

# Strategic Plan 2021–2023





# Introduction

**At the Hudson River Museum, we are planning for the future. Having recently marked our 100th anniversary, we have a proven record of achievement, a reputation for scholarship and interdisciplinary programming, and a commitment to meaningful partnerships and to serving our diverse community.**

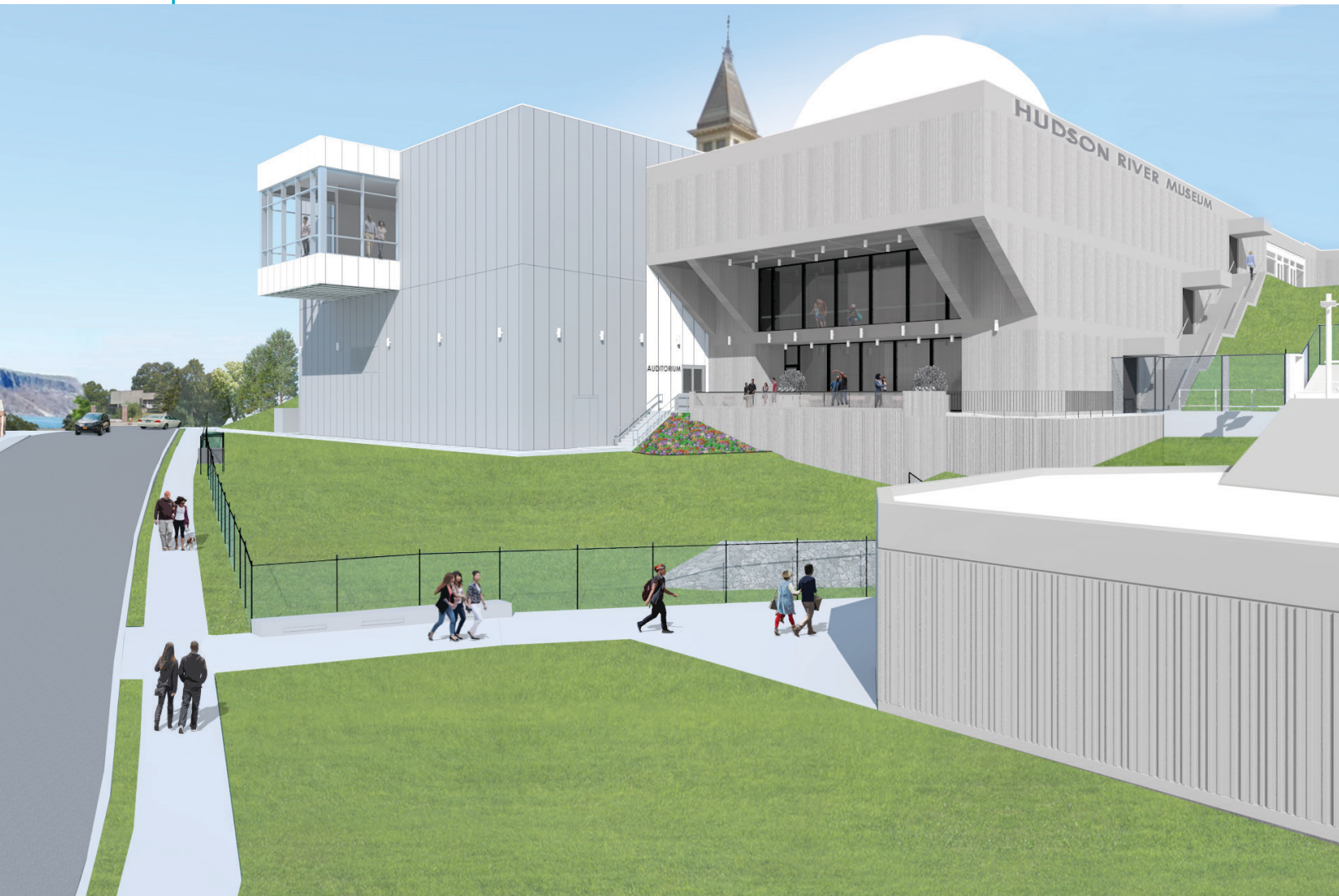
The Museum has consistently developed strategic plans and embarked on this planning effort to guide our next period of growth, allocate resources, and shape our thinking about the future. This process involved key stakeholders, including our Board of Trustees, staff, members, docents and members of our community. This strategic plan reflects our thoughts about the world today, and the present and future roles that our Museum, our public, and our supporters play in it. The plan will guide our initiatives and programs. It outlines a shared vision of the HRM as a transformative force in our community and in the museum field. Strategic planning at the Hudson River Museum is an ongoing, iterative, and collaborative process. During this process we improved our ability to identify and assess opportunities and ideas every day. We believe that 21st-century organizations require plans that are strong but flexible, allowing them to be nimble as circumstances unfold.





