

A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a person with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on a yellow wooden stool, facing away from the camera. They are looking towards a circular stone fountain with water spraying upwards. The fountain has a bronze statue of a figure on top. In the background, there are several people sitting on the grass, some under a large tree. A parking lot with several cars is visible in the distance. The sky is blue with some clouds.

WMA Strategic Plan

The Way Ahead

2023-2025

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Your 2023-2025 Strategic Plan – You’ve Already Begun

This strategic plan is designed as a 3-year plan, within the framework of a 10-year vision. The goal of this plan is to ensure WMA meets several milestones within the short-term period that are “dominoes” critical to the success of the long-term vision. We live in a rapidly changing and uncertain world, so this plan can and will evolve, but it should evolve strategically, deliberately, and with intention. Goals can shift more easily depending on how circumstances change; changes to priorities should receive careful consideration and deliberation—always with the end result in mind.

From WMA's Leadership

As the leading visual arts organization in the region, WMA actively builds a richer, more inclusive place to live, work, and learn in the Wiregrass. We believe that 'art elevates the everyday', a concept that embodies the importance of observing, practicing, and appreciating creativity in the everyday. As the museum embarks on its 35th year anniversary, we are inspired by the vision of our founders and early supporters as we develop a plan for the next 35 years!

This is a transformative time for WMA, and an opportunity to expand our reach, influence, and service to the Wiregrass community and larger Southeastern region. Since 1987, WMA has evolved from a pop-up art exhibition in a commercial mall space into an active, vibrant museum with a focus on Contemporary Art and a dedication to elevating the educational opportunities of the area. As we continue to welcome tens of thousands of visitors each year, we can clearly see the long-term impact of the museum's presence in the Wiregrass. As we look forward to our monumental anniversary, we are taking steps to improve and ensure the continued pursuit of lifelong learning, community-building, and cultural sharing by pursuing national accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).

This Strategic Plan was updated in consideration of WMA's vision of accreditation in the next 10 years, and sets a 3 year strategy to lay the foundation for which that will be possible. WMA's board and staff worked closely with stakeholders and community partners in developing this plan and we're excited to expand our work in a way that continues to serve the public in the best ways possible. The museum is a platform for artists to tell their stories, and is a community gathering space where cultural sharing is encouraged among residents and visitors in the region. By providing access to art as well as enriching arts education for all ages, WMA cultivates openness to new ideas, and a sense of cultural identity and belonging. With this creative spirit, we will continue to rise to meet the needs of our local community, now and in the future. And we will continue to build on our successes to earn a national reputation in the art and museum fields for innovative and diverse storytelling through exhibitions, and meaningful engagement with the public.

Our bold vision for the future is exciting and attainable! Once achieved, accreditation opens doors of opportunity for WMA to access art and artists



from major institutions across the country, expand educational initiatives, and strategic partnerships, elevating the Wiregrass as a national destination. As we work towards the goals outlined in this Strategic Plan, our standards of excellence drive our commitment to support the art and artists of our time, inspiring creativity and innovation, making us the catalyst for Dothan's transformation through the arts.

We see the power of art at work at WMA and in our community everyday. We hope that you'll join WMA in elevating the arts across the Wiregrass to ensure a rich and vibrant future for all.

We hope to see you at the museum soon and often!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Collins Trott".

Collins Trott
President, WMA Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana-Marie Lemmer".

Dana-Marie Lemmer
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

For 35 years, with the support of the Board of Trustees, Staff, founding members, the City of Dothan, volunteers and visitors, and artists, WMA has maintained a commitment to our mission, values, and evolving vision based on the core belief that access to the visual arts can transform our community into a better place to live, work, and learn.

Our Mission

The Wiregrass Museum of Art inspires a lifelong appreciation for the visual arts by providing innovative educational programs that engage diverse audiences through the collection and exhibition of quality works.

Our Vision

As a cultural anchor and visible symbol of excellence in the Wiregrass, the Wiregrass Museum of Art uses Contemporary art to inspire creativity and create community for visitors of every age and background, inviting them to explore themselves and the world around them by engaging in the lifelong learning experiences provided by the Museum. WMA leads the regional conversation and joins a national dialogue on the importance of the visual arts to both individual and community well-being.

