

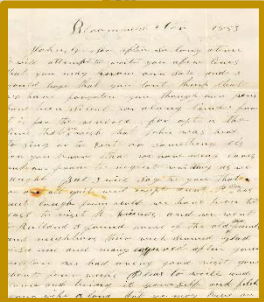
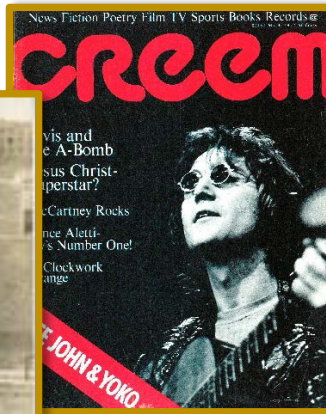


City of Birmingham



THE  
BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM

2021-2024 Strategic Plan



# 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

## APPROVAL/ACCEPTANCE

Museum Board Approval: September 3, 2020  
City Commission Acceptance: September 14, 2020

## CONTRIBUTORS

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*This plan represents an update and revision of the 2017-2020 Birmingham 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 such as the Friends of the Birmingham Museum. 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. It emphasized changes in the museum field toward community engagement and the human stories that relate to the physical objects in the collection. Also emphasized was the expansion of public access to the collection, educational goals, and continued acquisition and care for the objects that tell Birmingham's story (including contemporary materials). The plan included objectives relating to the landscape, site improvements, and interpretation of the historic buildings. Re-branding the museum and broadening its visibility were also significant objectives.

The **2017-2020 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** revised and modified the goals and objectives based on changing technology and audience needs as objectives from the first plan were met or obsolete. The museum has made considerable progress towards the initial goals set by its first strategic plan and revision. As a result, additional review and updating of the plan by the Museum Board has been undertaken for 2021-2024.

The newly revised goals and objectives that follow in the **2021-2024 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** represent a careful consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on current and future activities, especially virtual content and technological means of enhancing audience virtual experience. The Museum Board expects these adaptations to continue for some time, and they are reflected in the revised plan for 2021-2024. However, the ultimate goals and mission of the Birmingham Museum remain largely unchanged, while the methods of accomplishing established objectives continue to be flexible.

**MISSION AND VALUE:** The museum's mission statement reflects an inclusive and contemporary approach to integrating Birmingham's history in meaningful ways for its audiences, strengthening its value to the community and its long term sustainability.

**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 **2021-2024 Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan** builds on the preceding plan, which continues to provide relevant overall direction.

Goals and their 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.

Following the summarized description of goals and objectives, the updated 2021-2024 plan is presented in table format as a quick reference guide. As with previous versions, the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan is a living document whose purpose is to provide direction and guidance. Ongoing modification is expected 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

## 1) Service and Mission-Related Goals

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

### Objectives for Goal I:

- A. Develop and implement programs that strategically engage and connect with the community to make history and heritage more relevant.
- B. Establish the museum and park as a valued resource and place to encourage community connectivity.
- C. Enhance utilization of the collection by developing an interpretive plan for the site to engage visitors in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.
- D. Continue to create content to 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 museum collection's 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; de-accessioning; 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 increased digital access through exploring online or other virtual exhibit/access options.

## 2) Capacity-Building and Support-Related Goals

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

### Objectives for Goal III:

- A. Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund as a collaborative effort of the Museum board and Museum Friends.
- B. Continue to support board development.
- C. Increase the personnel capacity of the Birmingham Museum by increasing professional staffing, engaging volunteers, and utilizing partner organizations.
- D. Enhance funding through grant-writing efforts.

Goal IV: Continue to develop the museum's brand to increase awareness, interest, and attendance through a consistent message and marketing plan.

### Objectives for Goal IV:

- A. Continue to maximize low cost marketing resources.
- B. Strengthen our ties to the community by identifying our new/existing audiences and enhancing the museum's image.
- C. Explore best practices in marketing the new face of the museum.

## DETAIL OF OBJECTIVES, TASKS, AND TIMELINES

**GOAL I:** Enhance community engagement through improved access and appeal, resulting in increased utilization of the Birmingham Museum and broader appreciation of its cultural contribution.

### Objectives for Goal I

**A. Develop and implement programs that strategically engage and connect with the community to make history and heritage more relevant.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Public programming; schools, organizations, 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
3. Research services	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel; materials/operational funds	3. 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</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue and enhance social media audience interaction	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	1. Ongoing
2. Online events promotion	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	2. Ongoing
3. Phased landscape construction	3. City/museum staff	3. Personnel, consultants, funding (city/private)	3. 2021-2024

**C. Enhance utilization of the collection by developing an interpretive plan for the site to engage visitors in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Implement Hunter House interpretive plan	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. Ongoing
2. Develop Allen House interpretive plan	2. Museum staff/Board	2. Personnel	2. 2021-22
3. On site, off site, and virtual exhibits	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel, operational funds/virtual resources	3. Ongoing

**D. Continue to create content to promote the museum through social media and marketing.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Continue and enhance existing social media content and development of the museum's brand	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel, virtual resources	1. Ongoing



**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</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Re-organize storage in keeping with permanent and use collection goals	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing
2. Improve environmental controls	2. Museum staff	2. Personnel; materials/operational funds	2. Ongoing
3. Develop artifact assessment & intervention plan	3. Museum staff	3. Personnel; materials/operational funds	3. 2021

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

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

**C. Develop and implement collections-related policies and procedures for collections management; future acquisitions; de-accessioning; 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</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Finalize/implement disaster preparedness plan	1. Museum staff/city staff	1. Personnel	1. 2021-ongoing
2. Develop a building and grounds maintenance schedule	2. Museum staff/city staff	2. Personnel, operational funds	2. 2021-ongoing
3. Develop/finalize collections policy	3. Museum staff/Board	3. Personnel	3. 2021-2022

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

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Expansion of digital collections/digital content management for public access	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel, virtual resources	1. Ongoing

**Goal III:** Increase the capacity of the Birmingham Museum to serve its mission through fundraising, board development, building relationships, and volunteer resources.

Objectives for Goal III

**A. Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for the Birmingham Museum that increases contributions to both operations and the endowment fund as a collaborative effort of the Museum board and Museum Friends.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Develop a fundraising plan for seeking and managing contributions from public and private sources	1. Museum staff/city staff/partner organizations	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing

**B. Continue to support board development.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/provide opportunities for continuing education	1. Museum Board; Friends Board	1. Personnel; operational funds/virtual resources	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</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Maintain appropriate staffing levels and effective use of personnel resources	1. Museum staff/professional volunteers/interns	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. 2021-ongoing

**D. Enhance fundraising through grant-writing efforts.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Identify/explore grant opportunities for supporting museum initiatives	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. Ongoing

**Goal IV:** Continue to develop the museum’s brand to increase awareness, interest, and attendance through a consistent message and marketing plan.

*Objectives for Goal VI*

**A. Continue to maximize low cost marketing resources.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/develop low cost marketing opportunities to complement social media marketing	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel; materials/operational funds	1. Ongoing

**B. Strengthen our ties to the community by identifying our new/existing audiences and enhancing the museum’s image.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Explore/enhance relationships with local and virtual organizations	1. Museum staff/ Museum Board	1. Personnel; partner organizations	1. Ongoing

**C. Explore best practices in marketing the new face of the museum.**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Maintain and explore continuing education in museum marketing and branding	1. Museum staff	1. Personnel	1. Ongoing