

PATHWAYS TO 2030

HERMITAGE MUSEUM & GARDENS STRATEGIC PLAN



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The Hermitage Museum and Gardens most recent Strategic Plan, 20/20 Vision, was completed in early 2016 with an update added in 2017 in preparation for the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accrediting process that year. There were five (5) primary institutional goals.

- 1) To raise awareness and seek parity in community funding/support
- 2) To grow visitation
- 3) To expand and diversify constituencies
- 4) To secure AAM accreditation
- 5) To Rebrand

These goals were met and the Hermitage was laying the groundwork to launch a capital campaign in early 2020 when COVID-19 arrived. The pandemic quickly stemmed the museum's momentum, but not its confidence. Action was taken to protect the properties, personnel, and all assets of the institution.

- The endowment provided the designed umbrella effect to provide the funds needed to maintain payroll and protect resources. With innovation and persistence, the Hermitage secured significant COVID grants and payroll protection funding to return borrowed endowment funds to its corpus.
- The collections were secured and the property and facilities were maintained and improved according to schedule.
- There were no furloughs or terminations of staff
- Programming continued as was possible within state guidelines for safety.
- The gardens and grounds were open to the public providing much needed respite for families in search of an open-air escape to experience the healing gifts of nature.
- The Hermitage gave back to its community by dropping all entry fees and will continue its generosity post pandemic.
- The groundwork has been laid to resume full operations as soon as is possible with staff and plans in place.
- While a loss of or reduction in revenue streams may slow, it will not stop or suspend operations.

The Hermitage is proud of its accomplishments prior to and during the pandemic. More details of these notable achievements may be found on page 7.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Pam Combs, Co-Chair
Ted Enright, Co-Chair
Rob McFarland, Hermitage Board President
Alex Erving, Hermitage Board Vice President
Ann Stokes, Hermitage Board Treasurer
Allison Dunleavy
Bill Cabell
Christina Goode
Kay Stine
Jane Wright Rathbone
Linda Laibstain
Solomon Isekeije
Thom White



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Brief History of the Hermitage	2
Guiding Principles: Mission, Vision, Values	3
Pathways to 2030—Strategic Goals	4
Master Site Plan	23

HISTORY

The Hermitage Museum and Gardens makes its home in the 20th-century residence bordered on three sides by the Lafayette River, part of a tidal estuary that threads throughout tidewater Virginia. The forty-two room Arts and Crafts style mansion began in 1908 as a summer cottage built by native New Yorkers, William and Florence Sloane not long after their marriage and move to Norfolk. As their home grew so grew their collection of art and antiques acquired from across the European continent and beyond. The Sloanes established the Hermitage Foundation in 1937 to promote the arts in their community and eventually their home and its contents were open to the public.

In 2021, the museum's expansive permanent collection ranges from 20th century paintings to Coptic fragments along with more contemporary acquisitions. Numerous exhibitions and events are staged annually within the museum and across its waterfront lawns and gardens of over 12 acres featuring a vast living collection of plantings and trees.

Today, the Hermitage Museum and Gardens is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit with a Board of Directors (BOD) as its governing body and its Hermitage Foundation remains to support the BOD and offer additional fiduciary guidance in the management and protection of its investments and endowment.

In 2015 the Hermitage Board of Directors acted to preserve and to protect in perpetuity the Hermitage's natural woodlands, formal gardens, and wetlands with a Conservation Easement held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The property may never be divided or developed and is now assured to remain green space and open to the public now and in the future.

Key Points of the Conservation Easement

The Hermitage Foundation retains ownership and management of the property.

The property may be sold but may not be divided. All covenants and requirements of the easement, including guaranteed public access, remain with the property.

The museum building, cottage and Visual Arts School buildings may not be destroyed and their current historic appearance must be maintained.

Limitations govern the number and size of any new buildings, as well as the construction of roadways and parking areas.

A minimum 35-foot riparian buffer must be maintained along the edge of the Lafayette River on all sides to improve water quality and protect wetlands.

The Virginia Outdoor Foundation may conduct an annual inspection to ensure that the Hermitage is in compliance with the terms of the easement.



MISSION

The Hermitage Museum and Gardens preserves the distinct beauty of its natural environment; conserves and shares its multi-cultural collection; promotes and educates to inspire an appreciation for art and nature; and cultivates a spirit of stewardship while paying tribute to its rich legacy.

VISION

The Hermitage Museum and Gardens envisions an expanded experiential campus to engage with visitors and inspire new generations through conservation, education, exploration and preservation of art, history, and natural beauty.

INSTITUTIONAL VALUES:
EXCELLENCE
STEWARDSHIP
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND ENLIGHTENMENT
ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION



PATHWAYS TO 2030

STRATEGIC GOALS

- I. **Reintroduce a fully redefined campus inclusive of its expansive collections, to local, regional and national audiences.**

Pathways to 2030 will be guided by our new Master Site Plan (MSP). This wide-ranging vision of the campus as a whole will help to re-engage current members and constituencies while enlightening new audiences to this singular setting and so the full Hermitage story.

- II. **Define and launch the first capital campaign in the Hermitage's modern history**

A phased approach in capital projects will be necessary and is preferred to continue full operations and programming. Phase I will be restoration of the Visual Arts School in the Hermitage's historic stables.

- III. **Enhance the current focus on progressive programs, exhibitions, and events appealing to a broad diversity of audiences while showcasing the Hermitage's unique setting and open spaces.**

Diversity within the leadership and staff bring broader audiences from without. This goal should serve as a constant reminder to progressively plan, to seek the singular, to find the avant-garde, and celebrate the unconventional in all that we do.