The Hudson River Museum now moves forth on a mission and vision in a Strategic Plan that will have strong local and regional impact, with an eye toward connecting our audiences and team on topics that matter locally, while resonating with conversations occurring nationally. We are thinking of the health of our institution in a multifaceted way.

Our new West Wing Project, the final embodiment of a master plan set in motion in 2002, will simultaneously unveil destination-worthy exhibition galleries and a new Community and Partnership space. This capital project will allow us to welcome visitors to our stunning location on the Hudson, while also permitting us to share a far greater percentage of our permanent collection with the public. Our new auditorium will provide an inviting place in which to experience lectures and performances, while our updated art storage will enable the Museum to care for its collections as required by current day standards. As a second phase of this important capital project, we will carefully restore Glenview, our 1877 jewel of an historic home on the National Register of Historic Places. Also important will be utilitarian projects such as replacing the roof on our 1969 wing, thereby continuing to safeguard our collections on view.





We have focused on creating staff structures that facilitate cross-functional communication and coordination. Furthermore, the strategic planning process itself has been a cross-functional and Board / Staff / Community / Member process. We crafted an inclusive process recognizing that the responsibility for strategic thinking was shared by the staff, the Board, volunteer and docent voices, as well as external stakeholders. We have created new work groups that have brought people and perspectives together in new ways, beginning the process of redefining teamwork, especially informed by our museum-wide 2020 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging training program and the reflections that resulted from those important conversations. We aim to encourage diverse thought, experience, and cultural competency at all levels of the organization, ensuring that everyone at the HRM is motivated to achieve common goals.

We actively follow emerging issues that are shaping museums and other organizations to understand our place as a convener and catalyst for change. We grounded our decision making in data about our audience, our unique market within the City of Yonkers and Westchester County, and our operational capacity.





We recognize that our plan must be aspirational, yet reality based. In the year leading up to the pandemic, the HRM welcomed visitors from throughout the County as well as from a record 42 states. Our school programs served nearly 25,000 school children. Beginning in March 2020, however, our day-to-day reality shifted, and both our short- and long-term plans were seriously impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Along with institutions of all sizes nationwide, we have faced unprecedented financial and logistical challenges. Earned income and attendance were severely diminished, and traditional modes of fundraising had to be rethought. At the same time, the Museum's team was nimble in its response to our new realities. We mobilized to bring our strong in-person programming to a virtual audience and made great strides in introducing the HRM to new participants far and wide, all while staying focused on mission. Our reopening plan was directly informed by the skills and perspectives of every department in the Museum. In 2020, the HRM was honored and grateful to be one of fourteen small US museums selected by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the Art Museum Futures Fund for a grant in recognition of our "visionary leadership, distinctive collections, and commitment to community, as well as historically overlooked artists and histories."





We are determined to thrive and move forward, drawing upon our significant collections, our dedicated team, robust partnerships, and successful development of new mission-aligned programs online alongside quality experiences in person. We will lean into our multidisciplinary—and interdisciplinary—program of art, science and history experiences, to serve and reflect a more diverse audience. We will enable the Museum to thrive rather than merely survive over the first few years of this three-year plan. We know that social distancing will remain a logistical factor until the vast majority of the United States and New York population is vaccinated, and this will continue to impact our typical attendance figures and earnings for a year, if not more. Given the many unknowns about the long-term impact of this period, we know we must balance ambition with pragmatism. We will need to monitor what audience visitation and participation now means and will continue to assess our steps beyond that.

We emphasize that this plan must be a living document. The Hudson River Museum team will use it as a framework for priority setting, decision making, and future planning. We will also use the plan to guide ongoing evaluation of our progress. At least once a year, we will return to the full plan to evaluate our progress and use that assessment to develop any necessary revised annual work plans and budgets for Board approval.





