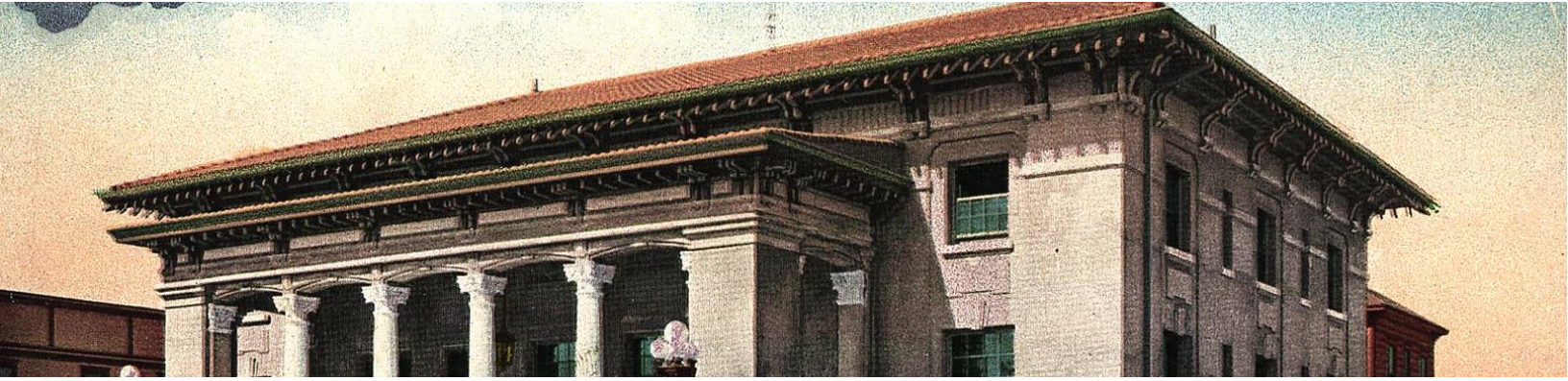


STRATEGIC PLAN
2018 - 2023



MUSEUM
of SONOMA COUNTY
ART • HISTORY



HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The Museum of Sonoma County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization housed in the historic Santa Rosa Post Office, an adjacent contemporary exhibition space, and a sculpture garden. The organization was first established in 1985 as the Sonoma County Museum. Then, in 2015, its name was modified to “Museums of Sonoma County” with the creation of a contemporary art space in an adjacent building, which was subsequently referred to as the “Art Museum of Sonoma County.” At that time, the original Post Office building was rebranded as the “History Museum of Sonoma County.”

The previous strategic plan, written in 2009, indicated that there had been, and continued to be, a divide between supporters of the art and history interests of the organization. This divide became an increasingly serious issue in terms of strategic priorities, branding, exhibitions, and programs, both internally and with the general public. An effort was made to provide greater definition for the organization as a whole and improve branding for the two museums by revising the mission statement and creating a new logo and identity. The result of that effort was the approval in 2015 of three intersecting mission statements: a general mission statement, a mission statement for the Art Museum, and a mission statement for the History Museum. In an attempt to further define the two museums and the organization as a whole, three logos were designed that were visually related but distinctly separate.

In 2018, during the development of the present plan, the Strategic Planning Committee came to a consensus that the three-tiered identity of the organization was confusing and presented a myriad of problems. The decision was then made to bring the art and history sides of the organization into alignment as one organization. The name was modified again from the Museums (plural) to the Museum (singular) of Sonoma County.

A brief description of the Museum’s current programs and status: The Museum of Sonoma County presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. The Museum is open year round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and education programs. The Museum preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over eighteen thousand objects, the region’s largest object documentation of Sonoma County’s history and culture. The Museum has been a Smithsonian Affiliate museum since 2009.

STRATEGIC PLANNING BACKGROUND

The board and staff of the Museum engaged in a six-month planning process in which we looked critically at our internal situation and the external environment. We imagined our future, as we would like it to be for our programs, our facilities, and our constituency. We reviewed the existing and past mission statement, leading to the development of a new mission statement and a list of core values. A series of internal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) exercises were conducted with board and staff members and we held a series of one-on-one external interviews with various constituencies. Our conclusions are:

1. The Museum is in a moment of positive change with strong leadership and forward momentum.
2. Programs are consistently strong. The addition of the contemporary space is a positive and welcome addition.
3. The Museum has a reputation as a well-established part of the community.
4. The Museum's board and staff members are dedicated and are committed to the Museum's success.
5. The historic post office building is iconic and well-recognized.
6. Collaboration with other community organizations and cultural groups and outreach efforts have been largely successful and will continue to develop.
7. There is general support for developing a synergistic relationship between history and art.
8. There are numerous grant and funding sources that the Museum can access.
9. The Museum gift shop has proven to be a good revenue generator and can be expanded.
10. The Museum has a strong track record of enjoyable and engaging events, and more can be planned to help expand our audience.
11. The facilities need a makeover, particularly the entrance to the contemporary space, exterior signage, and grounds. Also needed is additional space to accommodate exhibitions, programs, and storage.
12. The Museum must expand staffing capacity to meet its operational and programmatic needs.
13. More should be done to bring the public into the Museum, and an effort needs to be made to engage the community beyond the walls of the Museum.
14. There is general support for the future expansion of the Museum; downtown development is an opportunity to work more closely with the city.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.



