be?”

- Gold pan
- Fossil
- Locomotive bell
- Axe or hatchet
- Chinese coin
- Arrowhead
- Hiking boot
- Eagle
- Camera
- Rock pick
- Mine product
- Skis
- Sturgeon-nose canoe
- Small tree
- Fruit
- IPA
- Fossil
- Drum or cradleboard
- Fur or hide
- Suitcase
- Railway spike
- Saw
- Rail spike
- Gold nugget
- Bucksaw
- Ceremonial artifact
- Milk bottle

“If you could tell the story of Cranbrook and area with just a few images, what would they be?”

- Trans Canada Railway Cars
- Ed the Elephant
- Royal Alexandra Hall
- Model Trains
- PWA Crash
- Fisher Peak
- Rail Yards
- Outdoor pool
- Armouries building
- College of the Rockies
- Community forest and trails
- Fishing boat and lake
- Mineshaft
- Train
- Deer
- Skier
- Shopping cart
- Baker Street
- Scott Nedermeyer on top of Fisher Peak
- Trilobite
- View west down Baker towards water tower
- Ed the elephant
- Grizzly bear
- Someone loading grocery bags onto back a giant pickup truck.



Audiences: who are we missing?

Younger generations

- The Centre currently lacks engagement with younger audiences, including teenagers and young adults. There is an opportunity to attract these demographics through interactive and digital experiences tailored to their interests.

Skiers and winter enthusiasts

- Individuals who are passionate about skiing and winter activities are notably absent from the Centre's visitor base. Targeted programming or events related to winter sports could draw this group in.

Adults aged 30 to 40

- This age group is underrepresented, suggesting a need for exhibits and events that resonate with their interests and life stages.
- Individuals who are primarily focused on building their lives and are less reflective may not be engaging with the Centre. Initiatives like the popular wreath-building workshop demonstrate that such groups can be attracted when programs align with their interests.

Children and students

- While the Centre engages some younger visitors, there is room to expand efforts to attract school groups and provide educational programs specifically designed for children and students.

Fresh retirees

- Recent retirees, who often seek new hobbies and learning opportunities, are another potential audience not fully reached by the Centre's current offerings.

Indigenous communities

- The representation of Indigenous stories and cultures is missing, which affects the inclusivity of the Centre. There is a strong desire for the Centre to acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous history and contributions.

Cross-border american visitors

- There is potential to attract more American visitors, especially those from nearby regions. Tailoring marketing efforts and programming to this group could enhance cross-border engagement.

Long-time locals

- Long-time local residents, who can serve as invaluable storytellers and contributors to the Centre's narrative, are not fully engaged. Recognizing their role and encouraging their participation could enrich the Centre's offerings.

Young women

- Young women, particularly those who visit occasionally while picking up their children, are an underrepresented group. Developing programming that appeals specifically to them could increase their participation.

Online and digital audiences

- The Centre is missing opportunities to engage with online and digital audiences. Developing a strong digital presence and interactive online content could attract this group.

Archivists and researchers

- People who access archives and engage in research are an important audience not currently well catered to. Developing resources and programs tailored to researchers could address this gap.

Indigenous engagement

Representation and inclusion

- There was strong support for representing all three regional First Nations and ensuring their histories and stories are prominently featured.
- Participants emphasized the importance of promoting nearby Indigenous-run attractions, such as St. Eugene or the future aq'am cultural centre, as complementary offerings rather than competitors.

Cultural and historical accuracy

- The inclusion of accurate historical information, such as the displacement of Ktunaxa people from areas like the Tamarack Mall site, and their involvement in early railroad days, was seen as essential.
- Highlighting important cultural aspects, such as the Ktunaxa creation story and traditional practices (e.g., tipi and tuli house use), was positively expressed.

Elder and community involvement

- There was a strong consensus that all traditional content should be developed by Elders and knowledge keepers to ensure authenticity and respect.
- Consulting with Elders and involving them in every aspect of content creation was highlighted as crucial.

Showcasing Indigenous strengths and achievements

- Participants expressed pride in the accomplishments of Indigenous people, noting their successes in various fields such as industry, arts, and music.
- There was enthusiasm for temporary showcases and exhibitions of Indigenous objects and artworks, provided they are curated in consultation with the right community members. The community may be reluctant to do any long term loans of objects, artifacts or artworks.
- There may be an opportunity to commission new artworks works or artifact reproductions if the request is made with respect and proper remuneration.

Historical and ongoing challenges

- There was a need to communicate the hardships faced by the Ktunaxa and other Indigenous peoples, including the impact of the Indian Act, residential schools, and recent social issues like the 'social worker scoop.'
- Misconceptions about Indigenous people, such as the belief that they receive everything for free, were noted as persistent issues that need addressing.

Capacity and resource limitations

- Concerns were raised about the limited capacity of Elders and knowledge keepers to translate and adapt content for the centre. It was emphasized that translations should be adapted to Ktunaxa context, not just directly translated.

- The lack of resources and time for Elders to engage deeply with the Centre's projects was noted as a significant challenge. The community will need to be compensated for any work they do for the Centre.