- IV. **Secure American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Reaccreditation in 2027**



THE PROCESS

In 2019, the process began toward development of a new and fully defined Master Site Plan (MSP) created to encompass the unique institutional opportunities provided by the Hermitage's singular setting. This plan was devised through use of professional planning services and with information gathered through a series of community focus groups.

This MSP will be the strategic plan's primary vehicle and shall drive efforts to protect, preserve and better use every asset including the waterfront gardens and grounds, tidal wetlands, historic herbaraceous and tree collection, historic structures that house the Sloane Collection, and the educational venues. This wide-ranging vision for the campus of the future offers the visual tool needed to re-engage current members and constituencies while enlightening new audiences to the possibilities and the potential.

Committee Led Effort and Implementation

The Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of chairmen from each of the seven Standing Committees of the Hermitage Board of Directors, has devised this plan. Its format will reflect the four primary goals identified by the SP committee and the steps for implementation.

Each of the seven standing committees, comprised primarily of board members, focuses on key areas within the institution. Each committee has a defined charter that provides details of its meeting structure, membership, role and purpose. All committees are chaired by a current or past board member. While each may seek members with specific skill sets for their primary areas of focus, all committees engage staff, current and past board members, and other community advocates and volunteers to make up their membership.

Given the limited number of staff, the Hermitage Museum and Gardens has successfully used this working framework of committees and governing leadership to support to the Hermitage team. This framework of committees defined the Strategic Plan and will help direct its implementation.

An overview of the standing committees follows:

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Committee's purpose is to oversee the planning process and develop a plan document for review and approval by the Board of Directors. This committee is comprised of the chairmen of each standing committee of the Board and so is a significant portion of the institutional leadership.

COLLECTIONS

Advocacy, management, stewardship, and interpretation of the multi-cultural collection is the primary focus of this committee. Engagement in curatorial projects, planning and implementation of exhibitions, and sharing of same with the community is an important aspect of this committee's devotion to arts education. The team works closely with the Curator regarding potential acquisitions, restorations, preservation needs and more.

EDUCATION

The Education & Public Programs Committee advocates and assures that all programs support the mission statement is to advocate and assure that all programs support the mission statement. Their work extends to identifying target audiences and assisting in the program design. The committee also assists in production of public activities and events created to provide formal and informal learning opportunities that stimulate interest, inspire creativity, and make the Hermitage more meaningful to its community.

FACILITIES

On-going evaluation, assessment, maintenance, and planned improvements to all institutional structures/buildings/systems falls to this committee. In addition to ensuring aesthetics are preserved for all museum structures, the safety, security and protection of staff and visitors is paramount to this Facilities committee's concerns.

GARDENS AND GROUNDS

Working closely with the Curator of Gardens and Grounds, this committee focuses on preservation and protection of the entire 12.5 acres of riverfront lawns and gardens with particular attention to the historic living collection of trees and herbaceous plantings. In recent years the committee has focused on adding natives and native cultivars to the landscape in recognition of current best practices and with attention to the impact of rising tidal waters that surround 3 sides of the museum's property.

GOVERNANCE

This Committee is responsible for establishment and review of all institutional policies, constitutional documents and organizational structure, while continuously monitoring proper implementation of same for the Hermitage. On-going education and board training is within the Governance purview.

DEVELOPMENT

Fund raising and resource development is the focus of this committee. Its goals are defined by the general operating budget, capital needs, strategic plans, and direction from the Board of Directors.



STRATEGIC GOALS

In 2013, the Hermitage Museum began a concerted effort to establish itself as an institution of significance in a community where only a small percentage of the population knew of its existence or had visited since their childhood. Located in a residential neighborhood and largely invisible unless a visitor knew to look for it, the institution had annual visitation of approximately 20,000. Over the past decade, efforts to grow visitation, to expand and diversify the member, visitor and donor bases, and to rebrand the institution as one that is unique, offering experiences not available at other local cultural institutions, helped build momentum. The museum exhibited artists including Bruce Munro and Patrick Dougherty, establishing its contemporary sculpture program and using its 12.5 acres in a new way. Innovative programming, such as a partnership with the Virginia Stage Co to produce site-specific, immersive theatre experiences inside the museum building, were launched, making the Hermitage the destination for unexpected and unusual experiences. The museum and grounds were frequently open at night for exhibitions, events and programs. In 2015, the Hermitage executed a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to protect the museum's wetlands, natural woodlands, gardens and grounds and historic buildings in perpetuity. The easement guarantees public access to the site for the future.

These and other initiatives propelled total visitation to the grounds to over 95,000 by the end of 2016. Building on this momentum, the Hermitage has made additional significant strides in the past five years, and established parity with the other cultural organizations in the community. The work continues.



KEY STEPS AND NOTABLE ACTIONS

Accreditation: In 2017, for the first time in its 60+ years as a museum and after a three-year process, the Hermitage received accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). This is the highest national recognition possible for a museum. AAM Accreditation recognizes a museum for its commitment to excellence in all that it does: governance, collections stewardship, public programs, financial stability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement.

The Art of Burning Man: The Hermitage created the first museum-curated exhibition exploring the art of the famed Nevada festival. The opening night of the exhibition drew over 1,000 guests, and a longtime Norfolk arts writer stated: “It was the most memorable and positive arts experience in my quarter-century of living in this area.” Over 25,000 visitors saw the exhibition during its June–October run, many of them attending during the frequent nighttime hours of the show.

The Garden Loos: The institution’s first new building since the museum opened was designed by architect Jane Rathbone of Hanbury. The six outdoor restrooms eliminated the need for porta-johns for museum events. The building won numerous architectural awards for its innovative use of materials.

Virginia Stage Co. Partnership: The initial site-specific, immersive theatre performances in 2017 explored elements of the Hermitage’s history. *With Your Name Upon My Lips* was an experience like no other in Norfolk. In 2020, Norfolk State University’s theatre students joined the partnership, enhancing the program further. 2021 will mark the fifth year of this series, each unique and different from those in previous years.

