



**Great
Lakes**
AQUARIUM



Strategic Plan 2022-2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in December 2021, Great Lakes Aquarium engaged Northspan to conduct a strategic planning process. The process began with the following planned goals:

- Develop a 5-year strategic plan including a practical vision, strategic directions, and action planning to guide its implementation
- Measure projected economic impact on the local economy

During the process, the Great Lakes Aquarium strategy committee defined the following mission, vision, core values, and strategic directions:

VISION:

Leading freshwater conservation by connecting all people to Lake Superior and the world's waters.

MISSION:

To engage and inspire, encouraging stewardship of wildlife and water.

CORE VALUES | WE ARE...

Engaging. We recognize the essential role of being accessible and connecting with Aquarium visitors from all backgrounds. The passion of our staff shines through our work and brings people back to experience the Aquarium time and again.

Sustainable. We are careful stewards of the Aquarium's resources, including both those we need to continue and grow our operations and the natural world around us. We recognize the Aquarium's interconnectedness with our waters and wildlife and seek to model ethical practices in all our work.

Inclusive. We seek to create an environment where everyone who engages with the Aquarium feels welcome and respected. We pursue proactive efforts to increase our reach, particularly with those who have not historically experienced everything the Aquarium has to offer.

Educational. We strive to give all who engage with the Aquarium opportunities to gain new insights into the world around them. We collaborate across boundaries to explore our environments and share messages that embody our mission and vision

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

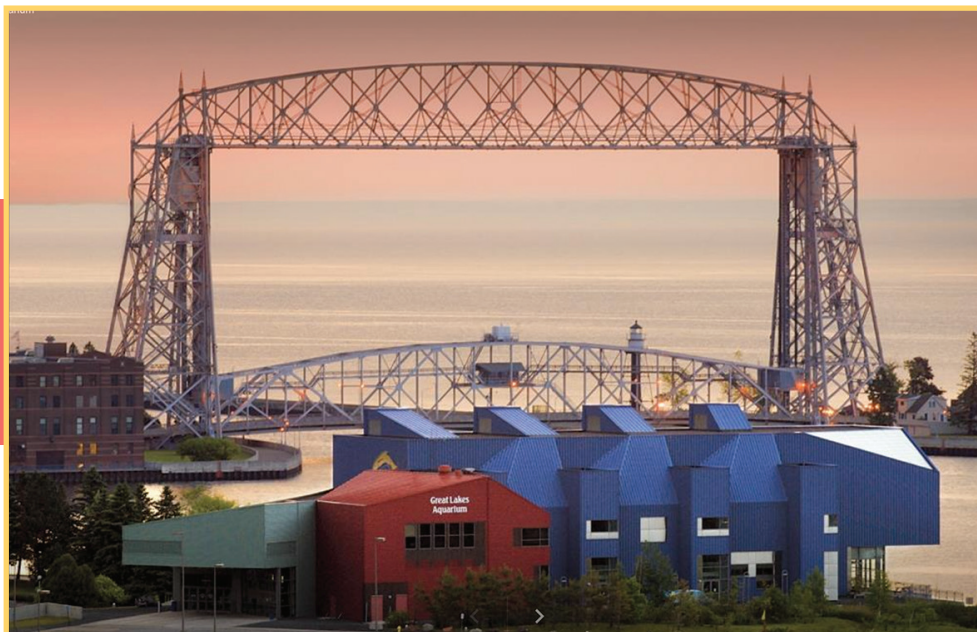
1. Expanding Resources to Empower Staff
2. Evolving Exhibits and Programs to Engage and Educate Visitors
3. Engaging Community to Broaden Influence
4. Developing Consistent, Stable Funding to Maintain Operational Capacity
5. Catalyzing Individual and Community Conservation Action
6. Fostering Governmental Relationships to Initiate Growth Campaign

OVERVIEW

Great Lakes Aquarium is a nonprofit organization based in Duluth, Minnesota. It has its origins in the Lake Superior Center, which formed in 1989 to provide freshwater education, and opened its facility on the Duluth harbor in 2000. Many of its exhibits focus on Great Lakes and freshwater ecosystems, though it also includes several global galleries and provides extensive educational programming. Each year, it welcomes over 150,000 visitors, dozens of school groups, and thousands of guests for special events.

The Aquarium last created a comprehensive strategic plan in 2012, though it has since developed and executed a three-year plan for 2015-2018 and one-year plans for 2019, 2020, and 2021. The organization has undergone multiple leadership changes over this time period, and it also endured the dramatic disruptions of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, which forced it to effectively abandon its one-year plan. GLA began 2021 concerned it would experience another challenging year, but it bounced back with strong visitation levels. Partway through the year, its leadership team recognized the need for a new strategic plan as it settled into its new reality.

In December 2021, GLA engaged Northspan to facilitate its strategic plan. It developed a strategy committee that included its 13-member board and 11 GLA staff members. Background efforts included a stakeholder engagement survey, a survey of staff and the strategy committee, and research on several comparison aquariums. It also included demographic and economic analysis of the Duluth area to provide context on the environment in which GLA operates and an analysis of the Aquarium's economic impact. The process included a stakeholder engagement session and four strategic planning workshops in February through April, and it went to the GLA board for approval in June. The new strategic plan seeks to bring together many of the Aquarium's activities behind a common vision, mission, and core values and provide concrete, measurable steps with which to make the vision a reality.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

VISION:

Leading freshwater conservation by connecting all people to Lake Superior and the world's waters.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Expanding Resources to Empower Staff
2. Evolving Exhibits and Programs to Engage and Educate Visitors
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5. Catalyzing Individual and Community Conservation Action
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PRACTICAL VISION

- Diverse and Stable Revenue
- Intentional Facility Growth
- Purposeful Conservation Stewardship
- Cohesive, Supported Staff Team
- Memorable Learning Experiences
- New, Stronger Partnerships

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

- Unclear roles and expectations prevent consistent communication practices
- Spatial limitations restrict exhibit and program growth
- Inconsistent, unstable revenue constrains creative strategy
- Unclear goals prevent unified vision
- Underdeveloped relationships constrain community reach

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Expanding Resources to Empower Staff
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SD1

EXPANDING RESOURCES TO EMPOWER STAFF

DEFINITION

This strategic direction recognizes the centrality of Aquarium staff development to the mission of the Aquarium. It seeks to streamline career pathways and establish necessary protocols to support and expand capacity. It creates a staffing plan with opportunities for advancement, engagement, stronger communication, and greater satisfaction regarding compensation and workload.

ACTION STEPS

1. Develop minimum financial requirements for sustainable pay and program development
2. Create active board and staff subcommittee for engagement with underserved groups
3. Establish budget and professional development plan for all staff
4. Develop roles and job descriptions for every employee with annual reviews
5. Set protocol for adding new programs and employees

OUTCOMES

- Staff take vacation without worry (and feel OK doing so)
- Organization structure makes sense; roles well-defined, match descriptions, and are understandable
- Opportunities for advancement/lateral movement exist and professional development is available
- Staff more representative of community due to direct outreach programs and engagement with underserved groups
- Salaries competitive with industry and community

SD2

EVOLVING EXHIBITS AND PROGRAMS TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE VISITORS

DEFINITION

This strategic direction recognizes that quality exhibits and programming are central to attracting, entertaining, and informing Aquarium guests. It seeks to work in concert with Aquarium education partners and plan intentionally for changes or expansions within the facility to create a consistent and cohesive experience and measure the results of its actions. Successful implementation of these efforts will create a virtuous cycle of well-supported animals, satisfied guests, and raised standards for Aquarium operations.

ACTION STEPS

1. Complete timing and tracking survey for every exhibit
2. Develop standard operating procedures for new exhibits and review current exhibits
3. Create interpretive master plan
4. Develop redundant component plan
5. Build process for annual guest satisfaction survey
6. Conduct Association of Zoos and Aquariums audit of exhibits

OUTCOMES

- All animals in appropriate habitats and show stereotypical behavior in welfare assessments
- Improved guest evaluations; track a) interaction, b) satisfaction, c) learning outcomes
- Increase in return engagement (camps, membership, trainings)
- Move from being reactive to proactive in funding exhibits
- Achieve and maintain Association of Zoos and Aquariums standards

SD3

ENGAGING COMMUNITY TO BROADEN INFLUENCE

DEFINITION

This strategic direction seeks to expand the Aquarium's presence in the community through outreach tailored to reach new groups. It recognizes the need for wider outreach methods and the value of reaching a representative cross-section of the community. Through intentional marketing efforts and volunteerism, it will build the foundations of a more inclusive Aquarium experience.

ACTION STEPS

1. Develop social media plan
2. Dedicate staff member to community engagement
3. Through the engagement subcommittee, identify initiatives in the community and work with them
4. Audit current engagement to connect with broad range of groups
5. Establish baseline demographics and track them
6. Identify opportunities and incentivize staff participation in/leadership of community projects
7. Proactively create opportunities for mission-driven community events

OUTCOMES

- Increase in income access program participation; demographics of visitors match or exceed region
- Increase in number of schools participating and educational content reaching more teachers and students
- Greater volunteerism through staff participating in/leading mission-relevant community projects
- Social media followers and interactions increase
- Social media plan in place with identified community engagement goals
- Volunteer program functions efficiently

SD4

DEVELOPING CONSISTENT, STABLE FUNDING TO MAINTAIN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

DEFINITION

This strategic direction acknowledges that predictable, strong revenue is essential for the operation of the Aquarium and the achievement of many of its objectives. It builds a firm plan to fully understand current funding streams and looming costs, devotes resources to strengthen the Aquarium's financial situation. It strives to diversify revenue streams to provide greater stability and proactively devote funds to both short- and long-term goals, and to integrate these plans with all Aquarium operations.

ACTION STEPS

1. Determine what, where, and why for current funding sources
2. Create long-term building plan for maintenance and expansion
3. Hire a development manager
4. Conduct annual staff survey and create action plan
5. Establish a fund development plan that analyzes return on investment and the percentage of resources coming from each source

OUTCOMES

- Establish two funds: a) a scholarship for programming and b) capital improvement fund
- No longer dependent on city funds
- Increased funding from outside Duluth MSA
- Reduced reliance on ticket sales for base funding
- Facility stays up to date and is updated

SD5

CATALYZING INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY CONSERVATION ACTION

DEFINITION

This strategic direction embraces the Aquarium's dedication to sustainability in its operations and educating working with the community to protect and enhance the natural environments showcased at the facility. It assesses existing operations and strengthens partnerships to build toward a consistent message that lives out the organization's values. Through a variety of methods, it works to empower an inclusive culture of conservation at the Aquarium.

ACTION STEPS

1. Re-establish sustainability committee with dedicated function, goals, and budget
2. Conduct sustainability audit of guest services (events and gift shop) and incentivize participation
3. Collaborate with existing community conservation partners and programs
4. Conduct energy audit and create plan for more efficiency
5. Develop and use interpretive master plan to hone conservation message
6. Increase visibility of culturing to visitors

OUTCOMES

- Functioning sustainability committee operational
- Decrease in water and electricity consumption
- Affiliated with nationally recognized conservation programs
- More redirected event waste and infrastructure in place for it
- Guests/participants can identify conservation message and participate in programs

SD6

FOSTERING GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS TO INITIATE GROWTH CAMPAIGN

DEFINITION

This strategic direction recognizes the importance of strong relationships with state and local government for the organization's financial well-being. It seeks to re-envision a relationship that has historically been somewhat limited by strengthening ties with government bodies and developing clear funding requests. If successful, it will lead to stronger buy-in from government staff and elected officials, leading directly to increased funding for the Aquarium.

ACTION STEPS

1. Determine who/how to track city activity pertinent to GLA
2. Board and staff create lobbying committee
3. Identify and build relationships with city and state level representation
4. The fund development plan includes regular funding bonding requests

OUTCOMES

- Increasing attendance and participation from city staff and city/state elected officials
- Increased GLA participation in city decision-making that affects GLA or are mission/vision related
- Bonding requests are funded



APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Strategic Planning Process



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Great Lakes Aquarium has prepared this 5-year strategic plan to guide its activities and achieve accomplishments consistent with the organization's vision and mission. The strategic process steps, session dates, and agendas are included as an attachment, as are the results of the sessions that followed.

