

## Oregon Historical Society Internal Stakeholder Themes

The following themes emerged across interviews and focus groups with OHS internal stakeholders (staff, volunteers, Cabinet, and board members).

### **Influential Trends in OHS's Operating Environment:**

- Technology, technological change, ubiquitous social media and mobile devices, e.g., ipads, smart phones.
- Changes in the funding landscape: new tax law may impact donations; local and state government budget pressures; potential for the next economic downturn; and regional foundation funders are emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Racial and ethnic diversity is growing in Portland metro area elsewhere in the state.
- Competition for philanthropic resources (many nonprofits in Oregon).
- Generational shifts, including:
  - We are losing many of our largest and most loyal donors as we lose the greatest generation.
  - With longer life-spans, many retirees are staying active by volunteering in civic affairs.

### **OHS's Strengths:**

- Excellent exhibits, collections, public programs, publications, lecture series, online resources, and community engagement/ outreach
- Knowledgeable and dedicated staff
- Well known and well respected leader
- Making good progress with diversity / sharing relevant history in collaboration with community partners
- Central, downtown location

### **OHS's Opportunities and Challenges: 3 to 5 Years:**

- **Becoming a truly statewide organization**
  - We need to reach the entire state of Oregon.
  - Create more statewide locations and partnerships, including other historical societies.
- **Increasing OHS's visibility**
  - Get the word out that we are a nonprofit, not a state agency
  - Translate interest in OHS into long-term membership / support
  - Rethink our identity: Does "historical society" sound exclusive / pose a barrier?
- **Staying relevant in a changing world**
  - Shine a light on current issues affecting our communities through the lens of history. We have opportunities to educate, showcase our collections, and create connections with more communities.

- Become a respected source for truth-telling about the past.
- Create fresh and relevant content through digital history projects, public programming and exhibit planning.
  
- **Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion**
  - More diversity within the organization and within hallmark exhibits, e.g., tribal histories.
  - Create trust with marginalized communities; deepen / expand our partnerships with diverse groups;
  - Grow a more diverse pipeline of historians, archivists, and museum professionals by creating internships, fellowships, or scholarships for minority students.
  - Rethink how we recruit communities of color and how we bring communities into decision-making.
  
- **Managing growth – including technology investment**
  - OHS is transitioning to become a nationally known museum and historical society, which includes growing pains.
  - The reboot of Oregon My Oregon is an opportunity to bring more technology into the building.
  - Become more tech savvy: More interactivity, more materials accessible online, etc.