



Strategic Plan FY27-FY31

Mission

Canterbury Shaker Village preserves and shares the legacy of the Canterbury Shakers, promoting learning, connection, and rejuvenation for people from down the street and around the world.

Vision

Canterbury Shaker Village envisions a future where Shaker values, culture, and concepts such as community, ingenuity, and intentional living, inspire people to live more meaningful, connected lives.

Purpose

This strategic plan establishes priorities to guide Canterbury Shaker Village over the next five years. It focuses limited human and financial resources on initiatives that protect core assets, enhance visitor engagement, and secure long-term financial sustainability.

Strategic Context - The Village's historic buildings, landscapes, and collections are both its greatest assets and its greatest responsibilities. To remain viable and mission-aligned, the organization must:

- Shift from reactive to proactive preservation.
- Deliver high-quality visitor experiences.
- Diversify and stabilize revenue streams.
- Align organizational capacity with strategic ambition.

This plan reflects a disciplined approach to those realities.

The plan is organized around three strategic priorities:

- **Preserve the Past** – Protect and leverage historic assets.
- **Enrich the Present** – Strengthen the Village as a vibrant destination.
- **Shape a Sustainable Future** – Build financial resilience and organizational capacity.

Values

- **Stewardship** – Protecting and sharing the Canterbury Shakers' legacy for the benefit of current and future generations.
- **Relevance** – Connecting Shaker heritage to today's world.
- **Community** – Welcoming all to find joy and inspiration through shared activities and experiences.
- **Integrity** – Acting truthfully, ethically, and responsibly in all circumstances.
- **Fortitude** – Demonstrating thoughtful courage in decision making that consistently supports long-term well-being.

Priority A: Preserve the Past

Protect and Leverage Historic Assets

Long-term sustainability begins with responsible stewardship of the Village's physical and cultural resources.

A1. Establish a Comprehensive Preservation Framework

Develop integrated planning tools to guide long-term investment decisions:

- Collections stewardship plan
- Cultural landscape plan
- Building preservation and rehabilitation master plan
- Master interpretive plan

Result: Proactive capital planning, reduced crisis spending, and mission-aligned prioritization.

A2. Stabilize and Protect Assets

Execute prioritized preservation and conservation initiatives:

- Preservation of eight buildings identified with high significance, visibility and need
- Protection of additional structures and collections
- Strategic rehabilitation of mission-supporting spaces
- Improved storage and exhibition spaces for collections
- Recruitment of a Director of Historic Preservation (Curator of Buildings)
- Creation of reserve funds for building preservation and artifact conservation

Result: Reduced emergency exposure, strengthened stewardship credibility, and improved access to collections.

Priority B: Enrich the Present

Activate the Village Experience

To be relevant and financially viable, the Village must offer compelling, high-quality experiences that attract visitors and encourage repeat visitation.

B1. Strengthen Core Visitor Infrastructure

Invest in improvements that shape visitor perception and satisfaction:

- Renovation of Brethren's Shop bathrooms
- Reintroduction of daily food service
- Development of family-friendly engagement spaces

Result: Improved first impressions, increased repeat visitation, and stronger destination appeal.

B2. Expand and Deepen Programming

Adopt a disciplined “test–evaluate–scale” model:

- Broaden programming to attract new audiences
- Develop immersive and multi-day experiences
- Ensure infrastructure supports program growth

Result: Increased audience reach, deeper engagement, and stronger earned income contribution.

B3. Modernize and Revitalize Interpretation

Embrace and enhance visitors’ curiosity about history and spirituality through revitalized interpretation of Shakerism and communal life:

- Expanding visitor access through transformative research and innovative digital and interpretive resources
- Launching a new permanent exhibition on Shaker religion

Result: Intellectual and spiritual relevance beyond that of other historic sites.

Priority C: Shape a Sustainable Future

Build Financial and Organizational Resilience

The Village must transition from financial urgency to strategic sustainability.

C1. Implement a Sustainable Business Model

Define and execute a financial framework that:

- Establishes an appropriate mix of revenue streams
- Aligns expenses with predictable income
- Supports disciplined, measured growth

Result: Predictable financial performance and strategic flexibility.

C2. Grow the Endowment

Increase the endowment by \$7 million to generate approximately \$350,000 in annual operating support through:

- Integration into the Vibrant Campaign
- Expanded planned giving
- Adoption of a policy directing planned gifts to endowment unless otherwise designated

Result: Stronger long-term operating stability.

C3. Expand and Diversify Earned Income

Strengthen revenue resilience by:

- Increasing program margins
- Expanding rentals and long-term leases
- Evaluating mission-aligned business opportunities

Result: Improved cash flow and reduced dependence on annual fundraising.

C4. Maintain Strong Annual Fundraising

Ensure development is integrated into organizational operations through:

- Stable development staffing
- Annual fundraising plans aligned with the business model
- Strategic use of capital and project funding

Result: Fundraising driven by long-term strategy rather than short-term need.

C5. Build a High-Performance Organizational Culture

Attract and retain talent by:

- Engaging individuals in meaningful work
- Clarifying roles and expectations
- Supporting professional growth
- Recognizing performance and ensuring thoughtful communication

Result: A mission-driven workplace capable of executing the strategic plan.

Conclusion

This strategy represents a disciplined, focused approach to stewardship, visitor engagement, and financial sustainability. By concentrating on a manageable set of priorities, Canterbury Shaker Village will:

- Protect its historic legacy,
- Strengthen its relevance and visitor experience, and
- Operate from a foundation of long-term financial stability.

Consistent prioritization and board oversight will be essential to successful execution over the next five years.