PROCESS STEPS

Collection of background information
Informed Stakeholder Engagement Survey
Staff, Board & Strategy Committee Engagement Survey
Economic Trends Analysis
Internal & External Analysis
Economic Impact Analysis
02.02.2022 Staff Engagement Workshop
02.05.2022 Board Retreat Virtual Workshop
Post-Strategic Directions Mini-Survey
03.17.2022 Vision, Mission & Core Values Workshop
04.13.2022 Focused Implementation Workshop
06.22.2022 Strategic Plan Board Presentation

COLLECTION OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The strategic planning process began with a series of meetings and communications with Great Lakes Aquarium staff that provided contact information, materials detailing the organization's work and impact, and clarification over the plans for the engagement. This phase also included the collection of background demographic and economic data from the US Census American Community Survey and IMPLAN to provide an overview of the current situation and recent trends in the greater Duluth area and the Aquarium's economic impact. Combined with background materials and past survey work provided by the Aquarium, this information was included in a context-grounding presentation for the Staff Engagement Workshop and the Board Retreat.



INFORMED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

In January 2022, Great Lakes Aquarium solicited input from an array of community stakeholders, including all Aquarium members, volunteers, local educators, scientific partners, local tourism industry leadership, city/state political leadership, and local diversity, equity & inclusion leaders. In a survey completed in December 2021. The survey received 199 responses. Participants were asked to rate the Aquarium on a variety of perceptions, events, and potential areas of advocacy; rate a series of value statements; and brainstorm ideas for the practical vision workshop within the strategic planning process. Results of the survey are available in the appendix titled GLA Stakeholder Engagement Survey Summary 01.31.22.

STAFF, BOARD & STRATEGY COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

In January 2022, Great Lakes Aquarium administered a second survey of its staff, authority board, and nonprofit board, a subset of whom participated on the strategy committee. The survey asked the same questions as the Stakeholder Engagement Survey, and it included additional questions inviting respondents to identify underlying contradictions holding the organization back from achieving its practical vision, brainstorm potential strategic directions for the Aquarium, and complete a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Results of the survey are available in the appendix titled GLA Staff Board Strategy Committee Survey Summary 01.31.22.

ECONOMIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

Concurrent with the survey work, Northspan completed an economic trends analysis that explored population trends in the greater Duluth area and analyzed changes in the regional economy. This research provided background information on both changes in the user base of the Aquarium in its host community and broader economic trends that may drive industries related to the Aquarium. This analysis and some conclusions derived from it are available in the appendix titled GLA Community Research and Economic Impact 02.01.22.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

Northspan reviewed an array of past reports, studies, and surveys completed by Great Lakes Aquarium and augmented it with its own research on economic and demographic trends for the city and surrounding areas. This research was presented at the Staff Engagement Workshop and at the first strategic planning session, and some information was added in response to questions at these sessions. Details from this section are included both in the appendix titled GLA Community Research and Economic Impact 02.01.22.



STAFF ENGAGEMENT VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

AGENDA | February 2, 2022 | 12:00 – 2:00 PM

- 12:00 Welcome, Agenda, & Introductions
- 12:20 Context Presentation
- 12:50 Strategy Ideas Workshop
- 2:00 Next Steps & Adjourn

On February 2, Northspan facilitated a staff engagement workshop for all members of the Great Lakes Aquarium staff. (A smaller subset was selected as staff representatives for the strategic planning process.) This session gave participants the opportunity to receive and react to the information in the context presentation and provide their strategy ideas to inform the subsequent workshops. The stakeholder strategy ideas are available in the appendix titled GLA Staff Strategy Idea Outcomes 02.02.22.

BOARD RETREAT VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

AGENDA | February 5, 2022 | 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

- 8:00 Welcome & Introductions
- 8:30 Context Presentation
- 9:30 Practical Vision Workshop
- 11:00 Next Steps & Adjourn to Break
- 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM BREAK
- 1:00 Underlying Contradictions Workshop
- 2:30 Strategic Directions Workshop
- 4:00 Next Steps & Adjourn

On February 5, the strategy committee met for the first time at an all-day retreat. The group received a presentation on the results of the Staff Engagement Workshop, survey results, and broader economic and demographic trends, including information on comparison aquariums and GLA's economic impact. It then developed a practical vision for the strategic planning process. Elements of the practical vision included:

- Diverse and Stable Revenue
- Intentional Facility Growth
- Purposeful Conservation Stewardship
- Cohesive, Supported Staff Team
- Memorable Learning Experiences
- New, Stronger Partnerships
- A Culture of Inclusion



After a break, the group reconvened in the afternoon, and Northspan facilitated a session with the committee that focused on blocks that prevent Great Lakes Aquarium from reaching its vision and strategic directions to overcome those blocks and barriers.

Underlying Contradictions aka Blocks

Participants identified seven contradictions or blocks that they believed held back the City of Port Washington. These blocks are available in the appendix in the document titled GLA PV UC SDs 02.05.22.

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

- Unclear roles and expectations prevent consistent communication practices
- Spatial limitations restrict exhibit and program growth
- Inconsistent, unstable revenue constrains creative strategy
- Unclear goals prevent unified vision
- Underdeveloped relationships constrain community reach

Strategic Directions

With the contradictions in mind, the participants then moved to identify six strategic directions that they believe will allow the City of Port Washington to overcome these blocks. These strategic directions are available in the appendix in the document titled Port Washington GLA PV UC SDs 02.05.22.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Expanding Resources to Empower Staff
- Evolving Exhibits and Programs to Engage and Educate Visitors
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- Catalyzing Individual and Community Conservation Action
- Fostering Governmental Relationships to Initiate Growth Campaign

POST-STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS MINI-SURVEY

Prior to its next session, Great Lakes Aquarium conducted a mini-survey of the strategy committee to assess the organization's existing vision, mission, and values. It also asked for respondents' hopes and dreams for GLA and analyzed strengths, weaknesses, benefits, and dangers that would arise from success of the strategic planning process. A summary is available in the appendix GLA Mini-Survey Summary 03.04.22.



VISION & MISSION WORKSHOP

AGENDA | March 17, 2022 | 8:30 – 11:00 AM

8:35 Introductions

8:55 Survey Results

9:15 Mission and Vision Workshop

10:55 Next Steps & Adjourn

In this session, the strategy committee built on the survey results to begin developing a new mission, vision, and set of core values for the organization. In the following weeks, a subcommittee met to further develop the vision and mission statements produced during the session and presented final version for approval at the subsequent workshop.

CORE VALUES AND FOCUSED IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP

AGENDA | April 13, 2022 | 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

8:30 Welcome & Introductions

8:50 Core Values Review and Finalize

9:20 Focused Implementation

- Current Reality, Success Indications, Actions
- Timeline
- Priority
- Next Steps

1:00 Adjourn

On April 13, Northspan facilitated a final workshop with the strategy committee. In this session, participants reviewed and finalized the mission and vision statements produced by the subcommittee and refined the organization's core values. They then detailed outcomes and accomplishments that could move GLA toward its strategic directions and placed these actions on a timeline.

Accomplishments

Great Lakes Aquarium defined its current reality, identified success indicators, and developed outcomes and accomplishments that will allow the organization to move from current reality to success. These accomplishments and the ideas that led to their creation are available in the appendix in the document GLA CR SI ACC 4.13.22. Participants further defined the strategic plan timeline, which is available in the appendix titled GLA Strategic Plan Timeline 4.13.22.



APPENDIX 2

GLA Community Research and Economic Impact 02.01.22

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Introduction

This document provides an overview of the demographics and economics of the greater Duluth area, and of the economic impact of the Great Lakes Aquarium (GLA) on that region. It aims to provide context for the strategic planning process, showing trends and changes in the Duluth area that may have implications for the Aquarium's operations. It also aims to demonstrate the reach of economic activity associated with the aquarium beyond readily available internal data.

Demographic and Economic Analysis

The Great Lakes Aquarium sits near the center of the Duluth metropolitan area. Federal sources classify the Duluth Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as consisting of St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake Counties in Minnesota and Douglas County in Wisconsin. According to the 2020 US Census, the Duluth MSA has a population of 291,638. However, given the large size of several of these counties and the deeply rural character of more distant parts of the MSA, Northspan typically uses data from ESRI, an industry standard data aggregator, to provide demographic information for a 30-mile radius from a point in downtown Duluth. According to this measure, the Duluth area's population is 200,082.

Table 1: Population of Duluth and Other Minnesota Metropolitan Areas, 2020

Metro	Population (2020)	Growth Rate Since 2010
Duluth MSA	291,638	0.3%
Duluth 30-mi. Radius	200,082	1.4%
Twin Cities	3,690,261	10.7%
Rochester	226,329	9.4%
Fargo	249,843	19.7%
St. Cloud	199,671	5.6%
Mankato	103,566	7.1%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2020.

The Duluth area's population is relatively flat when compared to other Minnesota metropolitan areas. While the growth rate within 30 miles of Duluth is somewhat higher than in the MSA, which includes rural communities with flat or declining populations, it still lags all other MSAs in the state, often by a significant margin. This low population growth rate can limit growth opportunities for organizations such as GLA that seek to increase visitation from locals.

The age composition of the Duluth area is also shifting. The share of the population over age 65 is the only one that has grown over the past decade, while numbers for other categories are declining. The population under 35 has proven more resilient than the 35-64 age group, which is somewhat encouraging for the region's future population stability, but this aging population has implications for the GLA visitor base, particularly since it has a disproportionately high percentage of its visitors who are children. The growth in the 65+ bracket, a product of both an aging baby boomer generation and immigration of retirement age population, represents a potential opportunity for distinctive programming.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Table 2: Population of Age Groups within 30 Miles of Downtown Duluth, 2010 and 2021.

Age Group	2010 Pop.	2010 Pct.	2021 Pct.	2021 Pct.
0-17	41,249	20.9%	38,016	19.0%
18-34	50,920	25.8%	50,021	25.0%
35-64	77,565	39.3%	73,361	36.8%
65+	27,631	14.0%	38,416	19.2%

Source: ESRI via Northland Connection, 2021.

The racial composition of the Duluth area population is also slowly but steadily shifting. While still predominantly white, the white population has declined over the past decade, while most populations of color have increased at fairly steady rates. This increasing diversity is particularly evident in younger populations; for example, Duluth’s public schools now have populations of color reaching 20%. These trends are unlikely to change and underscore the importance of intentional outreach to populations to welcome them into established local institutions such as GLA.

Table 3: Percent Population by Race and Ethnicity within 30 Miles of Downtown Duluth, 2010 and 2021

Race or Ethnicity	2010	2021
White	91.8%	90.3%
Native American	2.9%	3.0%
2+ Races	2.6%	3.1%
Black	1.4%	1.9%
Hispanic (Any Race)	1.3%	2.1%
Asian	1.0%	1.4%

Source: ESRI via Northland Connection, 2021.

Education levels in the Duluth area show additional unique opportunities. While attainment of higher degrees lags national rates, the region does have one of the highest high school completion rates in the country and an unusually strong skilled technical workforce. As in much of the country, educational attainment is trending upward across all categories. Surveying aquarium users could provide information on any gaps in current attendance and show potential areas for growth.

Table 4: Percent Population by Education within 30 Miles of Downtown Duluth, 2010 and 2021

Level of Education	Duluth Area % Population	USA % Population
Less than High School	4.9%	9.1%
High School Graduate	95.1%	90.9%
Some College/Associate Degree	68.2%	63.3%
Bachelors Degree	32.6%	37.5%
Graduate Degree	11.4%	14.1%

Source: ESRI via Northland Connection, 2021.

Poverty can be a significant barrier to local residents’ ability to access attractions such as GLA. Given its large share of visitors who come with children, this report presents two measures of childhood poverty in the greater Duluth area that show how and where some possible visitors may be challenged.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



While a handful of exurban communities have very low poverty rates, the bulk of the school districts within a 30-mile radius of GLA are at or above state poverty levels, which sit at 12.2% for Minnesota and 14.9% for Wisconsin. This is particularly true for districts with higher levels of diversity, such as Cloquet and Carlton. Poverty figures are even higher for many districts beyond this 30-mile ring.

Table 5: Duluth Area Percent of Population Under Age 18 Living in Poverty by School District, 2019

School District	% Pop. Under 18 in Poverty
Solon Springs	19.6%
Cloquet	16.2%
Wrenshall	14.7%
Superior	14.6%
St. Louis County (Rural areas north of Duluth)	13.9%
Carlton	12.4%
Duluth	12.2%
Lake Superior (Lake County)	11.9%
Maple	11.7%
Proctor	5.0%
Hermantown	4.1%
Esko	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey via Social Explorer, 2019.