Hermitage Handmade Festival: Launched in 2016, this event provides space for 75+ local artists to sell their work. This community event is free to the public and helps to support local artists and craftspeople.

Conversations, Contemporary Asian Art: In 2018, this exhibition drew a connection between the museum’s Asian art collection and the state of current, contemporary work by artists identifying their heritage as Asian. Ten internationally recognized artists including Zhang Huan, Yoshitomo Nara, Hung Yi, and Kohei Nawa exhibited work and concepts previously unknown to the community.

Wetlands Restoration: The City of Norfolk designated the Hermitage a grantee for a large-scale wetlands restoration and reclamation project that serves as a model for waterfront mitigation and protection. Begun in 2018, the multi-year project established marshlands and wetlands adding two additional acres of important protective buffer while enhancing the wildlife habitat and natural beauty of the Hermitage.

Unknown Outcome: In 2020, supported by a \$40,000, two-year grant from the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the Unknown Outcome exhibition explored the effects of climate change as the Norfolk area was named one of the communities most at risk, and frequent, increasing flooding impacts life in the area. Artists were asked to design and fabricate an artwork that addressed climate change. Not only did the museum highlight the physical issues facing our community, it elevated the perception of regional artists, and underscored the city’s effort to make Norfolk a place where artists of all types have opportunities to be paid for their work, to gain visibility and recognition for it, and to earn a living.

This aspect of the exhibition—paying artists to create and install their work—turned out to be particularly important when the COVID-19 crisis hit Norfolk. Museums and galleries as well as all businesses not designated as essential were closed. Layoffs and furloughs affected everyone. However, thanks to exhibition sponsors and granting agencies who fully supported the show, the Hermitage was able to keep paying the artists involved in the show and to continue with the exhibition.

The museum was able to reopen its grounds in time for artists to install their works on a staggered schedule to maintain physical distance. Guests were able to visit the grounds and see the outdoor works without restriction. Although there was some reluctance by visitors to enter the museum building initially, that resolved itself after a few weeks. The programming planned to accompany the exhibition was tweaked to meet the COVID requirements for group size, and a virtual gallery was launched on the museum's website for those who still preferred not to visit in person.

THEN THE PANDEMIC...

In early 2020, the arrival of the COVID pandemic changed everything. The museum closed for three months, and reopening was a slow process with limits on group sizes affecting all programming and revenue. The Hermitage remained strong, sought opportunities in the chaos, and emerged with a redefined sense of purpose. The crisis, followed by months of social and political riots and demonstrations, provided the institution with the time to review what it means to be a museum today. The realization that the Hermitage and all cultural institutions share a responsibility to build community, create moments of connection, and to contribute to conversations that result in a more informed, just and educated society became clear.

While the museum was closed, virtual programming, podcasts and concerts allowed the institution to maintain its connection with all audiences. Through the long reopening process, with fluctuating limits for event sizes based on COVID cases, the museum held all scheduled programming, no matter how few people were allowed to attend. The Hermitage was the only local nonprofit to hold in-person summer camps for children, and it did so with no health problems among campers or staff. At this writing, the museum continues to demonstrate that visiting museums is safe, and to reacclimate its community to this practice. The museum also made a commitment to keep all staff employed throughout the pandemic, and that ensured that once reopening began the institution was able to rebound quickly.



Upon reopening, the museum eliminated its longstanding admission fee. After considerable debate over the impact of this move on the museum's annual revenue stream, it was determined that the fee created a barrier to entry that unfairly affected numerous groups that the Hermitage's goal was to see in greater numbers inside the museum. The effect was profound. Immediately, visitation diversified and increased dramatically, and that trend continues to this day.

The museum's role as a source of community support became more important. *Unknown Outcome* helped support local artists and keep them working during the pandemic, and the Hermitage subsequently emphasized new collaborations with other nonprofits, artists, and community members for programs and events, working to sustain others as well.

Capital Projects

The quieter programming schedule imposed by COVID provided the museum with the opportunity to launch and complete an urgent capital project. The structural support of the museum building itself had been found to be compromised by rotting support beams and standing water. A two-phase project was launched in late 2019 to repair and strengthen the foundation. Beams and joists were replaced or repaired, water was removed, fans were installed for air circulation to reduce the growth of mold, the wood was sealed to prevent future mold growth. The full project took nearly a year to complete.

Resilience

During the second year of the pandemic, event size limits continued to play a major role in program and event planning, and many previously rescheduled weddings were cancelled. The decision by the local public school system to continue classes through the summer impacted attendance at the museum's summer art camps.

The museum successfully sought COVID relief funding to mitigate the financial impact. By late spring, steps toward a less restricted summer were taking place. As it became clear that capacity limits, masking and social distancing were nearing an end, people resumed renewing their memberships, sponsors returned to support programming, and visitation increased. Although the museum was still working with a reduced budget for the year, events and programs earned more than projected. This trend continued through the end of the year, allowing the Hermitage regain the momentum that was slowed due to COVID. Although it will likely take another full year to reach "normal," the possibilities we see for the future are within reach.



PATHWAYS TO 2030

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



GOAL I: Reintroduce a fully redefined Hermitage campus to local, regional and national audiences.

The Strategic Plan 2021-2030 is guided by a new and fully defined Master Site Plan created to encompass the unique institutional opportunities provided by the Hermitage's singular setting. The MSP will be the primary vehicle and shall drive efforts to protect, preserve and better use every asset including the waterfront gardens and grounds, tidal wetlands, historic herbaceous and tree collection, historic structures that house the Sloane Collection, and the educational venues. This wide-ranging vision for the campus of the future offers the visual tool needed to re-engage current members and constituencies while enlightening new audiences to the possibilities and the potential.