CORE VALUES

The Museum is guided in its mission and strategic planning by the following core values:

1. **COMMUNITY**

We believe the humanities and the arts are fundamental to a healthy society; we believe in being a good civic partner and understand that the arts and humanities contribute significantly to civic and economic development; when we are successful in addressing our mission, we break down barriers and establish a culture of learning that helps build a more inclusive and connected community.

2. **CREATIVITY**

We believe creativity is an essential aspect of our humanity, and believe in the power of creative programming to engage the public and provide memorable and meaningful experiences.

3. **ENGAGEMENT**

We believe that engagement in the arts and humanities positively impacts people of all ages and improves academic achievement and literacy for students.

4. **RELEVANCE**

We will strive to present exhibitions and programs that are relevant to the broad range of community members and visitors.

5. **COLLABORATION**

We value community partnerships and believe that a spirit of collaboration is necessary for the Museum's and the community's success.

6. **ACCESSIBILITY**

We believe the Museum should be accessible and welcoming to everyone.

7. **DIVERSITY**

We will use our arts and history programs to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

VISION FOR THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Museum will:

1. provide a memorable and meaningful experience when the public visits and attends its programs by designing and implementing improvements to ensure a consistently positive visitor experience.
2. expand programs including: history and art exhibitions that are relevant to and resonate with the broader community and provide opportunities for engagement by regional artists.
3. increase the number of people with whom the Museum has direct contact by strengthening programming for youth, families and the diverse population of Sonoma County.
4. actively develop productive, meaningful and lasting partnerships and collaborations with other community organizations.
5. improve the Museum's messaging so that the members of the community have a clearer understanding of what the Museum is and does.
6. increase board diversity and deepen board member representation from Sonoma County, with representation from all major communities across the county.
7. address our staffing and space needs to effectively plan for future long-term growth and sustainability.
8. expand our funding base and achieve greater financial security.

TIME FRAME

This five-year plan is organized in two phases:

PHASE ONE will concentrate on **capacity building** and covers a two-year period from July 2018 – June 2020. The Phase One plan, referred to as the *Re:Imagine!* Plan, is designed with specific priorities, goals, and a tight timeline.

PHASE TWO will focus on **expansion** during the period from July 2020 – June 2023, creating a broader framework for major expansion and significant institutional transformation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PHASE ONE

"Re:Imagine!" Strategic Priorities: Capacity Building

Priority 1: Maintain and strengthen the excellence of exhibitions and programs

- A. Develop a well-balanced two-year exhibition and program plan.
- B. Expand and improve educational and public programs.
- C. Effectively explore the synergy between art and history exhibitions.
- D. Improve the Museum's collections database and storage capacity.

Action item: By September 30, 2018 create two-year program plan and begin to implement exhibition and programmatic improvements.

Priority 2: Improve the visitor experience

- A. Improve presentation standards for exhibitions; improve signage and display aesthetics to professionalize all history and art exhibitions.
- B. Improve facility, exterior signage, way-finding and landscaping.
- C. Renovate the historic Post Office building.
- D. Repurpose portion of parking lot area as temporary café and public gathering space.

Action item: By December 31, 2018 make signage, exhibition, exterior, and landscaping improvements.

Priority 3: Strengthen identity and branding

- A. Change Museums of Sonoma County to Museum of Sonoma County (singular vs. plural).
- B. Improve and focus messaging to clearly state who we are and what we do.
- C. Create language and imagery to indicate relationship between art and history.

Action item: By December 31, 2018 revise logo and all marketing materials.



Priority 4: Increase community outreach, partnerships and collaborations

- A. Build on new and existing relationships to county arts, culture, education, and heritage organizations.
- B. Explore and implement cross-marketing strategies with other community and arts organizations where there is mutual benefit
- C. Reach out to the community to offer the Museum as a meeting and event location.
- D. Expand and diversify our audience.

Action item: By September 30, 2018 implement plan to increase organizational relationships.

Priority 5: Address immediate capacity and staffing needs

- A. Revise organizational chart to add one full-time and one to two part-time positions to address the Museum's needs through 2020.
- B. Update technology, including phones and computer systems; increase budget for installation support; improve security; increase budget for marketing and online presence.

Action item: By September 30, 2018 revise organizational chart and begin to implement improvements.

PHASE TWO

Strategic Priorities: Expansion

Priority 6: Address space and staffing needs to create a plan for long-term growth

- A. Continue work on staff growth and organizational development to meet the Museum's long-term capacity needs.
- B. Create expansion plan that:
 - 1. Connects the art and history buildings to improve the visitor experience.
 - 2. Improves access and creates a welcome center for Museum visitors.
 - 3. Increases facility capacity to address collection storage and presentation issues.
 - 4. Increases exhibition space for history and art.
 - 5. Provides program, performance, and event space.
 - 6. Creates space for member and visitor amenities such as a cafe and gift shop.
 - 7. Expand online capacity and content.
- C. Create development plan that effectively raises the funds necessary to address the Museum's capital needs and creates a funding plan to ensure the Museum's long-term financial stability.

Action item: By December 31, 2019 create well-articulated capital and capacity building plan.

Priority 7: Update and implement capital expansion and improvements / capacity building plan through June 2023

- A. Utilizing the previous plan for capital expansion as a starting point, hire architect and update plan.
- B. Engage civic and community leaders.
- C. Negotiate renewed lease agreement with the City of Santa Rosa for continued use of the historic Post Office.
- D. Begin capital campaign to raise funds for expansion.
- E. Hire new staff according to the new organizational chart and capacity building plan.
- E. Launch marketing campaign to gain greater overall public support

Action item: By June 30, 2020 develop and finalize capital and capacity building plan with targeted expansion completion date of June 30, 2023.