



# George Stoppel Farmstead

Final Interpretive Plan

July 21, 2023



**HISTORY  
CENTER**  
OF OLMSTED COUNTY





**106GROUP**

Connecting People + Place + Time

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# INTRODUCTION



# SITE OVERVIEW

Nestled into a gently rolling hillside, the bright red barn of the George Stoppel Farmstead evokes a mid-1800s settler landscape in Minnesota. The farmstead was built by two immigrant brothers, George and Joseph Stoppel, who left Germany in the 1830s for the United States. They filed claims for land in Minnesota in 1856. Located in present-day Rochester, Minnesota, the mid-1800s farm is now owned and operated by the History Center of Olmsted County (HCOC). The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Though the site has predominately told the stories of early settlers and agriculture in Minnesota, efforts to tell more comprehensive, compelling, and accurate stories about the landscape from a variety of perspectives are underway.



The iconic red barn built by George Stoppel.

# PREVIOUS WORK

Iterative and collaborative work between 106 Group and the History Center of Olmsted County led us from a Foundations Document, delivered in November 2021 to this Interpretive Plan.

## Project Process

### Phase 1: Foundations

In 2021-2022, 106 Group developed Foundations for the George Stoppel Farmstead. Through onsite engagement work and an iterative drafting process, 106 Group, the HCOC team, and its stakeholders created the Foundations Report that formed the heart of this Interpretive Plan as well as the centerpiece of future planning, digging deeply and thoughtfully to build future interpretation with intention and meaning.

### Phase 2: Interpretive Plan

With the Foundations in place, 106 Group and HCOC are continuing along the path of co-creation. An onsite workshop, held March 30-31, 2023, gathered key stakeholders again to reexamine the Foundations Report, confirm the themes and narratives are appropriate, and elaborate on the vision for the Stoppel Farmstead. That collaborative engagement work was documented in a Trip Report, included as an Appendix, and served as the basis of this Interpretive Plan.





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# INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK



# MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS

At the start of any planning project, it is essential to set firm foundations. Community stakeholders and HCOC staff did this by working together to answer a set of foundational questions.

## 1. WHY ARE WE CREATING THIS INTERPRETATION?

Defines the project goals

## 2. WHO IS THIS INTERPRETATION FOR?

Identifies the audience and community

## 3. WHERE DO WE STAND?

Summarizes the existing conditions

## 4. WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE ABOUT?

Articulates the interpretive messaging

From the organization's mission and vision, the process of building the project Foundations begins with setting goals for George Stoppel Farmstead: an operational goal and a visitor experience goal. The operational goal articulates what the institution wants to accomplish through interpretive planning and development at the site. The visitor experience goal summarizes what types of meaningful experiences the institution wishes to foster for visitors.

## Mission of HCOC

Give people of all ages and backgrounds access and opportunity to learn about the past through interpretive programs and exhibits, research, publications, and events.

## Vision of HCOC

To become a gathering place for the broader community that inspires and encourages the exploration of history.

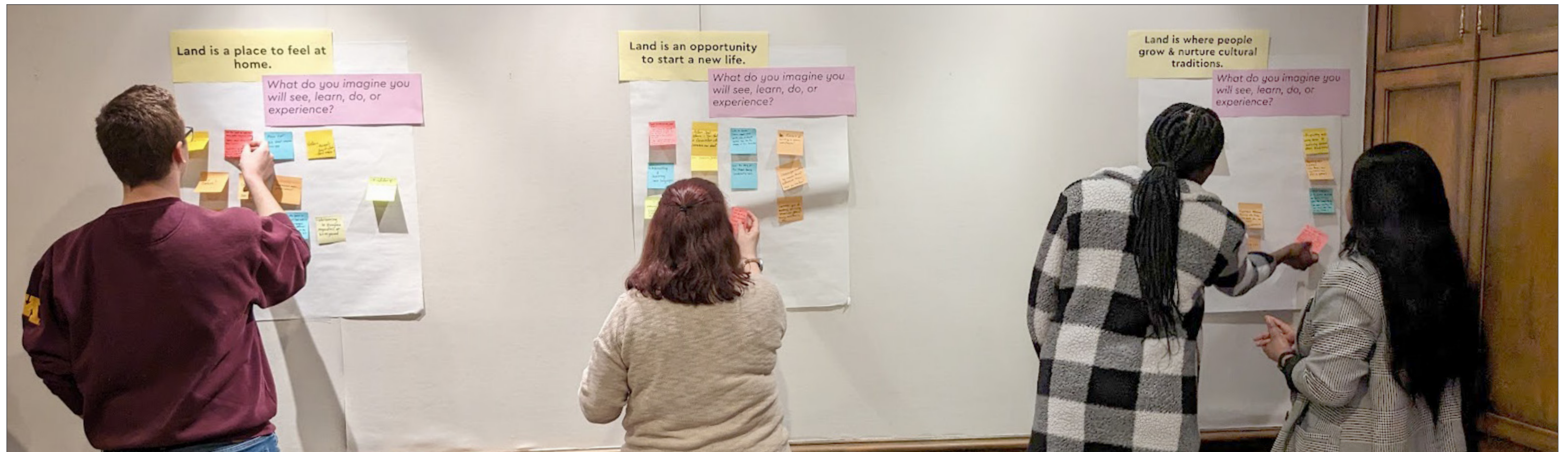
## Operational Goals

- George Stoppel Farmstead will bring a range of community members together to build cross-cultural understanding among those who live in and visit Olmsted County, providing opportunities to explore differences through programming and exhibits.
- George Stoppel Farmstead will become an accessible local and regional destination that demonstrates the economic and social value of investing in place-based agricultural history in southeastern Minnesota as well as stronger relationships to Indigenous communities.

- Following renovations, George Stoppel Farmstead will increase use and maximize efficiency in space planning for staff and visitors.

## Visitor Experience Goals

- As they explore George Stoppel Farmstead, visitors will feel a sense of belonging to Olmsted County.
- Regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, visitors will feel pride in their own family history and traditions—each with their own unique challenges and adversities to overcome.
- Away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, visitors will be able to slow down and feel present as they try new activities on the farm, have fun with their families and friends, and explore new perspectives on the landscape.



Participants in the March 2023 Workshop work to expand on activities that bring to life Stoppel Farmstead interpretive themes.



# AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY

## Who is This Experience For?

During two onsite workshops, held May 31 to June 1, 2022, and March 30 to 31, 2023, the project team—including board members, current staff, and community partners—identified and refined existing and target audiences for the George Stoppel Farmstead detailed below.

## Partners

The following individuals added their voices and expertise to the engagement workshops held in 2022 and 2023.