An alternative measure of poverty comes from free and reduced lunch rates in area schools. Free and reduced lunch rates create a more expansive category for cost burden and captures individuals who may not be in poverty according to the federal standard but are nonetheless struggling to make ends meet. The Minnesota free and reduced lunch rate for its public schools is 31.6%. (The actual poverty rate for children in the state is likely somewhat lower due to the typically high-income demographics of private and parochial schooling options, though their data is unavailable through the state Department of Education.)

An analysis of Duluth area free and reduced lunch rates shows significant divergence across local elementary schools. A majority of local schools fall under the state average rate, and substantially so in East Duluth and exurban areas; schools that exceed the rate are concentrated almost entirely in the central and western parts of Duluth and in Cloquet, which draws from the Fond du Lac reservation. This divergence has its roots in complex social forces, including residential segregation and racial factors, but has implications for area attractions' ability to reach all populations and how they can engage or support community members who might not otherwise have access.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Table 6: Free/Reduced Lunch Rate for Duluth Area Elementary Schools, 2021

School Name	F/R Rate
Myers-Wilkins, Duluth	85.3%
Laura MacArthur, Duluth	64.9%
Stowe, Duluth	55.4%
Piedmont, Duluth	52.7%
Cloquet	37.7%
Lowell, Duluth	27.9%
Carlton	26.0%
Bayview, Proctor	23.5%
Two Harbors	23.3%
Lakewood, Duluth	21.3%
Congdon, Duluth	16.6%
Homecroft, Duluth	16.0%
Lester Park, Duluth	14.8%
Hermantown	11.5%
Pike Lake (Proctor SD)	10.2%
Esko	7.3%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, 2021.

Duluth MSA Economic Base

This report provides a brief overview of the Duluth MSA economic base. It begins by calculating the location quotient of each major industry group. A location quotient shows the relative concentration of employment in an industry relative to a larger comparison area. Location quotients over 1 indicate a relative strength and concentration of employment in an industry, while those under 1 show a relative lack of employment. This analysis compares the Duluth MSA to the state of Minnesota, as these levels provide the most complete available dataset and capture the interconnectedness of the regional economy.

A shift-share analysis is a method that subsequently analyzes how a county's location quotients have changed over time. The time period for this analysis compares calendar year 2010 data with the last two quarters of 2020 and the first two quarters of 2021, which represent the most recent full calendar year of data available. These data likely contain some inconsistencies due to data suppression by state sources, but provide as accurate an overview of the economy as possible.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Table 6: Duluth MSA Industry Location Quotients and Shift-Shares, 2010 to 2020-2021

Industry Sector	2010 Employment	2010 Location Quotient	2020-2021 Employment	2020-2021 Location Quotient	Shift-Share
Mining	2,808	11.0	3,289	13.1	1.20
Utilities	1,822	2.6	2,956	5.0	1.89
Public Administration	9,093	1.5	9,303	1.6	1.07
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,169	1.3	2,447	1.5	1.12
Accommodation and Food Services	12,981	1.3	11,079	1.4	1.07
Health Care and Social Assistance	28,501	1.4	28,554	1.3	0.94
Retail Trade	15,365	1.1	14,698	1.2	1.04
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,083	1.0	3,958	1.1	1.11
Educational Services	10,658	1.0	10,146	1.1	1.05
Transportation and Warehousing	4,165	0.9	4,539	1.0	1.06
Construction	4,301	0.9	5,304	0.9	0.97
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,166	0.7	1,175	0.8	1.18
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,663	0.6	4,504	0.6	1.08
Finance and Insurance	4,251	0.6	3,612	0.6	0.86
Manufacturing	6,684	0.5	7,177	0.5	1.12
Information	204	0.1	1,047	0.5	7.15
Wholesale Trade	3,037	0.5	2,715	0.5	0.98
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,793	0.6	2,077	0.4	0.60
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,077	0.3	919	0.2	0.76
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	184	0.2	152	0.1	0.74

Source: WI and MN QCEW, 2010, 2020, and 2021.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Identification of location quotients and their trends allows for the completion of an economic base analysis that sorts the major industry clusters into four categories:

- Growing base: industries with high and growing location quotients
- Transforming: industries with high, but declining, location quotients
- Emerging: industries with low, but growing, location quotients
- Declining: industries with low and declining location quotients

Table 7: Sector Categories for Duluth MSA Economic Base Analysis

Transforming	Growing Base
Health Care and Social Assistance	Mining Utilities Retail Trade Educational Services Arts, Entertainment & Recreation Accommodation and Food Services Other Services (except Public Administration) Public Administration
Declining	Emerging
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Construction Wholesale Trade Finance and Insurance Management of Companies and Enterprises	Manufacturing Transportation and Warehousing Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

This base analysis gives a snapshot of the regional economy. The Duluth area now has a healthy array of major industries that form its economic base, including both traditional sectors such as mining and utilities and emerging tourism-related sectors. The Duluth MSA also has a larger than average public sector, reflecting its role as a regional center, and is a hub of education. The health care sector, despite being by far the largest individual employer, is not growing at the same pace as it is in other parts of the state; while it is a strength, it will likely need to adapt to continue at its current pace. Sectors that had once been strengths of the Duluth area, such as manufacturing and transportation, are rebounding from significant declines experienced in the second half of the 20th century and are once again growth areas, as are certain professional services and the real estate industry, reflecting the renewed desirability of the region. Agriculture, forestry, and construction face stronger industry headwinds, while several white-collar sectors also appear to have fallen victim to centralizing forces they may face.

Overall, these trends suggest healthy growth in both the GLA's sector (Arts, Entertainment & Recreation) and in its supporting sectors such as accommodation and food services and retail trade. The Duluth area is likely to remain a growing destination for people seeking to visit attractions such as the Aquarium, and an array of related amenities allow for broad experiences. The aquarium's ability to attract outside dollars through tourism put it in a position to withstand some less favorable demographic trends in the Duluth MSA and will likely be key to its continued growth.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Economic Impact

In order to further inform this strategic planning process, Northspan calculated the Great Lakes Aquarium's effects on the region using IMPLAN economic impact modeling. Northspan used the aquarium's number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs), total payroll, and total revenue as inputs to determine the effects it has on the local economy. These numbers provide an approximation of the Aquarium's impact on the region.

Economic impact modeling tools divide their outputs into three categories:

1. **Direct Effects:** Immediate impacts of employment and revenue generated by Great Lakes Aquarium
2. **Indirect Effects:** Impacts created by GLA's business-to-business transactions. This can include the purchase of supplies, any contracted services, construction or remodeling effects, and other goods or services purchased using GLA revenue.
3. **Induced Effects:** Impacts to the local economy that derive from the funds generated by direct and indirect effects. For example, this includes goods and services purchased by employees of GLA. The induced effects show the cascading effects of the wealth created in the community by the aquarium's presence.

Table 8: Direct, Indirect, and Induced Economic Impacts of Great Lakes Aquarium, 2022

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
1 - Direct	44.27	\$1,247,957.33	\$1,640,884.76	\$3,497,650.00
2 - Indirect	7.05	\$307,499.58	\$527,894.48	\$1,284,619.76
3 - Induced	15.22	\$712,138.29	\$1,285,012.67	\$2,272,997.05
Total	66.55	\$2,267,595.20	\$3,453,791.90	\$7,055,266.81

Source: IMPLAN, 2021.

An analysis of the aquarium's impact shows it creates a total of 44 direct, 7 indirect, and 15 induced jobs in the region for a total of 66.5 jobs. This suggests that GLA has a multiplier effect of 1.5, meaning that every job created at or directly for GLA creates 1.5 additional jobs. According to a March 2020 University of Minnesota Duluth Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) study titled Economic Impact of the Tourism Industry in Duluth, the multiplier for a large basket of tourism-related industries in Duluth is 1.28, showing GLA has a wider reach than many other businesses and organizations in its sector. GLA's payroll also has a direct effect of over \$2 million in wages paid out to its staff.

Great Lakes Aquarium generates approximately \$3.5 million in annual revenue. This revenue leads to just over \$7 million in total economic output, or a ratio of almost exactly 2:1. The BBER study showed the Duluth tourism sector had a 1.54:1 ratio of revenue to economic output, once again suggesting GLA has a wider impact than many of its industry peers. Industries that benefitted from GLA's presence include real estate (primarily in housing expenditures by employees), delivery services, scenic and sightseeing transportation, advertising and public relations, and radio and television. These benefits also lead to \$822,802 in tax revenue generated.

GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Research and Economic Impact



Conclusions

A demographic analysis of the Duluth area reveals a population that is undergoing changes, all of which may affect the Great Lakes Aquarium. The population within 30 miles of Duluth is relatively flat and aging, while diversity in the region is slowly but steadily increasing. The region's poverty rates are somewhat higher than statewide rates, but heavily concentrated in certain areas. Reaching some of these shifting populations will prove key to sustaining its strong economic base. The region's tourism economy, meanwhile, continues to grow, attracting outside spending and allowing GLA to work in concert with other regional attractions. That outside spending is then invested in the Duluth area economy through direct, indirect, and induced effects, building local wealth and providing spillover effects that are larger than those of many other local businesses and organizations.



APPENDIX 3

GLA Stakeholder Engagement Survey Summary 01.31.22



GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM · COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

As part of the strategic planning process, Great Lakes Aquarium surveyed the community to gather input ahead of the workshops. The survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey and distributed via e-mail by aquarium staff for participants to take from January 10, 2022, through January 26, 2022. The survey was sent to a variety of community partners including educational and scientific partners and gathered 199 total responses.

BACKGROUND

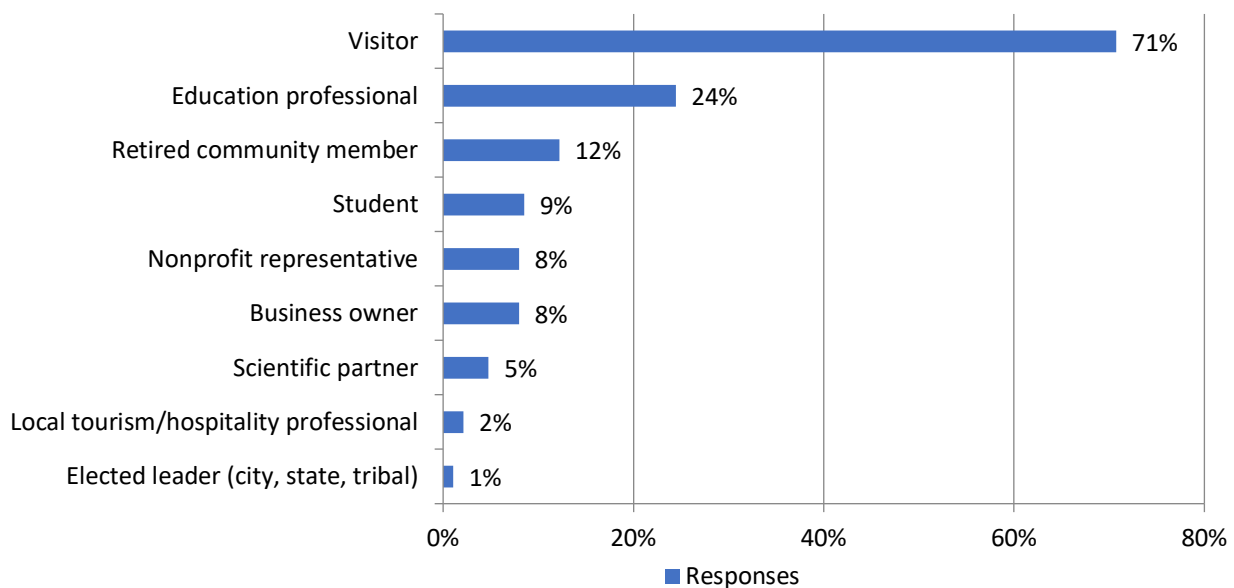
Those who responded to the survey largely live in the Twin Ports area, with the largest concentration of responses from Duluth residents (114 of 199 responses). The top 5 communities by responses, and ages of participants are shown below.

