



# MRPC

## FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDIAN REMOVAL

*in St. James, Missouri*

FINAL REPORT







The background of the page is a photograph of a river or stream, likely the Missouri River, with a thick layer of mist or fog. The trees on the banks are silhouetted against the light, creating a serene and somewhat somber atmosphere. A large, dark rectangular box is centered on the page, containing white text.

## LAND USE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors and collaborators of this feasibility study acknowledge the land that may one day feature a museum, and the land that we now call St. James and Missouri, were once ancestral lands of the Osage Nation, Otoe-Missouria Tribe, and other indigenous people.

Displacement forced thousands of people to travel through Missouri along the Trail of Tears. St. James is located along one of the northern-most trails, adding the power of place to the museum vision.

The museum will educate the public about past actions, honor the people who endured the suffering, and celebrate the resilience of the native people who thrive and inspire us today.



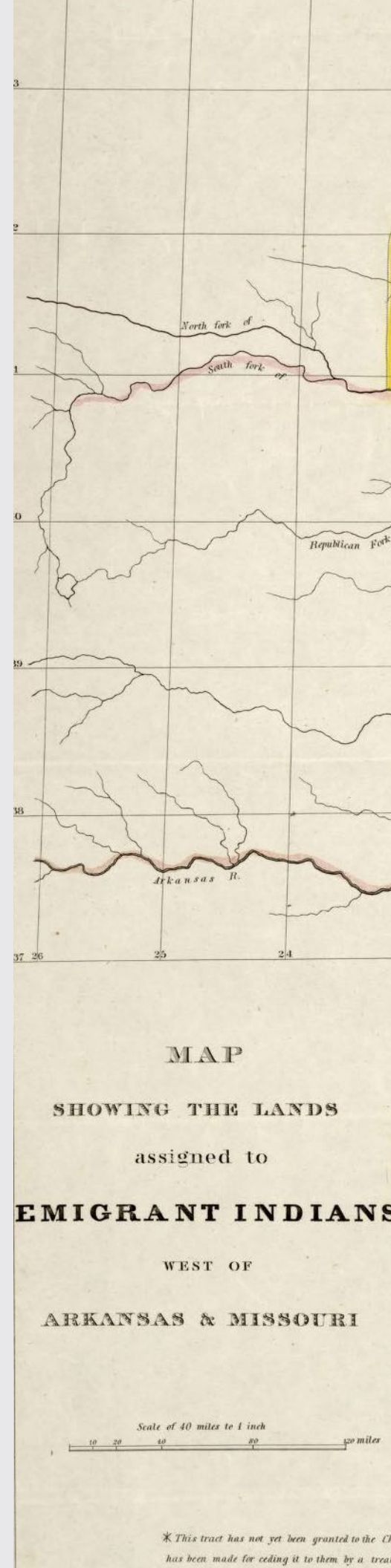
## A VISION FOR A CULTURAL DESTINATION OF NATIONAL PROMINENCE

The proposed museum is envisioned as a world-class facility of national prominence, focusing on the largely untold history of the dispossession associated with the colonization of America. It will seek to provide a chronology of events that ultimately ended with the forced removal of the American Indians from their lands. It will document the lasting legacy of these First Americans and celebrate their triumph over adversity and displacement.

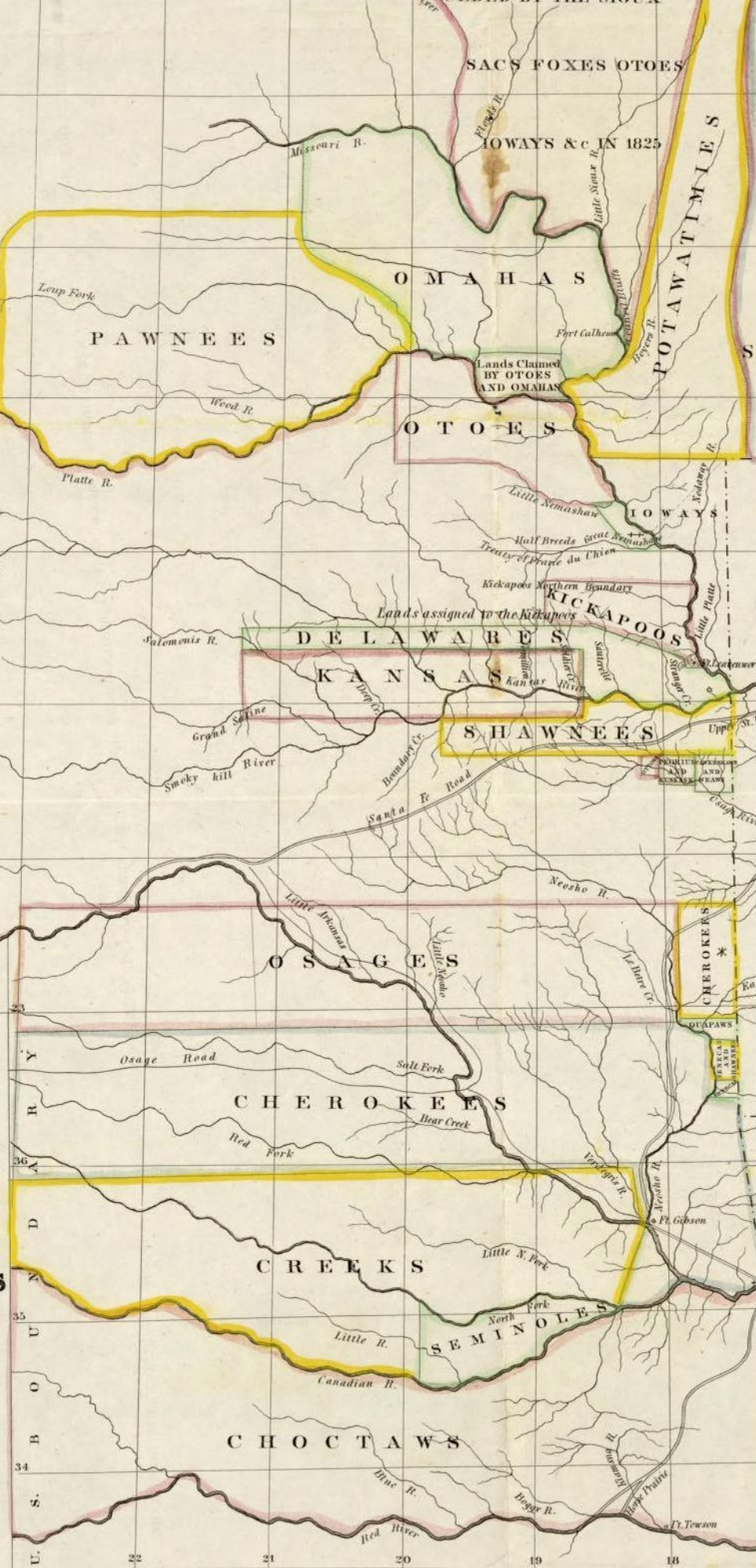
The museum will consist of indoor and outdoor exhibit and program spaces. Exhibit galleries and other indoor spaces will meet the needs of 21st Century visitors through state-of-the-art interactive technology, curated objects, and multisensory immersion experiences.

The museum will stimulate economic development through tourism to St. James, the Meramec Region and the state of Missouri and serve as a hub for a large heritage trail through Missouri. The museum will also provide an important new resource for the local community for education and community engagement.

The Museum will inspire visitors with the story of the resilience of Indigenous People of America—the power of the human spirit to overcome adversity.







### Usage of Terms

This document uses "Indigenous," "Indian," First American, and Native interchangeably in the text. When referring to citizens of a specific Native nation, it is preferable to be specific such as Cherokee—even better to use the word from their language; Tsalagi. It is more difficult to find a single label to describe people and cultures from 574 recognized nations in what is now the United States. When that is required to interpret a story as broad as removal, the terms referenced were most frequently used by the native people we met with during the study. Further consultation with representatives of Native nations is recommended as the project advances.

++ The small tract (coloured green) between the Little and Great Nemahaw Rivers, by the Treaty with the Confederate Tribes of the Sacs and Foxes of July 15<sup>th</sup> 1830 was



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### **Study Approach**

Engagement consisted of in-person and virtual meetings in St. James with the project team and local stakeholders, a site visit to the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City, and phone calls with individual stakeholders and advisors.

PGAV's team provides a comprehensive approach to critically evaluating the context of feasibility, leveraging our unique project experience to offer appropriate recommendations. We seek to capture and interpret technical aspects, such as visitation and financial metrics, while also paying special attention to the notion that people crave great stories, and generally want to be inspired by a place. We firmly acknowledge what is at stake with the mission and topics of this proposed museum, and it's a responsibility we do not approach timidly.

### **Study Findings**

- In order to differentiate from other institutions, it is understood that the National Museum of Indian Removal must involve indigenous perspective as a fundamental foundation to its existence.
- 14 individual sites were considered; two remain as viable relating to goals and opportunity. At time of publication, no single site has been selected or purchased.
- The proposed Interpretive Strategy is direct and honest while also respecting those that are telling the stories; we also want the listeners to be inspired by what they experience.
- Individual ticket sales alone will not financially sustain the future museum. A mix of revenue opportunities, as well as building amenities, must be pursued to offset operating expenses (while also planning for future phases).
- Entity creation and governance, along with the re-development of museum naming will be important first steps.
- A phased approach to building and site development is recommended over a ten-year period. In addition, a more immediate solution may be viable through the implementation of a Research and Information center at the current St. James Tourist Information Center (TIC).

### **Study Conclusion(s)**

This Feasibility Study is but a first step in the overall master planning, design, and construction of the museum, representing a decade (or more) of phased development.

The City of St. James, and its surrounding region, possess sufficient market potential, existing need, and potential growth to support a facility of this type and scope. However, this substantial opportunity comes with a significant capital investment over time, and further presumes that there are key personnel willing to tackle the initial challenge of establishing the parent organization.

Immediate next steps can include: Establishment of an organizational format (ex.: Non-profit, Foundation, Municipal Partnership, etc.) and its governing body. Cultivating an initial relationship with Osage tribe representatives, and possibly allying with the Missouri Trail of Tears Association. Upon successful completion of which may afford the new organization access to local, state, and federal grant monies to begin to cover operating expenses; further financial support may be available from Tribal Nations and individual donors as well.

The scale, scope, and approach of this museum has never been undertaken before. It has the potential to have monumental impacts on the national museum community, not to mention the public's knowledge of history – and is a challenge worthy of accepting.





PARKING AT  
CAMPSITE



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Missouri Humanities Council (MH) has awarded a grant of \$130,000 to the MRPC in support of the Feasibility Study for the National Museum of Indian Removal. Funding for these grants has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative.







## PURPOSE AND PROCESS

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The Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) commissioned a Feasibility Plan for a proposed National Museum of Indian Removal. MRPC received funding from Missouri Humanities Council under the American Rescue Plan Act to coordinate the development of a Feasibility Plan for a proposed National Museum of Indian Removal to be located in Missouri. MRPC selected PGAV Destinations from Saint Louis as the lead consultant. PGAV plans and designs museums and cultural attractions throughout North America and internationally.

Prior to this, the Missouri Humanities Council contracted with a consultant for the completion of a preliminary concept plan for a National Museum of Indian Removal to be located in Missouri. The preliminary study was completed in 2020, identifying the community of St. James, Missouri, as the proposed location for the museum. The 2020 study concluded that there is substantial support and enthusiasm for the concept of a national museum, calling for further study and development of a Feasibility Plan as a next step.

The Feasibility Plan provides a vision for the MRPC to fulfill its mission through a preliminary site plan and building design including estimated construction costs, an operational plan including site and building maintenance, and an ownership plan to include revenue and expense projections. The plan provides a clear strategic direction to meet the following planning goals:

- Build and operate the National Museum of Indian Removal in the city of St. James, Missouri, situated at the northern most point of the Northern Route of the Trail of Tears through Missouri.
- Attract a national and international audience and serve as the capstone of the ongoing interpretive activities currently underway in Missouri to locate, document, and interpret the entire Trail of Tears through our state.
- Erect and maintain this long-overdue memorial to our nation's complete story of westward expansion, in this case, a tale of the loss, rather than the acquisition, of extensive lands via the massive removal westward of the American Indian.