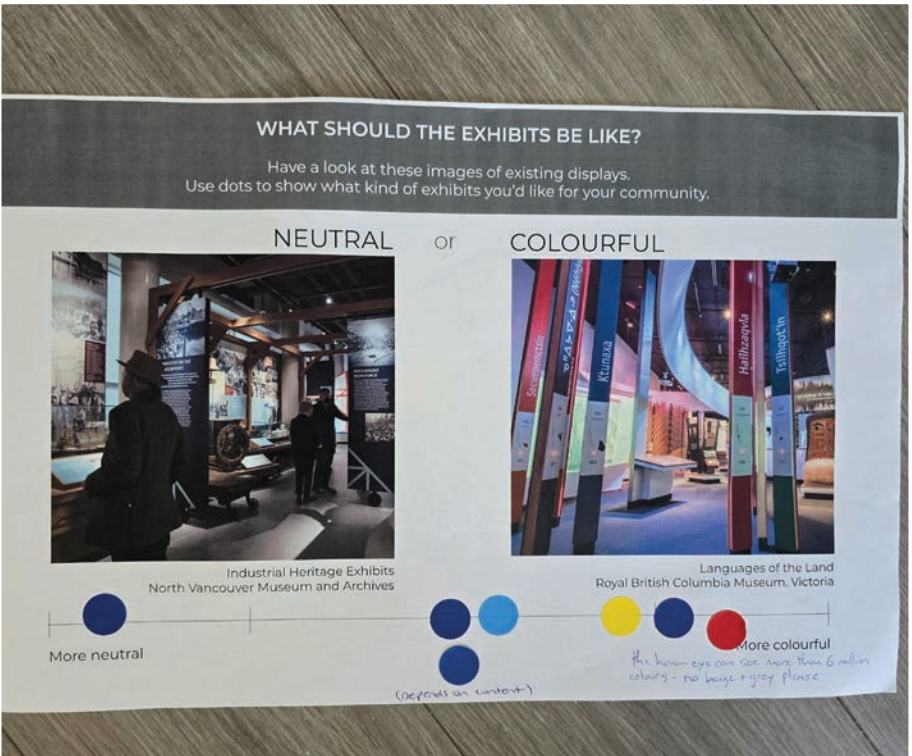
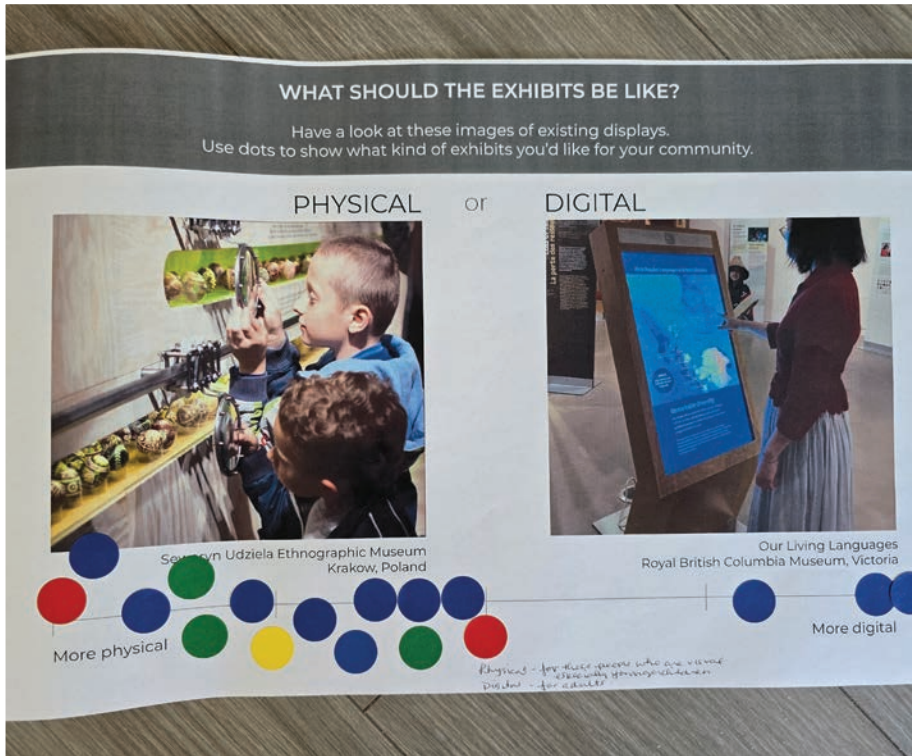
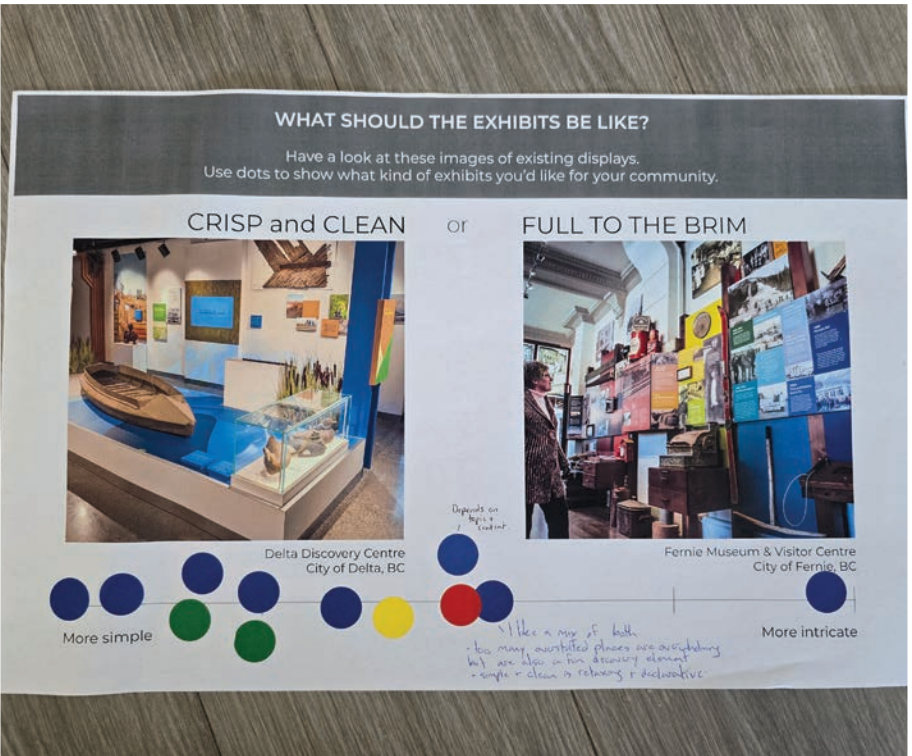