Hometown	# Responses
Duluth	114
Superior	12
Twin Cities area	12
Cloquet	9
Hermantown	5

Age	# Responses
Under 18	3
18-34	51
35-64	121
65+	24

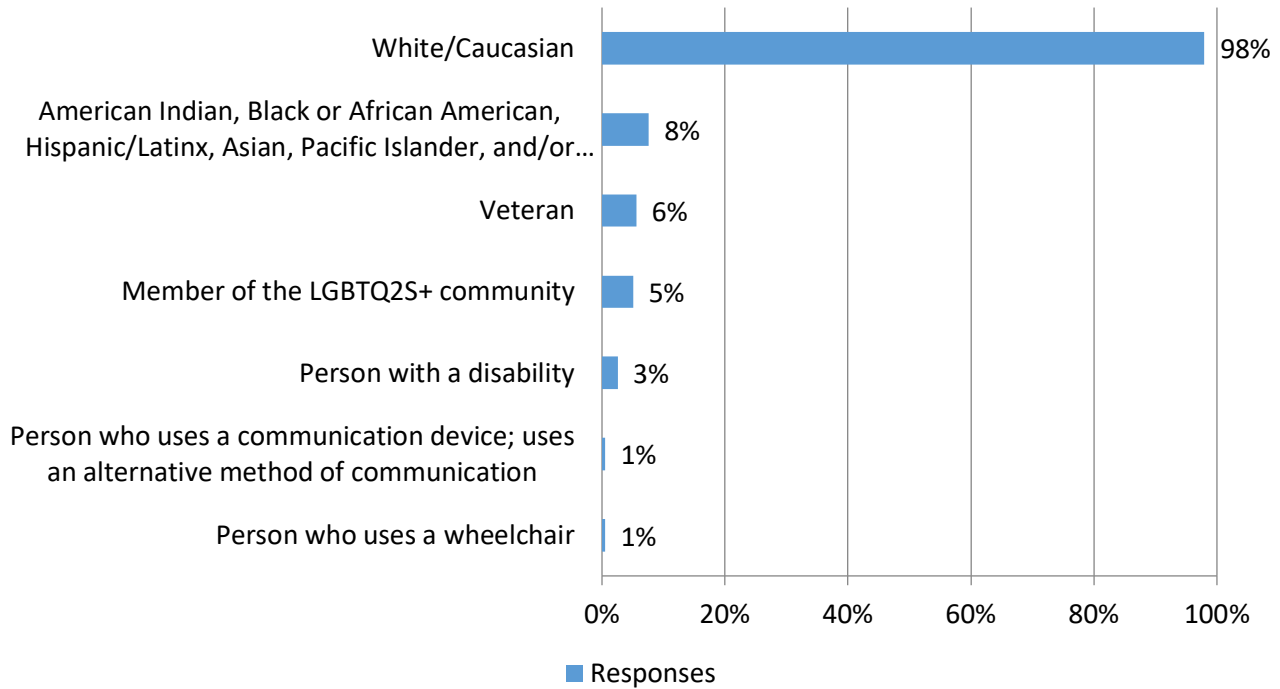
Participants were also asked if they identified with any groups listed below, and to self-identify if they chose. Other responses included: foster parents, homeschool families, volunteers, and parents who stay at home to provide child care.

Which of the following groups do you identify with?





Do you identify with any of the following groups?

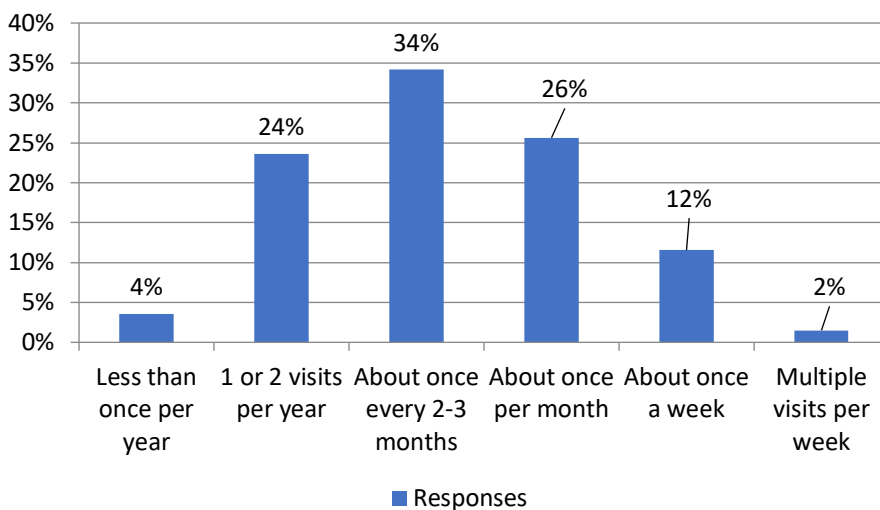


MEMBERSHIP AND VISIT FREQUENCY

Are you/your family a member of Great Lakes Aquarium?	
Yes	83%
No	12%
We used to be, but no longer are	5%

Survey respondents were also asked about membership and how often they visit GLA. **Eighty-three percent (83%)** noted they are **currently members**.

How often do you visit Great Lakes Aquarium?



Additionally, slightly **over one quarter (26%)** report visiting the aquarium about **once per month**.



RANKING VALUE STATEMENTS

Participants were asked to rank a series of statements related to Great Lakes Aquarium’s value statements. Rankings were positive overall, with the majority of responses ranking each in the 4-5 range. Top ranked statements included ones around **operating with integrity** and **accessibility**.

Please rank the following statements as they relate to your experiences with Great Lakes Aquarium. (1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)					
	1	2	3	4	5
Great Lakes Aquarium provides an innovative experience for guests.	1%	1%	15%	49%	35%
Great Lakes Aquarium staff, board, and volunteer members operate with integrity.	2%	1%	11%	23%	64%
Great Lakes Aquarium promotes sustainability.	2%	1%	9%	34%	55%
Great Lakes Aquarium is accessible to guests.	2%	1%	7%	30%	61%
Great Lakes Aquarium provides an engaging experience for visitors.	1%	2%	10%	40%	47%
Great Lakes Aquarium delivers an excellent guest experience.	1%	2%	14%	36%	48%
Great Lakes Aquarium is a collaborative organization.	2%	1%	20%	34%	43%
Great Lakes Aquarium creates a fun atmosphere for guests to enjoy.	1%	2%	8%	37%	53%

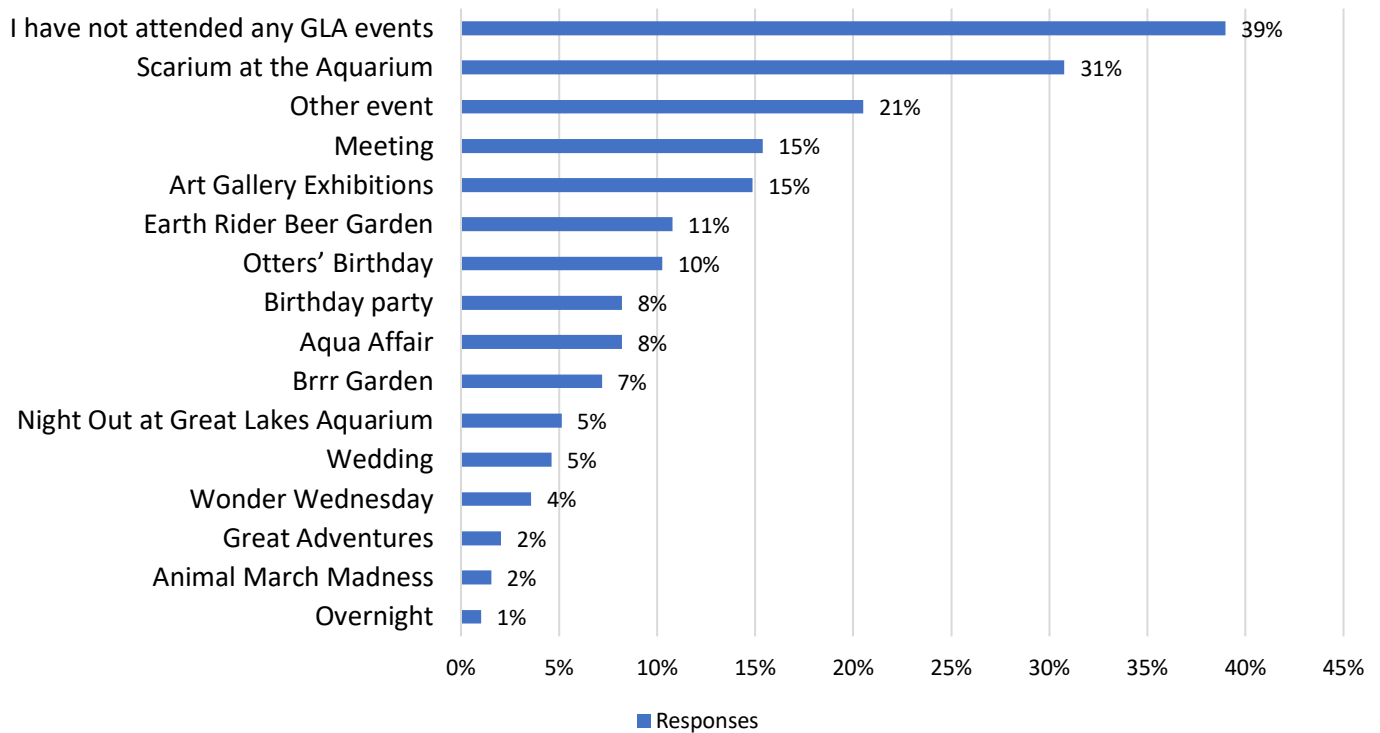
GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM EVENT ATTENDANCE & IDEAS

Next, respondents were asked which events they have attended in the past and to share ideas answering the prompt, ***“What events, celebrations, and/or experiences would you like to see at the Aquarium that are not currently offered?”***

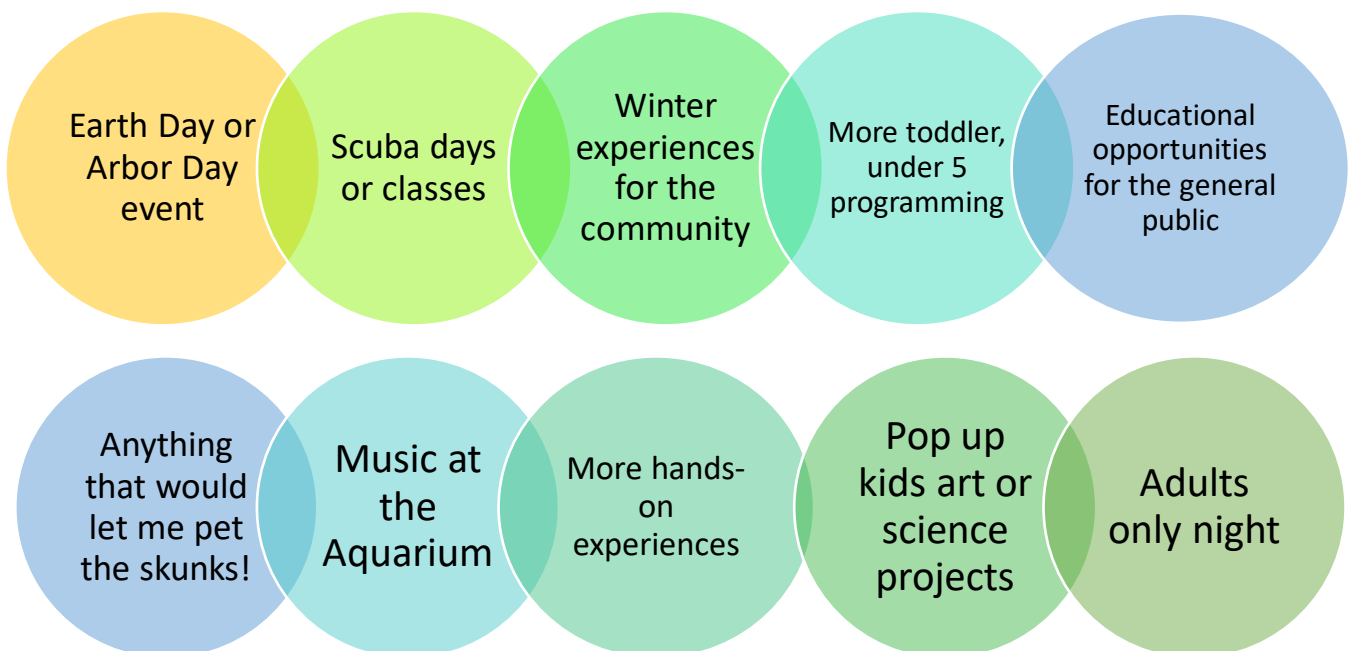
Thirty-nine percent (39%) stated they have **not attended** any special events, celebrations, or experiences. Scarium at the Aquarium stood out as the top rated event with 31% of those surveyed attending.



Which Great Lakes Aquarium events, celebrations, or experiences have you attended? *Please check all that apply.*



“What events, celebrations, and/or experiences would you like to see at the Aquarium that are not currently offered?”