The process spanned many months of planning and included input from a wide range of stakeholders representing the local community and indigenous nations. Data was gathered, and critical analysis was conducted to make recommendations regarding potential for site, facilities, attendance, capital cost, operating cost, and governance.

The Feasibility Plan is a preliminary step in the overall planning, design, and construction of the museum years in the making. Subsequent steps will include interpretive planning, exhibit design, architectural design, media production, exhibit fabrication, site development, building construction, and operational planning.





## COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDER, AND ADVISOR ENGAGEMENT

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The study was a collaboration between the MRPC, local stakeholders, numerous advisors, and the consultant team to explore the project potential and clarify parameters for success. Engagement consisted of in-person and virtual meetings in St. James with the project team and local stakeholders, a site visit to the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City, and numerous calls with individual stakeholders and advisors.

### TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Bonnie Prigge**, MRPC Executive Director

**Candace Connell**, MRPC Community Development Specialist

**James Fleming**, City Administrator, St. James

**Galen Gritts** (Cherokee)

**Rick Krawecki**, Mayor, St. James

### SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE

**Bonnie Prigge**, MRPC Executive Director

**Candace Connell**, MRPC Community Development Specialist

**Sammy Auxier**

**James Fleming**, City Administrator, St. James

**Rick Krawecki**, Mayor, St. James

**Dale Martin**, Rolla Regional Economic Commission

**Kelly Money**, Director, St. James Chamber

**Wesley Swee**, The James Foundation

**Joy Tucker**

**Mike Tucker**

**Robin Ziegler**

### ADDITIONAL ADVISORS

**Rocky Miller** (Cherokee), Missouri Trail of Tears Association President

**Travis Owens**, representative of the Cherokee Nation

**Lisa John**, representative of the Chickasaw Nation

**Heather Ahtone** (Choctaw/Chickasaw), Curator of the First Americans Museum

### CONSULTANT TEAM

#### *PGAV Destinations*

**Diane Lochner**, Museum Specialist and Architect

**Melissa Simmons**, Museum and Interpretive Planner

**Brian Pelcak**, Museum Planner

**Tom Owen**, Museum Planner

**Catherine Hamacher**, Urban Planner

**James Pepper Henry** (Kaw/Muscogee [Creek]), CEO of the First Americans Museum





## SUCCESS FACTORS

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The following factors are critical to the success of the National Museum of Indian Removal. While the project is feasible overall, there are certain qualifiers that need to be considered before moving forward and during the development phases.

Each success factor below outlines paths forward for that specific goal or outcome. Some of these may overlap, or new ideas and methods may come to light instead. The goal in providing these is a place to start with as full of a picture as possible of the work ahead in the creation of a world-class museum.

### **Intentional Inclusion**

Intentional inclusion begins at the top in providing for a diverse governance structure and a variety of voices as curators, educators, and other museum personnel. It is imperative to include First Americans at all levels of the museum workplace, from the board to volunteers and interns.

The museum's commitment to inclusion should go beyond having a diverse story and staff. It should be intentionally inclusive of its surroundings, taking inspiration from nature and being conscious of its place in the universe.

### **National Marketing & Brand Recognition**

In order to fulfill a mission of sharing the complete story of removal, the museum will need to step onto the national stage and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other nationally prominent museums. A robust, national marketing strategy is only the first step of building a national image for the museum.

Generating a national brand identity before the museum is completed could involve many strategies including the creation of a research center, public outreach, collaboration with First American nations, and developing curriculum or small traveling exhibits.

### **A Strong, Identifiable Character**

Whether the introductory experience to a larger museum site or of the museum site itself, the proximity to the highway presents an opportunity to develop key strategic features in visibility and guest experience. It also serves to create a unique icon to enhance the identity of the museum.

Along with an iconic building, the name of the museum will need to be developed. The current working title, the National Museum of Indian Removal, has potential conflicts within every word. Creating a name that both resonates with the story and is marketable is vital to national success.

### **Mix of Amenities**

Most museums supplement their ticket sales with additional revenue in the form of events, rentals, retail, and food and beverage options. Including a mix of amenities will support the many functions of the institution as well as provide additional income.

Providing amenities that the regional community is currently lacking will fill the demand and generate interest in the project, ideally resulting in additional investment or financial support. This would include the consideration of lodging and event space that would serve both the museum and the community.



### **Financial Sustainability**

For the long-term success and independence of the museum, the organization must look to become financially sustainable. The museum has the opportunity to investigate existing financial models and methods as examples and to implement programs to allow for long-term financial success.

### **Community Connections**

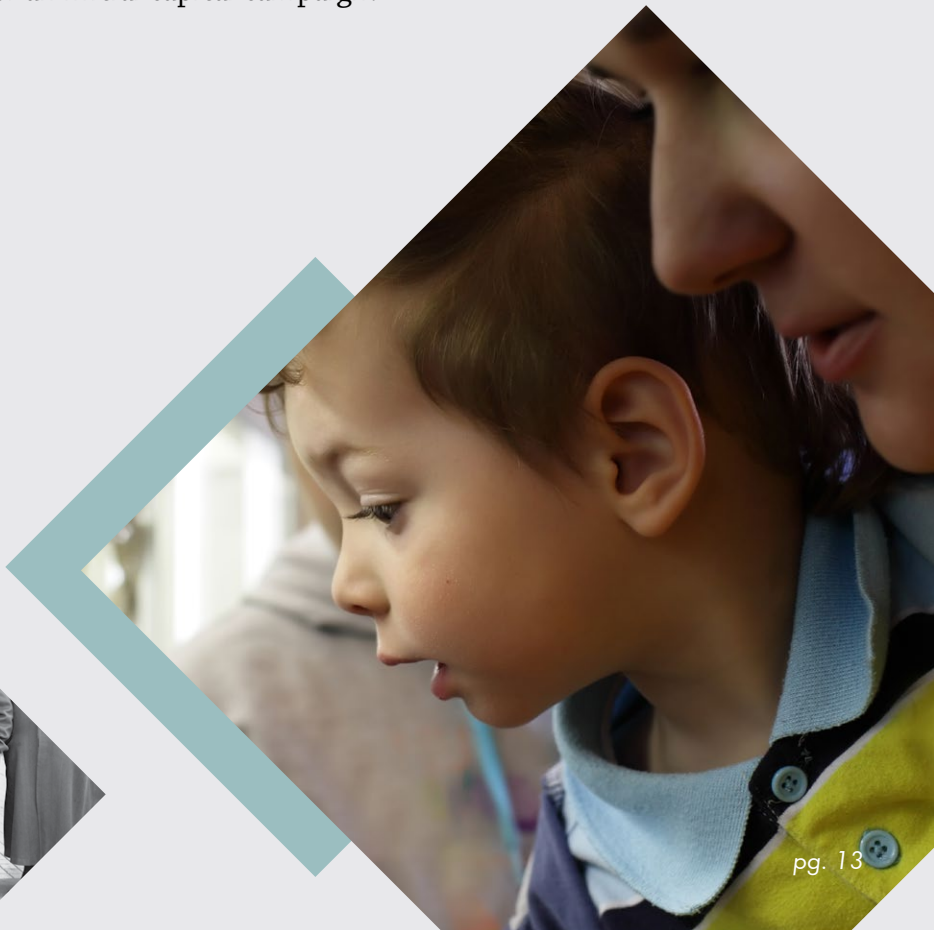
Centering this museum in the community of St. James provides many opportunities for its residents, including additional revenue through tourism, jobs, and an interest in the town itself. More than that, the community will also benefit from the resources and educational opportunities the museum will provide. The museum, in turn, could feature local stories and celebrate local events.

### **Share the Story of Indian Removal & Resilience**

The scale and scope of this museum has never been undertaken before. It has the potential to have monumental impacts on the national museum community, not to mention the public's knowledge of history. Sharing the mostly unknown story of removal with the general public is of utmost importance. However, it will be an emotional journey for even the most knowledgeable visitor.

### **Establishment of Organizing Body**

Paramount to the conclusion of this Feasibility Study will be the intentional organization of an initial governing body for the museum itself. Possibly undertaken by key members of the Site and Technical Committees from this study's development, or by equally passionate members of the St. James community, this group becomes responsible for carrying the mantle forward. Additional momentum can be gained through appropriate engagement of Indigenous Nations, issuance of press releases, and kickoff of an initial capital campaign.









## SITE ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project team identified site requirements and considerations to use to evaluate potential sites. The process explored several potential locations and weighed them against the following parameters:

- Area available
- Existing access
- Adjacencies
- Acquisition cost
- Highway visibility
- Synergy with other tourism assets
- Future development plans
- Current zoning ordinances
- Subdivision regulations
- Land policies

Evaluation consisted of discussions with advisors, in-person observation, and data assessment from online resources including county records, aerial images, and Geographic Information System (GIS) data. The team also factored the importance of the total visitor journey that begins outside of the site itself to contemplate how these sites may or may not be suitable or ideal for the future museum.





## INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

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Based on what they learn in school, most people assume that removal was only in a specific area over a relatively short amount of time. Many would be surprised to learn that not only is this a national story stretching completely across the country, but it also happened in their backyards. Missouri has the most mileage of the Trail of Tears of any other state. Just down the road from the proposed museum site, the northernmost part of the Trail of Tears is still evident, where thousands of Cherokees walked westward.

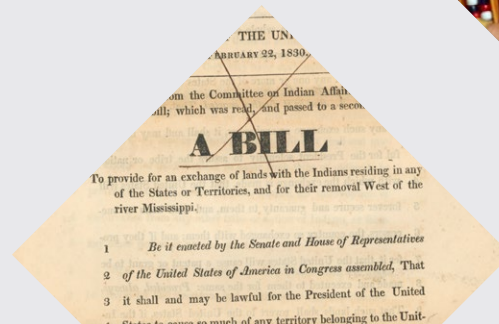
One of the most important messages this museum must express is that First Americans are still here.

Despite numerous attempts at cultural elimination, they have survived and are flourishing today.

While there is strong support both locally and in conversations with First Americans, all agreed this would not be an easy process. One of the largest hurdles identified during the feasibility study is that this broader topic of Indian removal is an unknown story for most people. It will take a strong marketing strategy to entice a broad enough audience to be sustainable.

This will be an emotionally intense journey for most, if not all visitors. Preparing guests will take time and physical space. The topic of Indian removal will challenge most people's belief in what they think they know. Some might reject that outright, but hopefully, with the right messaging and setting, most will be open to acceptance. It is necessary to provide space where people can express their emotions without worry of judgment or reprimand from the institution or fellow guests.

It is extremely important that First Americans be included throughout the entire process. Developing the story for this museum should be a cooperative process and follow Native insights on content and storytelling. The consensus among the advisory group for the feasibility study was that this story must be told from the First American's viewpoint.







### **Brand Development**

The current working name of the institution, National Museum of Indian Removal, must be re-evaluated. Development of the institutional name should run in parallel with brand development. Three priorities should be considered during this development: accuracy with the story, alignment with First American usage, and marketability. A specific focus group could be created to help with this process.

*Peter Bigheart,  
Chief of the  
Osage tribe  
Copyrighted.  
8/23/1898 by  
Wm. J. Boag.  
Pawhuska*



## Interpretive Focus

Such a large story is a challenge for any museum to interpret and for visitors to comprehend. Given the museum’s proposed location in Missouri, the team and advisors recommend making the primary interpretive focus on the tribes who were in Missouri when Europeans made contact, and on the tribes who were displaced from their homelands in the East and moved through Missouri to eventual reservations in what is now Oklahoma.

