National Building Museum Strategic Plan 2025-2028

NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

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April 24, 2025

From the President & Executive Director

This moment is an inflection point—for the world, and for the National Building Museum. As we share our Strategic Plan, we pause to reflect on who we are, why this moment matters, where we are heading, and how this plan will guide our next chapter. This plan is more than a roadmap—it is a commitment to our mission, our community, and the future of the built environment.

Who We Are and Why Now Matters

The National Building Museum is a unique cultural institution rooted in Washington, DC, with a reach that extends throughout the nation and beyond. We serve as a storyteller, convener, and catalyst working at the intersection of architecture, engineering, construction, community and design. Our purpose—to inspire curiosity about the built environment and empower people to shape a better world—has never been more vital.

The ways we live, build, and connect are evolving rapidly. From climate adaptation and housing insecurity to urbanization, technology and innovation, the built environment plays a central role in addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time. In this context, the Museum's role as a public educator and cultural touchstone is more urgent—and more promising—than ever before.

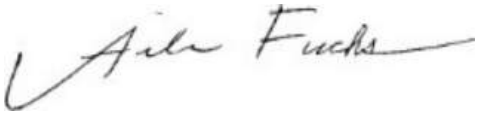
Where We Are Going

Over the next three years, the National Building Museum will expand its impact and deepen its relevance. We will become a must-see destination for families, students, and visitors seeking inspiration through world-class exhibitions and programs. We will be a trusted partner to the architecture, engineering, and construction industries—offering a platform for dialogue, discovery, and collective vision. The Museum will be recognized as a formative influence in the careers of emerging professionals, a leader in national conversations about the built world, and a driving force in the cultural and economic revitalization of Downtown DC. Through vibrant in person and digital experiences, we will reach audiences across the country and around the globe.

How This Plan Will Get Us There

This Strategic Plan outlines a clear set of priorities and actions to realize our 3+-year vision. It reflects the insights of our staff, partners, and community—and is grounded in our mission and values. We have already begun aligning goals and resources to support this work. With focus, creativity, and collaboration, we will advance our role as a cultural institution that doesn't just reflect the world we build—but helps shape it.

Sincerely,



Aileen Fuchs
President & Executive Director

2025 - 2028 Strategic Priorities

1

Mission & Impact Clarity

We have a clear vision around why the National Building Museum exists, what we do, who we serve, and how we achieve the Museum's mission.

2

Programming & Exhibitions

We deliver intentional, relevant, innovative, and engaging programs, exhibitions, and activations that advance the Museum's mission and serve our audience.

3

Enhanced Visitor Experience

The Museum is a "must-see, must do" destination for locals and tourists who come to experience world-class exhibitions, the wonder of the Great Hall, the high caliber of programming, and to shop, dine, and play.

4

Sustainable Future

The Museum's financial model is nimble while providing stability, predictability, and a roadmap for capitalizing on growth opportunities

5

Operational Excellence

We are a high-performing team, working efficiently and collaboratively with strong systems and processes.

Mission & Impact Clarity

We have a clear vision around why the National Building Museum exists, what we do, who we serve, and how we achieve the Museum's mission.

OBJECTIVE 1
Revise the existing mission to one that is clear, concise, universally understood, and reflective of our institutional identity.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Growth in audience engagement metrics
- Increase in earned media coverage

OBJECTIVE 2
Expand and Define audience, enabling us to understand who they are and how to target them.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Adoption of audience segmentation framework

OBJECTIVE 3
Develop and implement a robust communications strategy that authentically reflects the Museum's mission, values, and unique identity as a convener and storyteller about "The World We Design & Build."

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Internal & external survey results


Great Movies in the Great Hall


Institutions anchoring community
from bricks to clicks


University of Arkansas Community Design Center
Fayetteville, Arkansas
ARCHITECTUREFIRM


1 hour commute
30-minute commute
15-minute commute
City center

Programing & Exhibitions

We deliver intentional, relevant, innovative, and engaging programs, exhibitions, and activations that advance the Museum's mission and serve our audience.

OBJECTIVE 1
Put the "National" in National Building Museum.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Number of national partnerships or collaborations
- Increase in national or out-of-region memberships & ticket sales

OBJECTIVE 2
Adopt a programmatic Great Hall activation strategy that advances institutional identity, grows audience, and drives revenue.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Earned revenue attributed to GH
- Visitor satisfaction specific to GH

OBJECTIVE 3
Define and articulate a multi-year exhibitions and programming strategy inclusive of a more formalized and transparent selection and approval process.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Internal Stakeholder satisfaction based on survey results

OBJECTIVE 4
Ensure increased access to the Museum's collections through ongoing cataloguing, interpretation, and display.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Online access data (page views, searches, downloads, etc)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Enhanced Visitor Experience

The Museum is a “must-see, must do” destination for locals and tourists who come to experience world-class exhibitions, the wonder of the Great Hall, the high caliber of programming, and to shop, dine, and play.

OBJECTIVE 1
Dedicate resources to professionalize the guest experience through enhanced training for front-line staff and volunteers.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Guest satisfaction scores related to helpfulness, courtesy, and knowledge

OBJECTIVE 2
Leverage technology by using digital tools and platforms available to enhance the visitor experience and reach a wider audience.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Growth in virtual visitation
- Enhanced digital/tech in exhibitions

OBJECTIVE 3
Revitalize the space, concentrating on the Great Hall, to make the visitor experience more cohesive, delightful, and engaging.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Project completions
- Increase in guest satisfaction with wayfinding, overall experience

OBJECTIVE 4
Create a 3-year plan for Food & Beverage and Retail, which includes customer experience, revenue generation, overall design, and West Lawn activation.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Revenue growth from F&B and retail YOY


PENSION BUILD


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Sustainable Future

The Museum's financial model is nimble while providing stability, predictability, and a roadmap for capitalizing on growth opportunities

OBJECTIVE 1
Right-size the Museum's financial model based on evaluation and assessment of organizational design and income potential.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Completion of financial model evaluation with actionable recommendations

OBJECTIVE 2
Grow reserves to at least six months of operating expenses.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Months of operating expenses covered by reserves

OBJECTIVE 3
Increase financial analysis capabilities and literacy across the organization.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- % of department heads trained in budget management

OBJECTIVE 4
Optimize all revenue streams, utilizing deep analysis of revenue potential and vulnerabilities.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Comprehensive revenue stream analysis with risk profile
- Revenue diversification index

Operational Excellence

We are a high-performing team, working efficiently and collaboratively with strong systems and processes.

OBJECTIVE 1
Achieve Board excellence through recruitment, retention, and development of nationally recognized leaders.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Board composition & retention metrics

OBJECTIVE 2
Create an atmosphere of transparent communication, community, and collaboration that results in a high-performing team with strong job satisfaction.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Employee satisfaction/NPS scores

OBJECTIVE 3
Advance operational technology infrastructure by addressing business systems, hardware and software opportunities, and project management capabilities**.**

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Staff satisfaction with key tool & programs

OBJECTIVE 4
Strengthen efficiency for Operations and Exhibitions staff by optimizing space allocation and utilization throughout the building.

→ **MEASURING IMPACT**
- Completion of space needs assessments & implementation roadmap
- Staff satisfaction with workspace, storage, and functionality

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The world we design & build.