# Letter from the Chair of the Board and Director and CEO

We are pleased to present the new Strategic Plan 2021-23 for the Hudson River Museum. It is a product of the intensive efforts led by Director and CEO, Masha Turchinsky, the Museum's skilled staff, and our dedicated Board. Our initial advisor for this project, New Door Leadership, provided formative strategic consultation during our annual retreat in 2018, which launched subsequent meetings, focus groups, and retreats through 2020. A working group of Board and staff members for Strategic Planning was led by Vice Chair Conrad Meyer, who offered keen insights and invaluable professional experience in shepherding aspects of the project to completion. The Board unanimously approved the plan on January 28, 2021.

Engagement was at the heart of this process. The planning team met with a variety of constituents representing a broad cross-section of the Hudson River Museum community over the past two years, and reviewed visitor surveys, and member feedback. In summer 2020, the Museum's staff, members of the Board, docents, and junior docents participated in a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, Inclusive and Belonging training program, led by Gigi Gilliard Development. This thoughtful program launched important, candid conversations that informed this plan and will continue to guide our actions.

Our conversations during weekly staff meetings, and with featured artists, historians, and scientists also contributed to our plans and made us think about how to see our Museum through a variety of lenses and see ourselves in a new light. These sessions were extremely valuable in shaping our vision as the Museum aspires to be even more connected, vital, and relevant in the community.

As a leading regional cultural institution in the New York Metropolitan area, the HRM aspires to serve as a model of excellence to all of our patrons, welcoming them, delighting them, and creating new learning opportunities on every visit. As a forward-thinking museum in the twenty-first century, we strongly believe we can be a shared space for civic engagement and serve as a modern communal forum to discuss and advance issues that matter to our public. We contend that the intersection of art, science, and history can help us understand the vital relationship between the local and the global, and anchor us as we seek to interpret the most pressing issues of our time.

During this plan we will break literal and figurative ground, completing our long-awaited West Wing capital expansion, adding new climate-controlled art storage and galleries, further enhancing our ability to care for and exhibit our works in the public trust. At the same time, we will embark on new understandings of our collections, our public, and the needs of our team. Our programs and exhibitions will be informed by respected art makers, scientists, educators, historians, and art historians. We focus on the complex



ways in which art, science, and history intersect and actively engage with our audiences and community. Together, we will continue to enhance the Museum's profile to increase visibility, relevance, and recognition in the community and among peer institutions.

That this is a living document will be revealed in subsequent years as we modify the plan relative to new opportunities, yet unforeseen challenges, and updates in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continued throughout this planning process. We know how to anchor ourselves in aspiration balanced with fiscal pragmatism. We believe the objectives outlined here will guide the Museum well into the future as we build on the success this museum has enjoyed since its foundation in 1919.

Our sincere thanks go to all who have made the Hudson River Museum what it is today, and have helped us envision our future chapters of growth and sustainability.



  
**Masha Turchinsky**  
Director and CEO

  
**Thomas D'Auria**  
Chair, Board of Trustees

# Our Mission

The Hudson River Museum's mission is to engage, inspire, and connect diverse communities through the power of the arts, sciences, and history.

# Our Vision

The Hudson River Museum is a multidisciplinary institution steeped in rich cultural history and alert to the opportunities of the future. As a vibrant art institution located in the fourth largest city in New York, we maintain a steadfast commitment to our community and to our region, while taking pride in being keenly aware of, and participating in, conversations and changes in our society at large.





Hudson River Museum audiences can experience the richness of New York's Hudson River and the Hudson Valley region's cultural history, a strength of the collection, while we enlarge the scope of their surroundings with metaphorical bridges that extend far beyond the borders of our state, and in the case of our planetarium, our earthly terrain. Our evolving collection of American art serves as inspiration for exhibitions, collaborations, and unique juxtapositions between the historical and the contemporary. Our educational programs provide interpretation, inspiration, and give shape to our institutional identity. As a leading cultural institution in the New York Metropolitan region, the HRM aspires to serve as a model of excellence to all of our patrons, welcoming them, delighting them, and creating new learning opportunities on every visit.