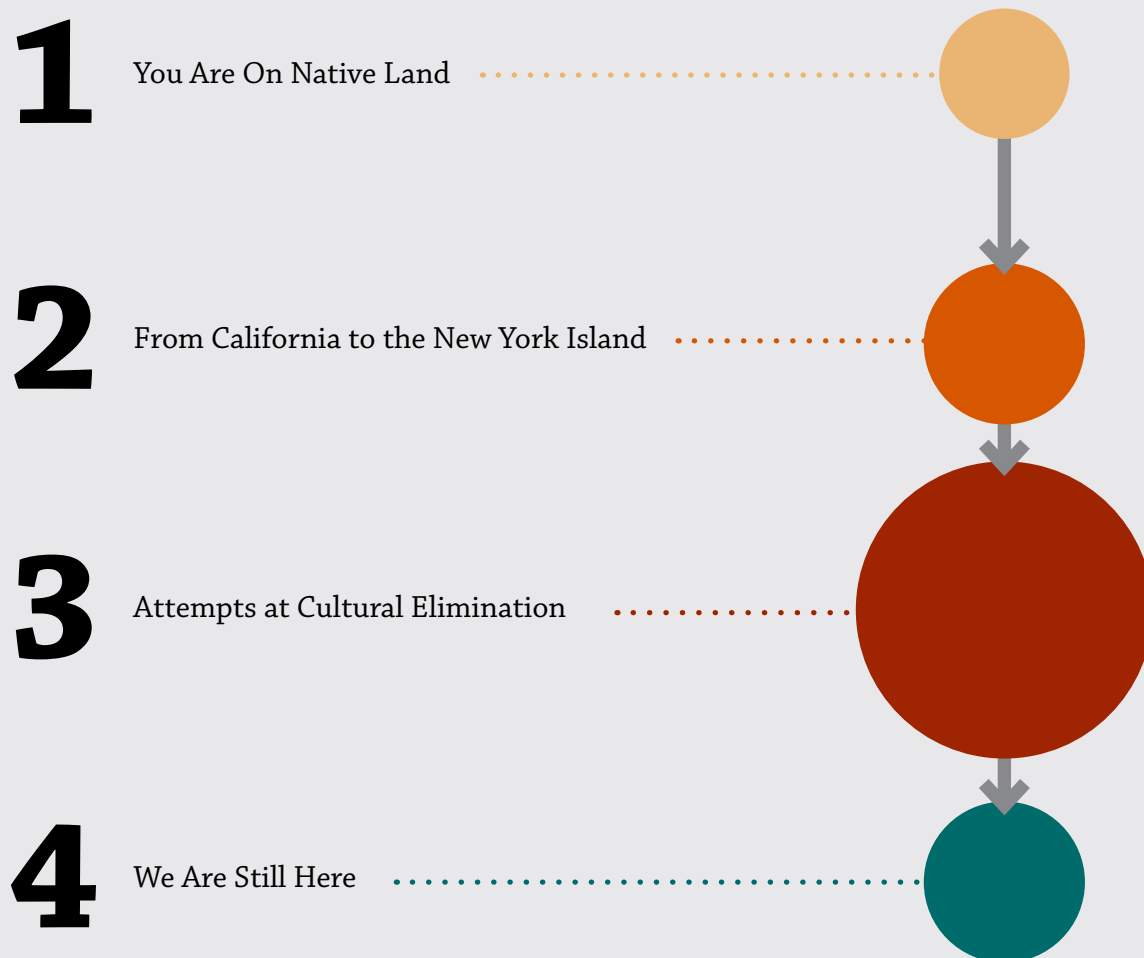
An overview film or other interpretive tools can provide the larger context, but more detailed interpretation will focus on the Missouri connection. Changing exhibits can, over time, feature more detailed interpretation of removal stories beyond the Missouri framework.

## Interpretive Framework and Story

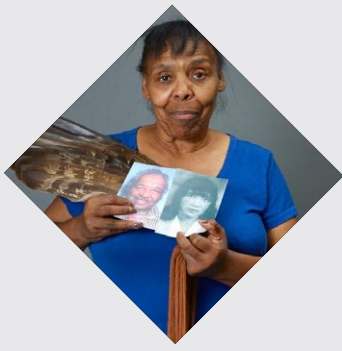
Interpreting the complete story of removal should utilize multiple galleries for two reasons: to break the story down into manageable chunks for visitors, and to be able to expand and contract specific stories or time periods as needed.

The galleries should be thematically organized, rather than strictly chronological, to allow for a thorough orientation to the story and a strong emphasis on resilience throughout.

For planning purposes, four “galleries” have been outlined, each with a different focus yet brought together to provide the full picture. These can be expanded or reimagined as needed as the project progresses. They are as follows:





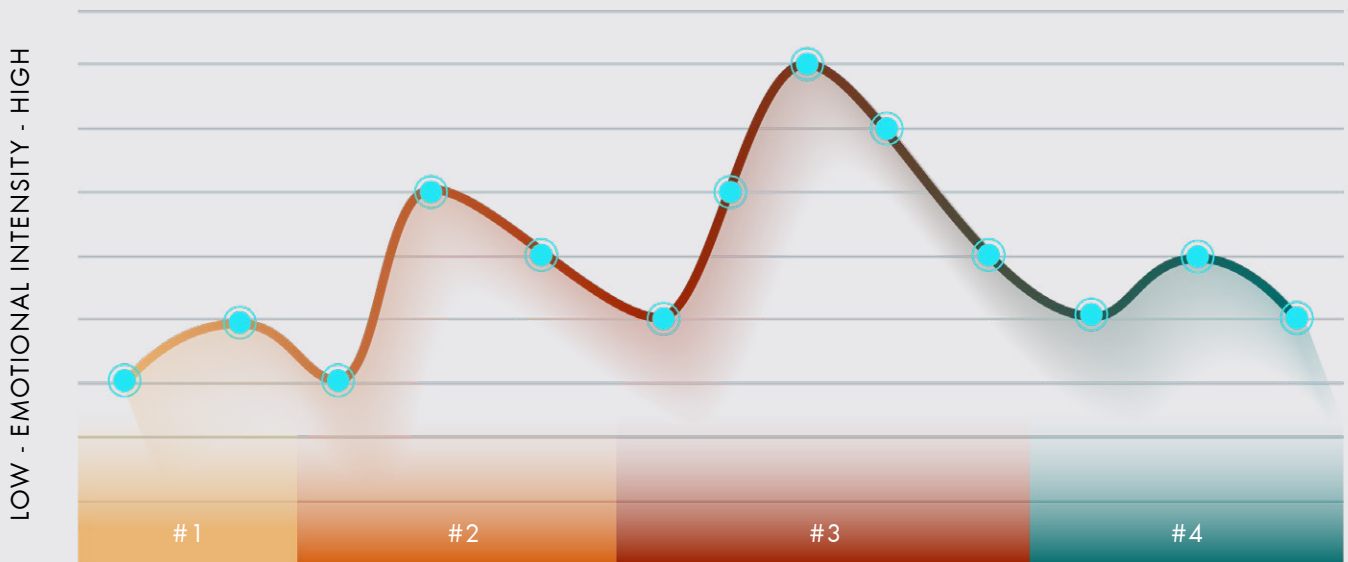


### Emotional Arc

There is power in using storytelling to help visitors emotionally connect to the experience. Using the structure of a three-act play helps to balance the high and low points of the overall experience. When plotted on a graph, the story points should provide a clear structure of the emotional intensity for the overall experience.

This graph does not show emotions as happy or sad, rather, the higher the story point, the more intense the emotion. This graph shows the most emotionally intense story will be the Forced Removal section of the Attempts at Cultural Elimination gallery. The build up and let down are also important to consider so visitors have time to build up the emotional context and release after the high point.

EMOTIONAL ARC OF OVERALL EXPERIENCE







# 1.

## You Are On

# Native Land

The title of this gallery is a commonly used phrase meant “to ignite conversation amongst non-Indigenous communities,” according to the online shop Urban Native Era who has a line of items featuring this phrase. Using this phrase as the title of the gallery inspires visitors to begin to question their assumptions.

The content in this gallery will focus on the importance of the museum’s place along the northern most part of the Trail of Tears and the land of Missouri as a major crossroads in the forced migration of First Americans to lands further west. This story will start to pick up the thread of the national story of removal, but through the lens of Missouri.





*River Bluffs, 1320 Miles above St. Louis*  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr.

**Specific topics in this gallery will include:**

- Tribes who called Missouri home, even for a short time
  - Ancestral homelands
- Missouri as Zone of Removal & Jefferson's plan
  - Osage treaty of 1808
- Tribes who passed through Missouri on removal journeys
  - Forced migration West
  - Trail of Tears



# 2.



## From California to the

# New York Island

The title of this gallery is a line from the song “This Land is Your Land.” It is intended to be a direct counterpoint to the first gallery, which qualifies all land in this country as Native Land, including where you are standing now. This is again an intentional choice to reveal the conflict between First American and European American settlers’ views of the land.

This gallery will focus on explaining the bigger picture of removal to provide context for the more detailed, personal stories of removal in subsequent galleries. It will seek to include all the federally recognized tribes in some format (At the time of printing this report in 2022, there were 574 federally recognized tribes). This gallery will provide visitors with a framework for understanding both First Americans’ connection to the land and the European/American settlers’ motivations for removal that took place over several centuries.





*Antique ship Mayflower II docked at State Pier in Plymouth, Massachusetts*

**Specific topics in this gallery will include:**

- First Americans as stewards of the land
  - Pre-contact populations and trade networks and connections
  - Accounts of land management from early settlers
- European precedent for removal
  - Removal and elimination of non-dominant cultures in Ireland, Spain, etc.
  - The Crusades
  - Need for more land
- The invasion of America
  - Doctrine of Discovery
  - Clashing of views on land
  - “Purchase” of New York



# 3.

## Attempts at

# Cultural Elimination

The title of this gallery doesn't pull any punches, with the name telling visitors what types of stories they will find within.

This gallery contains the major story and content points and is the climax of the entire museum experience. Stories told here are mostly from the First American perspective, with counterpoints of policy and eyewitness accounts shared from the dominant culture's perspective.

While the flow of this gallery is chronological overall, each section of content can expand both forward and backward in time to reveal a bigger picture of events.

A conscious decision was made to have this gallery focus on the decades surrounding the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The story of removal is vast, covering a huge amount of time with many different stories of removal from all over the country. This gallery is focused on the time period of the heaviest concentration of removal, allowing for the other galleries to build the context and briefly describe the periods of time both before and after the 19th century.

At the end of this gallery, informal questions should ask the visitor to draw conclusions on whether these are acts of genocide and/or other crimes against humanity.





*Delegation posing with President Andrew Johnson on the steps of the White House, 1867. Representatives of the Yankton, Santee, and Upper Missouri Sioux, Sac and Fox, Ojibwa, Ottawa, Kickapoo and Miami Nations. (Photo by Alexander Gardner)*

**Specific topics in this gallery will include:**

- Hidden agendas and broken promises
  - Treaties for land
  - Broken promises and unfulfilled duties
- Indian Removal Act of 1830
  - Political debate
  - International perspectives
- Forced removal
  - The journey West
  - What was left behind
  - What was lost on the way
  - The destination
- Assimilation policies
  - Indian Boarding Schools
  - Allotment
  - Other government assimilation policies
- Survival against all odds



# 4.



We Are

## Still Here

The title of this gallery stands in opposition to the previous gallery's title. Although there were many attempts at eliminating First Americans' cultures, many of those cultures are thriving today. This gallery is intended to bring visitors down from the emotional intensity of the previous gallery. It should allow visitors space for reflection and contemplation through the design and display of content.

The content in this gallery will focus on the resilience of First American people through many hardships and changes to lifeways. It will also examine what removal means today and how memory plays a role in daily life.

Although this gallery will focus on resilience, the message of resilience should be evident throughout the entire museum experience. The content in all galleries should be framed so that First Americans are not only depicted as victims, instead focusing on their agency, ingenuity, and resilience.





*Niyol Spencer from Drum group Oka Homma performs at 'Native Truths' Opening  
© Field Museum*

**Specific topics in this gallery will include:**

- Resilience
- Memory
- Reestablishing cultural connections
  - o Repatriation
  - o Traditional homelands
  - o Reinternment



## POTENTIAL ATTENDANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANNING PARAMETERS

The potential annual visitation was evaluated by market segment and attendance mix (adult, children, groups, etc.). Research compared similar museums in similar markets as well as museums of similar focus. Physical planning parameters are derived from projected annual visitation, then further spread across an average operating calendar year to establish an Arrival and Departure curve, as well Peak and Design attendance days. Establishment of an assumed average annual attendance value, begins with an analysis of current market conditions.