FUTURE ADVOCACY

Survey participants were asked to review examples from other aquariums and reflect on the question ***“What’s one word or statement that describes what cause Great Lakes Aquarium should advocate for an integrate into future plans or exhibits?”*** A list of suggested topics and frequency of mentions are shown below:

Clean water (25)	Pollution (20)	Great Lakes (18)	One World/One Health (17)
Lake Superior (17)	Stewardship (16)	Climate change (11)	Sustainability (7)

PRACTICAL VISION

In this section, participants were asked to list up to 5 ideas answering the prompt ***“What do you want to see in place in 5 years because of the Great Lakes Aquarium’s strategic planning actions?”***

In 5 years, because of Great Lakes Aquarium's strategic planning process, they will have

- Engaging, interactive exhibits
- Environmentally focused education and internal practices
- Impactful educational programming
- Inclusive, accessible environment and culture for all
- Vibrant experiences for youth
- Enhanced, creative uses of physical space
- Purposeful community partnerships
- A community engaged through science



APPENDIX 4

GLA Staff Board Strategy Committee Survey Summary 01.31.22



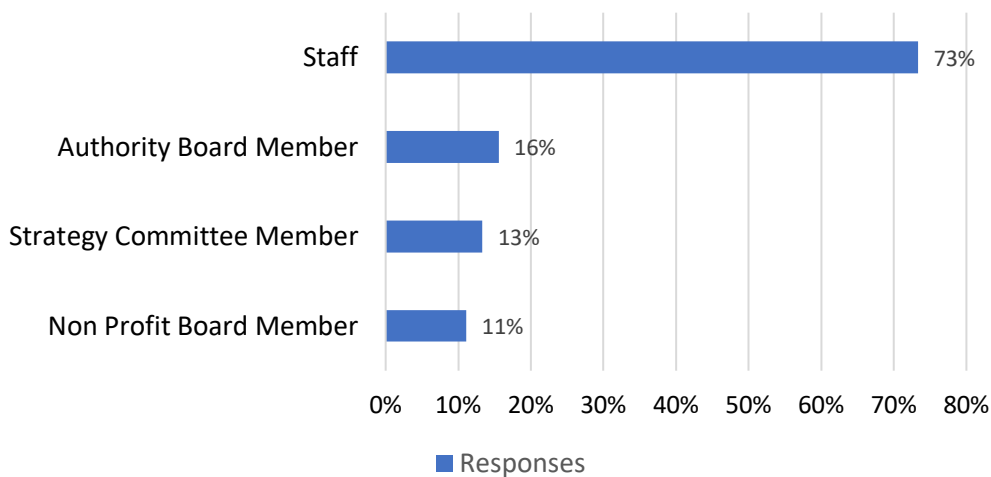
GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM · STAFF, BOARD & STRATEGY COMMITTEE SURVEY SUMMARY

As part of the strategic planning process, Great Lakes Aquarium surveyed staff, board, and strategy committee members to gather input ahead of the workshops. The survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey and distributed via e-mail for participants to take from January 10, 2022 through January 26, 2022.

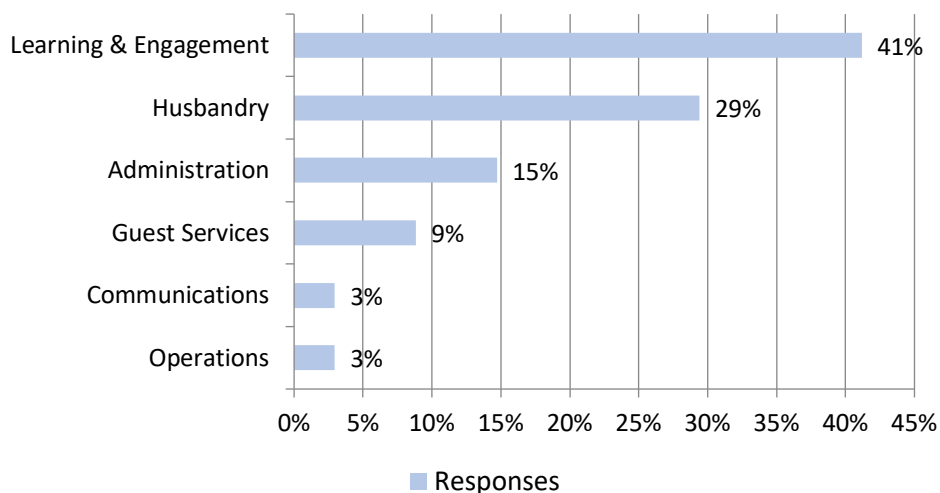
BACKGROUND

Most of the responses (73%) to this survey came directly from staff, with the majority of staff respondents (41%) indicating they are a part of the Learning & Engagement department.

What is your relationship with the Great Lakes Aquarium?
(45 responses)



If you are a staff member, which department do you belong to?
(34 responses)





RANKING VALUE STATEMENTS

Participants were asked to rank a series of statements related to Great Lakes Aquarium’s value statements. Overall, this group feels positively about their experiences with GLA. There were discontented sentiments emerging in the categories of **promoting sustainability** and working as a **collaborative organization**.

Please rank the following statements as they relate to your experiences with Great Lakes Aquarium. (1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree)					
	1	2	3	4	5
Great Lakes Aquarium provides an innovative experience for guests.	2%	7%	24%	22%	46%
Great Lakes Aquarium staff, board, and volunteer members operate with integrity .	2%	2%	13%	22%	61%
Great Lakes Aquarium promotes sustainability .	7%	7%	22%	28%	37%
Great Lakes Aquarium is accessible to guests .	2%	2%	11%	33%	52%
Great Lakes Aquarium provides an engaging experience for visitors.	4%	0%	7%	41%	48%
Great Lakes Aquarium delivers an excellent guest experience .	4%	2%	17%	26%	50%
Great Lakes Aquarium is a collaborative organization .	7%	11%	17%	28%	37%
Great Lakes Aquarium creates a fun atmosphere for guests to enjoy.	4%	0%	9%	37%	50%

EVENT IDEAS

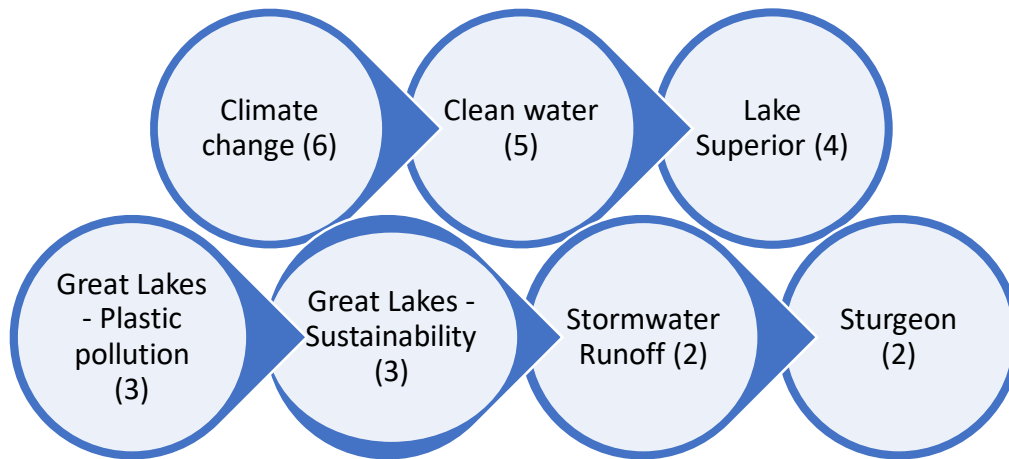
Next, respondents were asked to share ideas answering the prompt, *“What events, celebrations, and/or experiences would you like to see at the Aquarium that are not currently offered?”*

Adults only events	Food trucks	Increased guest-animal interactions	Additional hands on experiences
Experiences that teach about a more sustainable future	Beach/Lake Superior organized clean up	Robust teen volunteer program	Community engagement around local environmental issues



FUTURE ADVOCACY

Survey participants were asked to review examples from other aquariums and reflect on the question ***“What’s one word or statement that describes what cause Great Lakes Aquarium should advocate for an integrate into future plans or exhibits?”*** A list of suggested topics and frequency of mentions are shown below:



PRACTICAL VISION

In this section, participants were asked to list up to 5 ideas answering the prompt ***“What do you want to see in place in 5 years because of the Great Lakes Aquarium’s strategic planning actions?”***

In 5 years, because of our strategic planning process, we will have (a)...

- Robust, engaging animal exhibits
- Consistent plan for capital improvements
- Cohesive, supported staff team
- Environmentally focused education and internal practices
- Inclusive, positive experiences for community and guests
- Vibrant, engaging events and programming for all ages
- Purposeful collaboration with educational and non-profit partners



UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS

Once respondents had identified their practical vision, they were asked to consider the question ***“What may be blocking us or holding us back from moving toward your Practical Vision?”***

Participants were directed to focus on ideas that are feasible and within the realm of staff’s ability to respond to, impact, or go around.

Things that may be blocking us from moving toward our Practical Vision are...

- Disjointed, unclear organizational communication
- Inconsistent revenue streams
- Unclear shared vision, mission, and goals
- Underdeveloped support for staff
- Limitations on physical space expansion
- Underutilized technology and outdated exhibits
- Misalignment with community groups and partners

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Based on their responses to the previous two questions, the next step for participants was to provide a list answering, ***“What innovative things (actions, programs, or efforts) can our board members and staff do, create, or take on to move your Practical Vision ideas into accomplishments?”***

Innovative things our board members and staff can do, create, or take on to move the Practical Vision forward are...

- Developing methods to gather and incorporate community feedback
- Enhancing opportunities for staff training & development
- Creating long term, sustainable exhibit plans
- Exploring creation of Development Department
- Collaborating for strategic partnerships
- Providing opportunities for productive staff communication
- Elevating efforts surrounding advocacy and sustainability
- Establishing cohesive, current marketing and messaging



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

The final section of the survey asked respondents to complete a SWOT Analysis for Great Lakes Aquarium. Bolded responses indicate multiple mentions.

Strengths: <i>Internal factors that give our organization an advantage over others</i>	Weaknesses: <i>Internal factors that place our organization at a disadvantage relative to others</i>
<p>Staff – <i>passionate, dedicated, knowledgeable, work with integrity, talented, creative, supportive</i></p> <p>Positive reputation within community</p> <p>Location – <i>adjacent to Lake Superior</i></p> <p>Quality of exhibits</p> <p>Nimble and adaptable as an organization</p> <p>Educational programming and resources</p> <p>Working toward becoming more sustainable</p> <p>Accessibility</p> <p>Provides a unique visitor experience</p>	<p>Aging facility and technology</p> <p>Disjointed communication between departments</p> <p>Lack of unified vision, mission – <i>no set path for the future</i></p> <p>Size of building – <i>limited space for growth, not enough office/storage space</i></p> <p>Current budget and revenue streams – <i>unpredictable, unreliable, limited</i></p> <p>Resources and space for exhibit upgrades</p> <p>Limited professional development opportunities for staff, board</p> <p>Staff complacency, burnout</p> <p>Staff capacity and turnover</p> <p>Employee compensation</p> <p>(Lack of) diversity of staff, board</p>
Opportunities: <i>External factors that our organization could capitalize on to our advantage</i>	Threats: <i>External factors that could create challenges for our organization</i>
<p>Seek out collaborations, partnerships</p> <p>Develop corporate sponsorships</p> <p>Host additional events</p> <p>Public interest/awareness in being environmentally conscious rising</p> <p>Capitalize on lakeside location</p> <p>Better utilization of outdoor space</p> <p>Participate in exhibit/animal swaps</p> <p>Amplify message of/collaborate with Tribal groups</p> <p>Participate in City events (Tall Ships, Grandma’s, etc)</p> <p>Create a full-time preschool</p> <p>Follow social media trends more closely</p> <p>Facility accreditation</p>	<p>COVID</p> <p>Decrease or loss of City of Duluth Tourism Tax funding</p> <p>Anti-aquarium/anti-zoo sentiments</p> <p>Climate change</p> <p>Declines, shifts in tourism</p> <p>Competition for funding</p> <p>Hiring challenges</p> <p>Parking/congestion</p> <p>Community naysayers – <i>previous stigma in community, public perceptions, social media reviews</i></p> <p>General economic downturn, rise of inflation</p> <p>Local waterway impairments</p>



APPENDIX 5

GLA Staff Strategy Idea Outcomes 02.02.22

What innovative actions can our staff and board members do to move our Practical Vision into accomplishments?

RATIONAL AIM

Enable the group to create clearly focused yet innovative and empowering strategy ideas that set the course for the organization.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Generate excitement about collaboration within the group and new commitment to practical possibilities.