- We will expand the possibilities for what a museum can be in the 21st century, serving as an innovative cultural incubator and thought leader and advancing issues that matter to our public.
- We will serve as a convener and catalyst in our local community, while connecting locally-lived experiences to global issues and conversations.
- We will embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion as drivers of staff empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence.
- We will be a leader in the growth and vibrancy of Yonkers' and Westchester's urban and cultural transformation, which continues to draw new residents.





# Our Promise

The HRM actively pursues its mission through dynamic exhibitions and programs, and by building, preserving, studying and sharing its multidisciplinary collections, which include American art from the nineteenth century to present day, a Gilded Age historic home, a planetarium, an amphitheater, and an environmental gallery. This work is influenced, in part, by our power of place along the banks of the Hudson River, and by the broader issues surrounding art, the science of our time, and our vested interest in environmental stewardship. Our work is reflective of the communities we serve.





# Statement of Values

At the Hudson River Museum, we value:

**ENRICHMENT AND LEARNING**—We believe that art, history, and material culture contribute to the richness of the human experience. We share knowledge and forge new ideas with our diverse audiences, through research, discovery, interpretation, and education;

**COMMUNITY**—We empower the public to feel ownership of the Museum, welcoming local and regional communities and serving as a cultural hub through our collections, exhibitions, and programs;

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING**—We design programs, exhibitions, and experiences with input from a variety of stakeholders—inside and outside the Museum—so that they are relevant, appealing, and enhanced by the participation of our diverse audiences;

**STEWARDSHIP**—We hold our collections in the public trust and are committed to the responsible management of these objects, as well as to our human, environmental, and financial resources. We foster a culture of collaborative leadership;

**CREATIVITY AND ENJOYMENT**—We foster imaginative, innovative thinking and seek diverse perspectives that spark dialogue and encourage artistic expression. We are a catalyst for systemic change and strive to bring our audiences fulfillment, joy, and delight; and

**CONNECTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**—We create conceptual links between our multidisciplinary collections and assets, and develop strategic partnerships and interdisciplinary programs to strengthen these connections in our community.





# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Commitments

We seek to foster a culture committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Hudson River Museum. Our board, staff, volunteers, and partners are part of this shared commitment and embrace a vision of inclusion that supports all forms of diversity. We aim to encourage diverse thought, experience, and cultural competency at all levels of the organization, ensuring that everyone at the HRM is motivated to achieve common goals. We embrace the following commitments at the HRM:

- We value diversity, equity, and inclusion as drivers of staff empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence.
- We believe multiple perspectives and a healthy respect for differing views strengthen our organization by expanding our thinking.
- We embrace the challenge of exploring the complex stories embedded in our history and artworks as we work towards continued relevance of the Museum and collection to our public.
- We work together as board and staff to ensure that our members, partners, and key stakeholders reflect and embrace these core values.





# Strategic Priorities

## Build Institutional Strength

To grow the Museum's overall strength and value in the community through a dedicated and diverse Board and staff, and to achieve a healthy and balanced mix of funding sources. To achieve long-term financial stability, ensuring that the HRM can pursue its mission with excellence and agility.

1. Continue to develop an active Board of Trustees representing the diverse perspectives, skills, and financial resources that are part of our community.
2. Fortify the financial future of the organization by building and enhancing diverse streams of philanthropic support.
3. Ensure organizational success through skilled and sufficient personnel and improved modes of feedback and collaboration to support mission and goals.
4. Clarify and enhance our organizational structure, roles, responsibilities, and processes to align with and advance our mission, vision, values, and strategic plan.





## Create Relevant Experiences that Diverse Audiences Value

To develop memorable and relatable content through exhibitions, collections, gallery displays, and experimental programming that boldly combines objects and ideas. Build and sustain partnerships locally, regionally, and nationally to learn from multiple perspectives and be an incubator for ideas and substantive change.

1. **Diverse Relevance:** Identify and understand the needs and preferences of groups within the Museum's diverse community.
2. **Collections:** Commit to expanding the Museum's American art collections and displays to more fully reflect our audiences, as well as the people, landscapes and history of our region.
3. **Exhibitions:** Organize and present quality exhibitions that are relevant and exciting to a broad audience and that tap into interdisciplinary, scholarly, and timely themes.
4. **Public Programs:** With our collections and exhibitions as catalysts, develop relatable, participatory, and interdisciplinary programs that reflect contemporary concerns.
5. **School, Youth and Family Programs:** Continue to build relationships for sustainable partnerships and multi-year visitation that provide impactful learning experiences to a range of students in our communities
6. **Enhance our Visitor Services program and Gift Shop services** to provide guests a positive experience in all aspects of their visit.