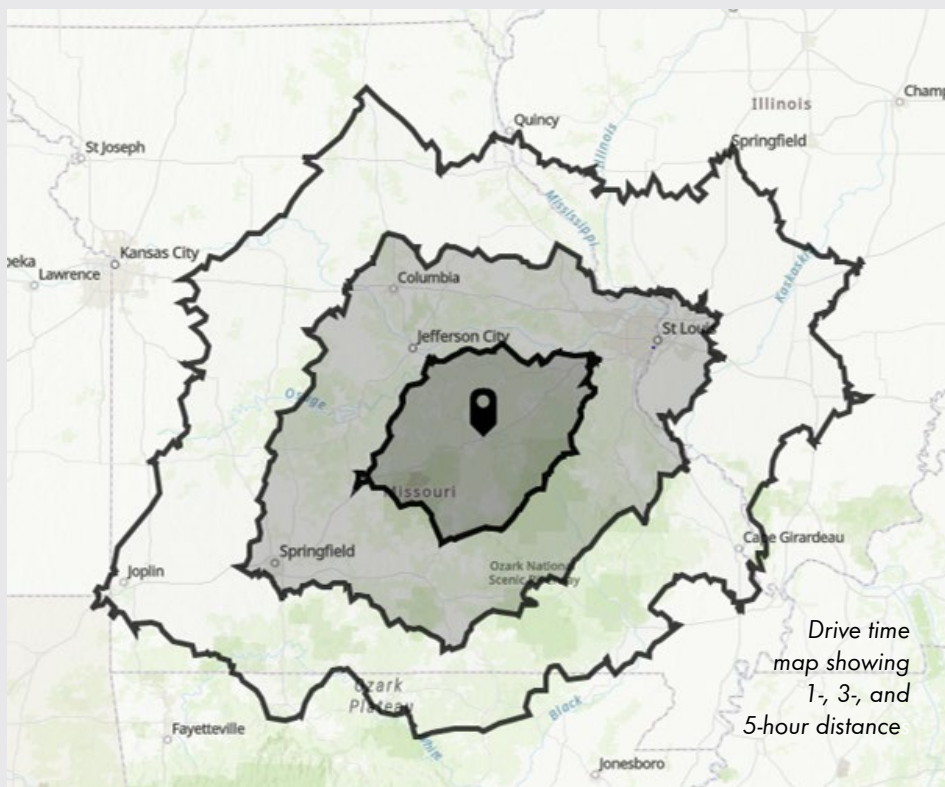
### Market Analysis

The National Museum of Indian Removal (working title), located in St. James Missouri, could expect to attract an annual attendance of 135,000 people. The overall market size, including resident and tourist market, is very large. The three-hour drive time, which includes the St. Louis Metro area, provides a large population with easy access to the museum. Even a small penetration captures significant numbers.

2022 population numbers

- 1-hour population – 277,773
- 3-hour population – 5,549,897
- 5-hour population – 16,172,258

Capturing 1% of the 5-hour drive population = 161,722 potential visitors







### **Market Segments**

There are many ways to think about audience and group people into specific market segments. Drawing from past precedents and demographic and psychographic data, the following groups may have the highest propensity to visit the museum:

- Visitors like those already traveling to the St. James Region
- Local residents
- History enthusiasts
- Meeting and event planners and participants
- Millennials & Millennials with families
- First Americans





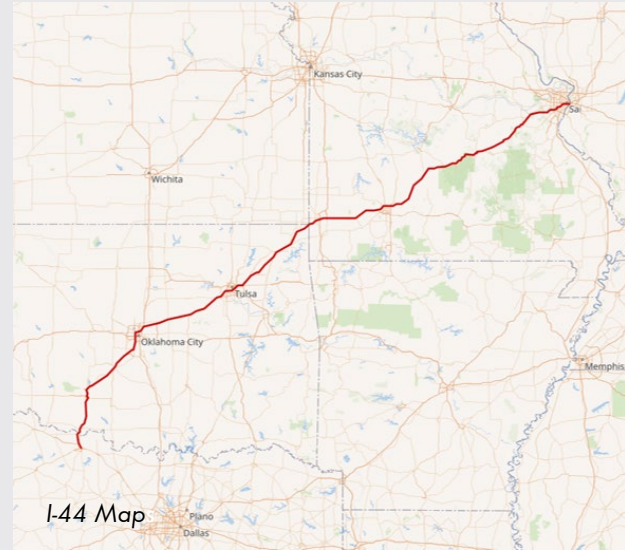


### Traffic Count

The Interstate-44 corridor provides a regular stream of potential visitor traffic on a daily basis. As the summary below suggests, there is sufficient vehicle traffic to support an assumption of even modest market capture which can positively influence a museum location in St. James.

- I-44 going east from St. James – 14,247 vehicles per day
- I-44 going west from St. James – 16,468 vehicles per day
- I-44 going west to St. James – 14,921 vehicles per day
- I-44 going east to St. James (coming from the west) – 16,832 vehicles per day

Conclusion: 28,000 – 32,000 cars pass the intersection of I-44 and St. James each day.

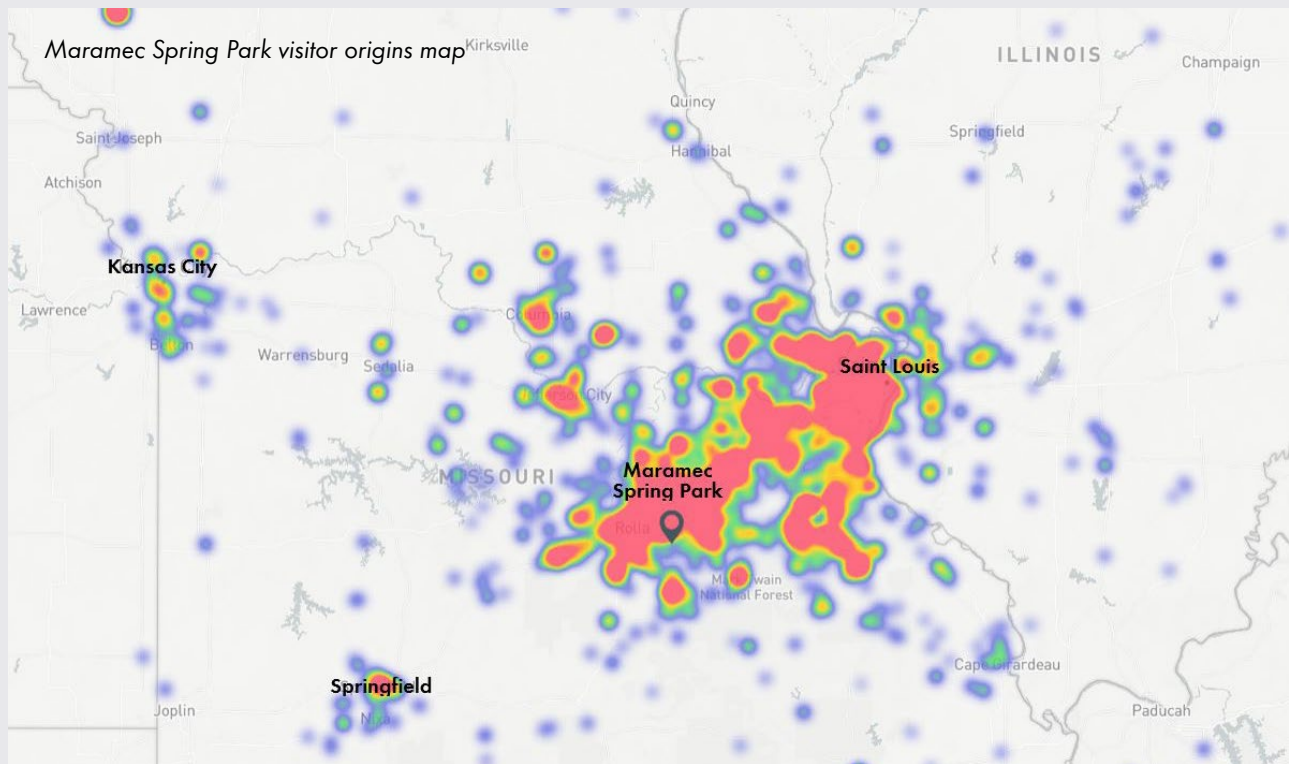


### Existing Tourism Market

An annual attendance of 250,000 to Maramec Spring Park confirms an awareness and willingness of Saint Louisans to include St. James in their consideration set. Many of the visitors to the park come for fishing, which may not be compatible with a museum visit. For the visitors that come for other reasons—nature, recreation, enrichment—the museum could provide a natural synergy. The low admission cost of the park allows room for a museum ticket purchase on the family outing budget.

The location of St. James suggests a strong market. The two potential site locations within St. James offer mutual support opportunities and have a proven history of attracting visitors.

One important factor of note in this data is the relative importance of the St. Louis population, and its proximity to St. James. The population base, as well as the propensity for these residents to travel along the I-44 corridor establish an important baseline for the assumed annual attendance projection. Therefore, consideration of, and marketing toward, this demographic will be important as the museum is established.





### **Attendance to Similar Institutions**

Attendance to museums varies widely based on many factors. The following are a few ways to gauge variations in attendance across similar institutions.

- *Market Size*: the number of people comprising a community's resident and visitor populations correlates directly to the number of potential visitors.
- *Market Penetration*: the percentage of people within the market (resident and visitor) that visit the museum.
- *Repeatability*: the inherent attributes of the museum that motivate someone to visit more than one time.
- *Relevance*: the museum, or an aspect of it, meets a potential visitor's needs—a need for learning, social interaction, self-image, recreation, reflection, mental health, etc.
- *Location*: the functional aspects of visibility and access along with the emotional aspects of safety, setting, and adjacencies.
- *Price*: the perception of value—do potential visitors believe the value of the experience is worth the cost of admission.
- *Product*—is the experience being offered compelling?
- *Marketing*—is it top of mind when potential visitors make leisure choices?



## Visitation Projection Summary

	Benchmarks	Median	Midwest Museums	Nielsen
Total	100,677	118,322	135,978	138,001

## 2019 Midwest Museum Attendance

National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium	Dubuque	IA	100,000
Putnam Museum of History & Natural Science	Davenport	IA	160,000
Minnetrista	Muncie	IN	104,278
National Agricultural Center & Hall of Fame	Bonner Springs	KS	100,000
Shawnee Town 1929	Shawnee	KS	120,000
Great Plains Nature Center	Wichita	KS	160,702
Old Cowtown Museum	Wichita	KS	51,890
Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center	Alpena	MI	80,000
The SPAM Museum	Austin	MN	125,000
Lake Superior Railroad Museum	Duluth	MN	100,000
National Eagle Center	Wabasha	MN	83,000
Strategic Air and Space Museum	Ashland	NE	117,000
Oregon Trail Museum and Visitor Center	Gering	NE	150,000
Durham Museum	Omaha	NE	161,000
North Dakota Heritage Center	Bismarck	ND	250,000
Fronteir Village	Jamestown	ND	150,000
Cass County Historical Society at Bonanzaville	Fargo	ND	100,000
Dacotah Prairie Museum	Aberdeen	SD	76,024
Deadwood History, Inc.	Deadwood	SD	100,000
National Railroad Museum	Green Bay	WI	86,000
Kenosha Public Museum	Kenosha	WI	130,151
Illinois State Museum	Springfield	IL	323,650
U.S. Army Engineer Museum	Ft. Leonard Wood	MO	150,000
Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum	Hannibal	MO	50,000
Missouri Sports Hall of Fame	Springfield	MO	100,000
The Ralph Foster Museum	Point Lookout	MO	60,000
Battle of Pilot Knob State Historic Site	Pilot Knob	MO	63,147
Confederate Memorial State Historic Site	Higginsville	MO	90,000
Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum	Independence	MO	90,000
Missouri State Museum	Jefferson City	MO	458,746
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield	Republic	MO	300,000
<b>Average</b>			<b>135,978</b>



## Benchmarks

Each of the four institutions chosen as attendance comparisons contains similar content although each varies in scope. These benchmarks are all well-known regionally or nationally and share content on Indigenous culture. They vary widely on attendance levels, market capture, and size, yet provide a good picture of success at different scales.