OBJECTIVES

Define what makes us unique

- Celebrate the unique nature of the institution and its multiple areas of focus: architecture, the historic collection, contemporary exhibitions, education, camps and classes, environmental programs and wetlands, gardens, performing arts and popular concerts.
 - Emphasize the wide range of experiences available at the Hermitage, and demonstrate how that makes it accessible to all visitors
 - Tell the Hermitage story with everything we do
 - Leverage our Smithsonian Affiliate status
 - Strive to be magnetic; create experiences that build a bond with visitors
 - Acknowledge our remarkable, protected green space and encourage community use
 - Combine experiences when possible: Explore theatre inside and outside the historic building, create intimate indoor experiences as well as larger outdoor concerts, contemporary art combined with historic spaces, and more.
- Firmly establish the Hermitage as the place to experience the unexpected, the unusual, the visionary and the provocative.
 - Be the first, not the follower, in all that we do.
- Emphasize what we offer the community, and how we meet its needs in all communications, exhibitions, marketing materials and grant applications.

Enhance the visitor experience

- Examine all aspects of the campus with a goal of enhancing the visitor experience.
 - Continue to develop new paths that enhance and increase views of the water.
 - Use wayfinding and interpretive signage that is clear, welcoming, and informative.
 - Increase indoor and outdoor lighting for safety and accessibility.
 - Provide outdoor waste receptacles for campus visitors; and a maintenance program to ensure cleanliness of the grounds, building, and collections.
- Increase access to the collection.
 - Work to eliminate potential uncertainties of inclusiveness.
 - Offer enhanced interpretation that is accessible to diverse audiences by including new perspectives on topics, themes and historical context for collection items.
- Preserve the character of the historic interiors of the museum while using them as an exhibition space.
 - Introduce necessary upgrades to lighting and security systems.
- Balance the wear and tear of regular museum and grounds use with ongoing maintenance and preservation of the site.
- Address facilities and grounds improvements to accommodate public programs, education, and exhibitions.
- Use the Master Site Plan to guide changes and additions to the grounds and gardens.
 - Use the Landscape Pyramid to further guide decision-making.



Preserve and improve

- Develop a care and treatment plan for the collection.
- Consider a Historic Structures Assessment by a preservation expert who will develop long-term planning for the preservation of the site's historic integrity.
- Prepare for improvements to the Museum, Water Tower, Cottage and Mechanical buildings
 - Identify the critical needs of each building with regard to its specific uses and public access.
 - Museum building: Electrical upgrades to meet the needs of a modern museum and office; adequate lighting for exhibitions, collections and workspaces; exterior shingles and water leaks; and stable HVAC and humidity control.
 - Water tower: Investigate repairs to wood rot in the foundation of the building; upgrade electrical and install HVAC so the building can meet its intended use as outlined in the Master Site Plan; repair leaks and holes.
 - Mechanical building: Investigate possible foundation issues; repair windows.
 - Cottage: In the short term, ensure that HVAC and humidity controls are stable for the collection storage use of the building. In the long term, potential redevelopment of the building for education will be considered and relocation of the collections objects stored in the building will be necessary.
- The Facilities Committee will develop and fund an annual maintenance plan with the Executive Director
- Evaluate and plan for shoreline stabilization and bulkhead repairs/reinforcement.
 - Prepare for stronger storms and higher tides due to climate change.





Innovative programming

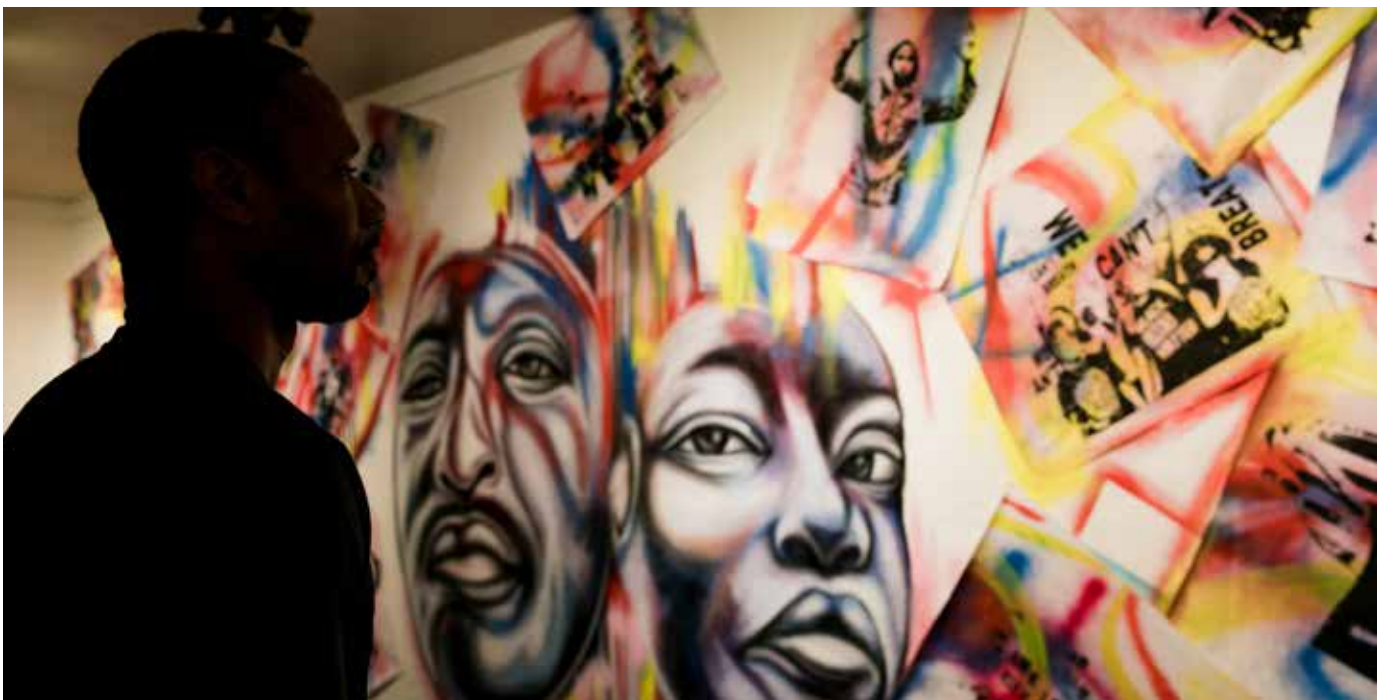
- Use the Master Site Plan to develop programs that take advantage of the unique newly imagined campus as well as to define short term strategies for alternative uses of the grounds, gardens, and outbuildings.
 - Use the water tower for small, acoustic concerts
 - Hands-on garden workshops at the VAS and on the grounds
 - Yoga on the shoreline

