



Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture

Strategic Plan 2022-2024





"I have been a member of the MAC for a long time and it is a membership I treasure. To me it means I share a common bond with every other member who appreciates our history, good and bad."

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Letter From The Executive Director



I am thrilled to present the Northwest Museum of Art and Culture’s (the “MAC”) 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. At its best, a museum is a place of discovery and inspiration; a place where a visitor can learn and be challenged to see the world in a new light. Our Plan aspires to this goal and proposes an ambitious and imaginative course of action for the MAC over the next three years. The Plan tackles operational areas that need fine tuning and better alignment, while setting the MAC up for future growth and region-wide impact.

Why now? The timing of the planning process was critical to our staff and board. Changes that were taking place in our community, region and world called for us to rethink our operating approach. From COVID related closures to an increased awareness of racial issues to the fact that our community is growing at an extraordinary pace, events over the past few years have caused us to pause and think about how to adapt and move forward. In light of these changes, the planning process provided a rich opportunity to ask questions, have critical conversations, and engage with staff, board, and community in a meaningful way.

The plan allowed us to look back at our history and think about what it means to serve our community in our current world. Founded in 1916, the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (the “MAC”) is the oldest and largest cultural organization in the region. The MAC provides cultural programming – exhibitions, lectures, performances – all while stewarding a permanent collection of over

60,000 objects and maintaining a five-acre campus that includes the Campbell House, a historic residence built in 1898. The museum focuses broadly on regional art, history, and tribal cultures, and welcomes approximately 90,000 visitors a year, including 10,000 students. In the past few years our attendance has grown to historically high levels, which has also created capacity challenges and discussions about our organizational structure.

Located in the Inland Northwest, which encompasses greater Spokane and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, the area is experiencing many changes. In recent years there has been a shift to more technology-based industries while the historically strong medical sector continues to grow. With a regional population of around 700,000, we have also seen dramatic growth, with many people moving from Seattle, Portland and California. The Plan proposes action items to address these changes and embraces the considerable opportunities that growth brings.

We are thankful to the many participants whose insights and ideas helped to shape the Plan. From elected officials to schoolteachers to artists and others in the cultural sector, we gleaned vital information that caused us to plan carefully about our next three years. We had excellent participation from our board, which is led by Chair Debra Schultz, and a Strategic Planning committee comprised of staff and board members. Marcy Goodwin and Cameron Boodram of M. Goodwin Museum Planning, Inc. brought their considerable experience to bear in leading a process that requires excellent listening skills and the ability to synthesize large sets of data into accessible and actionable items. Finally, we are very thankful to the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, which funded this plan through a generous grant. We are grateful beneficiaries of their commitment to the region, their focus on capacity building, and their embrace of the long view.

Wesley Jessup



Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

To engage our audiences in the appreciation of art, history, and culture of the Inland Northwest and beyond through collection stewardship, exhibitions, and programs that enrich and inspire.

Our Vision

To be a nationally acclaimed regional cultural center through curatorial excellence, innovative programming, and by offering an extraordinary visitor experience. We aspire to be essential to the social and cultural life of our local community, and a must-see destination for visitors.

Our Values

The Museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers are committed to operating transparently and with integrity in all matters—honoring our commitments, listening with empathy and being approachable, inclusive, and respectful of others.