- **Dakota Community Members**
  - › Valerie Guimaraes
  - › Betty Smith
- **Immigrants to Rochester**
  - › Armin Budimlic, Director of IMAA
- **HCOC Stakeholders and Partners**
  - › Heather Nestler, Spark Children's Museum
  - › Anders Mayland, Oliver Kelly Farm
  - › Amanda Nigon-Crowley, Village Agricultural Cooperative
  - › Jerry Locula, Village Agricultural Cooperative
  - › Beth Plaetzer, master gardener
  - › Lori Pagel, teacher and farmer
  - › Ron Pagel, farmer
  - › Michelle Rossman, teacher
  - › Kathy Harowski, Diversity Council
  - › Kristy Flanagan, Rochester Public Schools teacher
  - › Chinwe Obi, UM Rochester student
  - › Akon Chieu, UM Rochester student
  - › Logan Gaylor, UM Rochester student
  - › Mary Bovee, UM Rochester student
  - › Taylor Fox, UM Rochester student
- **HCOC Staff, Board Members, and Volunteers**
  - › Paul Scanlon, board president
  - › Christine Rule, board member
  - › Jean Williams, volunteer, board member
  - › Lee Hilgendorf, volunteer
  - › Dominick Nowakowski, student volunteer
  - › Sam Wick, board member
  - › Jean Marvin, board member
  - › Josefina Pozas, board member
  - › Abby Currier, Community Engagement and Events Coordinator
  - › Ashley Evans, Events/Rental Coordinator
  - › Madeleine Lawler, Education Coordinator
  - › Dan Nowakowski, Mayowood Historic Site Manager
  - › Wayne Gannaway, Executive Director
  - › Caleb Baumgartner, Communications Coordinator
  - › Krista Lewis, Archivist
  - › Darla Buss, Membership Coordinator
- **Stoppel Family Descendants**
  - › Gerald Stoppel
  - › Beverly and Duane Madsen

## Target Audiences

Understanding the needs and motivations of audiences can help focus content and design decisions. These groupings are surface level; age, gender, background, and ethnicity add nuance to each category. Even motivations for visiting—such as exploring or finding a place to simply unwind and relax—add layers to consider in interpretive planning. These categories will likely deepen, expand, and evolve with future community engagement.

### Immigrant Families

New arrivals to Rochester may be looking for opportunities to both share memories and celebrate their culture, as well as learn about their new home. Future engagement and consultation with recent immigrants could further inspire interpretive directions:

**“The Diversity Council does something called human books, which is people willing to tell their story. And that is so powerful, because if people volunteer to do it, often they do, they have something important to share... [a]nd that oral history could also be reading someone else’s story.”**

(Workshop participant, June 1, 2022)

### School Groups

As an existing core audience group, local students and homeschoolers in Olmsted County will likely benefit from an informal learning environment. Interpretation at George Stoppel Farmstead could promote opportunities for:

- Understanding the world and themselves
- Asking questions and fostering curiosity
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Developing interpersonal skills, such as empathy

### Multi-generational Family

Grandparents or older adult visitors, who may be out for a weekend day trip with younger members of their family, will likely enjoy introducing a “different way of life” from their childhoods. This target group—which varies in age, interests, and abilities—benefits from accessible, social, and multisensory interpretive experiences with multiple entry points and opportunities to spark a conversation.

**“Our audience also tends to skew older. So, we’ll get a fair number of audience members either [at the history center or] out at the barn like, this is what it was like when I was a kid. And so, it’s sharing that cross-generational information. So along with the validating, it’s like, this is what I grew up with, this is how we did things. Nostalgia.”** (Workshop participant, May 31, 2022)



Tours inside the historic cave reveal intriguing carvings and graffiti.

### Mayo Visitors, Staff, and Public Health Students

In between hospital visits or health appointments, some out-of-state visitors may look for a place of respite or even joy while visiting Rochester. Interpretive planning for this group may include short, bite-sized experiences in the surrounding beauty of the farmstead, such as film nights, craft workshops, cultural food events, or outdoor activities such as guided snowshoe tours. Tapping into a sense of belonging for this transient group of visitors may include offerings that are less structured around the formal history of Olmsted County and more grounded in a sense of place, building relevance to wherever they call home.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

## Community

To plan for future visitors at George Stoppel Farmstead, it is important to invest in meaningful relationships and develop an understanding of community needs. Broad brush strokes—including demographic data, existing engagement documentation from the City of Rochester, and onsite workshops with stakeholders—have started the conversation about the site’s potential value to the community.

An estimated 121,465 people live in Rochester as of 2021; almost 14% of residents are foreign-born.\* Home to Mayo Clinic, a world-renowned healthcare facility, the City of Rochester can present a challenging sense of transience for some residents: **“So why do I care about the history of Olmsted County of Rochester, things like that? Because I’m only going to be here six or seven years, and I’m out”** (Workshop participant, June 1, 2022).

A 2016 report developed by The United Way of Olmsted County notes a strong sense of disconnectedness for community members, both from their neighbors and the extended community.

The follow passage from the report highlights this:

**“Segregation is a kind of macro-level disconnectedness. Community members feel as though “groups” are isolated from one another, both geographically and socially. That is, there are divisions between black residents and white residents, upper- and lower-income residents, Rochester and other Olmsted County residents, Mayo employees and non-Mayo employees, etc. These divisions are many and are seen as pronounced and accepted throughout the community. However, participants in our conversations are consistently dissatisfied with this condition and long for a more inclusive community.**

**Isolation is another way in which disconnectedness affects Olmsted County community members. There’s a strong and pervasive feeling of alone-ness that seems to arise from weak or nonexistent support networks. People commonly report not knowing their neighbors, lacking a sense of community in their neighborhoods, and wishing for a stronger common bond with others in the community. Living among strangers also heightens fears and anxieties about crime and other social dangers. They also told us it hasn’t always been this way – that there was a time in our community’s (even our nation’s) history when people knew and relied on neighbors.”**

\* U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Rochester city, Minnesota

† Community Conversations Summary.pdf (uwolmsted.org)



A view of the bustling Stoppel Farmstead in A. T. Andreas’s *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota*, 1874.

Much like the Stoppel Family, many immigrant families landing in Rochester today left their homes for an unfamiliar place. Providing a space for visitors—both long-term residents and new arrivals—to gather and connect to their surroundings, to themselves, to their neighbors, to the past and present, could be a way to lean into this sense of disconnectedness, isolation, and loneliness. **What if, regardless of one’s roots, the farmstead was a place to belong?**

## Operations

Founded in 1926, the Olmsted County Historical Society purchased land in southwest Rochester in 1972—the location of the historic George Stoppel Farmstead. A museum near the farmstead, now known as the History Center of Olmsted County, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a board of directors. Supported by local volunteers and community organizations, the staff at HCOC curates exhibits, develops educational programming and lectures, leads tours at the farmstead, and supports researchers.‡ As with many museums and cultural heritage organizations, staff time is a limited resource: **“It’s not a huge staff here. And we’re all covering so many different things that there’s these great strengths, there’s opportunities, but how do you find the time to do it?”** (Workshop participant, May 31, 2022). Planning for the site-wide renovation and refreshed interpretation for the George Stoppel Farmstead should include cataloging collections—including both floors of the large bank barn.