Prepare for implementation

- Create a comprehensive plan for the utilization of the new VAS and grounds improvements that offers many opportunities for a broad array of new education and public programs, both indoors and out.
- Prepare and implement a Development Plan that is results focused in the following areas:
 - Emphasize community needs and how the Hermitage meets those needs
 - Illustrate our impact on our community
 - Donor Centric Giving: Expand and/or raise brand awareness of donor centric programs and campaigns.
 - Establish cultivation and stewardship programs to include events, group opportunities and programs, with the opportunity to funnel donors to top level giving.
 - Maintain annual fund, exhibition and program solicitation.
- Establish Development protocols to ensure increased, ongoing, annual support in anticipation of a capital campaign launch.
 - Establish protocols to create and maintain a Planned Giving program for ongoing support and Capital Campaign support.
 - Membership Program and Drives
 - Engage with current members and Hermitage Collective Board members to solicit and encourage new memberships; expand current membership benefits to include more curated experiences based on membership level and engagement.
 - Research and establish attractive membership benefits, such as free admission to the Sunsets series and special exhibition (as the museum is moving to a free admission museum) to increase overall membership and to establish the membership program and a priority among visitors/patrons.
 - Collaboration between Development and Marketing departments will be essential in membership education and growth.

- o Create Designated Giving programs for Curatorial/Collections (Conservation and Acquisition), Education and Public Programs, and Gardens and Grounds
 - Collaborate with departments to create guidelines and steward donors in a designated giving program as well as funding to support strategic goals and AAM reaccreditation.
- o Institutional Giving: Expand and maintain Grants and foundation program by developing relationships with program officers in foundations; research and invest in grant calendar and monitoring software.
- o Corporate giving/sponsorship program: Create programs and opportunities to garner ongoing (reliable) corporate giving and sponsorship support. This includes collaboration between the Development, Events and Public Programs departments and the Board of Directors to create events and opportunities to secure and maintain corporate partners, and collaboration between Development, Curatorial and Marketing departments to ensure corporate partnerships are on brand with the Hermitage.
- o Create partnerships with corporations (sponsorship and granting) which extend beyond the Hampton Roads region, to include major companies aligned with the Hermitage mission based in the Mid-Atlantic Region.
- o Board of Directors: Build a fundraising board by engaging Board members in the identification and cultivation process of potential and current donors, providing training opportunities as needed.
- o Staffing: Research and invest in continuing education opportunities for Development Staff to include conferences, webinars, subscriptions to publications, and CFRE accreditation.
- o Endowment: Establish an endowment for permanent free admission to the museum and gardens.

The redefined Hermitage campus reflected in the Master Site Plan is the culmination of a two-year process that involved the community as well as Hermitage staff, committees, and Board in its design. While all committees will be involved in meeting the objectives of this goal, the Facilities and Development committees will have the largest roles. Facilities must oversee the planning and execution of the projects, while Development must prepare for the capital campaign that will raise the necessary funds to execute the plan.





GOAL II: Define and launch the first capital campaign in the Hermitage's modern history.

The campaign will encompass a look at all institutional fund-raising efforts to include membership, annual fund appeals, sponsorships and grants. Efforts will continue to secure parity with local and regional art institutions and to grow the investment and endowment accounts. A phased approach is likely with the Visual Arts School the focus of Phase I and the Museum Building structural renovations in Phase II.

OBJECTIVES

Achieving the goal

- Prepare for Phase One of a comprehensive capital campaign—raising \$3-5 million in 3 years—to implement the Master Site Plan.
 - Reevaluate the 2019 \$3 to \$5 million goal vs an updated estimate from the contractors to determine whether the goal will cover the costs of the Visual Arts School renovation.
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of the building to ensure that any new priorities are included in the updated estimate.
 - Evaluate campaign objectives, market/economy and overall timing to start Capital Campaign fundraising, including the right time to begin major donor presentations.
 - Re-establish the capital campaign committee; begin planning meetings with Development staff.
 - Conduct Board training
 - Create naming opportunities for facilities and operations.
 - Initiate leadership and major gifts phase of the capital campaign.
 - Solicit multi-year gifts and grants in the silent phase.

- Create a leadership structure to manage the work of the campaign and to coordinate with the capital campaign committee.
 - Define roles and responsibilities for development staff.
 - Set regular meetings to evaluate progress.
 - Plan for multi-year gift tracking and recording by bookkeeper and accountant.
 - Provide ongoing follow-up and stewardship of campaign contributions.
- Conclude silent phase, and open Capital Campaign to public fundraising.
 - Maintain consistent communication with board members and other key stakeholders.
 - Provide appropriate donor recognition.
- Achieve public fundraising goal.
 - Complete Capital Campaign and transition to implementation.