Exhibit planning and development	Bolster and diversify funding	Mission-driven long-term planning	Staff development and training	Interdepartmental transparency and communication	Education & Program Development	Practice environmental sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve exhibits Create a ten year plan for exhibits. More hands on exhibits Find space and animals for larger exhibits Include climate change impacts for each exhibit Develop realistic exhibit of animals that guests can engage with that will be available for touch consistently hands on exhibit elements to compliment interpretation Create a customer liaison position; someone who WANTS change Learn about animal conservation statuses Less reading rails focus groups determining what visitors like New exhibit every 6 months to keep people engaged Learn actionable steps MN/WI residents can take Remove outdated signage/exhibits/unpopular interactives Wave action energy or interactive energy creating exhibit Form an exhibit development department stop making temporary exhibits Have Blue Heron crew and instructors be responsible/partner with us for the Blue Heron exhibit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek state bonding funds for building expansion Go to the state for bonding money. Staff and board leadership have strategic and consistent communication with City and State leaders. Build a savings plan into yearly budget hire a grant writer restructure our fundraising efforts Create a team within our staff or board members that spend their time looking for grants and funding for us We could connect with donors (like small businesses) to match other donations gain access to funds for advances / expansion Increase funding opportunities (grants, campaigns, etc.) Effort to seek more stable funding - hire development director Find a way to hire a grant writer- we need funding Build development department in 2022/2023 We could place a pop up gift shop on the board walk We could partner with other organizations to fundraise such as the zoo Better financial representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have clear list of what will be accomplished first and how Develop & execute an interpretive master plan Proper space for all staff, volunteers, animals Develop a POWERFUL mission and vision Cohesive messaging through an overarching Aquarium theme Talk through logistics- what is feasible? Develop a message that represents how Great Lakes Aquarium is a State organization and not only a Duluth attraction Focus on long-term as primary vision Research seasonality- adjust/improve from years prior become an accredited facility (AZA) Create partnerships through land acknowledgement writing process PSA's to local print/broadcast/social media showing volunteerism at GLA Hire/contract/recruit volunteer help Branching out to outside help update information on local connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger focus in trainings and development Upskill / train mid-level managers Diversify hiring efforts Guidance more professional development opportunities for staff at all levels Create a training folder in common drive Management training for all individuals Coordinate training sessions Create a backup / succession plan for all key employees. Modernize / integrate IT systems with custom solutions and invest in high-quality IT support Professional development for directors to develop contemporary perspective of what our role is as an organization instruction on technological resources available More qualified staff for positions We should have a fond du lac representative as a staff member Investment in staff and team needs Have an outline by year of when we can hire the staff we are lacking that will help us accomplish our goals All staff and board actually understand mission, and their contribution to it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all staff meetings quarterly Collaborate with staff to see needs Collaboration Invest in organizational culture and development More input from staff Ask for open feedback to improve EVERY area Inter and Intra department communication Cooperation More frequent communication across departments Top down and bottom up accountability department representatives to communicate to other departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin planning to move preschool to boardroom Create an education program with tribal groups increased programs for special animals Day trips, activities organized by GLA more representation at local events for educators Increased number of programs Stress alcohol free events and partner with local treatment centers and recovery homes. We could have a documentary/movie nights about the Great Lakes, the environment, etc Challenge idea that humans are most intelligent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a position as sustainability coordinator Increased efforts in sustainability As an organization, embrace environmental advocacy stances Provide flexible scheduling to staff to participate as a group in local conservation efforts Factor sustainability initiatives into budgetary decisions



APPENDIX 6

GLA PV UC SDs 02.05.22



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | *What innovative, substantial actions deal with the Underlying Contradictions and move us toward our Practical Vision?*

1. Expanding resources to empower staff
2. Evolving exhibits and programs to engage and educate visitors
3. Engaging community to broaden influence
4. Developing consistent, stable funding to maintain operational capacity
5. Catalyzing individual and community conservation action
6. Fostering governmental relationships to initiate growth campaign

PRACTICAL VISION | *What do we want to see in place in 5 years as a result of our strategic planning actions?*

- Diverse & Stable Revenue
- Intentional Facility Growth
- Purposeful Conservation Stewardship
- Cohesive, Supported Staff Team
- Memorable, Learning Experiences
- New, Stronger Partnerships
- A Culture of Inclusion

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS | *What is blocking us from moving toward our Practical Vision?*

- Unclear roles & expectations prevent consistent communication practices
- Spatial limitations restrict exhibit & program growth
- Inconsistent, unstable revenue constrains creative strategy
- Unclear goals prevent unified vision
- Underdeveloped relationships constrain community reach

PRACTICAL VISION | What do you want to see in place in 5 years as a result of our strategic planning actions?

RATIONAL AIM

Reveals the latent vision within the group; identifies the group's hopes and dreams.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Creates group ownership of a common vision of the future.



Diverse & Stable Revenue	Intentional Facility Growth	Intentional Facility Growth Continued	Purposeful Conservation Stewardship	Cohesive, Supported Staff Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hire full time development director Hire a development director and grants manager Plans/ procedures for fundraising and grant writing Become AZA accredited Expand after hours events Consistent/ professional marketing/ social media presence Become AZA accredited Bring on a Development Director and Grant writer. Exhibits geared more towards adults Exhibits on iconic people or events (John Beargrease, Edmund Fitzgerald, etc) Meeting or close to meeting AZA standards AZA certification Hire a full time development coordinator/dev committee Establish endowed scholarship to support research. Become AZA accredited. Scholarships for environmental students/high schoolers Development Department-- a true, concerted focus on fundraising Regularly attended GLA-hosted events Increased use of technological communication and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food options available on site. We will have a full-time nature play preschool robust and accessible preschool A bigger shark tank for larger species to grow and STAY Start expanding outward- Outdoor exhibits? Additional space for exhibits, Scheduled exhibit replacement plan north woods conservatory large fish in appropriately sized exhibits large outdoor deck on east side An updated otter exhibit seperate education and event spaces Organized, digital record keeping system larger saltwater tank for shipwrecks alive animals Technological updates (internally & on exhibit floor) Explorer's Cove rebrand roadmap for the exhibits and investments short-term, next 3-5 years (near-term) and 10+ years (long term), plan for how to secure funding. Update display floor to make it a clean and inviting space Expand to build a 2nd building that allows us to have larger displays and event centers Better use of vertical space, walls/ ceilings are bland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of facility with new galleries and event/meeting space. Bonding Bill money for building expansion, Aquarium redesign Maintain a well maintained facility State of the art technology Building improvement/ long term exhibit plan upgrade/replace building mechanicals and LSS(ozone, waste water recovery, pumps) Newer Exhibits More large exhibits Expand facility for new exhibits and events. updated (and larger) tree house play area perhaps in a larger area? Redo of the entrance (ticketing and gift store) Understanding how to prioritize projects based on animal needs An auditorium for hosting events. Automatic parking booth More enhanced utilization of GLA's outdoor spaces. We will fully integrate all IT systems (scheduling, memberships, POS, etc.) Food- Cafe? Little coffee shop? Automated coffee machine? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greener/ more local gift store items local conservation involvement Increase sustainability in practice and equipment. Aquarium adoption of environmental activism cause Ecotourism Natural water filtration exhibit. Florida Reef Tract conservation involvement Call to action for a national/global campaign Reduced impairment on Duluth area streams Focus on endangered animals culture more species of fish on site Teach climate change impacts over animal basics We will have high sustainability standards across the organization (i.e. sustainably sourced gift shop merchandise) Teach sustainability (composting, lifecycle of plastic, etc) More green energy for the building Revamp native onsite gardens by weeding invasives Only sustainable/local options in gift store Create and implement interpretive master plan We will not source any animals from the wild Local reduction in invasive pet releases Establish conservation team (new staff with husbandry & ed background) Field Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganize departments and roles to successfully serve our mission. (i.e. staff wear too many hats) Adequate staff pay non-binary staff bathrooms More full-time education positions Regular staff appreciation (parties, celebrate milestones, etc.) Succession planning and back ups for staff Better planning before starting large projects Better means of communication through departments Staff connection between departments Clear policies in regards to staff expectations More knowledgeable leaders when it comes to management better communication within and between departments Effective communication between all departments larger husbandry staff and better professional development plan Have the right amount of staff needed in each department to run the building efficiently Career fairs Organization wide logic model with evaluative outcomes

PRACTICAL VISION | What do you want to see in place in 5 years as a result of our strategic planning actions?



RATIONAL AIM

Reveals the latent vision within the group; identifies the group's hopes and dreams.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Creates group ownership of a common vision of the future.

Memorable, Learning Experiences	New, Stronger Partnerships	A Culture of Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff interactions with animals and guests • Darker areas when it feels like you are 'in' the exhibit. • Better signage- more professional/ concise. Less overall. • Update display floor to make it a clean and inviting space • Discuss human supremacy (human nature relationships) • More hands on Exhibits • Full building signage overhaul to new logo/ branding • Making our story go farther than a timeline, but the importance of every animal we have • Better theming inside exhibits, not just logs and plastic plants • Make the 'discovery center' a discovery center • Cohesive & mentally engaging exhibit floor experience • A walk through exhibit that grabs guests attention • Updated animal exhibits and interpretation • Electronic interactive information • More variety of mammals, reptiles and amphibians • New exhibit with grand display- a wow effect • More "touch" exhibits for children • Establish changable exhibit- visitors observe research/lab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific collaborations with local schools, universities, and agencies • GLA led interpretive tours (estuary, Brighton/Park Point, Duluth dives) • Working relationship with local educators • Lake Superior Education • More community based work and outreaches • partnership project with DNR • Science fairs • Local Community involvement in the Aquarium • Staff involvement in the community • Collaboration with Vista, Maritime Museum for events • Recognition as regional leader in nonformal education • Excursion tours to get people out on the water during summer months? • Active partnership with the Blue Heron Crew • More regular community/ regional communication • How can guests help nature/wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active commitment to equity, access and inclusion • Find ways to connect with groups that we are currently not reaching. • Teach tribal Lake Superior connections (ie sturgeon) • A place to send children • Collaborative inclusion of Anishinaabe ways of knowing • Wigwam: Ojibwe life through the seasons • expanding our programs and education to be duluth top place to send their kiddos • Find ways to have a diverse work force and board. • Board members that reflect the demographic of our community • Increased tactile experiences for guests • increased exhibit tactility for neurodivergent folx • Inclusive events and partnerships • GLA will transform into a cultural hub rather than just a museum with animals and information • Family Free Days, with optional transportation • Non alcoholic focused events for adults

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS |

What is blocking us from moving forward our Practical Vision?

RATIONAL AIM

Identify the obstacles to our practical vision.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Feel sure we've identified underlying contradictions.