‡ History Center of Olmsted County | GiveMN

## Infrastructure

Interpretive planning will focus on multiple buildings at the George Stoppel Farmstead. A brief outline of these areas is included below. The large bank barn, constructed circa 1874, is the most visible structure on the landscape for passersby on the highway. Livestock stalls—currently filled with large machinery and an assortment of unidentified collections—line the basement, with storage for grain and hay on the level above.§ After structural and exterior renovations, the barn will provide ample space for interpreting the site’s history. Conversations regarding spatial use of the barn for public programming, exhibits, education, as well as implications for current storage facilities and deaccessioning, will be beneficial in upcoming stages of planning.

A few steps from the barn, the circa 1861 farmhouse—currently in disrepair and sparsely furnished—is also a likely location to interpret Stoppel Family history over generations through programs and exhibits. One of the site’s unique features, the cave shelter dug by the Stoppels for their first winter in Minnesota, includes an intriguing array of graffiti carved into the walls. Additional locations for interpretation extend from the smokehouse out into the heritage gardens, open fields, community gardens, and walking paths along the property. A holistic, cohesive approach will be imperative to meaningfully connect themes to the landscape.

§ George Stoppel Farmstead Bank Barn | SAH ARCHIPEDIA (sah-archipedia.org)



# INTERPRETIVE MESSAGING

## What is the Experience About?

Community members from Olmsted County and HCOC staff contributed preliminary interpretive direction in a series of four onsite workshops. The interpretive Foundations builds a framework beginning with a “big idea,” a set of themes, and a list of topics. In *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, Beverly Serrell writes that “A big idea is a sentence—a statement—of what the exhibition is about.... It also implies what the exhibit is not about. A big idea is big because it has fundamental meaningfulness that is important to human nature.” Big ideas are also sometimes referred to as a main theme or main message.

The themes are interpretive threads that weave throughout the visitor experience. Each theme will be expressed in multiple places, and any place might communicate multiple themes.

## Big Idea, Themes, and Topics

**“The cities are but the branches of the tree of national life, the roots of which go deeply into the land. We all flourish or decline with the farmer.”** — *Bernard Baruch, American Agriculture: A Brief History (2002)*

BIG IDEA

## Cultivate a sense of welcoming through the land.



THEME



THEME



THEME



### Land is a place to feel at home.

THEME

- What resources in southeastern Minnesota did people use to live and support their families?
  - › Zumbro River Watershed (including prairies, forests, rivers, and wildlife)
  - › Food (Indigenous plants and medicines; early settler agriculture)
  - › Shelter (Seasonal villages, including two large Bdewakantunwan villages near present-day Rochester; Stoppel Family cave; settler development of Rochester and towns in Olmsted County, Minnesota)



### Land is where people grow and nurture cultural traditions.

THEME

- Which locations onsite encourage planting, gathering, and sharing of food and cultural traditions—both in the past and present day?
  - › Bank barn, smokehouse
- How are generations of families connected to the land in present-day Rochester?
  - › Sacred relationships to place (burial mounds; 17 identified archaeological sites known to be associated with Indigenous communities); Wyandot, Potawatomi, Sauk, Meskwaki, Ioway, Ho-Chunk; Dakota (Bdewakantunwan and Wahpekute) primarily after 1830s
  - › Roots of the farming community in Rochester, beginning in mid-1800s European settlement
  - › Modern farming (rise of factory farming and impact on small family farms in Olmsted County; impact on landscape and climate change)
- Stoppel Family history
  - › Assimilation into American culture (bank barn, large-scale agricultural practices, and machinery)
  - › Traces of German farmstead traditions (including smokehouses, masonry, food preservation, and brewing)
  - › George Stoppel’s siblings and stories of extended family



### Land is an opportunity to start a new life.

THEME

- Waves of immigration: Why did people come here?
  - › Ireland, Germany, Russia, Scandinavia (mid-1800s to early 1900s), including Stoppel Family motivations (political unrest, economic opportunity, and anti-German sentiment).
  - › Consequences of settler colonialism and displacement of Indigenous peoples
  - › Contemporary (late 1900s to present), like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Bosnia, and Mexico
- How did immigrants support the American economy?
  - › Craftsmanship and skilled trades
  - › Emergence of wheat production in Minnesota late 1850s
  - › Diversified farming 1870s
- Acknowledge that starting a new life for one group may mean ending a way of life for another.



# PRINCIPLES

These foundational principles should guide development of the Stoppel Farmstead through all phases of implementation.

- The Stoppel Farmstead is a **warm** and **welcoming place**. It does not come across as sterile. It welcomes new audiences and new topics. It invites conversation.
- Visitors to the farm have all their **senses engaged**, just as they would be when this was a working farm in the late 1800s.
- The Stoppel Farmstead is **defined by contrasts**. Some spaces feel contemporary and modern. Others feel historic. Highlighting contrasts reflects the combination of old and new, recent and historic.
- History Center of Olmstead County is **required visitation** for all school groups in the region. Content **resonates** with families and students.
- The Stoppel Farmstead is an **experiential** destination that encourages **engagement** for visitors young and old. Hands-on experiences are the goal.
- Interpretive elements throughout are **unexpected** and **playful**. The farmstead inspires a sense of wonder and encourages play for visitors of all ages.
- Interpretation relating to Indigenous history should be **grounded in collaboration**. Meaningful, authentic relationships with local Dakota communities should be established first. Interpretation follows after and evolves in close collaboration with communities whose stories will be told.