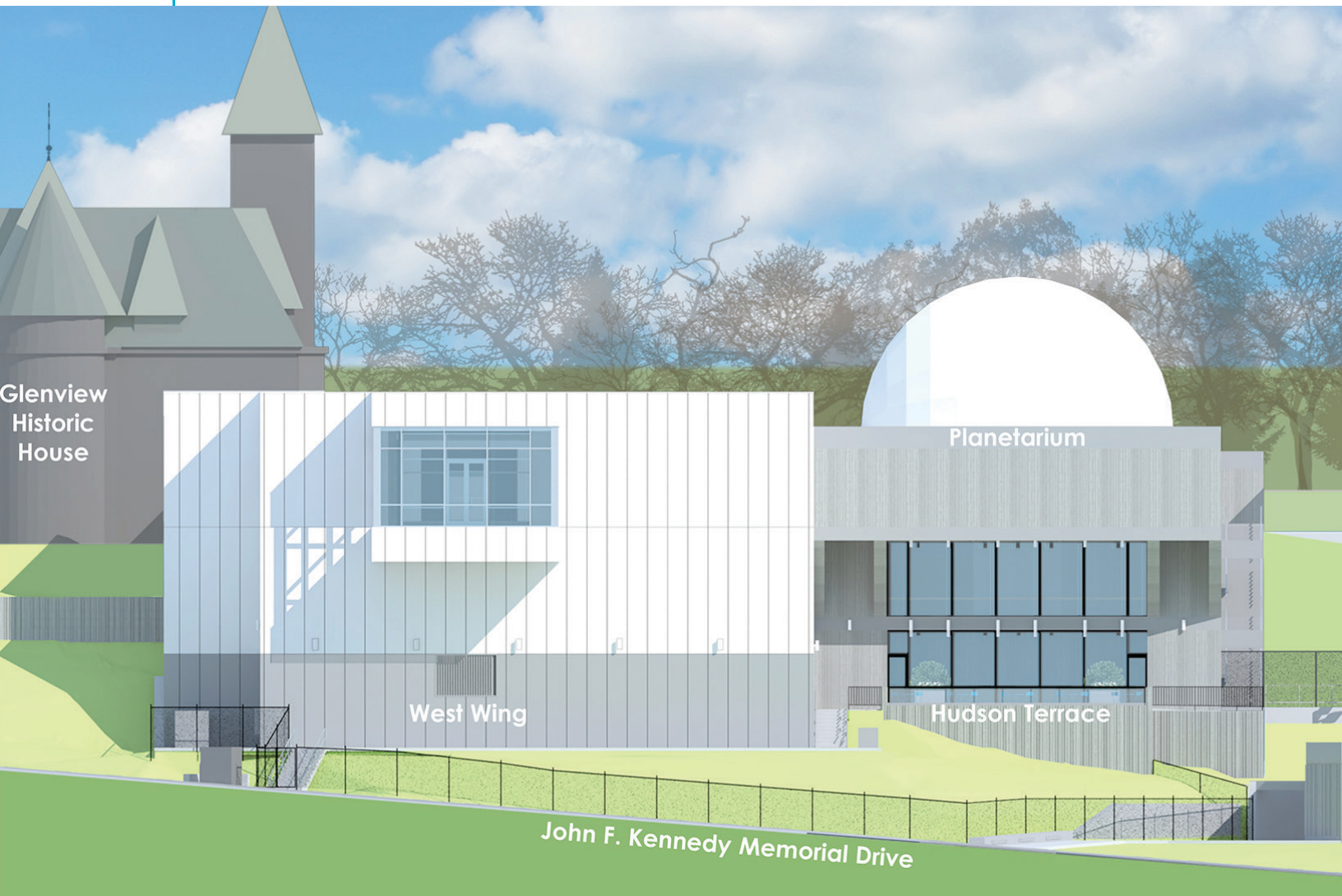




## Improve and Enhance Facilities

To upgrade and maintain the Museum's physical and technological infrastructure to safeguard the collections, enrich the public experience, and improve the staff workplace.