### THE EITELJORG MUSEUM

*Indianapolis, IN*

- Avg. Annual Attendance: 145,000
- Market Capture: 12.3%
- Nielsen DMA: 1.2M



### MUSEUM OF NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

*Bentonville, AR*

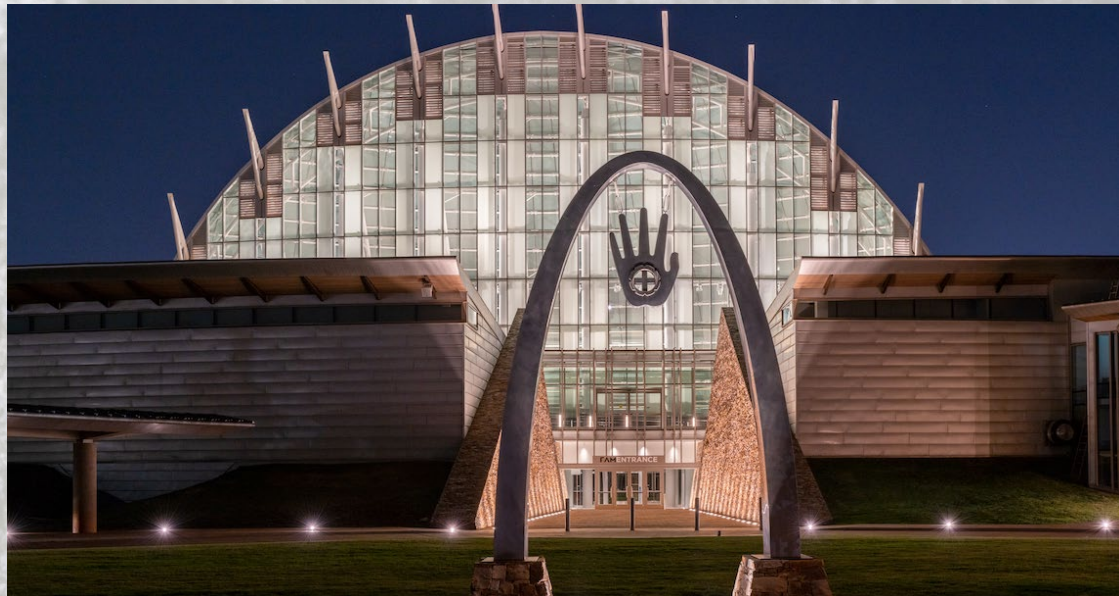
- Avg. Annual Attendance: 27,000
- Market Capture: N/A
- Population: 52,000



## FIRST AMERICANS MUSEUM

Oklahoma City, OK

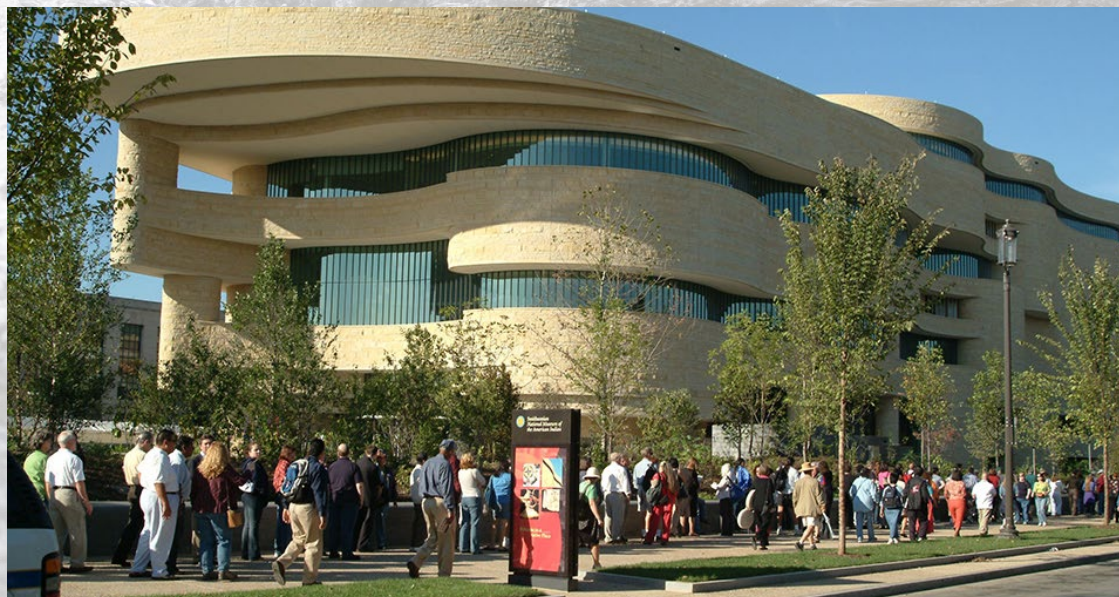
- Avg. Annual Attendance: 130,000
- Market Capture: 17.2%
- Nielsen DMA: 755,340



## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Washington, D.C.

- Avg. Annual Attendance: 1.1M
- Market Capture: 42.9%
- Nielsen DMA: 2.6M



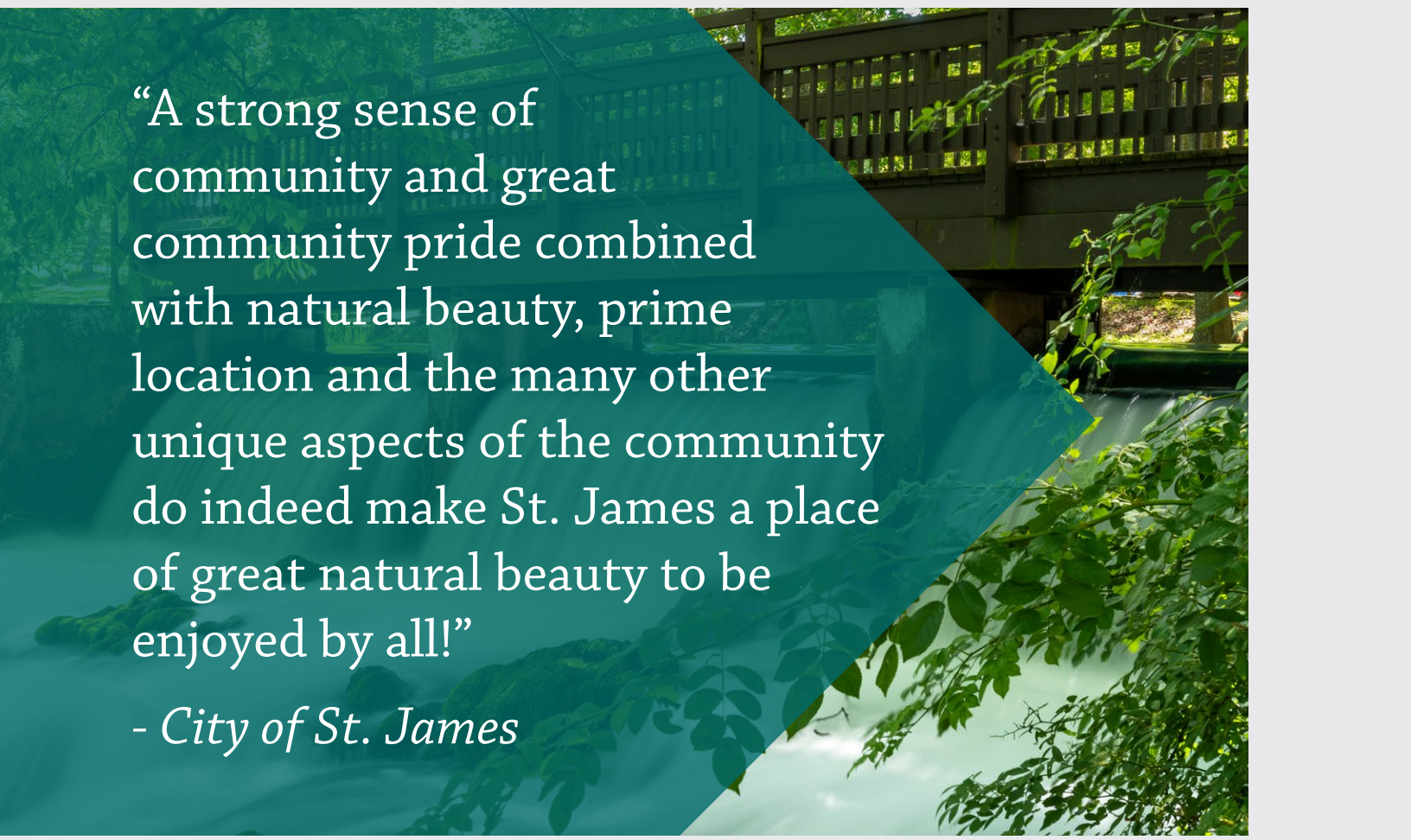


## **Tourism Opportunities**

The National Museum of Indian Removal is a key part of the unique integration of community and destination-based planning. St. James is invested in successful community development, believing that if it is a place where people want to live, it will also be a place where people want to visit.

Planning for tourism is key for a community's sustainability, making sure that the leisure assets that make a community great are working synergistically and are designed and managed in a sustainable way so that they do not negatively impact natural beauty of the region.

St. James is committed to enhancing and expanding the tourism industry in the community. This museum adds to the strength of St. James' commitment to introducing a broad range of audiences to the stories, history, culture, and natural beauty of St. James.



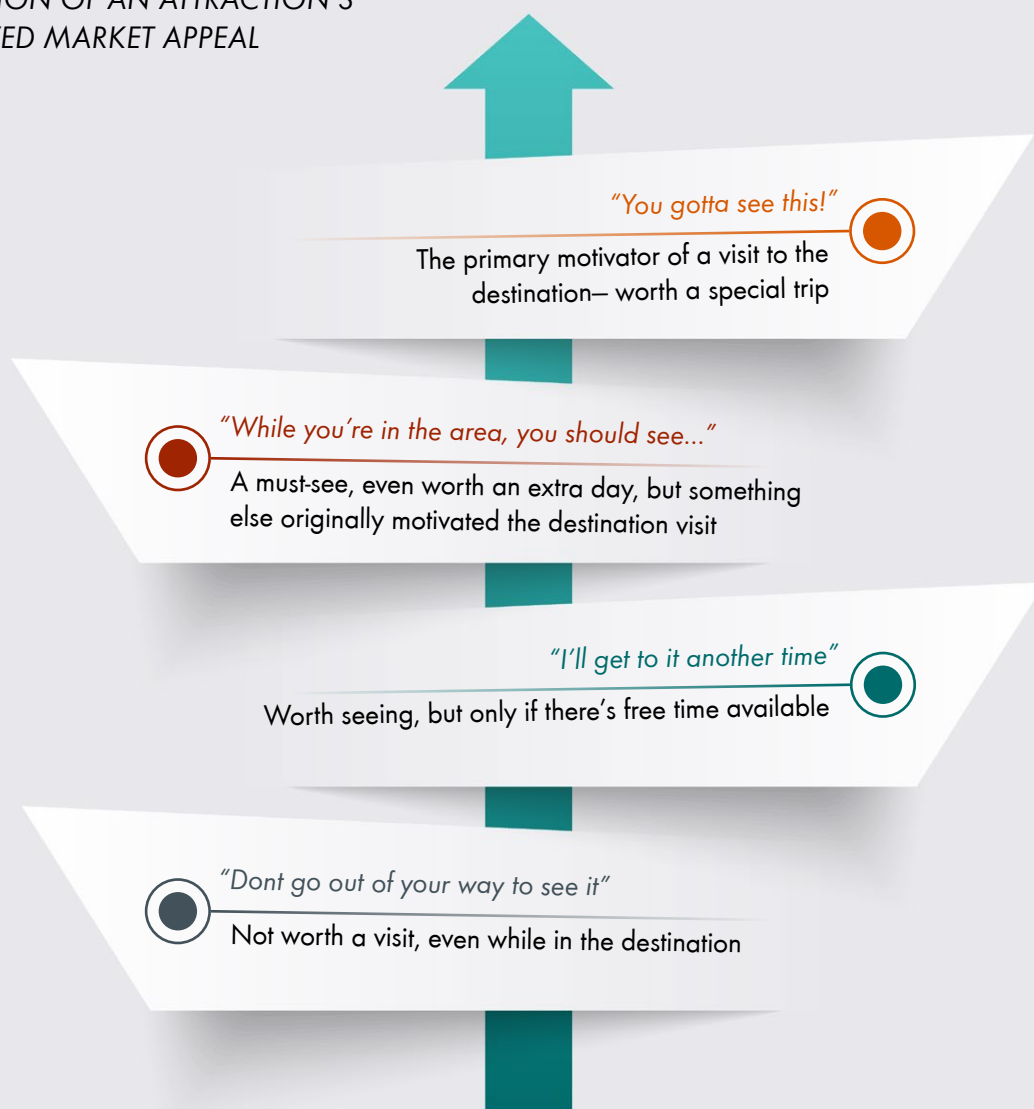
“A strong sense of community and great community pride combined with natural beauty, prime location and the many other unique aspects of the community do indeed make St. James a place of great natural beauty to be enjoyed by all!”