Fraser Garden Design



History Center of Olmstead County



Harrowsmith Magazine



Formations Exhibits



Khurt J Williams Photography



Pinterest



Mama Smiles



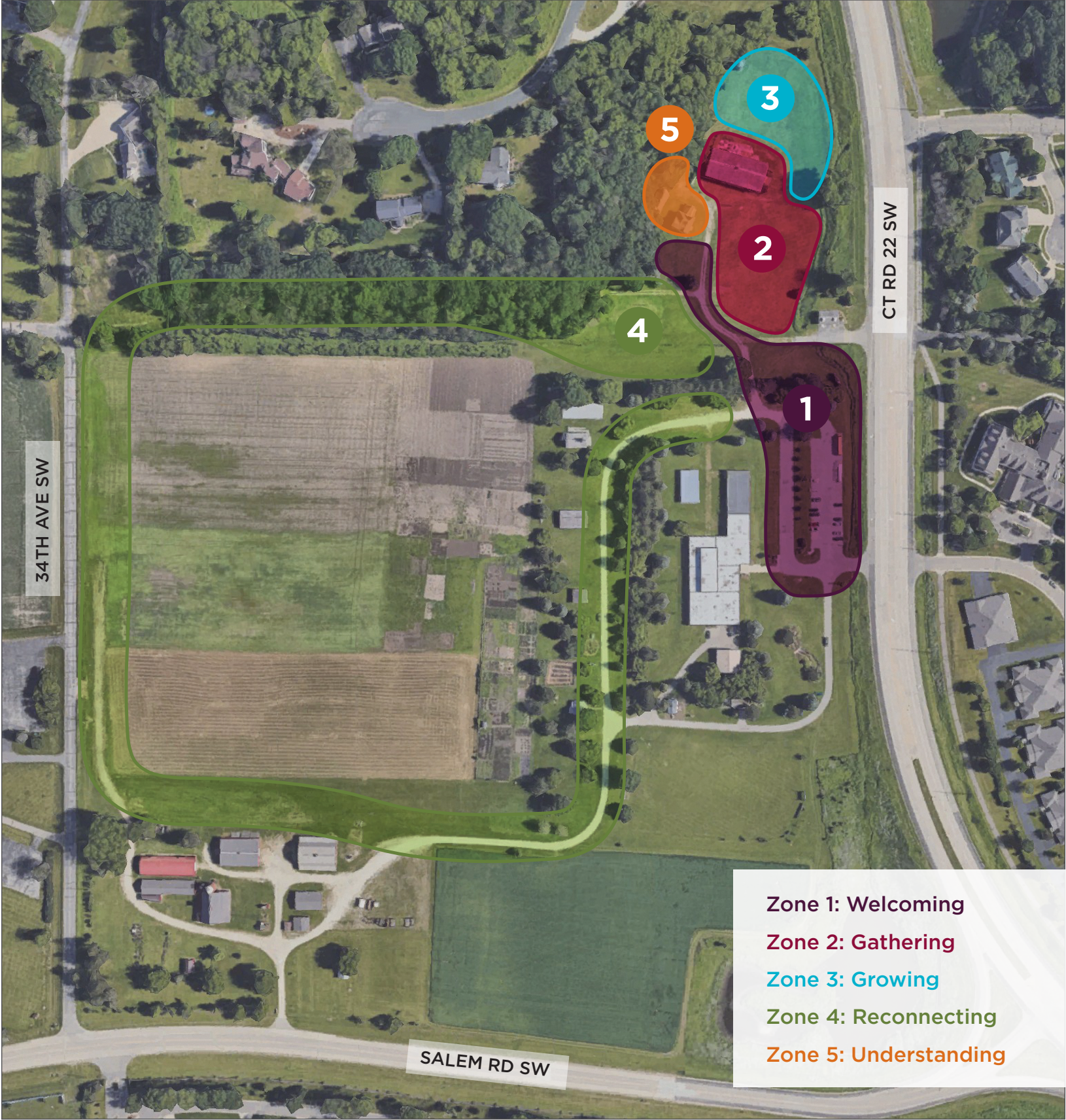
Bloomsbury Fine Art & Antiques



Wiwitka



# VISITOR EXPERIENCE ZONES





# VISITOR EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

## Multi-Generational Family

A grandmother and grandfather have been members of HCOC for many years, and are excited to bring their daughter, son-in-law, and their two granddaughters for a visit. They receive the HCOC newsletter and know there is a kid's movie night in the field as soon as it gets dark. The family arrives a few hours early to see more at the History Center.

The family starts at the **Welcome Map**, but only so Grandma and Grandpa can let the family know what to expect—they know exactly where they're going at HCOC! Grandma wants to show the kids her favorite artifacts on display inside the museum. Dad points out the Nature Trail, and Mom says she's curious about the Challenge Course at the Playground. They add those to the list.

After a great visit to the museum, the family picks up the **Nature Trail** near the Dee Cabin. The kids are drawn to the art installations they find emerging from the trees and growing out of the fields. They've never seen art like this.

Dad stops at identification markers labeling native plants along the trail. He scans QR codes to explore how the plants were and are used by Indigenous people. He downloads recipes for edible plants and find out how to identify the plants when he finds them in his own neighborhood.

On the other end of the nature trail, the kids are thrilled by the **Playground**. They see giant tractors and combines in the fields near their house; now they get to climb on one and pretend they're farmers!

Mom and Grandma spot the **Challenge Course** and try their hand at carrying water. They're shocked by how heavy the pail is. They can't imagine how hard it must have been for immigrants in the 1850s to do this every day.

Finally, it's time for the movie to start. The family finds a spot on **Family Field** and sets up their blanket. Dad goes back up to the parking lot, where a food truck is selling barbeque to others arriving to watch the movie.

As they enjoy their dinner, the family gets ready to enjoy a movie under the stars with a hundred of their closest friends.



### Think

- Environment and people are connected
- This is a Native space

### Feel

- Connected to each other and their community

### Do

- Welcome Plaza
- Nature Trail
- Playground and Challenge Course
- Community Gathering



## Mayo Visitor

An elderly man is in residence at the Mayo Clinic for several months while he undergoes cancer treatment. Back at home, he was used to walking along the ocean, and he misses his exercise. One of his nurses told him he should visit the Stoppel Farmstead, where there is a Nature Trail she walks every weekend.

Before he even reaches the trail, he is drawn to the **Stoppel Family Orchard**. A small plaque near an apple tree catches his eye. He sees that the tree was sponsored by a family in memory of a loved one. He sees similar plaques at other trees, along with the date they were planted.

The entrance to the **Nature Trail**, near the playground, is easy to spot and he is charmed by the art installation that welcomes him onto the trail. He learns it was designed by a local Indigenous artist and stops to read the Artist's Statement and learn more about her work.

The highlight of his walk on the Nature Trail are the signs identifying the native plants, along with recipes and uses for those plants.

The trail ends near the **Community Garden**, where he meets a gardener who has volunteered with the Village for years. They talk about the gardener's experience with the Village and how happy the gardener is to have a place where he can get his hands dirty.

The gardener tells the visitor he has to stop in at the **Bank Barn**, where there is a temporary exhibit of art by local Rochester high school students, including the gardener's daughter.

While exploring the exhibit, the visitor picks up a brochure and sees there is an upcoming program where the gardener he just met will be demonstrating a recipe using vegetables from his garden.

He makes a note of the date and promises to return. He's glad to have found a place that feels like home in Rochester.