Transparency And Inclusion

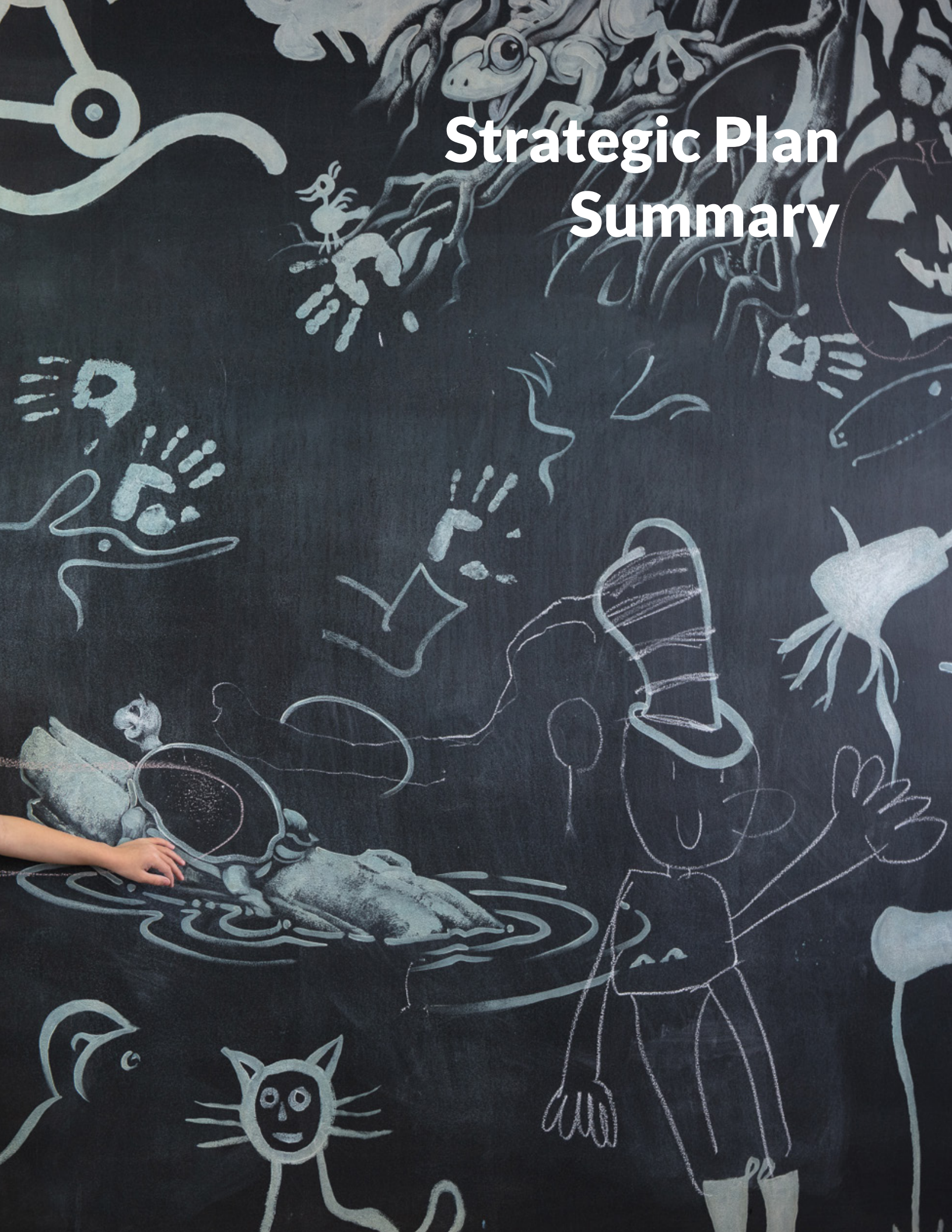
The Museum of Arts and Culture is a Washington State agency committed to providing a transparent, inclusive and welcoming environment.

We embrace a culture of collaboration, transparency, diversity, and accessibility. We design and deliver programs that engage all segments of our community in order to preserve our heritage, ensure credibility and to inspire and engage future generations.



"I think there is an opportunity to expand the relevancy of the MAC and its role as the most significant museum between Seattle and Minneapolis."

Strategic Plan Summary



2022-2024 Strategic Plan Context

The Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture is not just a regional museum. It's a museum **FOR** the region. As the largest exhibitor and collector of art and historical objects in eastern Washington and the Inland Northwest, it connects a regional population of over 800,000 people to ambitious exhibitions and programs.

The region is growing, diversifying, and welcoming new residents, not only from other parts of Washington and Idaho, but also from cities like Portland, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The MAC stands at the heart of this growth and is poised to expand its audience, serve broader and more diverse constituents, and take advantage of new programming opportunities.

The MAC's previous strategic plan (2018-2021) positioned the organization to meet the challenges it faced at the time. It helped to stabilize the organization and led to programming changes that yielded significant audience growth with over 90,000 visitors in 2019, more than many museums of comparable size and annual budget. The MAC achieved these results despite having a smaller staff than its peer museums.

