

City of Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM
The **MUSEUM**

2017-2020 Strategic Plan

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

APPROVALS

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CONTRIBUTORS

Museum Director: Leslie Pielack
Museum Board Members: James Cristbrook, Russell Dixon, Judith Keefer, Tina Krizanac, Marty Logue, Gretchen Maricak, Caitlin Rosso

This plan represents an update and revision of the 2013-2016 Museum Strategic Plan



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS: In 2012, the Birmingham Museum (formerly Birmingham Historical Museum & Park) adopted a strategic plan for the period of 2013-2016. It was created with input from city staff and officials; the public; local churches, schools, and other cultural organizations; and major stakeholders, especially the Friends of the Birmingham Historical Museum & Park (a.k.a. Birmingham Historical Society). The process was guided by consultant Marilyn Opdyke of Opdyke Consulting Group.

The resulting **2013-2016 Strategic Plan** also incorporated the findings of a **2012 Museum Assessment Program** report, a grant-funded audit and review of the museum's collection provided by the American Alliance of Museums/Institute of Museum & Library Services. The final strategic plan represented a broad effort to respond to community expectations, professional museum standards, and the museum's needs in a changing cultural environment.

At its inception, the 2013-2016 plan was intended to be adjusted as needed during implementation, with a more detailed revision planned for the next period of 2017-2020. Accordingly, during 2016, the Museum Board reviewed and updated the expiring plan based upon progress toward objectives and current museum status.

The 2013-2016 plan emphasized improved collection care and community outreach as well as funding issues and board development. However, a particularly important accomplishment of the period has been the initial phase of the museum's re-branding effort using input from the public and museum stakeholders, as well as current museum trends. With the resulting change in the museum's name and updating of its mission, its identity and message is better aligned with the needs of our community.

MISSION AND VALUE: The updated mission statement reflects a more inclusive and contemporary approach to integrating Birmingham's history in meaningful ways for new audiences, enhancing its value to the community and improving its long term sustainability. Its new stated mission is as follows:

The Birmingham Museum will explore meaningful connections with our past, in order to enrich our community and enhance its character and sustainability. Our mission is to promote understanding of Birmingham's historical and cultural legacy through preservation and interpretation of its ongoing story.

OVERVIEW

The **2017-2020 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** builds on the foundation of the 2013-2016 plan. It reflects alterations in certain implementation details only, as the original plan continues to provide relevant overall direction.

Plan goals and associated objectives form two different groups; 1) those related to the public service functions of the museum, and 2) those related to strengthening capacity and resources to carry out its mission. (Because of the interconnectedness of museum goals, similar objectives or tasks may appear more than once in the plan, but are separately detailed for convenient reference.)

Following the summarized description of goals and objectives, the plan is presented in table format. This provides an easy to navigate reference that includes the essential elements of *What, How, Who, and When* for the implementation of various strategies and tasks under ideal conditions. The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan is best seen as a living document whose purpose is to provide direction and guidance over the next several years. Optimal effectiveness is achieved by ongoing modification as changing needs dictate. The Museum Board has the role and responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations for plan modification.

DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are used in this document.

Goals: Goals in this plan state where the organization will focus its energies over a defined time frame. They can be short or long term in nature. Goals are not necessarily directly measurable but provide a broad overview or concept of the priorities established by the organization. Goals establish general direction.

Objectives: Objectives in this plan are shorter-term milestones that support individual goals. Each goal has several tangible objectives that will move the museum toward reaching that goal. Objectives are concrete, measurable and focused on results.

Tasks/Strategies: Strategies or tasks in this plan are specific actions or steps that lead to the accomplishment of the objectives. They are action-oriented, short-term, and include the specific “what, by when and by whom,” components.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES: The four goals and associated objectives of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan fall into two groups

1) Service and Mission-Related Goals

Goal I: Enhance community access, appeal, and engagement, resulting in increased utilization of the Birmingham Museum and broader appreciation for its cultural contribution to the region.

Objectives for Goal I:

- A. Develop and implement strategies and programs that actively engage and connect with the community, and make history and heritage more relevant.
- B. Establish the museum and park as a valued resource and place to encourage community connectivity.
- C. Develop an interpretive plan for both buildings. Enhance utilization of the collection by engaging in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.
- D. Develop and implement an interpretive plan for the park. Better utilize the park to share content, engage visitors, and connect them to the museum.
- E. Promote the museum through social media and marketing.

Goal II: Provide stewardship and management of the museum's collection of artifacts, archives, and buildings, in accordance with established professional museum practice.

Objectives for Goal II:

- A. Improve the museum's collection storage organization and environmental controls to protect and preserve the collection.
- B. Improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of collection object records and documentation.
- C. Develop and implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management; future acquisitions; deaccessioning; disaster preparedness; the museum's hands-on/use collection; building maintenance; and other collections-related policies and procedures in accordance with accepted museum standards.
- D. Provide improved digital access through exploring online or other virtual exhibit/access options.
- E. Seek professional training opportunities for museum staff to provide ongoing skills development and effectiveness.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES (Con't):

2) Capacity-Building and Support-Related Goals

Goal III: Increase funding to assure financial stability and sustainability, and increase the capacity of the Birmingham Museum to serve its mission through fundraising, board development, and building relationships and volunteer resources.

Objectives for Goal III:

- A. As a collaborative effort of the Museum Board and Museum Friends, develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund.
- B. Support board development by clarifying expectations and further developing the skills of the Museum Board, and seek new board members with complementary skills.
- C. Increase the personnel capacity of the Birmingham Museum by increasing professional staffing, engaging volunteers, and utilizing partner organizations.
- D. Explore grant-writing efforts in conjunction with the Museum Friends to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Goal IV: Define a unified message and marketing plan by using a variety of marketing media to further develop the museum's brand and to increase awareness, interest, and attendance.