### Think

- Impact of HCOC on the Rochester community
- This is a Native space

### Feel

- A sense of belonging in Rochester
- Reconnected to the natural environment and his sense of well-being

### Do

- Nature Trail
- Community Garden
- Bank Barn exhibit
- Temporary exhibits



## School Group

A 4th grade teacher at Overland Elementary is seeking an opportunity to bring to life her curriculum topic, “History: Minnesotan Immigration” and a colleague told her about the opportunity at the Stoppel Farmstead. She books her field trip online and schedules a guided tour with a UM Rochester student volunteer.

When the class arrives onsite, they are met by their UM Rochester student guide, who came to the US from Ghana to study. She brings into the Stoppel’s story a connection to her own experience of moving to Rochester three years earlier.

The class begins its tour in the **Stone House Kitchen**. The students are thrilled to touch the period stove, churn butter, and haul water from a well. Their hands-on experience continues in the gardens outside where they pick tomatoes and learn about vegetables the Stoppel family grew.

Next the tour guide takes the class to the **Cave**. She points out the historic graffiti, and shares family lore about how the Stoppels may have spent their first winters living in the caves. She asks the students about stories their own families might share. How can family stories change over time? How true are they?

The tour ends in the **Smokehouse** with the object theater experience, highlighting objects the Stoppel family may have brought with them to Minnesota. After the show, she shares the objects she brought with her from Ghana in her Freshman year.



### Think

- Understand immigrant experiences, past and present
- Visualize life on a Minnesota farm in the 1860s

### Feel

- Energized by hands-on experiences
- Empathize with the struggles, hard work, and joy of farm life

### Do

- Stone House
- Guided tour
- Smokehouse Object Theater



## Immigrant Family

A mother and father, with their two sons, come to the Stoppel Farmstead for a family day at the museum. The mother and father moved to Minnesota from Somalia twenty years ago, and have raised their two sons in Rochester. The father has been a volunteer with IMAA for many years, and knows a little about HCOC. He's excited to show his family the place where he spends his volunteer hours.

The family makes its way to the **Community Garden**. Dad brings the boys to the plot where he is growing adzuki beans the way he remembers his father growing them in Somalia. He is thrilled to walk the fields with his family, proud of all the ways he is contributing to the IMAA, HCOC, and the Rochester community.

From the Community Garden, the family makes their way to the **Smokehouse**.

As they step inside, a sound and light show introduces them to the experience of the Stoppels' journey to Minnesota. Against the sound of blizzards and livestock, the narrator talks about the things the family brought with them. With each new object, a spotlight shines on recreations of those items: a doll, a bag of seed, and their family Bible.

At the end, the narrator poses the question: "What would you bring with you if you started a new life?" Mom and dad stop to reflect on the treasured items they brought to Minnesota—photo albums, a baati dress.

They share with the boys that they also brought their family Koran with them, just as the Stoppels brought their family Bible.

*Please note the object theater experience is shown here in the Cave, but is instead proposed for the Smokehouse. Due to sensitive environmental conditions, the Cave will only be available as part of a guided tour experience.*



### Think

- Impact of immigrant experiences, past and present

### Feel

- Connected to past immigrants to Rochester and Minnesota
- Proud of their community

### Do

- Smokehouse Object Theater
- Community Garden



# ZONE 1: WELCOMING

## Purpose

Welcome and orient visitors to the History Center of Olmsted County, guiding them to locations that speak to their interests, including Stoppel Farmstead.

## Focal Points

In the HCOC Parking Lot, a **Welcome Map** orients visitors and communicates the opportunities inside the Museum Building, on the grounds outside, and at the Stoppel Farmstead.

Leading towards the museum building, a **Walking Timeline** draws visitors towards the HCOC museum and creates a visual representation of key moments in Olmsted County history.

Leading towards the Stoppel Farmstead, an **Art Installation** commissioned by a local artist, draws visitors towards the many experiences they can have at the Stoppel Farmstead.

## Goals

- Ensure visitors can build the experience they want at HCOC from the moment they arrive
- Unite the Stoppel Farmstead and HCOC campus experiences

## Theme



Cultivate a sense of welcoming through the land.





# ZONE 1: WELCOMING

## Welcome Map



A tactile map near the main parking lot communicates all the opportunities on the HCOC campus in an engaging, accessible way.

## Art Installation



Lump Sculpture Studio



Garden Form

An eye-catching art installation, designed by a local artist, greets visitors. Organic in form, it communicates the Big Idea that visitors are welcomed through the land.

## Walking Timeline



Pinterest

Visitors to the History Center walk through history on their way to the door. Key events and people in Olmsted County history are printed or embedded in paving stones.



# ZONE 2: GATHERING

## Purpose

Create flexible spaces that can shift as needed to accommodate visitors, stakeholders, programming, and rotating exhibits.

## Focal Points

In front of the Bank Barn, **Family Field** is where Rochester gathers for summer concert series, outdoor movie nights, and large-scale, community-centered events. This temporary name could be updated to highlight a major donor to HCOC.

Inside the **Bank Barn** is a wide-open space that serves as a multi-functional home for exhibits, programs, experiential learning, events and rentals.

The upper level is a flexible space that accomodates events, and rentals. It also includes exhibits showcasing collection items highlighting interpretive themes. These exhibits could include 1890s farm equipment, currently stored in the barn, alongside 1940s equipment drawn from the collection at the Ralph Stoppel farmstead. Visitors are invited to draw comparisons and create context between time periods. *106 Group recommends that xhibit planning for the Bank Barn take place after assessment and documentation of the farm equipment collection.*

On the lower level, an intimate classroom space welcomes smaller groups and hosts events, programs, field trip lunches, cooking demonstrations, and adult programs.

## Goals

- Make the Stoppel Farmstead a focal point of the HCOC campus, and the Rochester community
- Remain adaptive and flexible while retaining a sense of these spaces' original purpose
- Create a potential revenue stream for HCOC through event rentals

## Theme



Land is a place to feel at home.





# ZONE 2: GATHERING

Smokehouse



Evolve Media

Bank Barn



Family Field



Philly Voice



Pinterest



Contemporist



HCOC will be a gathering space for all of Olmsted County, with open, flexible gathering spaces on the Stoppel Farmstead at the organization's center.



# ZONE 3: GROWING

## Purpose

Create opportunities for hands-on education in modern and historic foodways and gardening practices.

## Focal Points

Surrounding the Bank Barn, the **Community Garden** is a hard-working, community-centered garden plot that offers opportunities to educate and expand on partnerships currently in place at HCOC.

The majority of the fields are maintained by IMAA and the Village volunteers, expanding on their fields behind the museum building.

In the dedicated **UM Rochester Class Garden**, students plant and maintain their crop through the summer, then harvest and sell at regional farmer's markets in the fall. This space may lend itself to "you-pick" opportunities for visitors.

The **Master Gardener Plots** invites visitors to explore gardening in new ways. Specific gardens, like Three Sister Groupings or a 1950s Victory Garden, might evoke cultivation practices from many periods in Rochester history. An herb garden may create space for a program on pre-modern healthcare.