This strategic plan seeks to build on the success of the last three years and focus on additional opportunities for growth: to **DO** more and to **SERVE** more.



The goal of the 2022-2024 strategic plan is to help the museum sustainably serve an expanding community in new and exciting ways. It seeks to:

- **Position the MAC as a regional destination for residents and tourists**
- **Fully utilize existing resources and continue to diversify revenue streams**
- **In collaboration with the MAC Foundation, grow the endowment to provide financial sustainability for staffing and programming during challenging economic times**
- **Plan and develop a permanent exhibition featuring the MAC's collection**
- **Lay the groundwork for a future capital campaign by conducting a feasibility study to plan and design an expansion needed for the MAC's growth**

Strategic Goals

As Spokane and the Inland Northwest have changed, so too have the MAC and its audiences.

Museums like the MAC seek to engage with all their visitors in ways that will offer insight, personal discovery, thoughtful education, a strong sense of community, and fun. Exhibitions, drawn from the permanent collections and organized in-house or brought to the MAC as traveling shows, create opportunities for dialogue about our history and the evolution of art and culture.

The MAC has become a lively venue for regularly changing exhibitions, but it can do even more to showcase its own collections and bring exciting, engaging, and relevant shows to Spokane.



The Tribes of the Columbia River Plateau play an essential role in the life of this region. There are now over 104,000 tribal members throughout the Plateau, tribes employ over 37,000 people and tribal business enterprises now serve as a major catalyst for Washington's economy. The MAC holds the world's largest collection of Plateau tribal art, and intends to strengthen its relationship with these regional communities to create programs and exhibitions to broaden public appreciation for tribal history, culture and art.

Thanks to the support of the State of Washington, the dedication of staff, and the loyalty of members and donors, the MAC survived the COVID era, providing scaled-back exhibitions and programs. Nevertheless, the pandemic forced the museum to lay off six staff members. Staffing levels are currently at 55% of where they were in 2008, prior to the recession.

The museum must have a comprehensive, long-term staffing plan that will address all its programmatic and operational needs. The MAC also needs to upgrade its policies, procedures and technology to support staff expansion, improved communication, and facilitate higher levels of interdepartmental collaboration.







Museums all over the US have been changing their approach to operations, finance, and revenue over the past decade. Most mid-sized and larger museums have rejected ticket sales as the primary source of revenue. Instead, they have come to rely on a number of revenue streams that include special events, food service, facility rentals, and fee-based programs. By diversifying its revenue sources, the MAC would be able to not only generate more income, but it would also be able to contribute to the region's tourism initiatives and draw more visitors.

The COVID crisis also changed civic life and how institutions like the MAC engage with the public. Unable to welcome visitors in significant numbers, the MAC has had to reassess how it provides programs and exhibitions for the community.

During extended periods of closure, the MAC successfully implemented a virtual operating model, offering a full menu of interactive exhibitions and programs. These virtual programs were so successful that the MAC intends to continue and improve upon its online programming even as visitors begin coming back to the museum. The staff is also looking at ways to integrate new technical resources into the on-site visitor experience.

The MAC's site and facilities significantly impact the museum's ability to implement new initiatives. A Comprehensive Master Plan for the MAC's buildings and site will serve as a blueprint for a needed expansion of the facilities to improve visitor access; enhance visitor experience; increase the number, size, and types of exhibitions and programs offered; diversify revenue sources; and tackle deferred maintenance issues.

To achieve a vision for the future that incorporates all these essential components, the MAC will leverage its assets, build on its strengths, and implement the following six Strategic Goals:

-  **Streamline the MAC's systems and operations**
-  **Enhance and extend the MAC's visitor experience**
-  **Strengthen the MAC's engagement with the Columbia River Plateau Tribes**
-  **Grow & diversify the MAC's audiences**
-  **Increase access to the MAC's collections**
-  **Develop a long-term Comprehensive Master Plan for the MAC's site and facilities**



Goal 1

Streamline the MAC's Systems and Operations

To improve its systems and operations the MAC intends to:

- 1) Build on existing resources to invest in its human and digital infrastructure
- 2) Expand its board of trustees and clarify trustee roles and responsibilities, and
- 3) Further diversify earned revenue streams.