1. Complete Major Capital Projects
2. Landscaping—Create a multi-staged plan for improving and sustaining the grounds around the Museum and Amphitheater (2021–2023)
3. Technology—Improve, integrate, and expand our technology to support the Museum's infrastructure and staff needs, as well as visitor expectations (2021–2023)
4. Security and Emergency Preparedness: Update systems, plans, and protocols for everyday safety and potential disasters that meet current standards of the field and address broader global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change (2021)





## Build Awareness and Grow Audiences

To foster engagement and increase visitation to the Museum and build its value as a cultural nexus to grow the HRM's reputation locally, regionally, and nationally.

1. Identify and attract new audiences (2021–2023).
2. Create a marketing and communications plan to effectively reach target audiences (2021).
3. Develop new and existing local and alliance-based partnerships with a commitment to establish one new, visible partnership per year of this plan.
4. Enhance Membership Program through targeted outreach.





# Key Budget Implications

## Year 1–2

West Wing Project is fully funded through City, State, and County grants. Other efforts, including technology upgrades are funded and budgeted with existing funds or annual fundraising efforts. Updated seating in the Planetarium will be funded by a matching grant from NYS Council on the Arts.

## Year 2–3

New West Wing landscaping and restoration to Glenview is fully funded through a Westchester County grant. Other funding and budgeting will be part of the normal budgeting process.

## Years 1–3

The HRM's Mellon Interpretive Fellow will be fully funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation via the Museum's partnership with Sarah Lawrence College.

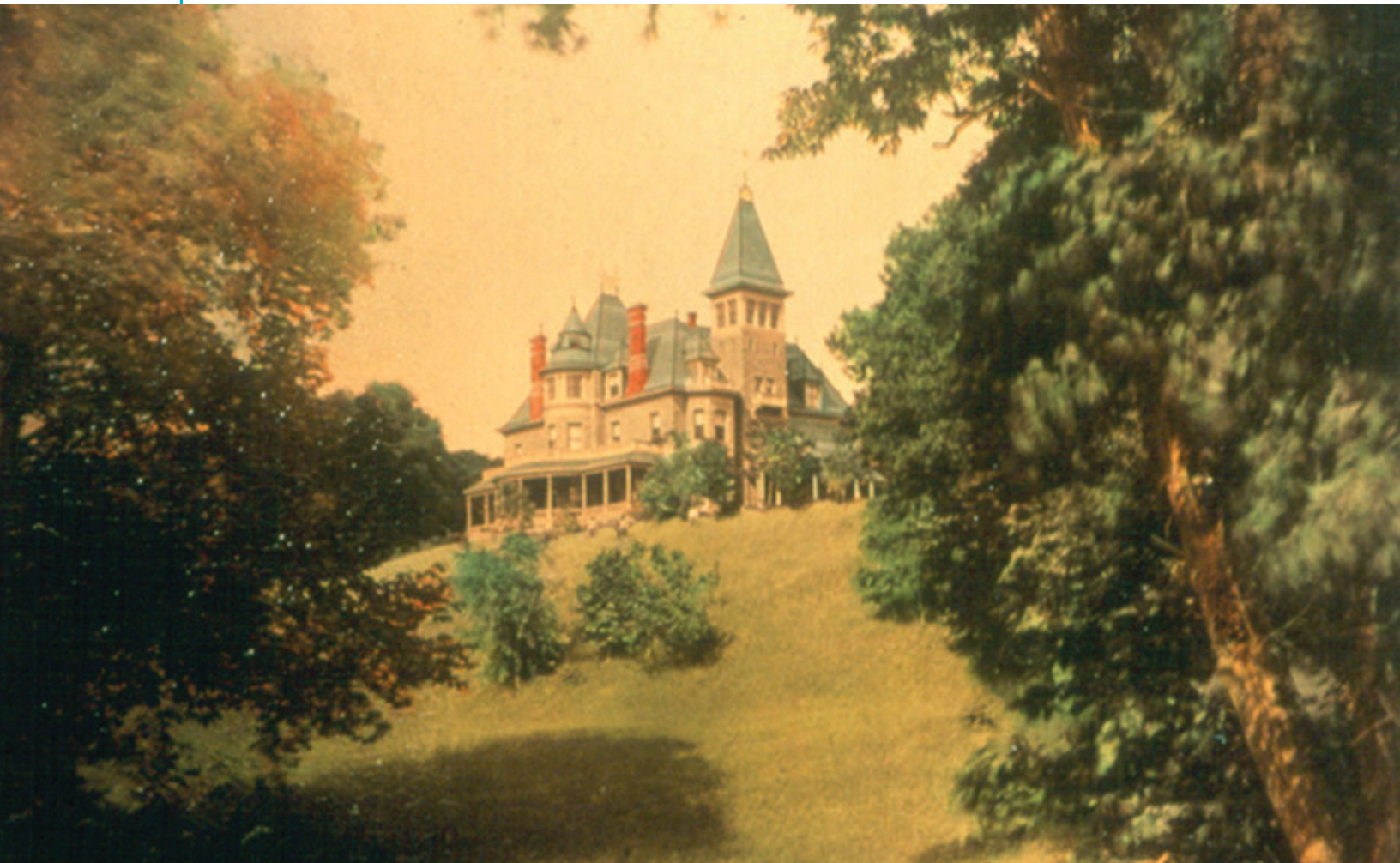
Throughout the course of this plan, exhibition and program funding will be secured through grants, gifts, endowment dispersals, gala benefits, exhibition travel opportunities, and board support. Funding will be incrementally set aside for costs related to the comprehensive documentation of the collection. Our feasibility study for the tentatively titled "The Next Century" campaign will further determine our fundraising goals. Other efforts will be part of the normal budgeting process.