Our Values

Power of Art / Inspiration / Creativity

We believe in the transformative experience of art and are dedicated to providing our audience with exceptional experiences of direct contact with unique objects and works of art through access to our collections and diverse exhibition schedule. These works of art are at the core of the museum's identity.

Integrity

We believe that we are accountable for the care and preservation of the collections and all objects entrusted to us. We stand for our values in making difficult decisions and will maintain accountability to our donors through good stewardship of donations and generous giving.

Excellence and Leadership/Professionalism

We believe in treating all visitors and colleagues with respect and will strive for best practices in all we do. Creative expression is central to how we plan, teach, and face adversity.

Excellence in Education

We believe in a welcoming environment for all to learn. We will provide life-changing educational experiences through research and direct interactions with visual art. We will encourage lifelong learning and a diverse student body to express new and challenging ideas at every age.



WHERE WE'RE GOING

As we look forward, we constantly reflect on the vision of our founding members and supporters, who knew that introducing art into the everyday lives of Wiregrass residents would improve our community. Building on that foundation, WMA's Board of Trustees have an ambitious vision for the future that fully realizes this dream of making Dothan and the Wiregrass a better place to live, work, and learn – all through the transformative power of art.

We have developed an ambitious 10-year vision that will transform WMA, how it contributes to Dothan, the larger Wiregrass Region, and how it is perceived beyond the Region. By 2032, WMA will be a nationally accredited museum with a modern facility that attracts visitors locally, regionally, and nationally and that continues to showcase diverse, Contemporary art. WMA's reputation for excellence will be well-known, and together with our partners, we will be a leader in developing events and programs that attract visitors to our area to experience all that WMA has to offer. WMA will promote our tri-state area as one that is rich with culture, talented artists, and a commitment to innovative educational experiences.

Art elevates the everyday. WMA imbues art in everyday life and sparks creativity and lifelong learning from the youngest to the oldest visitors. WMA offers a wide array of programming – exhibitions, educational programs and outreach, and events – that both inspires and challenges. With a traditional, object-based approach, WMA is unique in its people-centric planning and priority, posing questions that seek to elevate the human experience. WMA programs and foundation in arts education help visitors to see the world from different perspectives and this openness to new ideas is recognized as a vital element in developing a healthy, thriving community. A visit to WMA helps others to better understand themselves and the world around them.



The Collection sparks the conversation. As we plan for the decade ahead, WMA's Permanent Collection plays a central role in the development of the Museum's mission and approach to education. In 2032, WMA's Collection is understood thematically and is professionally managed with a narrative that residents of the Wiregrass can embrace and be proud of. WMA will have an ongoing plan for preservation, acquisitions, exhibitions, and interpretation for the Collection with adequate resources to support this activity. WMA's Collection will shape a distinctive brand identity that communicates our understanding of WMA internally, and others' understanding of what WMA is, externally.

WMA welcomes the world. WMA is already a place of convening for our community. The Museum of the future will include a facility that serves as an expanded community hub and gathering place that is accessible to all and inclusive of everyone. A sense of warm welcome is embedded into the foundation and design of a new museum facility, making WMA a place to visit for quiet moments of appreciation, reflection, and inspiration during a busy day. In 2032, WMA is also well-known across the Wiregrass region for its programmatic offerings and multi-day events. Newcomers to the area hear about WMA within the first months of arrival as the "place to go" and certain events are highlighted as "must do" annual events for the Region. WMA has a reputation for excellence that burnishes Dothan's growing reputation as a destination for the arts.

OUR CHALLENGES

This is a remarkable time for Dothan and for the Wiregrass region at-large. Changes and innovations in technology mean that people, including young professionals, can work from anywhere—and locations like Dothan are increasingly seen as an option where people can build a career, raise a family, or retire in comfort – and still enjoy the amenities of good food, good company, and elevated arts experiences. The Wiregrass Museum of Art aims to be a primary player in a bright future for our community; however, two primary challenges must be addressed to achieve our vision for WMA and for our community.

Our Home. WMA has a bold and ambitious vision for how we will engage our community in lifelong learning in a way that is welcoming to everyone; that experience starts with our Museum home. While the existing facility has been a wonderful place to introduce the Wiregrass region to Contemporary visual arts, it is not a location that will allow WMA to serve more people as we look to the future. As a professional museum and as stewards of significant cultural objects held in the public trust, WMA has a responsibility to protect and preserve the art entrusted to WMA's Collection. Our current facility is no longer sufficient to meet the required standards of care.