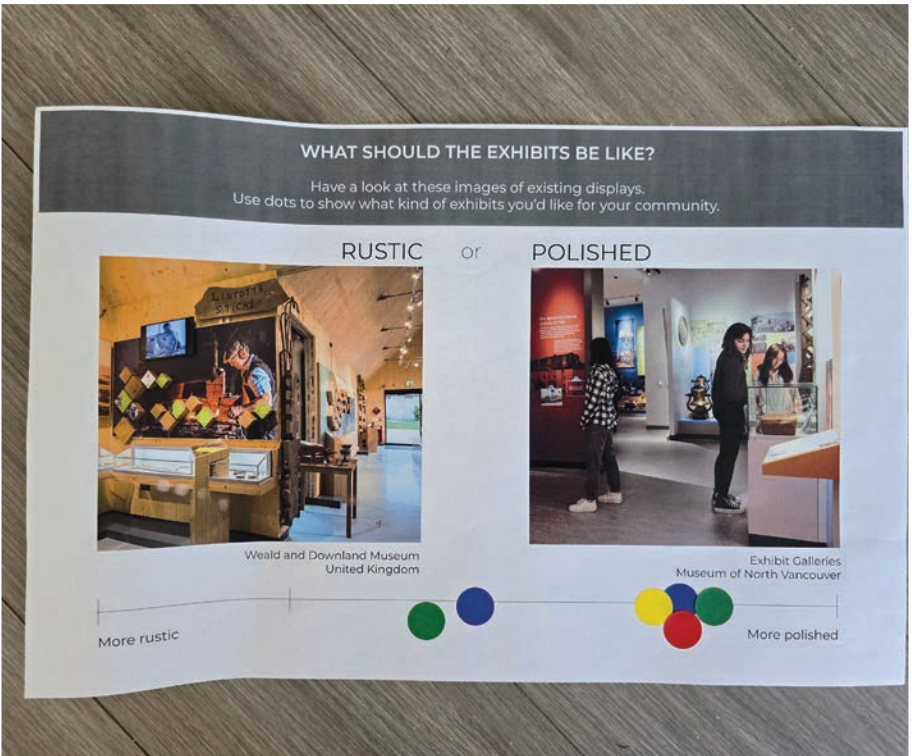
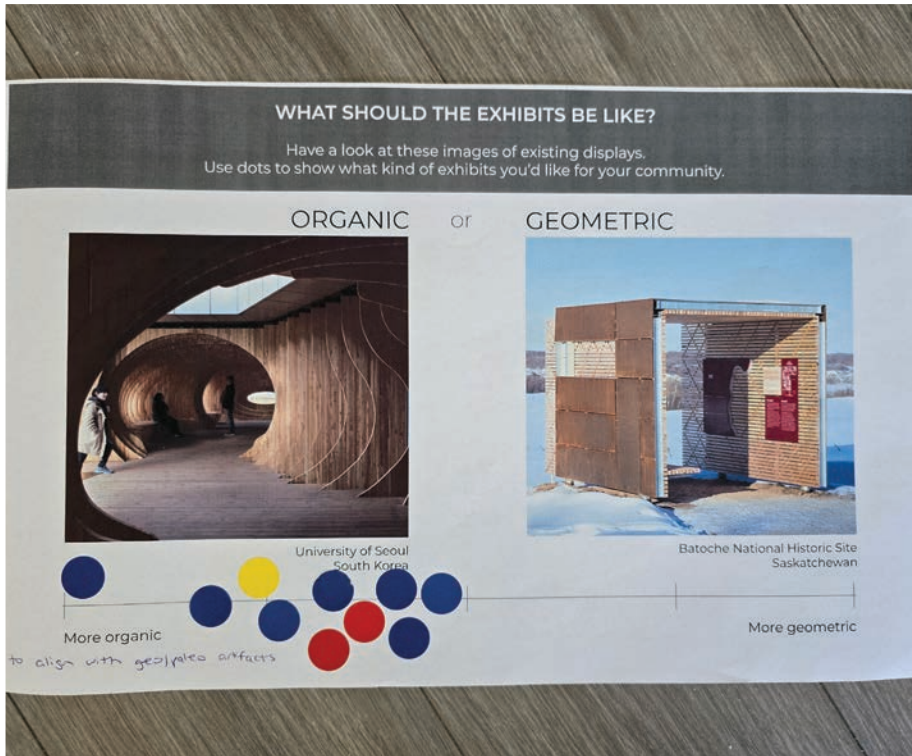
Racism and misunderstanding