## Goals

- Allow visitors to envision the Stoppel Farmstead as a working farm
- Expand cultivation spaces for IMAA, the Village and Master Gardener partners
- Make a space for new and existing HCOC partnerships to grow
- Partner with local farms to seasonally display chickens and small livestock

## Theme



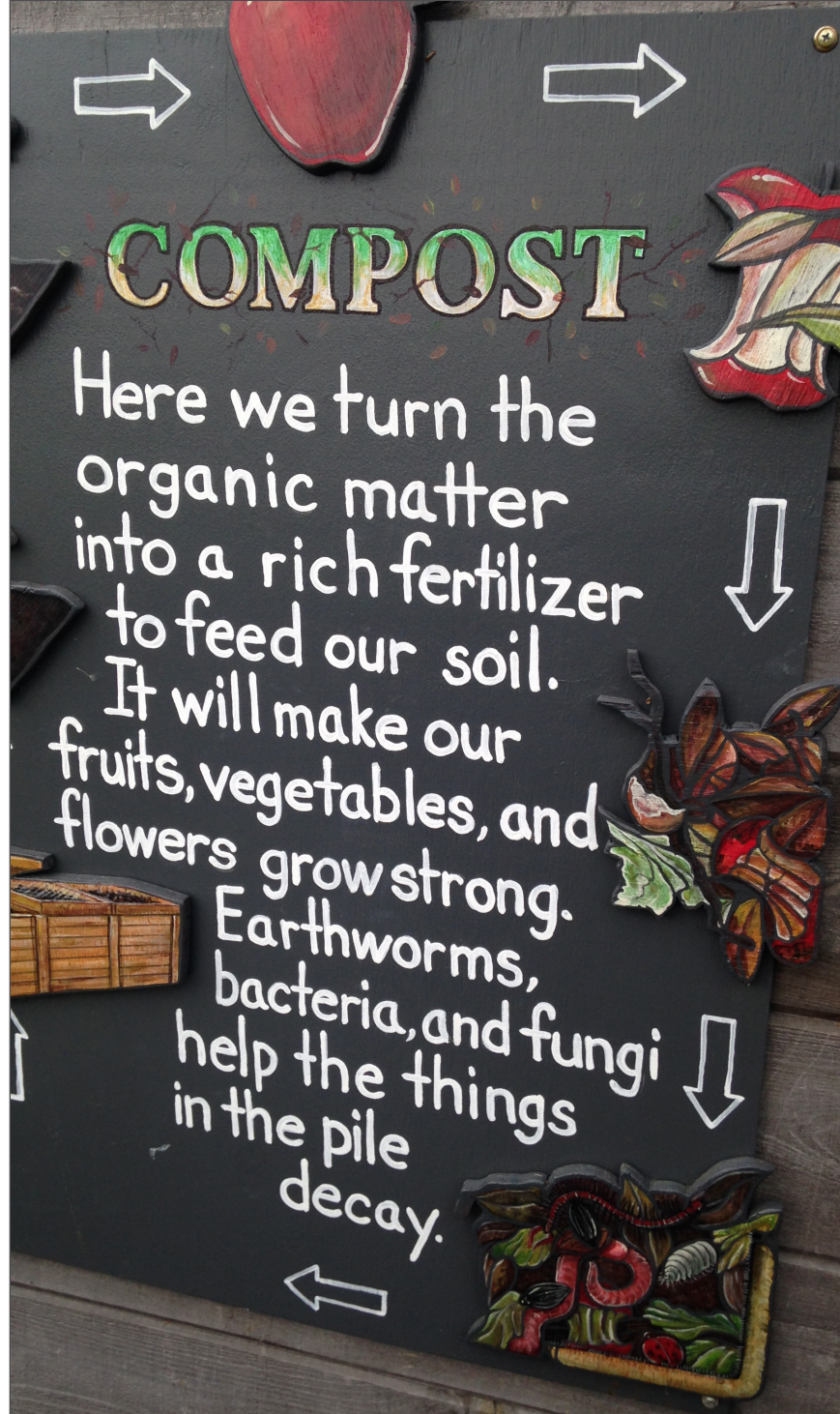
Land is a where people grow and nurture cultural traditions.





# ZONE 3: GROWING

## Community Garden



## UM Rochester Class Garden



Visitors will feel the agricultural roots of the Stoppel Farmstead as they walk through the Community Garden.

Large working fields provide a new space for HCOC volunteers and opportunities for new partnerships.



# ZONE 4: RECONNECTING

## Purpose

Invite visitors to relax, reflect, and reconnect. Create space for Indigenous history at the History Center of Olmsted County.

## Focal Points

As visitors approach the Stoppel Farmstead, they are greeted by a **Children's Playground** featuring life-size farm equipment climbing structures. Within the playground, a **Challenge Course**, appropriate for all ages, invites visitors to test their ability to do 1850s chores, like harnessing horses or carrying water.

Native fruit trees, like apple and plum, recreate the **Stoppel Family Orchard**. Each tree in the Orchard has been donated in memory of a loved one by Rochester community members.

Along the path, **Art Installations**, commissioned by Indigenous artists in the Rochester area, create unique opportunities to experience art.

Leading away from the Farmstead, a **Nature Trail** circles the HCOC campus. The trail shares Indigenous history, via interpretive method(s) that will be developed in collaboration with Dakota communities.

*Development of the Nature Trail requires deep, authentic relationships with the Dakota communities around Rochester. The initiative should be Indigenous-led. 106 Group recommends grant opportunities that will fund partnerships with Dakota leaders and artists.*

## Goals

- Establish collaborative, ongoing relationships between HCOC and Indigenous communities in the Rochester area
- Create a space where Indigenous history is shared authentically at HCOC
- Provide an educational and recreational space that draws repeat visitors to HCOC

## Theme



Land is where people grow and nurture cultural traditions.





# ZONE 4: RECONNECTING

## Children's Playground



Gordon Huggins

Karla's Cottage



The vibrant, modern playscape sets the stage at the Stoppel Farmstead, grounding the place in agriculture in a fresh, whimsical way.

## Nature Trail



The nature trail is a place for visitors to return again and again.



IDN



Marianne Levison

## Art Installations



Eley



Exercice de Style

Art installations along the trail add to the sense of being in another world.



# ZONE 4: RECONNECTING

Creating a Native Space: Erin Genia



bu.edu

Erin Genia has public art commissions across the country. Tuŋmaġatipi (below) uses the Dakota morningstar to create a pollinator habitat.