# History

The Museum was founded in 1919 with the support of a group of local citizens and artists known as the Yonkers Art Association. Two of the members were Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr., a titan of late nineteenth and early twentieth century photography, and sculptor Isidore Konti; both went on to serve as the Museum's founding commissioners. The Yonkers Museum, its name in 1919, began as a collection of minerals donated by Yonkers attorney Edwin C. Mott, which were first displayed in Yonkers City Hall. Under Mott's leadership, the collection grew rapidly—after just two years the Museum expanded its plans to include an exhibition of artworks.

In 1924, with the support of the Yonkers Art Association, the Museum was moved to Glenview, a Gilded Age mansion purchased by the City of Yonkers. Glenview was the home of the late Wall Street financier John Bond Trevor; the family owned it for 45 years. The home, which was completed in 1877, was designed by architect Charles W. Clinton, who designed many notable buildings, including the Seventh Regiment Armory, also known as the Park Avenue Armory, in Manhattan.





In this new home, the Museum, renamed the Yonkers Museum of Sciences and Arts, attracted a steady stream of visitors from Yonkers and the surrounding area. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, significant new donations of American art, including Jasper F. Cropsey's painting *The Narrows at Lake George*, 1888, as well as robust science and art education programs, attracted enthusiastic audiences. As a sign of deepening ties to the region, the Museum changed its name to the Hudson River Museum of Yonkers in 1948. A few years later, in 1956, a Planetarium was installed in Glenview, which demonstrated the Museum's commitment to advancing public understanding of the cosmos.

In need of more exhibition space, the Museum opened a modern wing in 1969—a Brutalist-style building designed by architect Richard Kaeyer of Sherwood, Mills and Smith—with 15,000 square feet of gallery space and a new, state-of-the-art Planetarium. The Museum was first accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1974, a mark of excellence we have retained ever since. With Glenview approaching 100 years old and exhibition galleries in the new building, the Museum began to curate period rooms to showcase its significant collections of late nineteenth-century decorative arts.

In 1979, renowned Pop artist Red Grooms created *The Bookstore*, a dazzling sculpto-pictorama installation that deftly joins two favorite haunts of New York City book lovers—the Isaac Mendoza Book Company and the Pierpont Morgan Library—into a work of art. *The Bookstore* served as the Museum's gift shop for the next 30 years. After extensive conservation, it was reinstalled in its own gallery in 2008; visitors can experience the piece there today.

The Museum drew closer to the community in the 1980s by offering nearby magnet schools curriculum-based programming that has only deepened with the years. We also began training local citizens to help interpret the Museum (renamed the Hudson River Museum of Westchester) for visitors of all ages. The Docent Program was formed—a rigorous program that trains adults to give guided tours of the collection and special exhibitions. The Program is an integral part of the Museum today with more than 40 active docents.

