

# Transformation *through* Collaboration



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**STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2020**

## Dear *Friends and Supporters,*

In 1825 a remarkable group of citizens came together to found the Worcester Natural History Society. For nearly 200 years the institution they established has been the source of innovative exhibits, exciting educational programs, and unique experiences that *inspire a passion for science and nature*. Still true to our historic roots, the EcoTarium today welcomes nearly 150,000 visitors annually and is poised for the next stage of its growth.

At the EcoTarium we understand that helping our visitors discover a passion for science and nature can have lasting benefits. We hear countless testimonies from scientists, engineers, veterinarians, researchers and successful people from all walks of life who found their science passion at the EcoTarium's summer camp, as part of a field trip, or on a simple visit with family and friends. As we approach the EcoTarium's Third Century and celebrate the generations of visitors we have inspired, we are also looking to the future as we expand our role to meet the needs of tomorrow's visitors.

Noted museum researchers John Falk and Lynn Dierking, in an article for American Scientist, suggest growing evidence that informal education – education outside the regular school curriculum – is where Americans learn and gain their best understanding of science. A visit to a museum can peak an interest, satisfy a curiosity, and lead to more in-depth learning once they return home. This is particularly true of young children. While schools provide the foundation for a strong formal education in today's critical fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), places like the EcoTarium are increasingly important in encouraging "free-choice learning"; the type of learning that lasts a lifetime and inspires the careers of tomorrow. To prepare for this future, the EcoTarium has adopted our 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan utilizing four thematic strategies to guide us forward:

- ⊗ **Expand our audience and reach by providing substantive, memorable, and accessible experiences**
- ⊗ **Expand our impact locally, regionally, and nationally, collaborating to become a necessary resource**
- ⊗ **Increase and diversify our sources of financial support, strengthening our institution and its economic impact**
- ⊗ **Develop an infrastructure that enables institutional responsiveness and agility**

Through these steps the EcoTarium will achieve our vision of being a national leader in engaging communities with science and nature, and fully enact our mission of inspiring a passion for science and nature to the broadest audience possible.



Joe Cox,  
President



Ray Quinlan,  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020



**OUR MISSION**

To inspire a passion for science and nature

**OUR VISION**

To be a national leader in engaging communities with science and nature

**STRATEGIC GOALS**

**INSTITUTION**

Expand our audience and reach by providing substantive, memorable, and accessible experiences

**COMMUNITY**

Expand our impact locally, regionally, and nationally, collaborating to become a necessary resource

**RESOURCES**

Increase and diversify our sources of financial support, strengthening our institution and its economic impact

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Develop a sustainable infrastructure that enables institutional responsiveness and agility

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Add / enhance guest amenities and experiences, indoors and outdoors
  - 2. Increase accessibility and diversity in all aspects throughout the institution
  - 3. Develop and implement a cohesive institutional Interpretive Plan
- 
- 1. Raise awareness around the importance of science and nature, inspiring deeper engagement
  - 2. Thoughtfully collaborate with organizations that serve our intended and potential audiences
  - 3. Increase visibility and value as a resource through dissemination to the field and our community
  - 4. Be a regional voice for cultural advocacy
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- 1. Sustainably grow and diversify earned revenue
  - 2. Sustainably grow and diversify contributed income
  - 3. Build the endowment through planned giving and other programs
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- 1. Attract, invest in and retain excellent staff, board and volunteers
  - 2. Design, implement and continually improve business processes and systems
  - 3. Develop long-term asset replacement and acquisition plans

## Expand Our Audience

With a campus that covers fifty five acres in the heart of Worcester, we have a unique opportunity to provide an indoor and outdoor experience that captures the imagination of our visitors. To that end, the strategic plan builds on our Exhibit Master Plan to both add new guest experiences and amenities as well as enhance long-time favorites. From our new indoor “City Science” exhibit to the transformative outdoor exhibit, “Wild Cat Station”, we are creating a platform for learning that is innovative.

- ⊗ **Add and enhance guest amenities and experiences, indoors and outdoors**
- ⊗ **Increase accessibility and diversity in all aspects throughout the institution**
- ⊗ **Improve the guest experience by developing a cohesive institutional Interpretive Plan**

We will continue to create engaging educational programs that allow children and their families to learn and discover together.



## Expand Our Impact

Each year thousands of visitors experience the EcoTarium, whether on a field trip, family outing or to attend a special event. While our commitment to Worcester and Central Massachusetts remains strong, the Museum is poised to have an even greater impact locally, regionally and nationally. As the first National Geographic Museum Partner in New England, we recognize the value of building strategic partnerships that will allow us to increase our impact.

- ⊗ **Raise awareness around the importance of science and nature, inspiring deeper engagement**
- ⊗ **Thoughtfully collaborate with organizations that serve our intended and potential audiences**
- ⊗ **Increase visibility and value as a resource through dissemination to the field and our community**
- ⊗ **Be a regional voice for cultural advocacy**

## Increase and Diversify Support

Our community has consistently supported the EcoTarium through ongoing annual support, memberships, Capital Campaigns and our endowment. This strong support, with fiscal oversight by the Board of Trustees, has allowed the EcoTarium to be in a position to better invest in innovation, new opportunities and programs. The goal of this strategic plan is to generate expanded financial resources through both earned revenue and community support.

Our goals include significantly expanding our membership levels, strengthening partnerships with research agencies and leading academic institutions, expanding corporate sponsorships and growing attendance to 200,000 annual visitors by 2020.

- ⊗ **Sustainably grow and diversify earned income**
- ⊗ **Sustainably grow and diversify contributed income**
- ⊗ **Build the endowment through planned giving and other programs**



## Develop a Sustainable Infrastructure

We aim to support the EcoTarium’s goals and strategies by investing in our human resources and facilities, ensuring we have the right people with the right tools to support our mission and vision. We are committed to recruiting strong people in key roles to allow us to create an innovative environment for all.

- ⊗ **Attract, invest in and retain excellent staff, board and volunteers**
- ⊗ **Design, implement and continually improve business processes and systems**
- ⊗ **Develop long-term asset replacement and acquisition plans**



For generations, the EcoTarium has recognized the importance of being a key partner in our community. We will continue to be inclusive and welcoming to all segments of our community. We strive to have our Trustees, staff and audience reflect the diversity of our region including underserved populations and all age groups. Our programs will continue to be accessible and affordable.

## Third Century Campaign: Phase Two

The EcoTarium’s Third Century Plan builds on both our indoor and outdoor experiences, and uses them as a jumping off point for exploring natural and physical sciences. Phase Two of the Third Century Plan builds on the successful completion of Phase One that raised \$8.2 million.

**Phase Two of the Third Century Plan aims to raise \$9.1 million** to strengthen our indoor and outdoor exhibits and programs, bolster our iconic experiences, and inspire a passion for science and nature in future generations of children and their families here in Central Massachusetts and beyond.

- ✳️ **“Wild Cat Station”** will bring mountain lions and other native New England species to the EcoTarium in a spectacular outdoor exhibit.
- ✳️ **“City Science”** is funded in part by the National Science Foundation and introduces us to the urban science that is all around us.
- ✳️ **“Explorer Express”**, our iconic train ride will be renovated.
- ✳️ **“Powering the Future”** allows us to decommission our power plant and build an energy efficient mechanical plant.
- ✳️ **April 2016: To date we have raised \$6.9 million towards our Campaign goal of \$9.1 million**



**PHASE TWO CAMPAIGN**  
Inspiring a Passion for Science & Nature