This deficit also creates an impassable barrier to achieving our goals for national accreditation, a foundational pillar that supports our drive for excellence and that will elevate WMA to the high standards met by every other professional art museum in the state of Alabama. Additionally, the current space does not allow us the flexibility to be creative in how we think about exhibition design or event engagement and does not allow for growth in our educational programs which are at the core of how we engage our community. WMA requires a purpose-built space designed to achieve our strategic goal to double the number of visitors we serve and to quadruple the number of students and teachers we support. For these reasons, WMA must secure a new home – one that will enable us to grow in ways that meet present needs, and to be proactive in responding to those needs that will arise in the future.



OUR CHALLENGES

Engagement & Sustainability. Our founding Board, members, and supporters had a dream for what a meaningful Contemporary art museum could add to the Wiregrass community, and our vision will carry that forward to the next generation in a way that demonstrates excellence for Dothan and the Wiregrass region. Inherent in our vision for a successful future is one that is resourced to grow as Dothan grows, and one that will serve more students, more residents, and that will attract more visitors. Vibrant, livable cities include important cultural amenities and WMA is a vital cornerstone of this for the Wiregrass.

For WMA to grow with confidence, we will transform how we engage with our community – at home and beyond. WMA already delivers excellence in its exhibitions, artist engagement, and lifelong learning experiences; however, WMA is challenged with a lack of corresponding community awareness of current programmatic offerings and the quality of work the museum offers. We aim to change this with an extensive communications campaign that expands local and regional awareness of the Museum's mission, the programs we offer, and the exhibitions we host. Coupled with our ambitious goal of achieving accreditation within the next 10 years with a new facility, we strive to double our annual reach from 28,000 to 56,000 and increase the number of students we serve by almost four-fold, with a goal of serving 10,000 students annually.

Securing the support necessary for a new facility, the resources to meet the challenge of accreditation, and the desire to increase our impact means that WMA must increase its fundraising operations in a significant way. We believe we have a strong case for support and clear funding priorities: a new home for the Museum, additional staff to support growth, and an endowment that will ensure the Museum is future-proof and recession-resistant. Our community deserves big ideas and bold dreams, and to satisfy this need, we must achieve elevated funding that will fuel this progress. With the appropriate resources and purposeful facility, a nationally accredited WMA will contribute in a meaningful way to developing a comprehensive vision for an active and revitalized downtown Dothan.



THE WAY AHEAD: OUR PRIORITIES 2023 - 2025

This strategic plan commits us to expanding our identity as a professional art museum by harnessing the power of our Collection, envisioning a new and creative space as our home, and increasing our impact during a time of both extraordinary opportunities and challenges.

Our goals for WMA leverage our unique strengths and align with the goals for growth and development in our city. WMA is committed to being a positive part of the dialogue which seeks to grow our city and region. WMA has a unique role to play in positioning Dothan as a city that can offer it all.

Over the next three years, our team of staff, Board members, volunteers, and partners will be intently focused on the following core priorities.

Priority One: Collections + Exhibitions. At the heart of all museums is its Permanent Collection and exhibitions program. Although WMA suffers from a lack of gallery space to adequately display its Collection, the Museum holds important works in its care – including the largest public collection of Frank Stella prints in the State, among internationally known modern printmakers; a collection of Contemporary art from diverse artists across the Southeast; and a growing collection of photography from artists nationwide. With a vibrant exhibitions calendar, WMA has become widely recognized by the Alabama artist community for its willingness to support artists' experimentation, ongoing studio practice, and innovative programming ideas through both creative and financial support. As WMA continues to grow, developing and exhibiting our Permanent Collection becomes essential to our goals for what WMA will be.



- **Goal #1:** Develop a comprehensive plan for the collection that includes assessing, registering, and reporting on the current objects; developing a philosophical approach to the growth of the Permanent Collection that will be a cornerstone of WMA's brand identity. The plan will include tactics that guide deaccessioning, acquisitions, preservation, and exhibitions as well as an updated marketing plan that communicates the Permanent Collection's role and importance in a way that is cohesive and accessible to the public.
- **Goal #2:** Offer a relevant and vibrant exhibition schedule that stimulates new and diverse audiences and promotes ongoing participation from existing members and visitors.
- **Goal #3:** Review the need and develop a policy that clarifies and guides WMA's support of living artists that includes important topics such as W.A.G.E. certification.