- *City of St. James*

Product appeal drives visitation. In addition to the content, visitors seek unique experiences—things they can't do anywhere else. Planning the museum with appeal and marketability will help drive word of mouth and higher attendance. Events, changing exhibits, and cultural celebrations can expand the appeal beyond the permanent galleries.



## EVOLUTION OF AN ATTRACTION'S PERCEIVED MARKET APPEAL



Robust marketing will be essential. **Unless potential visitors are aware of the museum and believe it will be worth the investment of time and money, they will not visit.** Events, changing exhibits, and cultural celebrations provide new things to promote a sense of urgency to visit.

The museum will need to charge as much as the market will bear to support operational costs. Price will be a deterrent to many people. However, since a high percentage of visitors will be tourists, people tend to spend more freely on vacations and day trips than they do when spending at home.

The story of Indian removal is very focused, and museums focused on serious, difficult subjects don't appeal to everyone. By balancing the removal stories with inspiring stories of resilience, the experience can appeal more broadly. Events and cultural celebrations add to the appeal and motivations for repeat visits.



## CAPACITY ANALYSIS

The PGAV team conducted an operation analysis and capacity analysis based on anticipated attendance patterns, comparable museums/attractions, tourism data, and primary research. The capacity calculation helped right-size the project, informing the magnitude and program of new facilities. Since the museum is not yet in operation, we have made the following assumptions (while taking into account an annual attendance of 135,000 people):

Attendance Projections (Year 5)		CLOSED:	
Total Annual Attendance	135,000	New Years Day	
Days of Operation	360	Easter Sunday	
Max Day	0.79%	1,063	Thanksgiving
Max Day, Peak on Property	33%	351	Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
<b>Design Day</b>	<b>0.55%</b>	<b>749</b>	
Design Day, Peak on Property	33%	247	
Hours of Operation	7	10am-5pm	

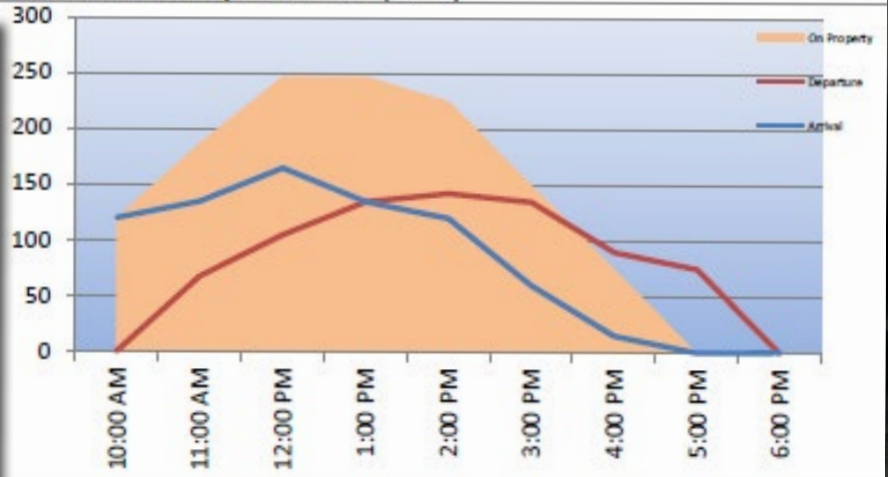
With this total annual attendance assumption, we can expect to see an average daily attendance of 749 in total spread out over the course of operating hours. This is what PGAV refers to as the Design Day, as it assists greatly with 'right-sizing' the space within in the museum.

### Planning for Physical Parameters

Our next step is to chart the assumed arrival and departure curves, based upon industry averages across many types of institutions, to get an accurate picture of Instantaneous Capacity on two unique types of days: Design Day and Maximum Day. These values further help us understand the demand on the building and its functions.

Proposed Guest Arrival and Departure Times (Year 5)						
Design Day (2027)		749				
Hours of Operations		10am-5pm				
	Arrival	Departure	On Property			
10:00 AM	16%	120	0%	0	16%	120
11:00 AM	18%	135	9%	67	25%	187
12:00 PM	22%	165	14%	105	33%	247
1:00 PM	18%	135	18%	135	33%	247
2:00 PM	16%	120	19%	142	30%	225
3:00 PM	8%	60	18%	135	20%	150
4:00 PM	2%	15	12%	90	10%	75
5:00 PM	0%	0	10%	75	0%	0
6:00 PM	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
<b>Maximums</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>247</b>
	<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>			
			<b>Length of Stay</b>	<b>1.7</b>		
				<b>100</b>		
				<b>1:40</b>		

DESIGN DAY: Arrival & Departure Curves (Year 5)

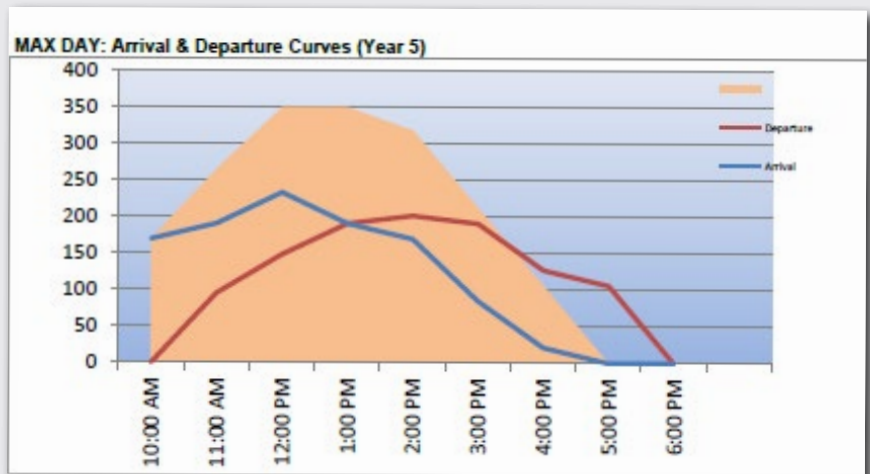






While Maximum Day suggests the most people we could expect to show up in a single day, these days represent a small percentage of total operating days. Instead, Design Day is a more appropriate average throughout the operating year. Our Design Day suggests that the most we would expect to see at one time (instantaneous) is 247 people in the museum. Additionally, we anticipate an average dwelling time of each visitor of approximately one hour and forty minutes.

Maximum Day		1,063				
	Arrival	Departure	On Property			
10:00 AM	16%	170	0%	0	16%	170
11:00 AM	18%	191	9%	96	25%	266
12:00 PM	22%	234	14%	149	33%	351
1:00 PM	18%	191	18%	191	33%	351
2:00 PM	16%	170	19%	202	30%	319
3:00 PM	8%	85	18%	191	20%	213
4:00 PM	2%	21	12%	128	10%	108
5:00 PM	0%	0	10%	106	0%	0
6:00 PM	0%	1	0%	0	0%	1
Maximums	22%		19%		33%	
	100%	234	100%	202	33%	351
					Length of Stay	1.7





## SITE AND BUILDING PROGRAM

The vision for the National Museum of Indian Removal includes a world-class museum building that works in conjunction with an interpretive site design to create an integrated and powerful overall visitor experience. The building program should further be expressed through dramatic architectural and interior design, inspired by native imagery and symbolism determined through close collaboration with native cultural experts.

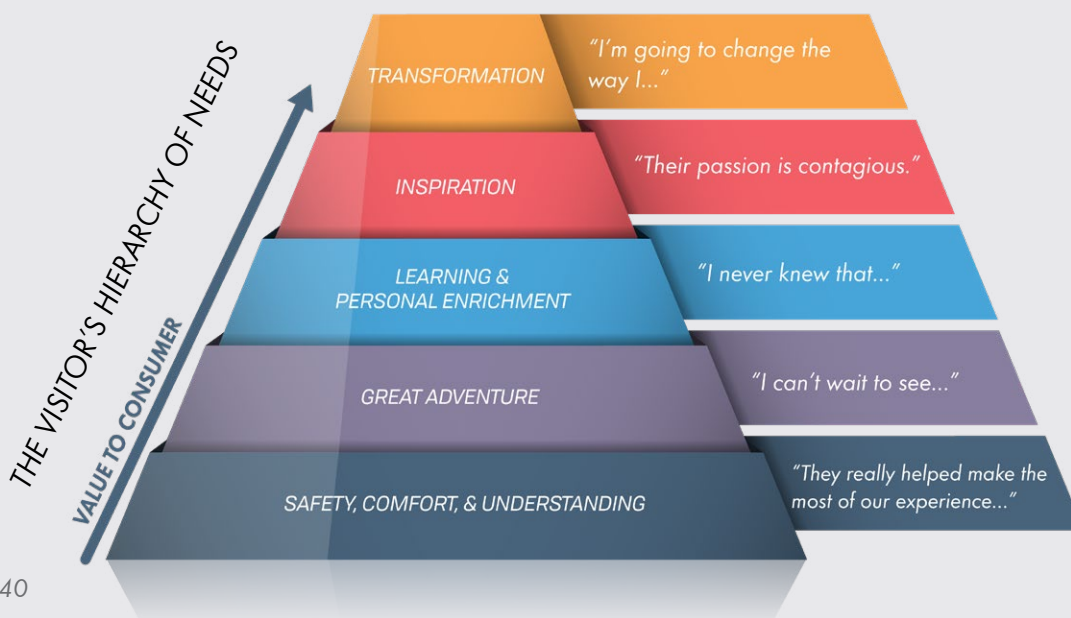
The adopted building plan and adjacencies should allow for expansion opportunities for exhibit galleries, provide event spaces, and support other programmatic needs like native events, while also furthering the mission of curating native stories. Future phase development could include a hotel with conference facilities located nearby, allowing for increased length of stay – while also supporting local and regional needs for similar resources.

The grounds are envisioned to serve as an outdoor exhibit with living history venues, native landscape restoration, and other interpretive components; all under the direction of First American representatives and following culturally responsive methods.

### **A Powerful Visitor Experience**

When people arrive at a destination, they immediately begin forming an opinion about its quality and value. A well-designed arrival sets the stage for the entire visitor experience; it creates anticipation and helps transport people from the space “outside” into the spirit of the place “inside.”

A successful arrival helps people make the most of their day by addressing basic needs—information, bathrooms, safety, orientation, strollers, accessibility—so they can feel comfortable, free to explore, and ultimately transformed by the experience of the destination. We call this the Visitor’s Hierarchy of Needs.