Develop a comprehensive staffing plan and achieve 100% State funding for staffing expenses

Improve staff communication and working efficiency

Develop a comprehensive IT plan

Fund and implement the Campbell House maintenance plan

Increase non-admissions earned revenue

Clearly define the Board's role, and further develop and expand the Board

Work with the MAC Foundation to identify a target goal for the MAC endowment





Goal 2

Enhance and extend the MAC's visitor experience

The MAC wants to provide an extraordinary experience to every visitor. It seeks to serve as the heart of the cultural life of our community and become a must-see destination for tourists.

The MAC understands that a positive visitor experience depends on more than offering excellent exhibitions and programs. It also involves marketing and ticketing, making sure there is enough information available, giving tours, encouraging program participation, and maintaining the indoor facilities and outdoor campus.

Develop an integrated User Experience (UX) strategy for the MAC, its website and its digital content

Explore immediate opportunities for facility modifications to improve the MAC's visitor experience

Improve signage and wayfinding



Goal 3

Strengthen the MAC's engagement with the Columbia River Plateau Tribes

Over the next three years, the MAC will work more closely with the regional tribal communities and tribal subject matter experts to develop and deliver programs and exhibitions that share their stories.

The MAC takes its role as a caretaker of an enormous collection of Native American artifacts and art very seriously. The MAC views the tribes as partners in protecting and preserving this collection.

Identify funding to retain a Tribal Liaison position

Implement diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility plan strategies

Improve working relationship with the American Indian Cultural Council (AICC)

Clearly define MAC / AICC structure and relationships

Work with Tribal subject matter experts to begin planning permanent exhibition components

Work with Tribal representatives to develop a land acknowledgment plan

Goal 4

Grow & diversify the MAC's audiences

As both a State agency and the largest museum in the Inland Northwest, the MAC has a duty to inspire, engage and connect a regional population of over 800,000 people to art, history and cultural experiences. The MAC is committed to developing an inclusive culture that represents our diverse population

The MAC will broaden its efforts to increase our visibility among residents, especially new arrivals to the Spokane metropolitan area. At the same time, the MAC will also seek to expand its regional reach through advertising and tourism marketing. The MAC will focus on building strategic partnerships with civic, educational, and cultural institutions to build synergies and audiences for our exhibitions and programs. As part of this effort, we will also explore establishing community outreach and support groups to engage more effectively with underserved audiences.

Increase engagement with local audiences, especially new residents

Increase tourism marketing

Increase impact on and support for young Tribal audiences

Develop new, and expand existing, community partnerships

Further develop the MAC's community outreach and support groups to reach underserved audiences



Goal 5

Increase access to the MAC's Collections

The MAC has an extensive, enormously diverse, and largely under-utilized collection of artifacts, art, and documents.

Over the next three years, the MAC will assess its holdings by re-inventorying the entire collection in conjunction with the purchase of a new collections management system. This evaluation will enable the MAC to not only refine and better organize its collection, but also to develop exhibitions that help our audiences better understand our shared history and heritage.

To increase access to MAC collections, the MAC will begin the planning process for a permanent exhibition that will support regional K-12 education programming. This exhibition will sync with curriculum standards and draw students from across our region. At the same time, the MAC will develop a traveling exhibitions program to showcase and share our treasures with other museums.

Assess collection by re-inventorying, focusing on areas that are not catalogued or for which little is known

Identify and purchase a new collections management system with Federal, State, and private foundation funds

Develop more in-house exhibitions showcasing the collection and leveraging the knowledge, skills and strengths of Exhibitions and Collections staff

Determine a target balance between traveling exhibitions, outside contractor-generated exhibitions and self-generated exhibitions. Plan and implement an exhibition program within these guidelines.

Begin planning for a permanent exhibition

Develop a traveling exhibitions program

Ready the MAC for re-accreditation in 2025





Goal 6

Develop a Comprehensive Master Plan for the MAC's site and facilities

The MAC's site and facilities provide the venues and storage for its exhibitions, programs and collections. As the museum's newest structures enter their third decade, it is time to reassess whether the site and its buildings can meet the MAC's needs and draw contemporary audiences.

