

Grounds For Sculpture - Strategic Vision 2018-2028

Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) is in a period of significant transition, building on a sound and vibrant foundation of success over the last 25 years. A strategic planning process has resulted in a long-term vision that sets our aspirations to be a leader, magnet and vibrant forum that invites a diverse public to create, learn, and discover personal meaning in their interactions with art, nature and one another. Our plan identifies key strategic priorities (Impact, Relevance & Capacity) that will drive the next 3-5 years of work toward our larger vision.

GFS seeks to be inclusive, reflective, and responsive to the dynamic world we live in. The potential power of this aspiration was driven home during the planning process by a concurrent exhibition, *Joyce J. Scott: Harriet Tubman and Other Truths*. The exhibit helped us to imagine other future opportunities to be more explicit about our commitment to diversity and inclusion at all levels, and to reach out to individuals, families, and groups who might otherwise not be served by our offerings. This work has moved our Board to articulate and commit deeply to values and goals of relevance, social impact, responsiveness, inclusion, diversity (among our Board, collection, artists, staff, volunteers) in a remarkable way. It has enabled us to see and feel what we can do if we fully commit to these values.

We plan to expand and deepen our impact by growing as a cultural hub in the region. We will focus on deepening our engagement with, and providing meaningful encounters for, all our visitors. We will expand our educational reach and maximize our role as a leading cultural organization in NJ. Growth will be strategically paced to balance our capacity with demand and financial viability.

VISION

GFS is a leader, a creative magnet and vibrant space that invites a diverse public to create, learn, and discover personal meaning in their interactions with art, artists, nature and one another.

MISSION

GFS combines art and beckoning spaces to welcome, surprise and engage all visitors in the artist's act of invention.

WE BELIEVE ...

- visiting an oasis of beauty, where art and imaginatively landscaped gardens awaken the senses, enhances well-being, and stimulates reflection.
- the experience and discovery of art in nature is transformative.
- the visual arts should reflect the complex and dynamic world around us, inspiring essential conversations and understandings.
- in artists' abilities to envision anew, challenge perceptions and inspire; we support them in taking ambitious next steps in their creative process.
- in a democratizing approach to art in which novice and connoisseur are equally at home.
- in a culture of inclusion that reaches out and warmly welcomes in.
- that curiosity, discovery, and playfulness have and will continue to guide our work.
- in a culture of imagination, innovation and forward thinking.
- that as a museum we have the responsibility to serve as a platform, convener and bridge within and among our communities.
- in nurturing imagination by connecting people with art, artists, and the creative process.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Impact

Expand and deepen our influence by securing GFS as a vital cultural hub.

- We will reinforce the centrality of meaningful engagement with artists, artwork and nature by maintaining our commitment to our audience and building upon our model of multi-generational visitor experience.
- We will strategically prioritize exhibitions and acquisitions that advance contemporary sculpture in the 21st century, opening up new avenues of artistic medium, process, content, and audience development.
- We will actively embrace our promise to be an educational resource for visitors of all ages and abilities, continually innovating our experiential offerings.
- We will leverage the experience of art and nature to improve individual health and well-being.
- We will expand our external influence by serving as leaders, conveners and advocates on the local, national and international levels, sharing our model of accessibility.

Relevance

Ensure that we evolve to reflect the dynamic world in which we live.

- We will ensure that GFS is representative of, and informed and strengthened by its ever more diverse surrounding region. We will work aggressively to achieve diversity and inclusion among our Board, staff, volunteers, artists and visitors.
- We will strengthen our work through collaboration and partnerships connecting meaningfully with, and authentically serving, an audience that is reflective of our region, while deepening relationships with our visitors and supporters.
- We will anticipate and enlist the next generation of visitors, supporters, and artists to assure the continued vibrancy of GFS.
- We will embrace evolving technologies that advance our priorities while retaining the essential visceral experience of GFS.

Capacity

Increase our capacity to deliver upon our vision strategically and sustainably.

- We will grow and manage our resources (endowment, reserves, donors, earned revenue and audience) to support GFS strategic priorities and the Founder's vision.
- We will maximize, leverage and capitalize on existing physical, financial, intellectual and programmatic assets to meet and expand demand.
- We will continuously seek and use data to evaluate our work against clearly articulated goals, undergird planning, and measure our impact.
- We will prioritize the efficient investment of time and resources to achieve sustainable pacing and high quality in our activities, recognizing the necessity to make focused trade-off decisions to increase our impact.
- We will pursue environmental sustainability and efficiency throughout the grounds.

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: *To manage ongoing decision-making responsibly*

- What is the big idea? So, what?
- Why here? Why now? Why us?
- Who cares?
- Who can help us with this?
- Which strategic priorities does this advance?
- What will success look like?
- What are our tradeoffs? What will we need to stop doing or perhaps lose to take advantage of this new opportunity with quality?

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2017 Grounds for Sculpture committed to develop a new plan that would set out the strategic vision for the next ten years of our work. The process began with a rewriting of the mission statement, led by a subcommittee of the board's Governance Committee. The new mission statement was approved by the board in March 2017. Over the course of the year our Strategic Planning Committee met regularly to craft a 10+ year vision that sets aspirations for our future evolution, while identifying key strategic priorities that will drive the next 3-5 years of our work. The process was informed by series of parallel research projects including, the American Alliance of Museums - Museum Assessment Program (MAP), a semester long innovative business analysis done in partnership with the University of Philadelphia's Strategic Design MBA program, and a full day workshop applying Clayton Christensen's "Jobs to be Done" theory led by Innosight, a growth strategy consulting firm. The process was intentionally inclusive and facilitated by a consultant, Nadya K. Shmavonian, who brought a wealth of experience to us. She has previously held senior leadership roles at the Rockefeller Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Center for Effective Philanthropy, among others. Nadya conducted interviews with all trustees and senior staff, and key members of the Johnson family foundation. The staff and board imagined 'big', reflecting our ambition to be a leader in the arts community, and to increase GFS's impact and leadership in both art and horticulture.

Strategic Planning Committee

Nancy Kieling, Board Secretary, Strategic Planning Committee Chair

Gary Garrido Schneider, Executive Director

Nadya K. Shmavonian, Consultant / Facilitator

Eric Ryan, President

Barbara Lawrence, Vice-President

Marco Cucchi, Treasurer

Ilana Gutierrez, Trustee

Penelope Lattimer, Ph.D, Trustee

Barry Zhang, Trustee

Heather Brady, Director of Education and Engagement

Rhonda Dimascio, Director of Development

Coby Green-Rifkin, Director of Marketing Communications

Rob Gross, Chief Financial Officer

Tom Moran, Chief Curator

* Adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 9, 2018