- Participants highlighted the prevalence of racism, particularly anti-Indigenous sentiments, in the area. Addressing these issues through education and accurate representation at the centre was deemed important.
- There was a call for truthful storytelling as a foundation for reconciliation, emphasizing that without acknowledging the truth, reconciliation cannot be achieved.



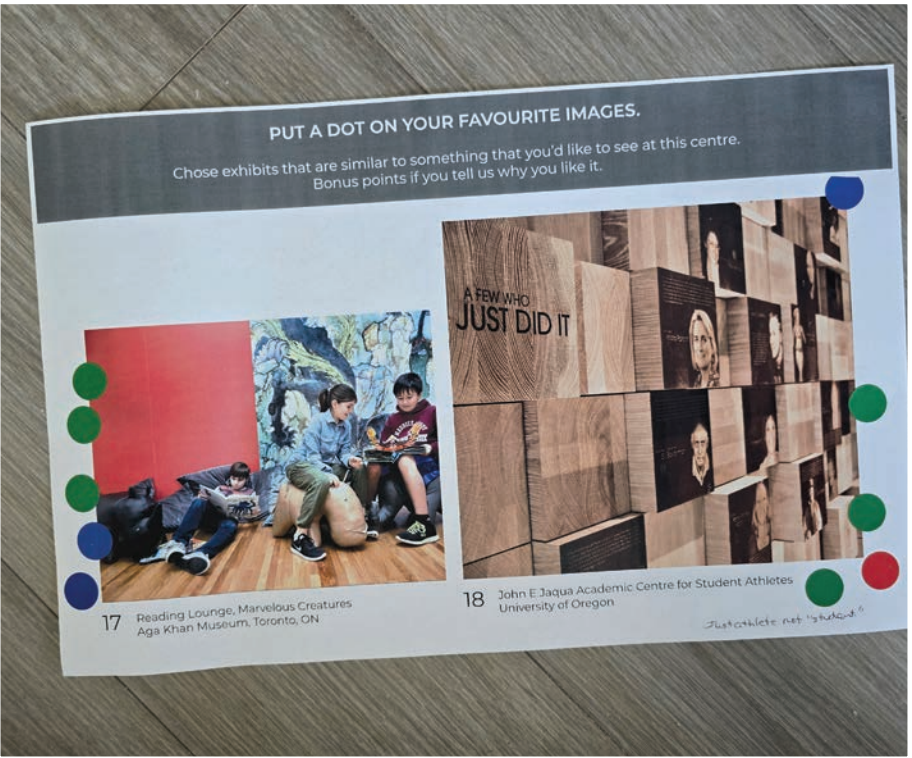
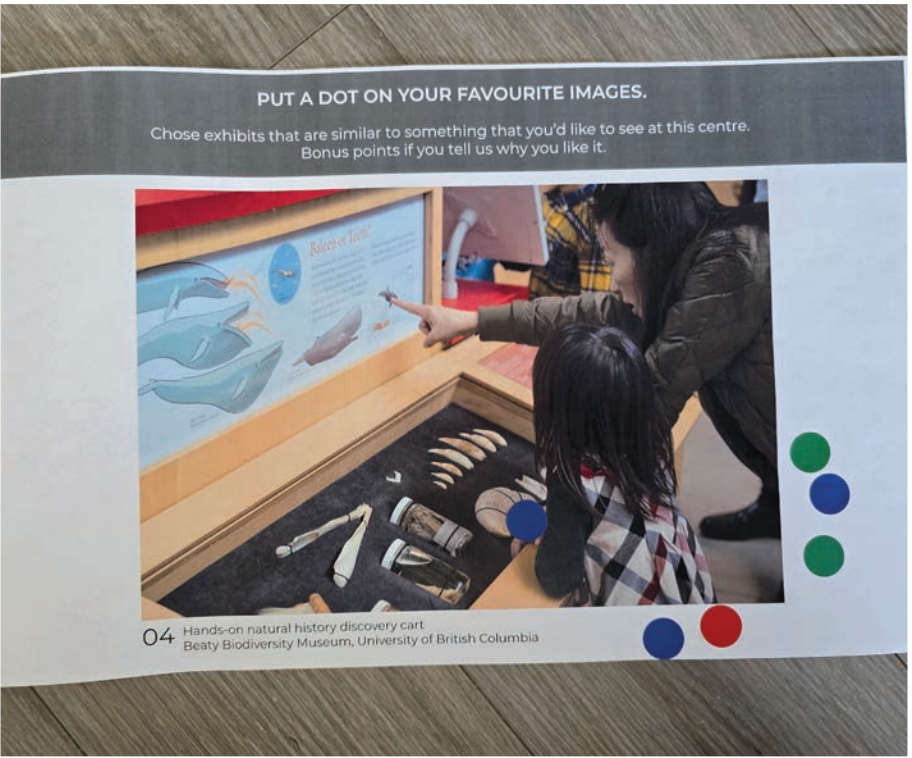
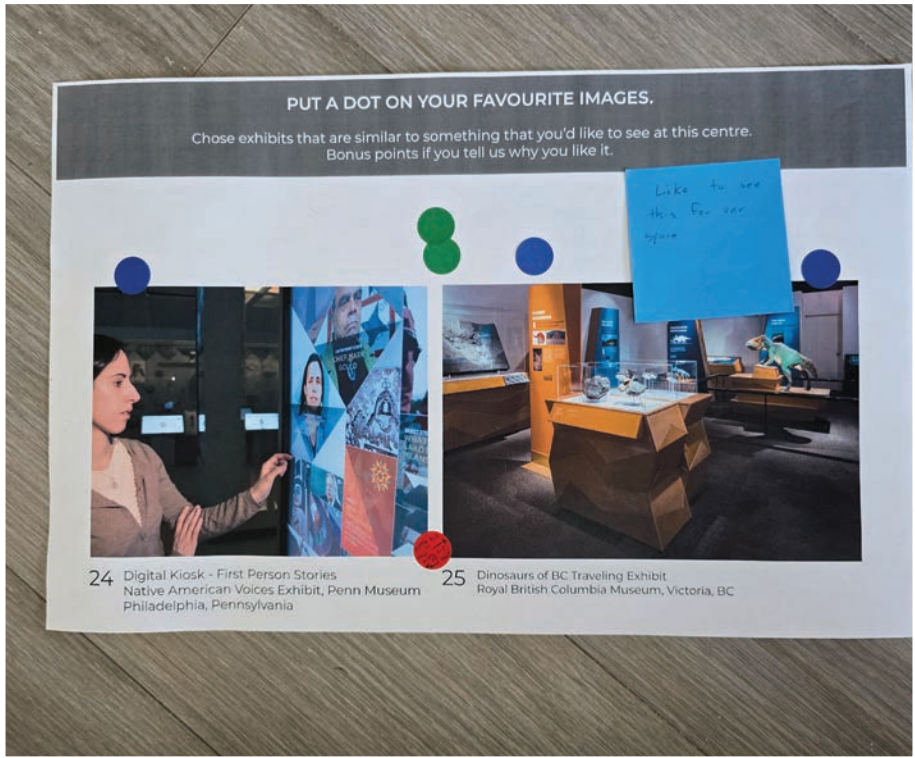
Exhibit characteristics