The MAC will develop a Comprehensive Master Plan for the MAC's buildings and grounds. In developing this plan, the MAC will take into consideration its overall mission, its ability to meet growing demands from the community, and its ability to create new revenue streams that would contribute to long-term sustainability. The Plan, a blueprint for future development, will also look at creating larger gallery space to showcase the MAC's collections and ensuring easier access to the buildings.

Secure funding for Comprehensive Master Plan development

Select a consulting planning team

Develop the Comprehensive Master Plan

Communicate the Comprehensive Master Plan with the State and MAC's supporters



"Maintaining the standard of your exhibits should be top-priority."

2022-2024 Strategic Plan Outcomes

Partner with Spokane Public Schools to welcome one full primary grade level of students each year

Achieve an average of 90,000 annual visitors across the three-year plan term

Ready the museum for re-accreditation in 2025

Double the annual number of tourist visitors to the MAC

Travel three exhibitions to other museums

Present one to two American Indian collection-based exhibitions per year

Establish two new programs and initiatives engaging Tribal audiences

Develop a Comprehensive Master Plan with the Governor's Office of Financial Management for the long-term maintenance and development of the MAC's site and facilities

Achieve 100% funding for staffing and facility-related expenses

"Keep Spokane's eyes open to the wonders of the whole wide world. Do not let people of this area forget the wonders, big and small, of the rest of the world."

2020 Spokane
Watercolor Society
JURIED MEMBER SHOW



OCTOBER 4 - NOVEMBER 8
Northwest Museum
of Arts & Culture
West Spokane Gallery
219 West First Avenue
Spokane, WA 99201
For more information contact the MOC:
www.mocspokane.org

ACCEPTING ARTISTS
All are welcome!
The show is juried.
Artists must be 18 years of age or older.
Artists must be residents of the Spokane area.
Artists must be members of the Spokane Watercolor Society.
Artists must submit their work to the juried member show.
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" Hang in there! There is a thirst for what the Museum provides!"



"It's because we over in the dream about But when I got was dreaming the"

"There was one officer that was a little bit more than I was... they took me to the ID... and I looked at it and he had a beautiful wife and two young children and I thought to myself, 'They don't know that their dad is gone. That he was a little bit.'"
 - [Name]

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Process

From June through October 2021, the MAC's Strategic Planning Taskforce, along with the museum's staff and trustees, participated in a series of in-person and remote meetings to assess the current state of the MAC, and to chart the institution's next three years.

Nearly 600 people played a part in creating this Plan.

The strategic planning process began with an exploration of big-picture dreams and aspirations, as well as the acknowledgment of shared challenges. The MAC's staff, trustees and the Strategic Planning Taskforce worked together to develop a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats statement, and Strategic Statements were created for each museum department. Online questionnaires were distributed to the museum's extended community of supporters. Stakeholders were interviewed in individual meetings.

Together, this input guided the Strategic Planning Taskforce's process of determining the goals and objectives, identifying the tactics that would best support the achievement of these goals, and assigning implementation tasks.

The Strategic Plan is a result of a concerted effort from a committed staff and Board, with support from an enthusiastic community of members, volunteers and friends.

Acknowledgments

MAC's 2022-2024 Strategic Plan would not have been possible if not for the dedication and support of the following people.

Strategic Planning Taskforce

Wesley Jessup, Executive Director
Debra Schultz, President, MAC Board of Trustees
Betsy Godlewski, Director of Development
Freya Liggett, Curator of History
Carol Summers, Marketing Director
Brooke Wagner, Exhibits Registrar
Tisa Matheson, American Indian Collections Manager
Katie Staib, Director of Education
Peter Sanburn, MAC Board Trustee
Janet Durnford, MAC Board Trustee
Greg Hesler, MAC Board Trustee
Maureen Green, MAC Foundation Trustee

The MAC's staff

MAC Board of Trustees, Debra Schultz, President

MAC Foundation Board of Trustees

M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Community leaders and supporters, in dialogue

509 community questionnaire respondents, members and volunteers,
whose comments are featured throughout this document





M Northwest Museum
AC of Arts and Culture