### **NMIR Building Program: Area Allocations**

The First Americans Museum (FAM), located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, provides an appropriate case study of the ratio of spaces. The entire building is 170,000 gross square feet, with the exhibits occupying roughly 17% of that amount (28,000 SF). Additional, largely non-ticketed areas include a large event space, meeting rooms, multipurpose theater, full-service restaurant, and large gift shop (staff offices and other back-of-house functions round out the total area). What this generally speaks to is an importance on “other” spaces, beyond a space strictly for exhibits. Additionally, the presence of a diverse set of spaces which can contribute to revenue strategies beyond ticket sales is particularly important to note.

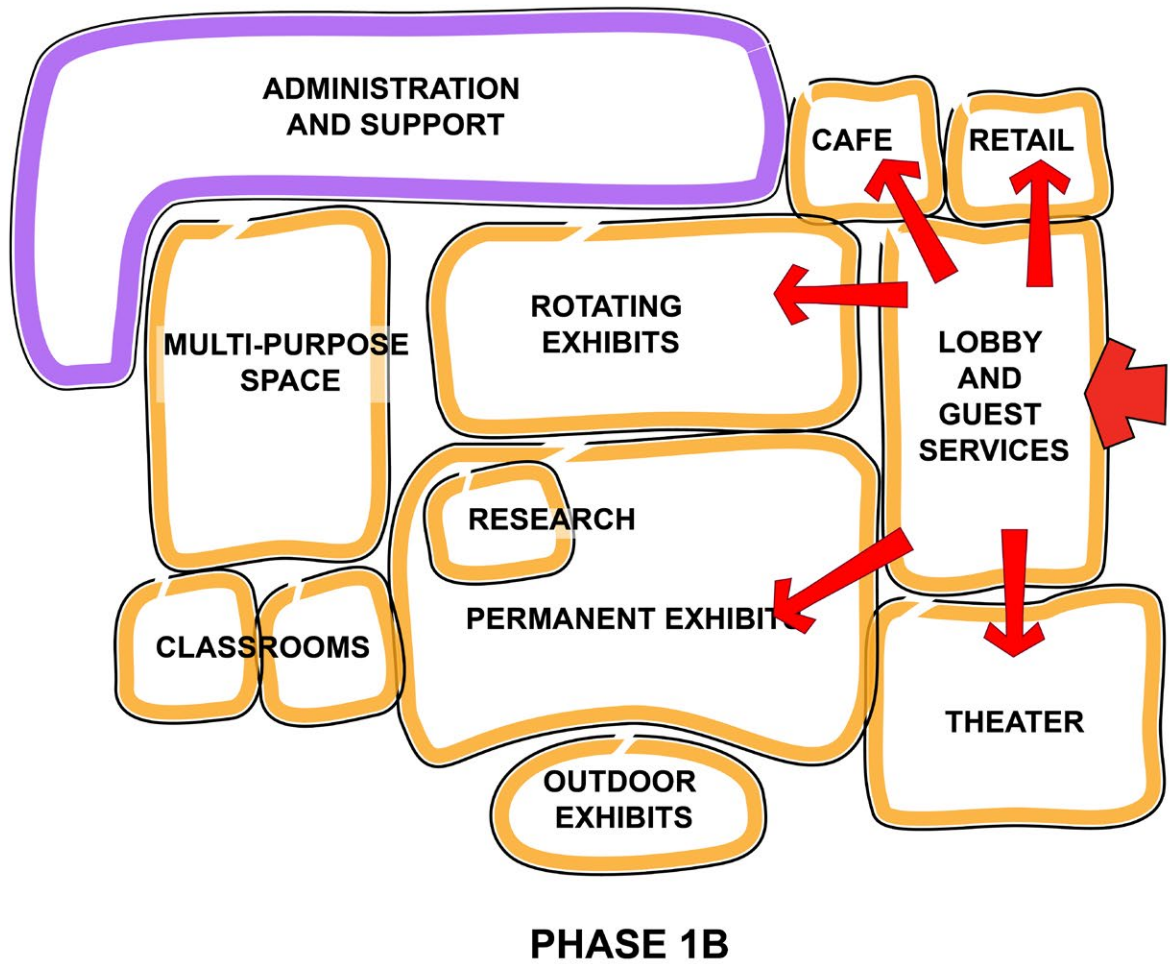
Taking into consideration annual attendance projections, Design Day and instantaneous visitor presence, and benchmark examples of similar institutions, PGAV has developed a complement of spaces (with recommended sizing):

<b>BUILDING</b>	<b>15,456 sf</b>
Lobby & Guest Services	2,500 sf
Administrative Areas (offices, meeting, staff, etc.)	2,000 sf
Multi-purpose Space	1,200 sf
F&B Counter & Support (cooler, freezer, kitchen, dry storage, etc.)	2,000 sf
Retail Sales Floor	2,000 sf
Retail Storage (~20% of sales floor)	400 sf
Restrooms & Janitorial	1,200 sf
Research & Curatorial Space (Relocated from Phase 1A)	1,500 sf
Circulation - allowance	640 sf
Grossing Factor (~15% of total SF) - allowance	2,016 sf

<b>MUSEUM FRONT-OF-HOUSE</b>	<b>23,500 sf</b>
Permanent Exhibit Gallery	15,000 sf
Rotating Exhibit Gallery/Special Event Space	5,000 sf
Lecture Hall/Media Theater - 125 seats	2,500 sf
Cafe/Dining - 80 seats/20 4-tops (approx 800 SF)	80 ea
Education Area(s) - 2 classrooms of 25 ppl. ea.	1,000 sf



The Preliminary Concept Plan, previously undertaken, suggested a 70,000 square foot (SF) museum building. However, taking into consideration the previous market research and operational model, PGAV asserts that a 40,000 SF museum may be more appropriate. Coupled with area development, parking, pathways, and landscaping of an additional 40,000 SF, we estimate the total Phase 1B space requirement at roughly two acres. The diagram (labeled Phase-1B) suggests a relationship to these spaces in term of function, as well as relative proportion to one another. These spaces make up the building program for which a rough order of magnitude (ROM) estimate was created.





## CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

The project team utilized a proprietary database of known construction costs from a variety of previous projects within the last 8 years, factoring in current known market conditions (ex. Inflation) while also applying an escalation factor to account for time between each phase. The provided rough order of magnitude (ROM) estimate incorporates as many direct building construction costs, inclusive of site development, as well as indirect costs (including architectural and engineering design and other potential owner's costs) which are assumed at the time of this study's publication. Please note that the published estimate does not include land acquisition, which could be a limiting factor to overall project feasibility.

### NMIR Feasibility Study

Components

ROM Estimate

ISSUED: 11/30/2022

Component	Subtotal	Inflation 8.59%	Escalation (per year) 3.00%	Total	GC Mark-up 20.50%	Loaded Subtotal
<b>02 Research &amp; Information Center (Phase 1A)</b>	\$1,104,000	\$94,834	\$66,240	<b>\$1,265,074</b>	\$259,340	<b>\$1,524,414</b>
02.05 1A: Sitework	\$125,000	\$10,738	\$7,500	\$143,238	\$29,364	\$172,601
02.10 1A: Interior Improvements	\$69,000	\$5,927	\$4,140	\$79,067	\$16,209	\$95,276
02.20 1A: Exhibit Development	\$910,000	\$78,169	\$54,600	\$1,042,769	\$213,768	\$1,256,537
<b>05 Museum &amp; Community Center (Phase 1B)</b>	\$32,305,828	\$2,775,071	\$4,845,874	<b>\$39,926,773</b>	\$8,184,988	<b>\$48,111,761</b>
05.10 1B: SITEWORK	\$887,000	\$76,193	\$133,050	\$1,096,243	\$224,730	\$1,320,973
05.20 1B: BUILDING	\$7,577,840	\$650,936	\$1,136,676	\$9,365,452	\$1,919,918	\$11,285,370
05.30 1B: MUSEUM FOH	\$22,865,000	\$1,964,104	\$3,429,750	\$28,258,854	\$5,793,065	\$34,051,918
05.40 1B: Infrastructure & MEP+FP	\$975,988	\$83,837	\$146,398	\$1,206,224	\$247,276	\$1,453,499
<b>10 Museum Site Expansion &amp; Hotel (Phase 2)</b>	\$35,862,000	\$3,080,546	\$10,758,600	<b>\$49,701,146</b>	\$10,188,735	<b>\$59,889,881</b>
10.10 2: Hotel & Conference	\$25,817,000	\$2,217,680	\$7,745,100	\$35,779,780	\$7,334,855	\$43,114,635
10.20 2: Full-service Restaurant	\$10,045,000	\$862,866	\$3,013,500	\$13,921,366	\$2,853,880	\$16,775,245
<b>99 Ownership Costs</b>				<b>\$12,057,622</b>		<b>\$12,057,622</b>
99.10 Entity Creation Expenses (BOD, 501c3, etc.) - allow.	—	—	—	\$25,000	—	\$25,000
99.20 A&E Fees - Phase 1A	—	—	—	\$152,441	—	\$152,441
99.30 A&E Fees - Phases 1B & 2	—	—	—	\$10,800,164	—	\$10,800,164
99.40 Building Permit @ 1% (Phases 1B & 2) - allowance	—	—	—	\$1,080,016	—	\$1,080,016
				<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$121,583,678</b>
				Construction Contingency:	10.00%	\$12,158,368
				<b>Project TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$133,742,045</b>



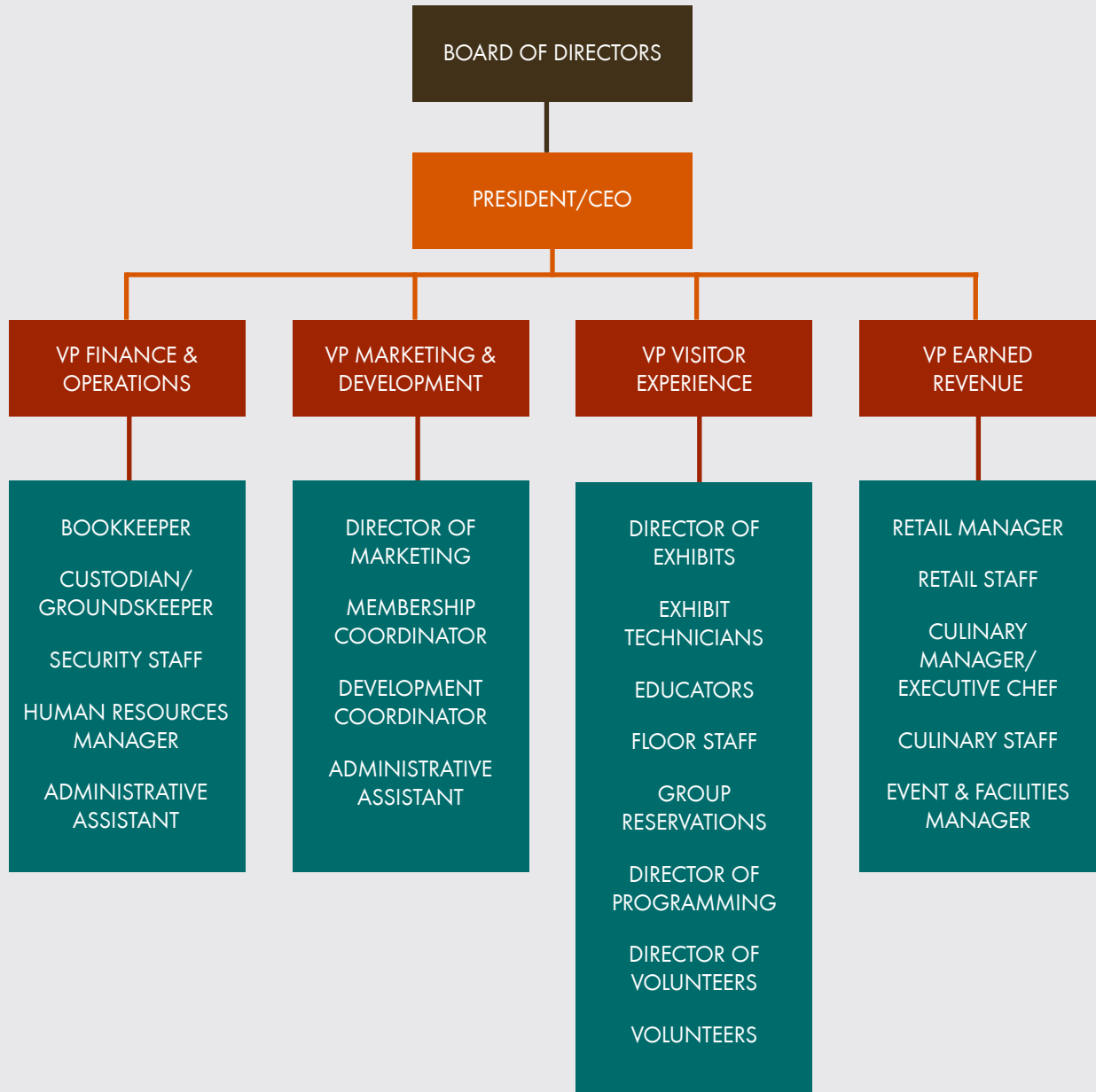




# OPERATING APPROACH

Once the museum opens, it must operate well to fulfill its mission and become financially sustainable. Drawing upon examples from other museums, advice from operators, and industry data, the operations overview includes staffing, organizational structure, ownership, revenue, and expenses.