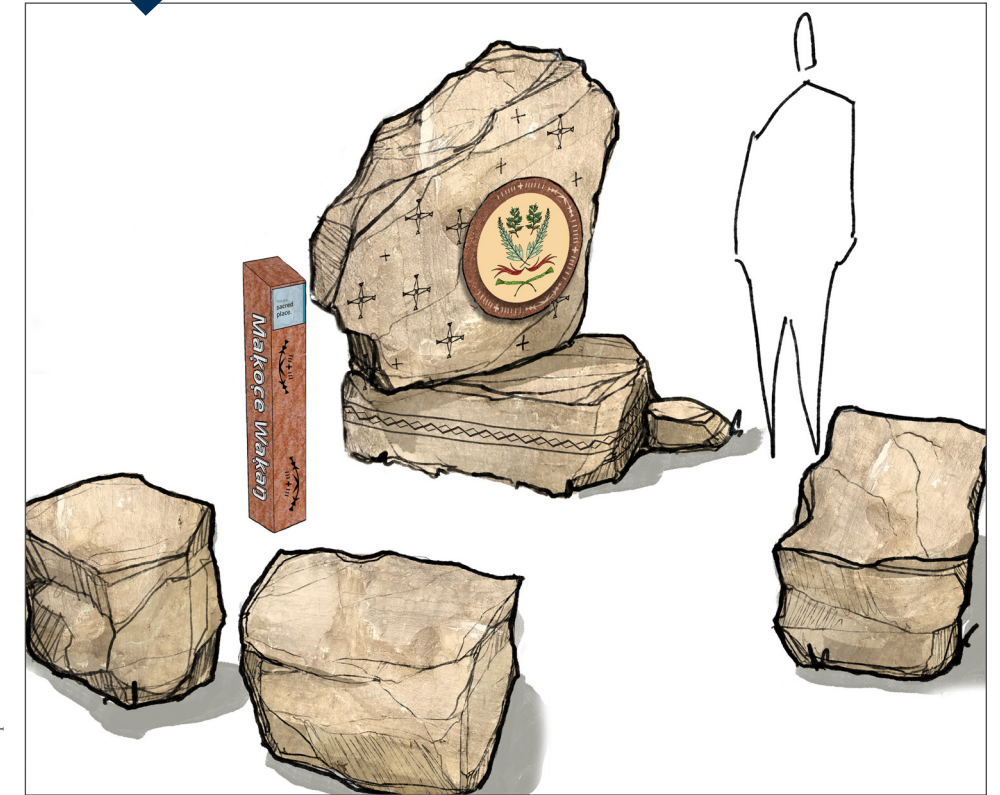
Creating a Native Space: Angela Two Stars



mitchellrepublic.com

Angela Two Stars creates works that inspire healing. "Okciyapi" (above) replaced "Scaffold" at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. It incorporates spoken Dakota.

Creating a Native Space: Waġaŋ Țipi



Waġaŋ Țipi is a Dakota space currently in development. The Teaching Stones (above) and plant identifiers (below) create a space to share Dakota culture.



erigenia.studio



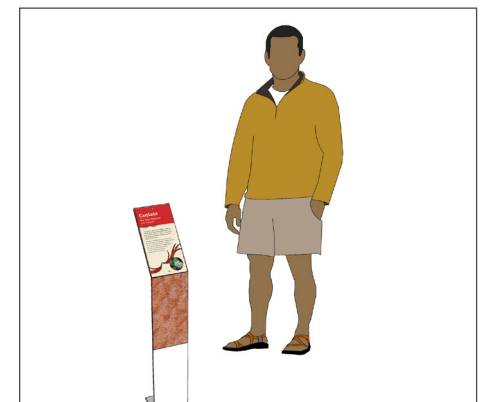
erigenia.studio



mpc.org



Angela Two Stars



Art along the Nature Trail will be inspired and populated with installations by Indigenous artists, like those highlighted above. Development will be Indigenous-led, with the goal of creating a space where Dakota history and culture are shared in an authentic and accessible way with HCOC visitors and the Rochester community.



# ZONE 5: UNDERSTANDING

## Purpose

Create a welcoming, immersive space to experience life on a mid-1800s Minnesota farm and draw connections to modern immigration stories.

## Focal Points

The historic **Stone House**, restored to its 1856-1900 era appearance, draws visitors into a functioning farmhouse kitchen for an immersive, hands-on experience. The **Kitchen** features regular programs that bring to life the chores, work, hardships, and joys experienced by the Stoppel family in the mid-1800s. The **Living Room** creates a welcoming and rentable space for small gatherings and intimate programs that evoke the memories and experiences of the Stoppel family.

The **Caves** are available on tour-led visits only, protecting their historic nature. Details about the caves are communicated by tour guides who can clarify family lore. There are no exhibit installations that would compromise this delicate historic space.

In the **Smokehouse**, an atmospheric and evocative Object Theater shares the story of the Stoppel's first years in Minnesota. As they see objects the Stoppels may have brought with them, visitors are encouraged to ask: *What would someone bring today? What would be the same? What would be different? What would you bring if you started a new life?*

## Goals

- Center the Stoppel Family at the heart of the Stoppel Farmstead, sharing their story, journey, and experience
- Ground visitors in the sights, sounds, smells, hard work, and joy of a mid-1800s farm
- Encourage visitors to consider immigration stories in a new way
- Invite comparisons between historic immigration and recent immigration

## Theme



Land is an opportunity to start a new life.