At the workshop, we asked participants to comment on the look and feel of a number of reference images from different types of exhibits. When asked to choose between two exhibit styles, our participants expressed preferences as follows:



Some favourite images

Participants were asked to look at a variety of exhibit images and indicate their favourite with a dot.
Here are those that received more dots than others:



Appendix B: Architectural changes

In addition to planned renovations by the Cranbrook History Centre, the drawings on this and the following pages outline additional recommended architectural changes to support this concept document. It is best practice that the architect work in collaboration with an exhibit design team to refine the details.

Exterior updates:

- Improve signage
- Improve driving/parking infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure

Freight Shed upper floor changes:

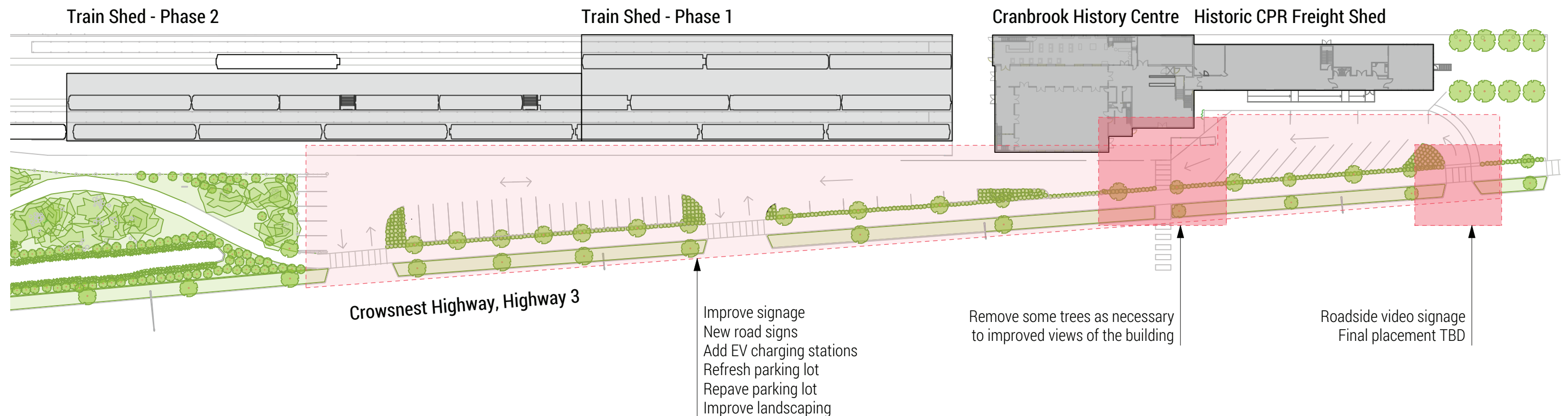
- Reconfigure entrance to the room that will hold the Immersive Multimedia Intro
- Other walls in the space to be demolished (consistent with existing plans)
- Reconfigure the kitchenette to incorporate storage for tables and chairs in the Multipurpose room. Remove serving window/pass through to the adjacent hallway
- Relocate the glass panels from the Royal Alexandra Hotel to the hallway outside the Multipurpose Room