Advocacy and support

- Cultivate relationships and partnerships at important cultural institutions while working to increase awareness, attendance and support of the Hermitage.
- Assist the capital campaign efforts by keeping data on audience demographics, partnerships with community organizations, and programs that serve as economic development tools by attracting visitors to Norfolk.
 - Develop strategies to capture data to help potential funders understand the people and communities that are served by the Hermitage.
- Educate the Hermitage Board as well as potential donors about facilities, gardens and grounds issues and the resources needed to resolve those issues.
 - Emphasize the benefits to visitors of these improvements
- Advocate for support of the campaign through discussion of its benefit to the community.
 - Tell the story of the development of the Hermitage and the growth in its importance to the community.
 - Share the history of the VAS and its growing importance as an educational facility
- Use the Hermitage's diverse board to assist by supporting, donating or recruiting donors to the campaign.
 - Leverage the varied talents, resources and interests of the board for the best possible results.
 - Ensure that the goal of the board recruitment process is a board reflective of the community and committed to the goals of the Hermitage.





Planning for Phase Two

As the Hermitage's first capital campaign concludes and construction begins on the Visual Arts School, planning for Phase Two should begin, using the Master Site Plan as the guide.

- Develop plans and get estimated construction costs for all other aspects of the Master Site Plan
 - Water Tower building renovations
 - New boardwalk construction
 - Front entrance improvements
 - New shed building
 - Museum building improvements to electrical, HVAC, storage
 - Fortifications for south lawn resilience
 - Landscaping and parking improvements for front lawn
- Develop a financial goal for a second capital campaign to fund these sitewide improvements.

While capital campaign advocacy and support is the responsibility of every committee, board member and staff member of the Hermitage Museum & Gardens, responsibility for the implementation of the campaign falls on the development and capital campaign committees, led by the Executive Director and development staff.

GOAL III: Enhance the current focus on progressive programs, exhibitions and events appealing to a broad diversity of audiences while showcasing the Hermitage’s unique waterfront setting and open spaces.

This goal provides the over-arching directive in strategic planning post-2020, for continued emphasis on increasing diversity in every aspect of museum operations, to include staff, leadership, membership and visitorship, to better represent our immediate community and the region. This goal should serve as a constant reminder to progressively plan, to seek the singular, to find the avant-garde, and to celebrate the unconventional in all that we do at the Hermitage Museum & Gardens.

OBJECTIVES

Innovation

- Build on the institution’s reputation for indoor and outdoor cutting-edge exhibitions and site-specific installations by planning exhibitions and programs that are conceptual, immersive, and challenge the parameters of art, science, and nature.
 - Thoughtful planning and programming should be used to build diversity and capacity.
 - Develop educational and public programs and exhibitions that offer visitors personal connections through the many themes, philosophies, subject areas, and indoor and outdoor spaces that can be explored.
 - Continue to develop and present experiences that are unusual for the area
 - Future staffing increases will be necessary for the continued growth of the institution



Audience Development

- Seek to reach new audiences with alternative partnership opportunities such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Teens with a Purpose; Envision, Lead, Grow (ELG); Horizons Hampton Roads; and The Contemporary Arts Network, Virginia Stage Company, the Norfolk State Theater Company, and The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University.
- Create opportunities for community members to volunteer or co-produce programs
- Use programs developed during COVID restrictions such as live streaming, podcasts, virtual tours and social media as a means of attracting new populations to in-person campus activities.
- Seek diversity in age, gender, race, culture, interests, and more when securing staff, contract educators, committee members and volunteers.
- Work to eliminate potential visitor barriers such as admission fees, physical challenges, and uncertainties of inclusiveness.
- Expand accessibility by enhancing the grounds and gardens, opening up views of the water, improving and adding pedestrian walkways and gathering spots.
 - Work to eliminate potential visitor and volunteer barriers to coming to the Hermitage including physical challenges and uncertainties of inclusiveness.
- Develop exhibitions that relate to the museum's mission and serve the community
 - Create connections to visitors through their exploration of the unique areas of the Hermitage.
 - Increase awareness, understanding and empathy through thoughtful curatorial interpretation.
 - Encourage appreciation and interest of all art forms.

Be Different

- Seek inspiration outside the region, bring in new ideas
- Never follow, always lead
- Create unexpected experiences
- Stay strange, slightly mysterious, and unusual

Staying true to what makes the Hermitage the Hermitage is important as the institution matures. The strange, funky and sometimes confounding nature of experiences and events creates a collective memory for visitors that endures beyond any they would create after a conventional museum visit. All committees and departments of the institution must remain committed to the vigorous process of continual innovation.



GOAL IV: Secure American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Reaccreditation in 2027

This goal is an important consideration in short–and long-term institutional planning efforts. AAM’s mark of merit is a signal to all that the Hermitage is an institution distinguished among its peers and worthy of support and trust as a leader in its field.



OBJECTIVES

Highest Standards

- Bring the museum building up to AAM standards for exhibition space and collections display.
- Interior and exterior upgrades as established by the building assessment and required for office and museum work and public safety.
 - Stable HVAC and humidity control
 - Electrical upgrades and lighting
 - Security upgrades and physical presence
- Enhance the professionalism of staff and its management of the Hermitage collections through continued access to professional development opportunities.