Unclear roles & expectations prevent consistent communication	Spatial limitations restrict exhibit & program growth	Inconsistent, unstable revenue constrains creative strategy	Unclear goals prevent unified vision	Underdeveloped relationships constrain community reach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inconsistent communication across organization Unclear/ Inconsistent communication channels Unclear roles and goals- whose responsibility is it to... unclear communication strategy inconsistent and unclear communication Contradicting understandings of individual & departmental roles Inconsistent communication from leadership Uncoordinated cross-departmental efforts Uncoordinated and inconsistent collaboration between departments No accountability for mistakes Inconsistent management practices depending on department, and situation Constant change from COVID has left staff feeling disjointed. Underutilized staffing talents Restricted timing for staff connection between departments inconsistent progression in training and growth as professionals Overreliance on individual overachievers (staff burnout) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A larger budget to support full time staff City support is inconsistent and the long-term is unclear. Inconsistent business during slow time/year. Limited funding options Limited staff dedicated to find funding (grant writing, etc.) Underqualified IT support, nobody is looking out for efficiency flaws Outdated computer equipment Small things can be neglected as we work to achieve big thing no dedicated staff member for grant writing Identify new funding sources to grow revenue. budget based mostly on ticket sales- unpredictable Limited grant opportunities We need matching donors for fundraising campaigns Engage the Lake Superior Authority board to assist with State funding. Build a financial surplus to mitigate unforeseen infrastructure issues. Outdated technology Strengthen relationship with City and State leadership. ineffective fundraising Limited funds for facility repair and renewal We need more full time staff to accomplish our goals inability to attract qualified staff Limited workers restricted access to certain animals that we can not care for Failed attempt early on- minimal guests during winter season Underdeveloped fundraising outreach to big donors in and around Minnesota city council and mayor unclear and disjointed strategy for tourism and economic development Underutilized technological resources Unprofessional signage everywhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misaligned priorities of board, departments, individuals, and organization Unbalanced tension between science-education-attraction. tendency to use short term solutions shared mission, vision and values. Staff have conflicting interests- "the science" vs. "the animals" management not unified in messaging and behavior Inconsistent training resistance to change Unclear understanding on how best to implement mission strict adherence to aquarium "story" Unclear connection of visitor animal relationships Unrealistic organizational scope for focus on aquatic life misaligned w/ connecting historically to the land of the Great Lakes Unclear organizational goals Inconsistent short-term and long-term agendas We have underutilized our position as a state entity (LSCA) Unclear, unbalanced generally outdated perspective- need to be more than just animals and information Inconsistent conceptualization (internal & external stakeholders) of mission underdeveloped mission and an unclear vision outside of 'get more visitors in the door Entrenched paradigm ingrained work culture Ensure attraction/ education programs align w/new standardsion outdated signs and boards with old logo Outdated outcomes- climate change more pressing now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited space for exhibit expansion Limited space and Covid 19 As big as the facility is, the space feels constrained sometimes. Inadequate animal care holding limited funds for a redo in gla spcaes We need to use eyes like a customer Opportunistic animal acquisition/ Reactionary exhibit design protocols Neglected exhibits DIY everywhere, we need to step up appearance Develop a plan to update an aging building. if we want to step up we need to step up appearances Restricted building space/footprint outdated employee space Outdated exhibits and touch pools underutilizing space that we could expand exhibits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underdeveloped relationship with local tribal groups Deeply ingrained patterns of hiring and operating that wall us off from diversity and growth community nay-sayers Consistently validating the status quo Slow to address equity and access concerns community partnerships are underutilized Inconsistent open dialogue with local educators Outdated information and local connections limited access to historically underrepresented groups Restrictions for access w/POC & indigenous peoples. Underdeveloped strategic partnerships

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | What innovative, substantial actions deal with the Underlying Contradictions and move us toward our Practical Vision?

RATIONAL AIM

Enable the group to create clearly focused yet innovative and empowering strategies that set the course for the organization.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Generate excitement about collaboration within the group and new commitment to practical possibilities.



Expanding resources to empower staff	Expanding resources to empower staff <u>continued</u>	Evolving exhibits and programs to engage and educate visitors	Evolving exhibits and programs to engage and educate visitors <u>continued</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in organizational culture and development Diversify hiring efforts Hire/ contract/ recruit volunteer help Investment in staff and team needs Ask for open feedback to improve EVERY area Create a backup/ succession plan for all key employees. Professional development for directors to develop contemporary perspective of what our role is as an organization Modernize/ integrate IT systems with custom solutions and invest in high-quality IT support Build development department in 2022/2023 Work to close the opportunity gap Develop a POWERFUL mission and vision that inspires the organization Proper space for all staff, volunteers, animals Have an outline by year of when we can hire the staff we are lacking that will help us accomplish our goals More qualified staff for positions Talk through logistics- what is feasible? More input from staff Create a training folder in common drive More frequent communication across departments instruction on technological resources available begin planning to move preschool to boardroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess staff abilities and interests annually all staff meetings quarterly Have clear list of what will be accomplished first and how Upskill/ train mid-level managers more professional development opportunities for staff at all levels Focus on long-term as primary vision Management training for all individuals Coordinate training sessions Stay current with technology changes Stronger focus in trainings and development Collaborate with staff to see needs Top down and bottom up accountability Inter and Intra department communication All staff and board actually understand mission, and their contribution to it department representatives to communicate to other departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop & execute an interpretive master plan Conduct deep alignment of all education products. Form an exhibit development department Remove outdated signage/ exhibits/ unpopular interactives Incorporate life on the water Include climate change impacts for each exhibit New exhibit every 6 months to keep people engaged Create a ten year plan for exhibits. Challenge idea that humans are most intelligent Bring the past to life Day trips, activities organized by GLA Wave action energy or interactive energy creating exhibit hands on exhibit elements to compliment interpretation Increased number of programs Develop realistic exhibit of animals that guests can engage with that will be available for touch consistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stop making temporary exhibits Improve exhibits increased programs for special animals Learn about animal conservation statuses We could have a documentary/ movie nights about the Great Lakes, the environment, etc Offer remote video tours live or asynchronously (front/backdoor). Cohesive messaging through an overarching Aquarium theme Less reading rails More hands on exhibits

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | What innovative, substantial actions deal with the Underlying Contradictions and move us toward our Practical Vision?

RATIONAL AIM

Enable the group to create clearly focused yet innovative and empowering strategies that set the course for the organization.

EXPERIENTIAL AIM

Generate excitement about collaboration within the group and new commitment to practical possibilities.



Engaging community to broaden influence	Developing consistent, stable funding to maintain operational capacity	Catalyzing individual and community conservation action	Fostering governmental relationships to initiate growth campaign
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor social media for people who comment negatively. Invite them to come to the facility for free and give them a tour. • Create partnerships through land acknowledgement writing process • more representation at local events for educators • We should have a fond du lac representative as a staff member • Create a customer liaison position; someone who WANTS change • have a contest with students to see what wild visions they can paint for how to better utilize outdoor spaces at GLA. • become an AZA • accredited facility • Host research and outreach walk through. • Research seasonality- adjust/ improve from years prior • focus groups determining what visitors like • Customer feedback should be reviewed annually to identify the top 3-5 complaints • Stress alcohol free events and partner with local treatment centers and recovery homes. • Reach out/ meet w NAACP & local tribes to determine needs. • Have Blue Heron crew and instructors be responsible/ partner with us for the Blue Heron exhibit. • Branching out to outside help • Create an education program with tribal groups • PSA's to local print/ broadcast/ social media showing volunteerism at GLA • develop mutually beneficial relationships and strategic partnerships • Encourage partnerships with other attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a savings plan into yearly budget • hire a grant writer • Support need to adapt to continued change • Effort to seek more stable funding- hire development director • Increase funding opportunities (grants, campaigns, etc.) • Find space and animals for larger exhibits • Long-range schedule for renewed resources • We could place a pop up gift shop on the board walk • gain access to funds for advances/ expansion • We could partner with other organizations to fundraise such as the zoo • We could connect with donors (like small businesses) to match other donations • restructure our fundraising efforts • Find a way to hire a grant writer- we need funding • Create a team within our staff or board members that spend their time looking for grants and funding for us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a position as sustainability coordinator • Factor sustainability initiatives into budgetary decisions • As an organization, embrace environmental advocacy stances • Provide flexible scheduling to staff to participate as a group in local conservation efforts • Increased efforts in sustainability • Learn actionable steps MN/WI residents can take 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek state bonding funds for building expansion • start planning for major bonding request • Staff and board leadership have strategic and consistent communication with City and State leaders. • Go to the state for bonding money. • Develop a message that represents how Great Lakes Aquarium is a State organization and not only a Duluth attraction • Stop asking the City what they want from GLA- start telling the City what GLA needs



APPENDIX 7

GLA Mini-Survey Summary 03.04.22



BACKGROUND

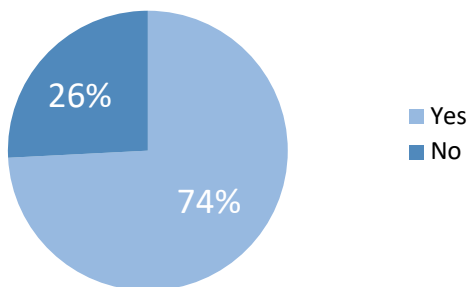
After completing the Practical Vision, Underlying Contradictions, and Strategic Direction workshops, Great Lakes Aquarium staff and strategy committee members were asked to take a mini survey to gather feedback related to the aquarium's current vision, mission and values, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, benefits and dangers of achieving the group's practical vision. The survey gathered 31 responses, with 84% of respondents indicating they are a GLA staff member.

VISION AND MISSION

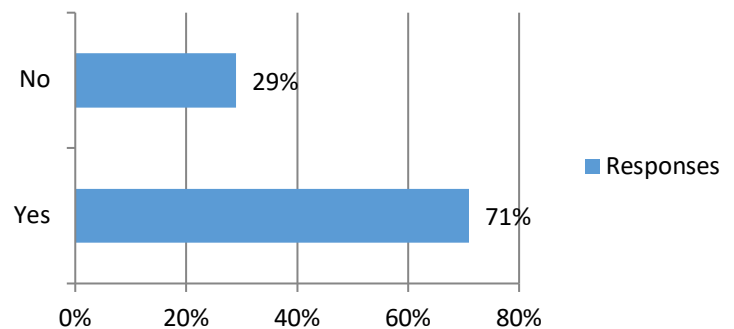
The first few questions asked participants to assess the aquarium's current vision and mission for recognition and relevance. Nearly **30% of respondents do not feel the existing vision is relevant**, with many expressing GLA provides visitors with connections beyond water. When evaluating the current mission, there was more alignment with relevancy, with only **13%** reporting concerns. Many of the comments on the current mission focus on the verb **connect** and whether that is the strongest word choice.

Great Lakes Aquarium's stated **vision** is **"People feel connected to, value and protect the world's waters."**

Do you recognize this as the vision statement?



Do you feel the statement is still relevant?



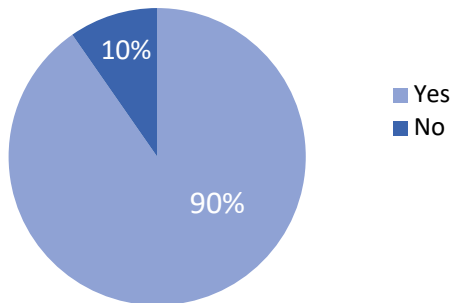
Comments:

- *It is a stretch to say we promote protecting or valuing waters of the world*
- *I believe people leave their GLA visit thinking more about water*
- *The water is obviously important. But this somehow seems limited or insufficient to capture all that GLA encompasses.*
- *I think it's time to move beyond influencing how our visitors feel when they leave and directing our focus toward influencing how they act when they leave.*
- *'World's waters'- If our focus is on the great lakes why in our vision does it discuss 'world waters'*
- *I don't know what GLA means by "connected to". This feels very vague and leaves a lot up to personal interpretation within the organization. For my own understanding of the word, it is relevant. If I inserted another's understanding of "connected", I may not feel it is relevant.*

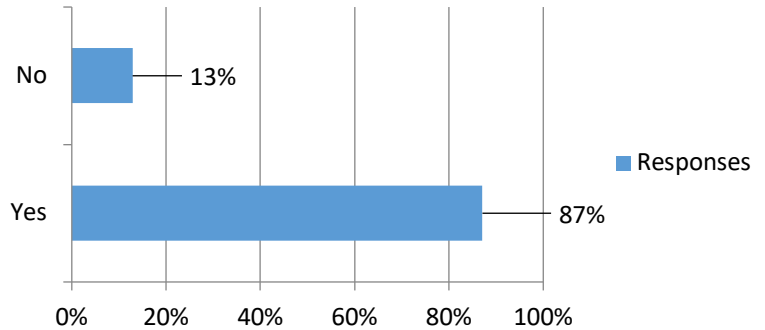


The current mission statement reads *“Great Lakes Aquarium connects all people to the water and wildlife of Lake Superior and beyond.”*

Do you recognize this mission statement?



Do you feel the statement is still relevant?



Comments:

- *It is what we do well. We connect people physically with hands-on displays and touch pools, and we connect people emotionally with shared experiences with friends, family and staff.*
- *the "and beyond" seems ill-conceived. we are one of few aquariums with a freshwater focus on the shores of one of the nation’s most iconic great lake. I feel we should lean into that rather than broadening our focus to things we neither specialize in, nor have a depth of understanding in.*
- *While I DO feel like our mission statement is still relevant, I believe we have work to do to DEFINE it better. What does it mean for someone to be "connected" is that a feeling? An action?*
- *I think 'connecting' is sort of a weak word. Again, it focuses on feelings and not actions.*

FUTURE HOPES AND DREAMS

Major themes emerging when asked about aspirations or dreams for the future relate to **physical growth** and depth in **educational offerings** and **community connections**. The second question prompted respondents to identify how things would be different if their dreams came true. Responses to this prompt centered around themes of being a **well-known, science focused leader** with **increased attendance and participation in events**, and a noticeable improvement in **staff retention and satisfaction**.