# ZONE 5: UNDERSTANDING

## The Smokehouse



Sylvania Lighting

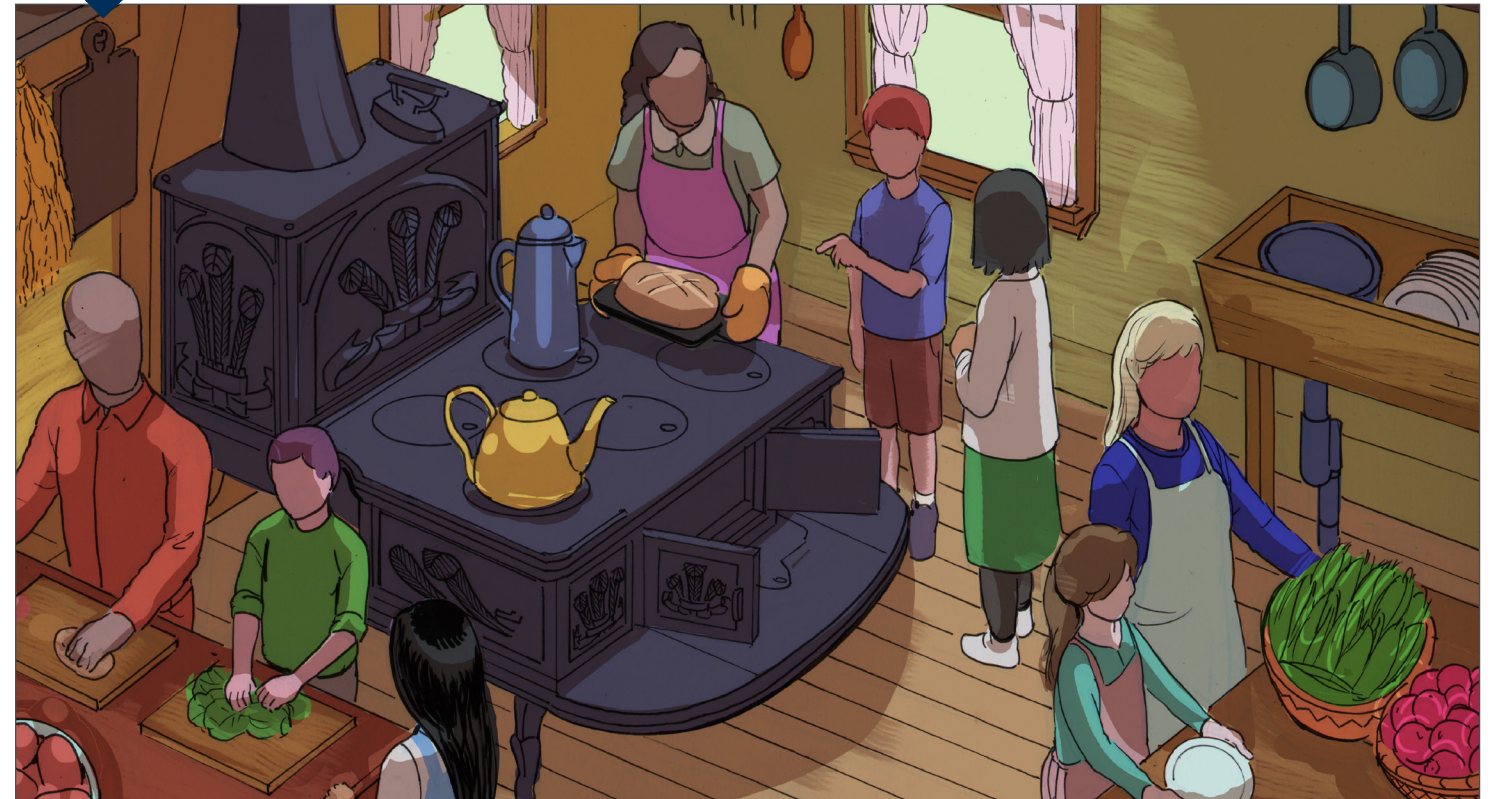


Pinterest



Against a soundscape of blizzards and a crackling fire in the Smokehouse, spotlights shine on objects the family may have brought—a doll, a bag of seed, a family Bible.

## Stone House



St. Vrain Historical Society



Pinterest

Hands-on and first-person experiences bring the Stoppels and the mid-1800s Minnesota experience to life in the Stone House.



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NEXT STEPS



# PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Ideally, fabrication and installation of all interpretive elements would be implemented at the same time. This would create cost efficiencies and provide visitors with the fully realized Stoppel Farmstead experience all at once. In reality, implementation is likely to happen in phases.

This Plan recommends phasing implementation of interpretive elements as seen in the table at right. These recommendations result from analysis of potential visitor impact as well as contextual considerations, including current level of development and existing infrastructure.

## Future Planning Questions

In addition to the cost and feasibility considerations listed at right, several questions related to implementation were suggested by workshop participants during review of this Interpretive Plan at the draft phase.

These questions are included here to be addressed during future planning.

- *Is there a type of programming that should be emphasized first?*
- *Can new trails be given a name? (Stoppel Way, History Lane, etc)*
- *Adding a few animals would really make [Stoppel Farmstead] come alive.*
- *How does the renovation of HCOC fit into [these plans]? Which takes priority?*
- *How do we get people to stop in the History Center before going to the farmstead, walking the Nature Trail, or visiting the playscape? Do they have to?*
- *Do these plans impact HCOC staffing? Taking on this project and maintaining it to our standards will require a much larger staff size than we currently have.*
- *Where will people park? Will we need a bigger parking lot?*
- *Will this increase the number of students we are able to host for field trips at one time? We are currently limited to 25 for indoor visits, 40 for outdoor.*
- *The term Bank Barn may be confusing for some visitors, who associate it with money-lending. Consider using the term Barn instead.*
- *How will we secure these new features?*
- *How will we ensure people are paying inside the History Center?*

PHASE	ZONE	COST	INTERPRETIVE ELEMENT	CONSIDERATIONS
1	2: Gathering	\$	Family Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Family Field is already being used in this way.</li> <li>› No implementation costs are required.</li> </ul>
1	4: Reconnecting	\$\$\$\$	Children's Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Finding the right partner to bring vision to life</li> <li>› <i>Prioritized highly because of potential to draw attention to HCOC and collaborate with SPARK Children's Museum</i></li> </ul>
1	4: Reconnecting	\$\$	Memorial Orchard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Property rights (where can HCOC plant orchard trees?)</li> <li>› Coordination of memorial campaign</li> <li>› <i>Prioritized highly because of revenue potential</i></li> </ul>
1	3: Growing	\$\$	Community Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Coordination with IMAA, the Village, Master Gardeners other partners</li> <li>› Costs involved in tilling and preparing the field</li> <li>› Extensive planning required for maintenance and sustainability (buy-in and longevity of partners)</li> </ul>
2	1: Welcoming	\$\$\$	Welcome Art Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Consider art installation grants for funding sources</li> <li>› <i>Requires relationship building with Indigenous artists. Prioritized lower to allow time to establish those connections.</i></li> </ul>
2	2: Gathering	\$\$\$\$	Bank Barn Gathering Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Cost and planning involved in renovations of Bank Barn</li> </ul>
2	4: Reconnecting	\$\$	Nature Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Property rights</li> <li>› Accessibility of the trail (paved vs. woodchip or other material)</li> <li>› <i>Requires authentic, collaborative relationships with Dakota communities in and around Rochester. Prioritized lower to allow time to establish those connections</i></li> </ul>
2	4: Reconnecting	\$\$\$	Nature Trail Art Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Coordination and relationship building with artists</li> <li>› Consider art installation grants for funding</li> </ul>
3	5: Understanding	\$\$\$	Stone House Kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Cost and planning involved in renovations of Stone House</li> </ul>
3	5: Understanding	\$\$\$	Stone House Living Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Cost and planning involved in renovations of Stone House</li> </ul>
3	5: Understanding	\$\$\$\$	Smokehouse Object Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Infrastructure capacity of Smokehouse</li> </ul>
4	1: Welcoming	\$	Tactile Welcome Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Develop map after all other features are implemented so it remains relevant</li> </ul>
4	1: Welcoming	\$\$	Walking Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Tie in to renovation of History Center building</li> </ul>