Stewardship

- Consider the needs noted in AAM’s accreditation report by peer reviewers.
 - Enhance the professionalism of staff and its management of the Hermitage collections.
 - Upgrades to supplies, tools and equipment used in the direct care of objects in the collection.
 - Additional staff to handle conservation, imaging, contracted or part-time registrar, archivist/librarian.
 - Additional dedicated workspace for collections care and preservation.
- Monitor planning for education and public programs and contemporary exhibitions to reflect Ethics, Standards, and Professional Practices published in the Core Standards for Museums from AAM.
- Utilize evaluation practices such as visitor and group tour surveys, feedback from various groups of constituents, and attendance for programs and exhibitions to review and prioritize for their effectiveness based upon the data collected.
- Review the Living Collections Plan annually, and ensure its continued development as changes and improvements are made to the grounds.

Excellence

- Stay on track
 - Create a dashboard with one-, two-, and three-year strategic planning goals to track the progress of the institution toward its goals.
 - Review annually with the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board.
 - Red=Project not started
 - Yellow=Project started
 - Green= On target to complete by year-end
- Scheduled reviews of the Strategic Plan and governing documents
 - Review policies, governance documents and committee charters to ensure compliance with the Museum's mission and AAM requirements.
 - Review AAM requirements for ethics, standards and professional policies and ensure that the Hermitage meets them.
 - Lead Board efforts to secure reaccreditation.
 - Educate the board about its role in the reaccreditation review process.
 - Review and update the Strategic Plan every two years

Reaccreditation involves all committees, Board and staff members, and volunteers of the institution. It is a continuous commitment to the ongoing work of achieving excellence in all that an institution does.





MASTER SITE PLAN GUIDE

The Master Site Plan (MSP) was developed with the primary intent to improve upon, yet carefully preserve, what makes the Hermitage Museum and Gardens unique. At the forefront of all discussions during the planning process was recognition of the imperative to build upon and improve the campus and its capital assets without losing the essence of all that is *the Hermitage*.

Work Program Architects (WPA) provided guidance and direction in the process via numerous focus groups and community input to define our direction.

The Hermitage’s historic waterfront gardens and grounds with 12.5 acres of peninsula reaching into the Lafayette River and boasting five original structures, including the arts and crafts mansion built by William and Florence Sloane, is without equal in the region. In 2015, the leadership preserved and protected the property and all its physical structures within a conservation easement that prevents its division or development into perpetuity and requires that all the structures be protected and preserved. A new structure was erected with the proceeds from tax credits secured after the easement. This new Loos building offered a much-needed visitor restroom facility with an exterior that assumes the historic design of all other Hermitage buildings and a state-of-the-art interior reflecting the contemporary and artistic vision of today’s Hermitage.

For improved clarity and understanding of references in the overall Master Site Plan, the following is a guide to the nomenclature used when referencing primary campus structures. In some cases, an historical and current property reference may be used interchangeably. Other areas and/or structures will be referenced in this narrative and in the Strategic Plan narrative with explanations provided as needed.

MASTER SITE PLAN GUIDE

<u>CURRENT STRUCTURE REFERENCE</u>	<u>HISTORIC STRUCTURE REFERENCE</u>
1) Museum Building	Sloane House
2) Mechanical Building	Carriage House
3) Loos (new restroom, 2018)	
4) Welcome Center	Water Tower
5) Visual Arts School	Stables
6) Cottage - Collections Storage	Caretaker’s Cottage
7) Garden Shed	*Shed

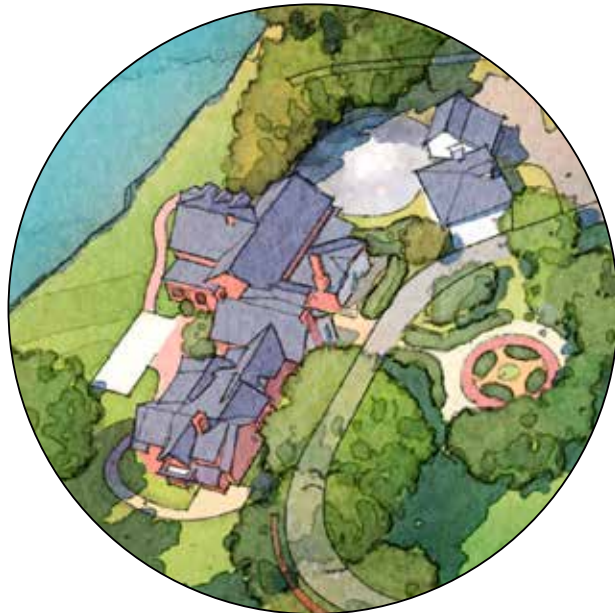
** A storage shed of no historic value/importance is currently located on the western waterfront. It will be razed thus opening another prominent viewshed. A new garden shed will be constructed in a more suitable location.*

MASTER SITE PLAN DETAILS

MUSEUM BUILDING

Enhancements and repairs to the Museum Building are aimed at improving function for programming and exhibitions, as well as, preserving the primary structure that houses the Sloane Collection. The Museum Building itself is a part of the collection with special architectural design features and wood carvings throughout rendered by master craftsman, Charles Woodsend.

Improvements that enable the Hermitage to meet the American Alliance of Museums standards for collections care include maintaining consistent temperature and humidity levels for the collection and for works on loan from other institutions; conservation of the building itself as part of the collection both interior and exterior that include leak detection, mold mitigation, structural repairs and more. A natural gas generator is needed to protect the collection during power outages. Electrical upgrades are necessary to provide ample service for exhibitions, to operate safely and to power a modern workplace. These modifications are included in the planned improvements.



SOUTH LAWN

- **The exterior and lawn immediately surrounding the Museum Building must be fortified to withstand storm surges today and to address sea level rise in the future.** The property's bulkhead must be enhanced and strengthened following best practices to help mitigate the effect of surges and over-wash along with normal wave erosion. Backfilling and other appropriate conservation approaches will be introduced to effect needed change.
- **Additional permanent exterior lighting** is needed in this area to provide safety to visitors and improved functionality for events.
- **A seawall plaza** is envisioned for the southeastern side of the property offering 360-degree waterfront views of the cove and river.