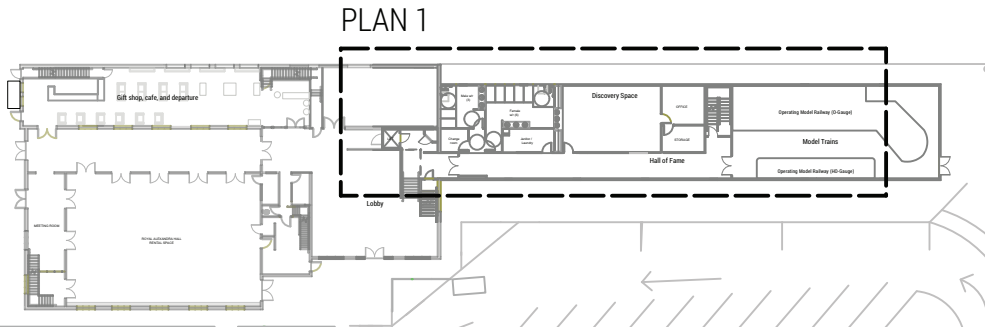
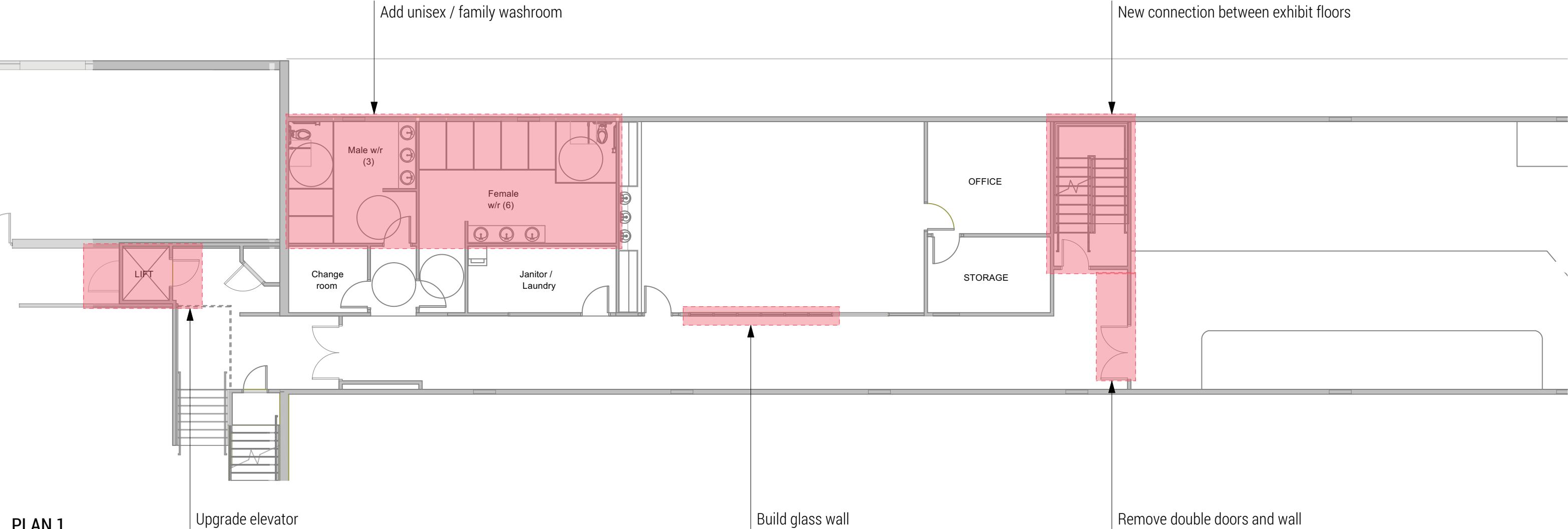
Freight Shed lower floor changes:

- Add glass wall between the discovery space and the adjacent hallway
- Remove double doors between model train area and adjacent hallway
- Add unisex / family bathroom