THE WAY AHEAD: OUR PRIORITIES 2023 - 2025

Priority Two: WMA Lifelong Learning. Inspiration and creativity are the foundation of WMA's work and are essential elements of a vibrant, thriving community that promotes quality of life for its residents. WMA prioritizes programs that attract a wide array of participants at every age and welcomes individuals from every background. Our programs are designed for toddlers to aging seniors to ensure everyone in our community enjoys the benefits of the transformative power of art. As we look forward to the next three years, we will increase opportunities for teachers in Alabama and will strive to increase our community's commitment to lifelong learning by reducing barriers to participation.

- **Goal #1:** Focus on the complete visitor experience at the museum to engage a wide ranging and diverse audience by developing a comprehensive interpretation plan that includes specific plans for toddlers, families, and seniors.
- **Goal #2:** Expand current programming impact by launching new initiatives that include more participants in groups WMA is already focused on. Examples of this include expanding WMA's impact on students by creating content for homeschooled students and increasing opportunities for adults to participate in hands-on learning.
- **Goal #3:** Leverage strategic partnerships to expand target areas including health and wellness programming, focusing on collaborations with medical training schools and programs for future doctors and nurses.



THE WAY AHEAD: OUR PRIORITIES 2023 - 2025

Priority Three: Engagement + Advancement. This 3-year strategic plan is designed to move the organization towards its 10-year vision to become an accredited museum. In the next three years, WMA must work with the City of Dothan and strategic partners in the region while developing the resources to exist independently as a nationally accredited museum and 501c3 organization. Strategic partnerships and expanded public engagement will increase WMA's impact and position the Museum for a sustainable future.

- **Goal #1:** Accelerate fundraising efforts and results by launching a planned giving initiative while also establishing clear growth targets in all components of annual fundraising: annual giving, corporate giving, and major gifts.
- **Goal #2:** Develop and execute a comprehensive marketing and communication plan that will expand the public's knowledge and awareness of WMA's exhibitions, programs, and events, and that grows WMA's audience of new and repeat visitors and expands WMA's connections with diverse and traditionally underserved communities. WMA will measure success by focusing on specific target audiences, measuring target audience response and growth. The comprehensive marketing plan will establish and track metrics for growth in the areas of membership, online engagement, attendance and participation, and press recognition.
- **Goal #3:** Develop and execute a comprehensive plan for strategic partner advancement that directly serves WMA exhibitions and lifelong learning goals while simultaneously advancing WMA's brand awareness and perception. WMA will build new partnerships that specifically advance the Museum's visiting artist program, move forward our goal for a permanent artist in residency program, grow WMA's commitment to health and wellness, and establishes the foundation for a comprehensive public art program.
- **Goal #4:** WMA will make meaningful steps towards accreditation by (1) completing the core documents verification process with AAM and (2) confirming a path ahead that identifies a new site plan for a new facility for the Museum.



THE WAY AHEAD: OUR PRIORITIES 2023 - 2025

Priority Four: Facility + Operations. In collaboration with the City of Dothan, our members and partners, we will confirm plans for a new facility for the Museum that properly supports our goals for national accreditation, the Permanent Collection and exhibitions growth, and that provides appropriate space for lifelong learning and innovative programs and events. We will do this by optimizing human capital development with our Board, Staff, and Volunteers and streamlining workflows and processes.

- **Goal #1:** Determine the space and building system requirements needed to support accreditation and the Museum's strategic planning goals.
- **Goal #2:** Determine the feasibility for securing a new facility for the Museum by raising \$3 - \$5 million focused on capital building infrastructure development and priorities.
- **Goal #3:** Identify, secure, and announce a location site for the new WMA location.
- **Goal #4:** Confirm a board-approved staffing plan that expands the human resources in key areas aligned with the strategic plan that (1) addresses current gaps and (2) focuses on future growth.
- **Goal #5:** Build the process and human capital infrastructure for a comprehensive campaign that includes new processes for capturing and using data related to donors and prospects, toolkits for board and campaign committee members, and recruitment of potential campaign committee members and/or co-chairs.





wma
wiregrass museum of art