GARDEN SHED

- **A new garden shed will be constructed near the western edge of and behind the north lawn** and will serve multiple functions such as supporting grounds work, staff operations and facility rentals. As with all structures, its exterior will conform with the arts & crafts style of all other historic campus structures. Some of the many benefits follow:

- The shed will provide an outdoor compound for much needed storage of grounds maintenance tools and supplies along with space for efforts such as seed starting and plant propagation.



GARDEN SHED (cont.)

- A new dumpster enclosure will allow weekly service, making both facility rentals and events run more smoothly along with eliminating current dumpster rental fees.
- Truck deliveries (primarily for larger exhibitions) will be able to access and offload through the designated space with large, roll-up garage doors. Artwork may be unloaded out of the weather, and securely stored in a climate-controlled space prior to and during installation.

NORTH LAWN

- **At the west edge of the north lawn, expanded parking will accommodate more visitors.**

Pervious paving will create an “invisible edge” on the open lawn. Directly opposite, on the east side, more pervious paving will eliminate the recurring lawn damage caused by event rental trucks during event setup.

VISUAL ARTS SCHOOL (VAS) AND SURROUNDING CAMPUS AREA



VAS BUILDING

A complete renovation of the VAS is vital to continue the Hermitage’s important educational mission. Significant repairs are critical to protect and preserve the historic stables structure that is highly visible near the museum’s main gateway to the property. The structure currently houses a busy, year-round arts school with classes and workshops for adults and children. Summer Arts camps for ages 6-14 are always at capacity with many turned away. The VAS is an important revenue generating facility for the Hermitage. The renovation will help to better fulfill both educational and financial goals.

The planned renovation reimagines the space creating great flexibility and takes advantage of the second floor of the building currently used for storage. In the future, this space would create much needed classroom and office space doubling educational capacity. Highlights of the renovation include:

- Inter-connected space for ease of flow, improved access and functionality.
- Additional, accessible restrooms will be added.
- A multi-purpose studio in the center space of the first floor will provide a welcome lobby to visitors, offer additional gallery space and an overflow area for meetings/events.
- The second-floor renovation creates office space for education staff, a collaborative work area, a second multi-purpose studio, and a digital lab area.

VAS SURROUNDING CAMPUS

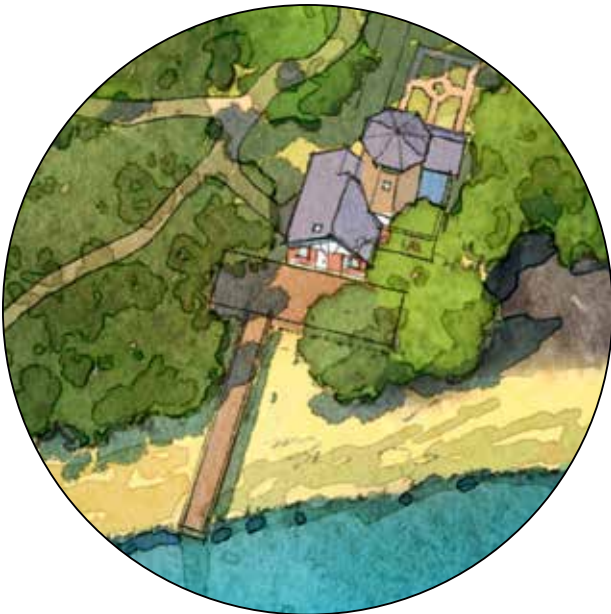
The VAS is set on a small cove with marsh and waterfront views. The surrounding grounds offer many opportunities. Some details follow:

- The landscape around the VAS building creates exterior, programmable space while also solving parking and traffic-flow problems. A reconfigured entry allows after-hours access to this segment of the campus while protecting the rest of the Hermitage grounds.
- The current playground will be reimagined with interactive art, making it a unique and educational experience for children and their families.
- The adjacent cottage, while used in the short term for collections storage, is envisioned in the long term as a part of the VAS campus. Option for future use include housing for visiting artists during installation of exhibition, office space, a small café or coffee shop and more.
- A second boardwalk extending along the small cove could provide water views and expanded nature hikes/experiences. A small kayak, canoe, or other non-motorized craft launches might be considerations for the future.

HERMITAGE MAIN FRONT ENTRANCE

Enhancements to the main front entrance include a much-needed sidewalk to connect the current sections of sidewalk along the south side of North Shore Road to the entry. The entry drive itself will be enlarged to make visitor drop-off easier. A pedestrian path into the grounds from the sidewalk outside the gate will separate pedestrians from cars along the winding access road through the wooded area toward the main Museum Building.

Electrical service and lighting at the front entrance and along the drive will provide visibility during nighttime events. New signage and a new front gate will complete the initial experience.



WELCOME CENTER/ WATER TOWER AREA

The iconic water tower building, perched at the eastern edge of the property overlooking the larger North Shore cove, is a beautiful location for events. With the addition of a deck and interior renovation, the building could house restrooms for those events, support space, and catering support. A lookout pier extending from the deck over the wetlands adds to the appeal.

Enhanced pathways meander through the wooded area behind the tennis courts, allowing the visitor to discover the water tower on their exploration of the grounds. Enhancements to the building will also upgrade the facility rental possibilities for the tennis court area.



As Florence Sloane, the Hermitage Museum's founder, wrote decades ago:

“Museums are living, active centers, where all people come for help and productive recreation.”

The Hermitage strives to fulfill this definition of what a museum is meant to be. The institution is resolved to continue its growth as an open, inclusive, and joyful space for everyone. The journey is our past, present and future.

Approved and adopted by the
Board of the Hermitage Museum & Gardens,
Date, XX, 2021.