Objectives for Goal IV:

- A. Identify and utilize free and low-cost marketing resources maintained by specific target audiences, such as city publications, local schools, senior groups, and other community organizations.
- B. Identify our target audiences, and explore and enhance the image the Museum presents to the public through independent and collaborative projects and partnerships that strengthen our ties to the community.
- C. Explore and assess the museum's brand and marketing needs and identify qualified consultants in accordance with City requirements.

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Goal I: Enhance community access, appeal, and engagement, resulting in increased utilization of the Birmingham Museum and broader appreciation for its cultural contribution to the region.

Objectives for Goal I:

A. Develop and implement strategies and programs that actively engage and connect with the community and make history and heritage more relevant.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Public programming; schools, individuals & families	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing
2. Private programs & tours	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; materials/operational funds	2. Ongoing

B. Establish the museum and park as a valued resource and place to encourage community connectivity.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Facebook and other virtual communication	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; operational funds	1. Ongoing
2. Online calendar, events promotion	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; operational funds	2. Ongoing
3. Enhanced internet capacity to support enhanced online access	3. City	3. City/grant Funding	3. Early-mid 2017

C. Develop an interpretive plan for both buildings. Enhance utilization of the collection by engaging in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Develop plan	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. 2018
2. Exhibit development	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel, operational funds	2. Ongoing

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Objectives for Goal I (Con't) :

D. Develop and implement an interpretive plan for the park. Better utilize the park to share content, engage visitors, and connect them to the museum.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Develop park master plan	1. Museum Board, museum staff	1. Personnel, historical survey data, design consultant	1. 2018-2019
2. Develop park interpretive plan	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel	2. 2019
3. Phased landscape construction	3. City/museum staff	3. Personnel, funding	3. 2019+

E. Promote the museum through social media and marketing.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Utilize and enhance existing social media communication	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. Ongoing
2. Explore and develop additional online marketing as appropriate and in accordance with marketing plan (Goal IV A.)	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel, funding	2. 2017+

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Goal II: Provide stewardship and management of the museum’s collection of artifacts, archives, and buildings, in accordance with established professional museum practice.

Objectives for Goal II:

A. Improve museum collection’s storage organization and environmental controls to protect and preserve the collection.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Re-organize storage needs in keeping with accession and de-accession goals (II c.)	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; funding;	1. 2017-19
	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel, funding	2. 2017-18
2. Improve environmental controls	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel, funding	3. 2017-19
3. Re-housing of artifacts and archives	4. Museum staff	4. Personnel	4. 2019-20
4. Develop artifact assessment & intervention plan			

B. Improve efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of collection object records and documentation.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue digitization and improvement of digital records and expansion of electronic storage	1. Museum staff; interns/ volunteer professionals	1. Personnel; funding	1. Ongoing

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Objectives for Goal II (con't):

- C. Develop and implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management; future acquisitions; deaccessioning; disaster preparedness; the museum's hands-on/use collection; building maintenance; and other collections-related policies and procedures in accordance with accepted museum standards.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Develop and finalize approval of collections policy	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. 2017
2. Develop and finalize disaster preparedness plan	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel-museum and City	2. 2017-18
3. Develop a building and grounds maintenance schedule	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel-museum and City	3. 2017-18

- D. Provide improved digital access through exploring online or other virtual exhibit/access options.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Expansion of digital collections for public access	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel, funding; fiber-optic connectivity	1. 2017-2018;
2. Explore joint content with other institutions	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel, funding	ongoing 2. 2018+

- E. Seek professional training opportunities for museum staff to provide ongoing collection management skills development and effectiveness.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore and provide virtual and actual professional training opportunities	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; funding	A. Ongoing

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Goal III: Increase funding to assure financial stability and sustainability, and increase the capacity of the Birmingham Museum to serve its mission through fundraising, board development, and building relationships and volunteer resources.

Objectives for Goal III:

A. As a collaborative effort of the Museum Board and Museum Friends, develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Develop plan	Museum Board, Museum Friends, consultant, museum staff	Personnel; funding	2018+

B. Support board development by clarifying expectations and further developing the skills of the Museum Board, and seek new members with complementary skills.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Provide opportunities for continuing education	1. Museum Board; Museum Friends	1. City/museum personnel; funding	1. Ongoing

C. Increase the personnel capacity of the Birmingham Museum by increasing professional staffing, engaging volunteers, and utilizing partner organizations.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Pursue appropriate staffing levels and planning	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; funding	1. Ongoing

D. Explore grant-writing efforts in conjunction with the Museum Friends to identify opportunities for collaboration.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Identify and explore grant opportunities for supporting museum initiatives	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; potential partnering organizations	1. 2018+

2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & TASKS

Goal IV: Define a unified message and marketing plan by using a variety of marketing media to further develop the museum’s brand and to increase awareness, interest, and attendance.

Objectives for Goal IV:

A. Identify and utilize free and low-cost marketing resources maintained by specific target audiences, such as city publications, local schools, senior groups, and other community organizations.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Complete and implement marketing/branding plan	1. Museum staff; Museum Board; consultant	1. Personnel (City and museum); funding	1. 2017+

B. Identify our target audiences, and explore and enhance the image the Museum presents to the public through independent and collaborative projects and partnerships that strengthen our ties to the community.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore and identify opportunities for collaborative partnerships	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; funding	1. 2017+

C. Explore and assess the museum’s brand and marketing needs and identify qualified consultants in accordance with City requirements.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Complete and implement marketing plan	1. Museum staff, Museum Board; consultant	1. Personnel; funding	1. 2017+