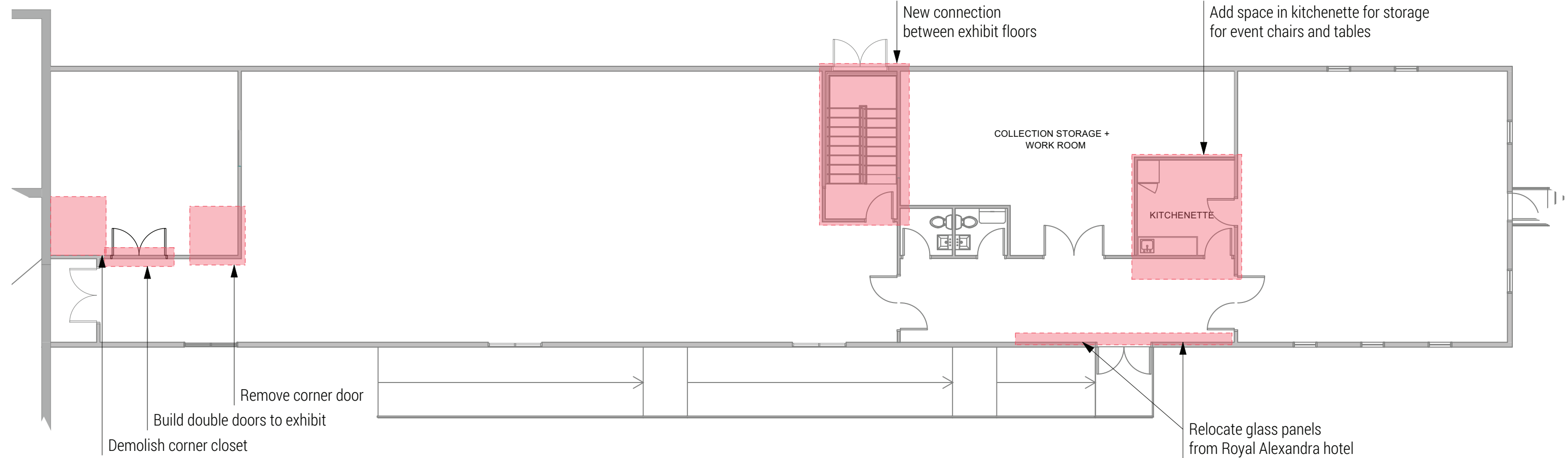
All floors:

- Replace elevator / elevator upgrades
- Improve the stairwell connection between the model train area and the upstairs exhibits

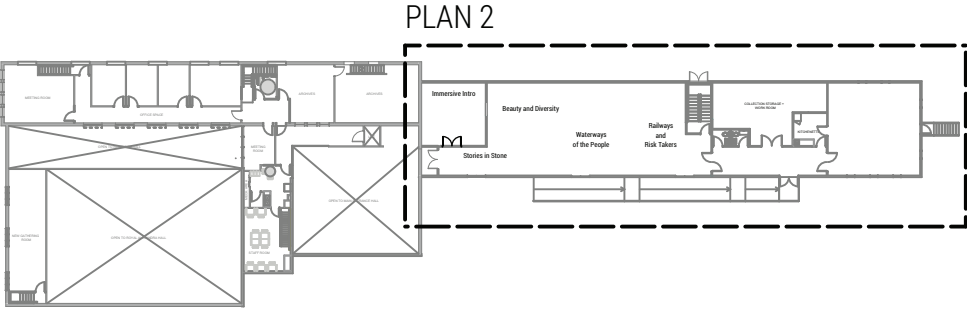




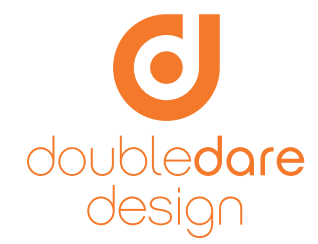
KEY PLAN - First Floor



PLAN 2



KEY PLAN - Second Floor



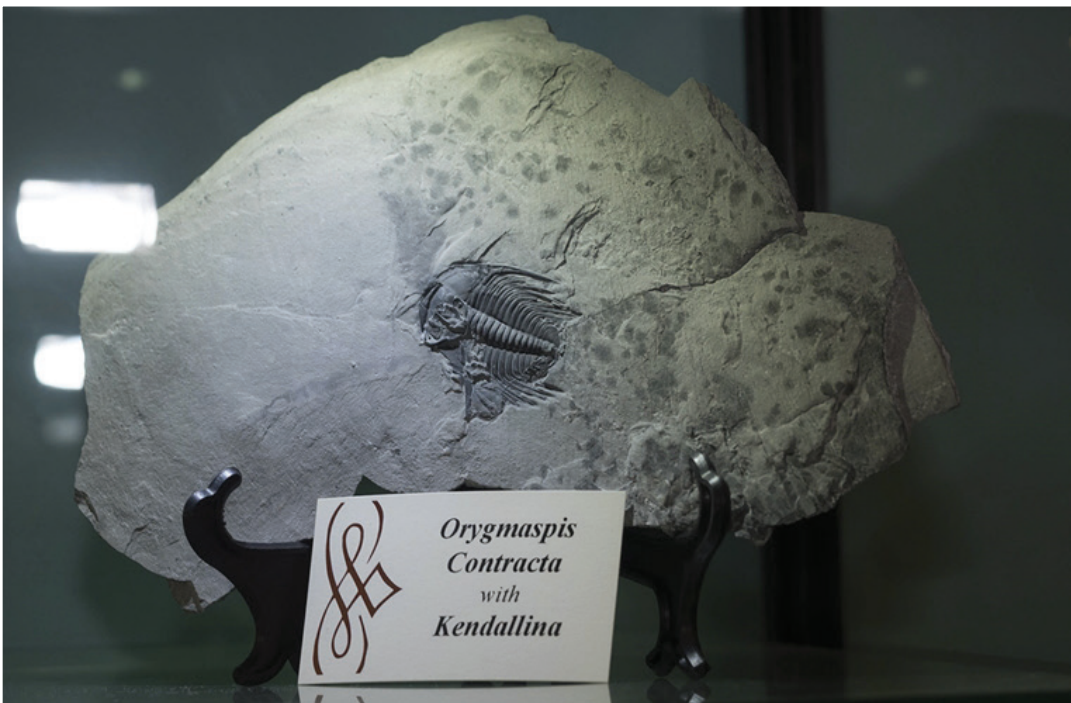
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Zone Narrative