In 1995, we began teaching critical thinking and interpretation skills in the context of the Museum to Yonkers high school students in the Junior Docent Program. To date, nearly 500 young adults have graduated from the program, equipped with a deeper understanding of the arts and sciences, and the necessary communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills to succeed in college and the workplace.

A magnificently restored Glenview reopened to the public in 1999. The enormous, multi-year effort, which reproduced the mansion's original grandeur inside and out, received the National Victorian Society in America Award for historic preservation in 2001. In 2003, Hudson Riverama opened—a multimedia environmental teaching gallery about the history and ecosystem of the Hudson River. Central to the installation is a three-dimensional topographical model of the river that enables visitors to locate natural and man-made landmarks.



The Museum expanded its programming to include free performances of music, drama, and dance when, in the summer of 2013, we opened our 400-seat Amphitheater. The outdoor shows are an exuberant gift to the community that we've been able to offer every summer since. Stargazers were (and still are) awed by the Museum's upgraded full-dome digital Planetarium, rededicated in 2014, which can project up to 20 million stars.

Today, the permanent collection contains nearly 18,000 objects, and the Museum actively collects works by a range of American artists from the 19th century to present day, which continue to expand our ability to reflect the diverse nature of our audience, region, and nation. Significant artists represented include Hudson River School painters James Renwick Brevoort, Samuel Colman, Jasper F. Cropsey, and Asher B. Durand, and such notable artists as Georgia O'Keeffe, Red Grooms, Paul Manship, George Segal, Hiram Powers, and Sylvia Sleigh. Recent acquisitions include works by Derrick Adams, Ebony Bolt, Raul Caracoza, and Robert Zakanitch. Prints, archival material, and ephemera documenting the Hudson River Valley and local and regional history comprise a significant holding of the Museum. The decorative arts collections—furniture, ceramics, glass, silver, costumes, textiles, etc.—primarily date to the Gilded Age, when the Trevor family resided in Glenview.

The HRM recognizes that the history and population of Yonkers, Westchester County, and the Hudson Valley is rich and diverse. It is a core value of the institution to connect to the communities that surround and support us, and ensure that people see themselves reflected, in numerous manifestations, in our galleries. Therefore, we seek to collect and preserve diverse cultural artifacts and lift up marginalized histories. Through our work, we are committed to understanding and sharing a fuller story about who we are, where we come from, and what we want for a better, more just society for all.

In Fall 2020, the Museum broke ground on its long-awaited West Wing strategic capital improvement project. Made possible by funding totaling 12.28M from Westchester County, the City of Yonkers, and New York State, the project includes much-needed improvements including, for the first time: dedicated special exhibition galleries with exhilarating views; a sculpture court; a 100-seat, tiered, ADA-compliant auditorium; necessary art storage space; and a climate control system. All of these improvements will allow the Museum to organize and present cutting-edge exhibitions. The project will also allow the Museum to display and interpret far more of its permanent collection while ensuring proper storage and safekeeping of the Museum's repository of cultural heritage.

Designed by Archimuse, a New York-based architectural firm, the West Wing project expands the Museum from approximately 40,000 to 52,000 square feet while seamlessly integrating the enhancements with the existing Museum campus, including its center Courtyard and the view of the Hudson River and Palisades. The West Wing is the culmination of a multi-phased Master Plan begun in 2002, in which capital improvements were made to the Museum's entrance and lobby, the creation of a new education center and a 400-seat outdoor amphitheater, as well as critically needed updates to exhibition galleries and a new special events space.



The new galleries will include a stunning new Community and Partnership gallery for displays that will feature local and emerging artists, including work by artists-in-residence, community collaborations, and partnerships with schools.

Subsequent phases of the project will address restoration of the exterior of Glenview, the Museum's prominent nineteenth-century home on the National Register of Historic Places, and a much-needed new roof for the existing 1969 building. An exterior study of the necessary work has been completed by historic restoration specialists Stephen Tilly & Associates.

Today, the Hudson River Museum is known for imaginative, thought-provoking exhibitions of contemporary and historical art, its evolving permanent collection and ongoing restoration and interpretation of Glenview Mansion, groundbreaking exhibits about regional history, and hands-on art and science programs for all ages. We are proud to give back to and be an active member of the community in which we have thrived. We invite all to come make waves with us and experience the power of art, science, and history.



Visitors and staff interact with Barkley L. Hendricks' *Brenda P.*, on loan from Art Bridges.