What are your aspirations or dreams for Great Lakes Aquarium?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To become bigger and more recognized</i> • <i>grow and expand our building, our reach and education to our community</i> • <i>A sustainable organization serving our community for the next 50 years and beyond, providing a family fun and educational experience.</i> • <i>I would love to see more community connection. We could be a great resource and a leader for our community and local businesses setting a standard in operations from everything to education, entertainment, and how to implement different elements like compostable to-go containers. I think we could have a rather large influence if we wanted to.</i> • <i>To grow and spread knowledge, giving guests tools to make a difference outside of the Aquarium.</i>



How would things be different if your aspirations & dreams came true?

- We would be an unstoppable force for change in actually living out what our facility hopes to inspire in others. Also, we wouldn't consistently face burnout as a staff.
- We would become the science focused center within Duluth and that would be an amazing thing to reach
- My job and its duties would be expanded, and I would love that!
- We could be an impetus for civic involvement in the conservation/preservation of our natural resources/species.
- More visitors, expand programs and events = more money
- Our revenue stream would diversify with expanded events. New Galleries will create a "must-see" attraction that will increase gate revenue. Pre-school diversifies our education offerings and provides a much-needed service to the community. The Aquarium staff can take a more active role in promoting freshwater conservation and become a nationally known facility for what we do.

VALUES

The next section directed respondents to assess Great Lakes Aquarium’s stated values, which currently are Innovation, Integrity, Sustainability, Accessibility, Engagement, Excellence, Collaboration and Fun.

Participants were asked to provide **three words** that you feel, or hope, embody Great Lakes Aquarium.

Words chosen should complete the statement “We are...”

<p>Educational 10 responses</p>	<p>Engaging 5 responses</p>	<p>Fun 4 responses</p>	<p>Passionate 4 responses</p>
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STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, BENEFITS, DANGERS

The final section directed participants to complete an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the group as they work toward the practical vision, as well as benefits and dangers anticipated as the group attains success. Responses with multiple mentions are indicated in **bold**.

Strengths: <i>What are the strengths this group has toward creating the Practical Vision? What are our strengths as a team?</i>	Weaknesses: <i>What are the weaknesses this group has toward accomplishing the Strategic Directions? What are our weaknesses as a team?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/Team • Collaboration • Creative & Innovative • Hard working • Passionate • The dedication of our people - staff, leadership, volunteers/board members • Flexibility in dealing with the pandemic • Diverse mix of professional backgrounds with the skills we need • Community connections which can promote GLA success stories • Everyone has a strong desire to see GLA improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, or lack thereof • Physical space constraints • Misaligned goals/objectives • Money • Lack of diverse voices • Need metrics to assess progress towards success • Small size, hardworking which can lead to burn out • Determining how to assign new work towards the vision • Complacency • No intentional topic for conservation stewardship for staff to work from
Benefits: <i>What benefits will our success bring?</i>	Dangers: <i>What obstacles or dangers do we anticipate confronting when we are highly successful?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better exhibits and guest experience • Community building opportunities • Empowered staff • Increased revenue • Increasing guest visits and recurring visits - Guests will want to make repeat visits • Reputation of a scientific institute • People will understand how important freshwater is and what they can do to protect it. • Staff will feel valued and staff retention will be high • Visitors will making positive behavioral changes - conservation actions • Education remains core objective, but not in your face; they learn without realizing it - just fun! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing too fast • Alienating stakeholders • Competition • Losing connection to mission and vision/losing alignment • Danger of criticism/contention from public • Become overdependent on outside donations to operate • Lack of staff & hiring challenges • Tunnel vision, believing there is one path to success • Not everyone's voice is heard • "We are nonprofit- we don't have the funds for..."



APPENDIX 8

GLA CR SI ACC 4.13.22



SD1. EXPANDING RESOURCES TO EMPOWER STAFF

Current Reality:

- People wearing many hats and leading to burnout
- Very homogenous staff
- Salaries not competitive, especially with for-profit competition
- Collaborative, resourceful, helpful, intelligent staff
- Some professional development but could be more
- Opportunities have been limited by Covid; trying to bring back

Success Indicators:

1. Staff take vacation without worry (and feel OK doing so)
2. Organization structure makes sense; roles well-defined, match descriptions, and are understandable
3. Opportunities for advancement/lateral movement exist and professional development is available
4. Staff more representative of community due to direct outreach programs and engagement with underserved groups
5. Salaries competitive with industry and community

Accomplishments:

1. Develop minimum financial requirements for sustainable pay and program development
2. Create active board and staff subcommittee for engagement with underserved groups
3. Establish budget and professional development plan for all staff
4. Develop roles and job descriptions for every employee with annual reviews
5. Set protocol for adding new programs and employees



SD2: EVOLVING EXHIBITS AND PROGRAMS TO ENGAGE AND EDUCATE VISITORS

Current Reality:

- Coming out of Covid, restabilizing existing programming with a new perspective
- New exhibit projects in process
- Need direction
- Reactionary, broken
- Temporary exhibits are meant to be temporary
- Specialization is happening
- Department growth; hiring back up to pre-Covid levels
- Storage is maxed out and may not be efficient use
- Lack of process
- Not looking modern or state-of-the-art, reality vs. perception

Success Indicators:

1. All animals in appropriate habitats and show stereotypical behavior in welfare assessments
2. Improved guest evaluations; track a) interaction, b) satisfaction, c) learning outcomes
3. Increase in return engagement (camps, membership, trainings)
4. Move from being reactive to proactive in funding exhibits
5. Achieve and maintain Association of Zoos and Aquariums standards

Accomplishments:

1. Complete timing and tracking survey for every exhibit
2. Develop standard operating procedures for new exhibits and review current exhibits
3. Create interpretive master plan
4. Develop redundant component plan
5. Build process for annual guest satisfaction survey
6. Conduct Association of Zoos and Aquariums audit of exhibits



SD3: ENGAGING COMMUNITY TO BROADEN INFLUENCE

Current Reality:

- Engaged with local science community
- Waning engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion community while visitors grow more diverse
- Re-engaging educators after Covid obstacles
- Narrow political engagement
- No good plan for general community outreach/event participation; off-site things have been cut
- Volunteer program swamped and no plan to build capacity
- Staff community engagement not emphasized; individual things are happening, but not harnessed
- Focused heavily on revenue generation; could meet whole mission
- Social media providing general awareness but lacks broader purpose/process

Success Indicators:

1. Increase in income access program participation; demographics of visitors match or exceed region
2. Increase in number of schools participating and educational content reaching more teachers and students
3. Greater volunteerism through staff participating in/leading mission-relevant community projects
4. Social media followers and interactions increase
5. Social media plan in place with identified community engagement goals
6. Volunteer program functions efficiently

Accomplishments:

1. Develop social media plan
2. Dedicate staff member to community engagement
3. Through the engagement subcommittee, identify initiatives in the community and work with them
4. Audit current engagement to connect with broad range of groups
5. Establish baseline demographics and track them
6. Identify opportunities and incentivize staff participation in/leadership of community projects
7. Proactively create opportunities for mission-driven community events



SD4: DEVELOPING CONSISTENT, STABLE FUNDING TO MAINTAIN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Current Reality:

- Coming out of Covid; stayed open throughout
- Operational uncertainty: can this be maintained?
- Reactionary decision-making
- Willingness to commit learning team to grant-writing right now
- Lack an emergency fund
- What is ROI? What can we allow?
- Need a bigger buffer
- Reliant on revenue streams that are not definite
- Aging facility and have maxed its capacity
- Fundraising all over the place – creates confusion

Success Indicators:

1. Establish two funds: a) a scholarship for programming and b) capital improvement fund
2. No longer dependent on city funds
3. Increased funding from outside Duluth MSA
4. Reduced reliance on ticket sales for base funding
5. Facility stays up to date and is updated

Accomplishments:

1. Determine what, where, and why for current funding sources
2. Create long-term building plan for maintenance and expansion
3. Hire a development manager
4. Conduct annual staff survey and create action plan
5. Establish a fund development plan that analyzes return on investment and the percentage of resources coming from each source



SD5: CATALYZING INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY CONSERVATION ACTION

Current Reality:

- No consistent conservation messaging/organization goals and direction
- No formal conservation projects; all on an individual basis
- Sustainability committee hasn't come back since Covid
- Active composting and plastic film recycling programs
- Some sustainability-focused facility projects (pumps, electrical efficiency) in infancy
- Culturing some live food sources
- Some environmentally friendly products in gift shop...and some not

Success Indicators:

1. Functioning sustainability committee operational
2. Decrease in water and electricity consumption
3. Affiliated with nationally recognized conservation programs
4. More redirected event waste and infrastructure in place for it
5. Guests/participants can identify conservation message and participate in programs

Accomplishments:

1. Re-establish sustainability committee with dedicated function, goals, and budget
2. Conduct sustainability audit of guest services (events and gift shop) and incentivize participation
3. Collaborate with existing community conservation partners and programs
4. Conduct energy audit and create plan for more efficiency
5. Use interpretive master plan to hone conservation message
6. Increase visibility of culturing to visitors



SD6: FOSTERING GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS TO INITIATE GROWTH CAMPAIGN

Current Reality:

- Board experience underutilized
- Government relations narrow and mostly city or mandated
- Relationship with city isn't balanced or collaborative
- Government perception doesn't align with reality of GLA; need direct messaging
- We tend to use qualified messaging
- Technically a State entity only connected through board, have not used lobbying strategy; could do more with focus on city and state relationships

Success Indicators:

1. Increasing attendance and participation from city staff and city/state elected officials
2. Increased GLA participation in city decision-making that affects GLA or are mission/vision related
3. Bonding requests are funded

Accomplishments:

1. Determine who/how to track city activity pertinent to GLA
2. Board and staff create lobbying committee
3. Identify and build relationships with city and state level representation
4. The fund development plan includes regular funding bonding requests



APPENDIX 9

GLA Strategic Plan Timeline 4.13.22

	2022		2023				2024				2025				2026			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SD1: Expanding Resources to Empower Staff																		
A1. Develop minimum financial requirements for sustainable pay and program development	S & E																	
A2. Create active board and staff subcommittee for engagement with underserved groups	S & E																	Review
A3. Establish budget and professional development plan for all staff		S & E																Review
A4. Develop roles and job descriptions for every employee with annual reviews			S & E															Review
A5. Set protocol for adding new programs and employees																		Review
SD2: Evolving Exhibits and Programs to Engage and Educate Visitors																		
A1. Complete timing and tracking survey for every exhibit	Start & End																	
A2. Develop standard operating procedures for new exhibits and review current exhibits		Start		End														
A3. Create interpretive master plan			Start															Review
A4. Develop redundant component plan				Start														
A5. Build process for annual guest satisfaction survey								S & E										S & E
A6. Conduct Association of Zoos and Aquariums audit of exhibits										S & E								S & E
SD3: Engaging Community to Broaden Influence																		
A1. Develop social media plan	Start	End																
A2. Dedicate staff member to community engagement	Start																	
A3. Through the engagement subcommittee, identify initiatives in the community and work with them																		
A4. Audit current engagement to connect with broad range of groups			S & E															
A5. Establish baseline demographics and track them			S & E															
A6. Identify opportunities and incentivize staff participation in/leadership of community projects					Start	End												Start & Ongoing
A7. Proactively create opportunities for mission-driven community events																		Start & Ongoing
SD4: Developing Consistent, Stable Funding to Maintain Operational Capacity																		
A1. Determine what, where, and why for current funding sources	Start	End																
A2. Create long-term building plan for maintenance and expansion	Start	End																Review
A3. Hire a development manager		Start		End														
A4. Conduct annual staff survey and create action plan				S & E						S & E								S & E
A5. Establish a fund development plan that analyzes return on investment and the percentage of resources coming from each source				S & E						S & E								S & E
SD5: Catalyzing Individual and Community Conservation Action																		
A1. Re-establish sustainability committee with dedicated function, goals, and budget	Start & Ongoing																	
A2. Conduct sustainability audit of guest services (events and gift shop) and incentivize participation				Start		End												
A3. Collaborate with existing community conservation partners and programs					Start & Ongoing													
A4. Conduct energy audit and create plan for more efficiency						Start												End
A5. Develop and use interpretive master plan to hone conservation message																		Start & Ongoing
A6. Increase visibility of culturing to visitors																		Start & Ongoing
SD6: Fostering Governmental Relationships to Initiate Growth Campaign																		
A1. Determine who/how to track city activity pertinent to GLA	Start		End		Start		End		Start		End		Start		End		Start	
A2. Board and staff create lobbying committee	Start			End		Start	End				Start	End			Start	End		Start
A3. Identify and build relationships with city and state level representation			Start & Ongoing															
A4. The fund development plan includes regular funding bonding requests			Start	End			Start	End			Start	End			Start	End		Start