1.0 Parking lot and entry

Visitors arrive at the parking lot and appreciate the Centre’s vintage urban train station architecture—particularly in its newly spruced-up surroundings. The parking lot and landscaping has been refreshed and re-paved; a tasteful video display outlines current programs and events; and thematic way finding signs confirm to the visitors that they have come to the right place.

2.0 Lobby

Just inside the lobby doors, visitors are greeted by desk staff who welcome them and outline the programs and exhibits on offer. Across the lobby is a spectacular historic mantel around which comfortable couch and armchair seating is arranged. Not far from the mantel, is a theme statement encapsulating the essence of Cranbrook in its East Kootenay setting. A territorial welcome from Ktunaxa lets visitors know in whose territory they are living or visiting.

Thematic way finding, evoking the stories of the centre, invite visitors toward the exhibition galleries.

3.0 Immersive intro

The must-see stop of any visit is a multimedia space. Visitors are fully surrounded by the sights and sounds of the Cranbrook and the East Kootenay area from the distant past to the present, including the Ktunaxa creation story. Through immersive video, sounds, music, and narration they understand the themes and periods that have shaped what Cranbrook is today.

4.0 Stories in stone: a palaeontology legacy

Departing the multimedia experience, visitors enter mysteriously lit gallery that evokes an ancient undersea world as visitors explore what this area might have been like hundreds of millions of years ago. Fossils and 3D reproductions of strange ancient animals paint a picture of the Cambrian life that is recorded within the region’s mountains.

Project of Heart by students at
Laurie Middle School, St. Eugene, Cranbrook.

5.0 The beauty and diversity of the Kootenays wilderness

The next gallery feels bright and natural, as visitors encounter images, video, and reproductions of the plant and animal life of the East Kootenay. Some reproductions are touchable; some are embedded in classic dioramas; some may be taxidermy.

6.0 The enduring culture of Ktunaxa

A spacious gallery introduces visitors to the Ktunaxa people. In a space co-developed and curated with the Nation, visitors understand their history and culture. Elements in this space encourage visitors to see the interpretive centre at St. Eugene and other local Indigenous attractions. To be developed in partnership.

7.0 Railways and risk takers

Next, Cranbrook’s early exploration and settlement period comes to life in this gallery telling the story of the railways, the mounted police, early settlers, and the development of early Cranbrook. The story of modern Cranbrook continues in this gallery with images, artifacts, and interactive exhibits that highlight some of the events and larger-than-life personalities that defined Cranbrook through the 20th century.

8.0 Multipurpose room

A gallery space within the centre has been dedicated to traveling exhibitions, offering something new to local visitors each time they come. Between touring shows, the room may become an education space, a showcase for artifacts of the week, or a staff working space.

9.0 Hall of fame

A bright and lively corridor space showcases the spirit of Cranbrook through its people and their accomplishments in sports, arts, tourism, business, philanthropy come to life in a hall of fame. Through video, images, and sound visitors see Cranbrook's accomplishments and points of pride—and have their say in the kind of Cranbrook they'd like to see in the future.

10.0 Discovery space

Downstairs, a colourful space with a bright glass wall has been dedicated to activities, games, and educational programming for school groups and families with younger children.

11.0 Model trains

The model train gallery is another must-see part of any trip to the Cranbrook History Centre. Visitors discover that beautiful new lighting has been added—and they can now have close-up views from the front of the moving train, or down into some of the mini-buildings through subtly placed cameras within the model.

12.0 Courtyard

The outdoor space between the Centre and the historic trains has been remodeled into a beautiful courtyard, with bistro tables and chairs, coffee or food truck style service, a small stage for local performers and speakers, and original artwork commemorating workers who helped create the region's railways.

13.0 Train platforms

On the platforms between the historic train cars are a series of interpretive panels highlighting the significance of this remarkable train collection. The panels are in a historical sequence, and create a self-guided story walk along the platform.

14.0 Children's exploration zone

Not far from popular rail cars, a train themed play area beckons families with younger children. A dedicated rail car becomes a mini children's train exhibit and hands-on space, and filling out the zone, an open programming space facilitates family programs and events.

15.0 Train interiors

The interior of the historic trains remains a highlight of the visit, offered as part of a guided tour with the Centre's talented guides. New experiences surprise the visitor with augmented reality views of some of the cars; haunting historic sounds and voices in surprising spots here and there; and more.

16.0 Archives

The Archives are open for visit by appointment, or for drop-in visits on busy days where staff have curated a tabletop exhibit on topical themes—and chat with visitors about the stories and images featured.

17.0 Gift shop and departure

As visitors spend time in the cafe, they see an innovate kind of 'guest book' in the form of a nail-board weaving activity. Each person, with their own thread, connects where they are from, what kind of group they're travelling with, and which exhibit area was their favourite.