## Organization and Staffing





## Revenue and Expenses

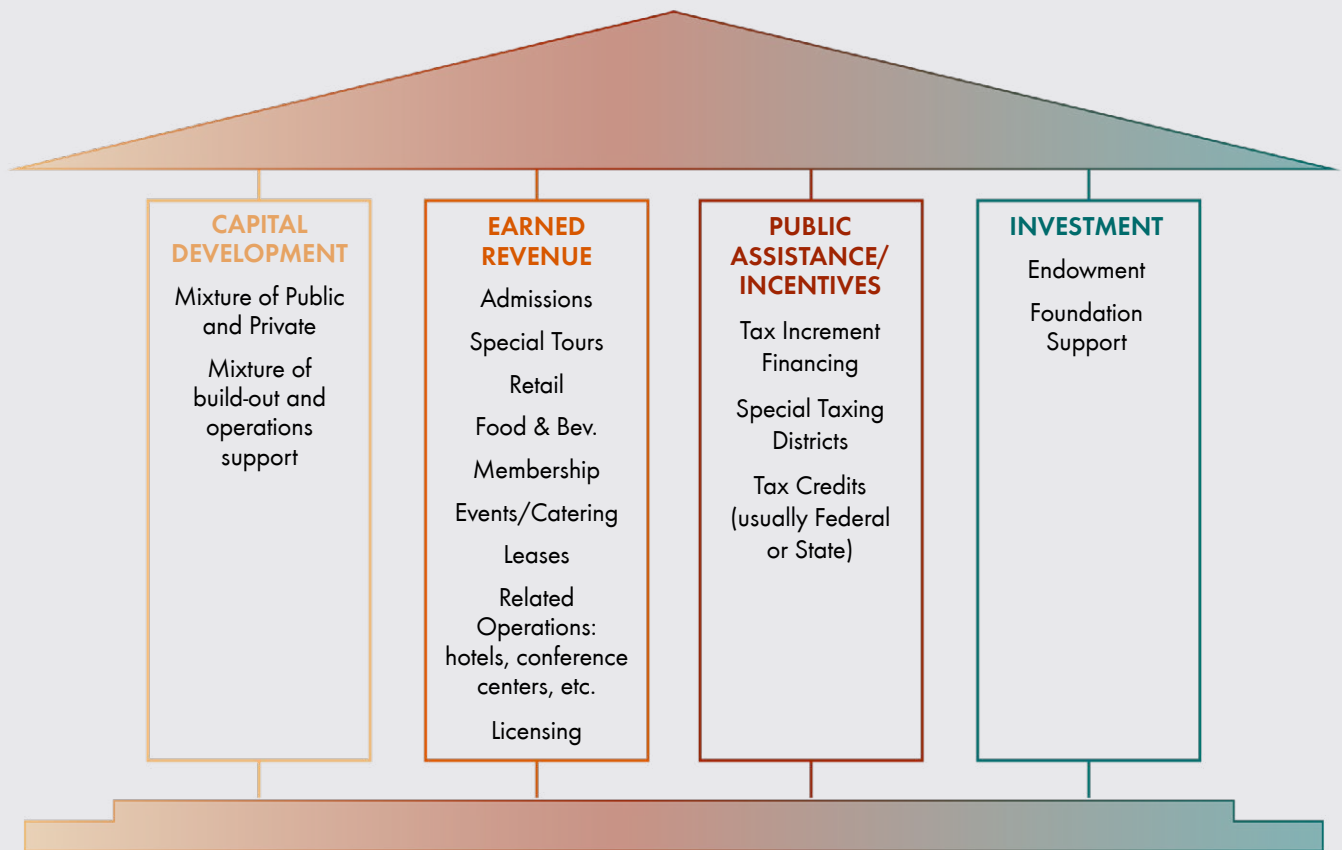
To ensure long-term financial sustainability, PGAV strongly recommends supplementing ticket sales with additional revenue in the form of events, rentals, retail, and food and beverage sales. Including a mix of amenities will support the many functions of the institution as well as provide supplementary revenue. The example below suggests one such strategy for categories of revenue opportunity undertaken in a given year of operation.

### Revenue Assumptions Example

Adult Ticket Price	\$18.00
Per Capita Ticket Revenue	\$11.88 (66% of ticket price)
Per Capita Retail Sales	\$2.00
Cost of Goods Sold as % of Sales	55%
% of Visitors Buying Food & Drink	60%
Average Food/Beverage Sale	\$5.00
Cost of F/B Sold as % of Sales	85%
Number of Memberships	1,000
Average Membership Fee	\$40.00
Annual Attendance Per Member	2.5
Number of Corporate Memberships	10
Average Corporate Membership Rate	\$1,000.00
Attendees Per Corporate Membership	10
Major Facility Rental/Year	6
Average Net Revenue/Rental	\$1,500.00
Minor Facility Rental/Year	12
Average Net Revenue/Minor Rental	\$250.00
Program Income	\$2,000.00
Annual Campaign	\$10,000.00
Annual Event	\$10,000.00
Sponsorship/Partnership	\$100,000.00
Financial Reserves and Endowment	\$25,000.00
Average Annual Drawdown	4%



## Revenue Structure



## Financial Sustainability

Many museums in the United States have been able to raise capital to build or expand facilities, but most struggle to cover the cost of operations over time. Ticket sales alone fall far short of paying the bills in most cases. Most museums need diversified sources of revenue to be sustainable. As it moves forward with planning and design, the National Museum of Indian Removal will need to develop robust infrastructure and talent maximize potential in each of the the following categories:

### *Contributed Revenue*

Contributed revenue accounts for a large percentage of operating revenue for most museums. it includes gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, or other organizations. Some organizations consider their membership program to be under the category of contributed revenue since the membership is evidence of loyalty and members are more likely to make additional contributions. Museums expend significant effort and resources to keep contributors engaged and willing to donate year after year.

### *Endowment*

Many museums enjoy endowments as a source of income. The principal comes from contributed revenue, but when well invested can generate significant earnings to supplement operations. Growth of an endowment is an ongoing effort throughout the life of the museum.

### *Public Funding*

Funding from local, state, and federal sources provides a steady source of revenue for many museums. for example, St. Louis City and County have a percentage of sales tax proceeds designated to help fund the museums in the Zoo Museum District. Voters agreed to the tax increase and have voted for subsequent increases.

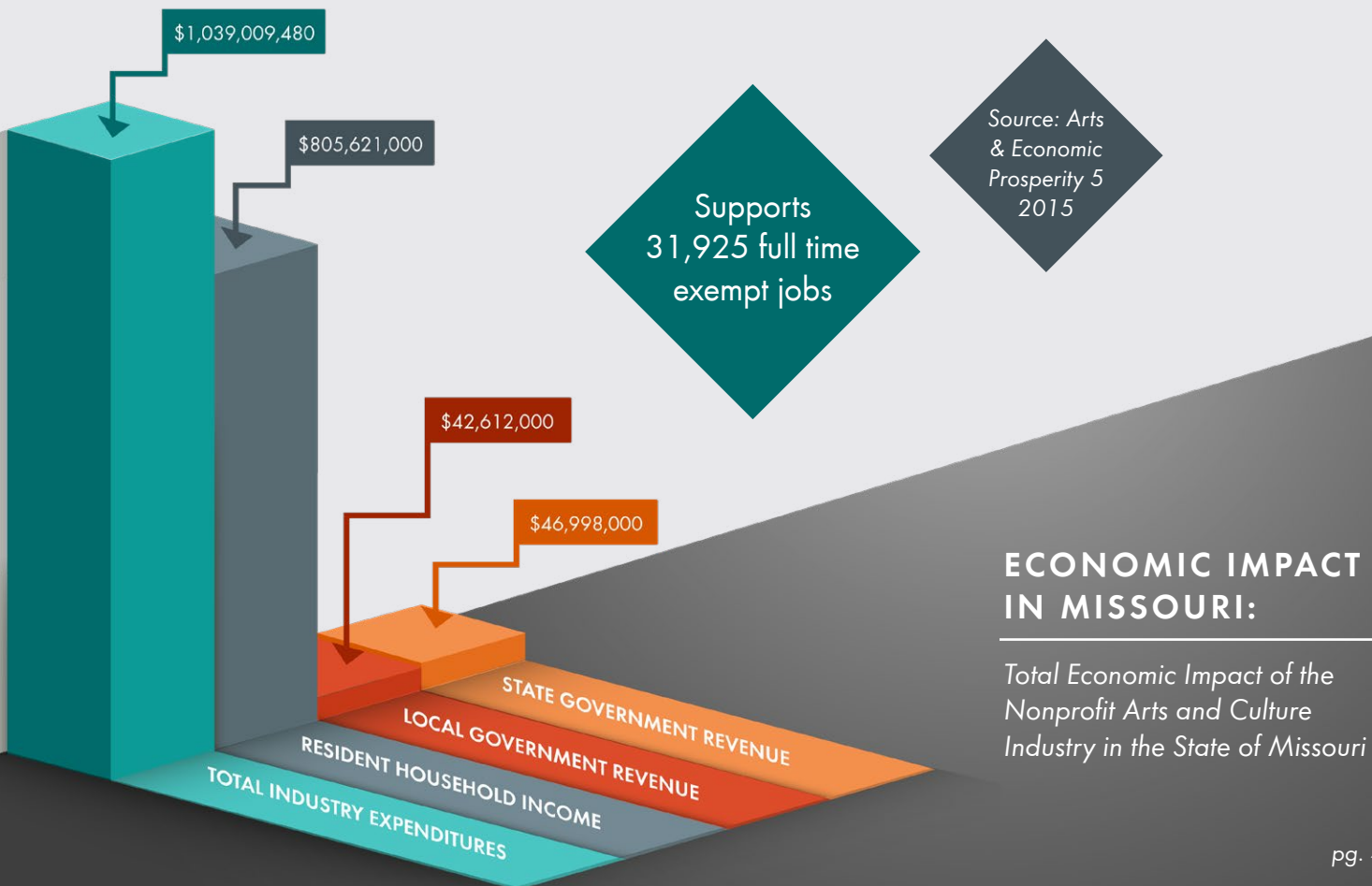


*Earned Revenue*

Earned revenue has played an increasingly important role in museum sustainability over the last decade. Earned revenue encompasses a wide variety of entrepreneurial endeavors such as ticket sales, retail, dining, programs, rentals, catering, sponsorship, licensing, digital, and premium experiences.

The categories can be viewed as interconnecting and overlapping options to work in combination to bring financial stability to the planned museum.

-  **PARKING**
-  **CATERING**
-  **ADMISSION**
-  **MEMBERSHIP**
-  **RETAIL**
-  **PARTNERSHIPS**
-  **FOOD & BEVERAGE**
-  **NON-TRADITIONAL SERVICES**
-  **PREMIUM EXPERIENCES**
-  **NON-RELATED BUSINESS**
-  **SPECIAL EVENTS**



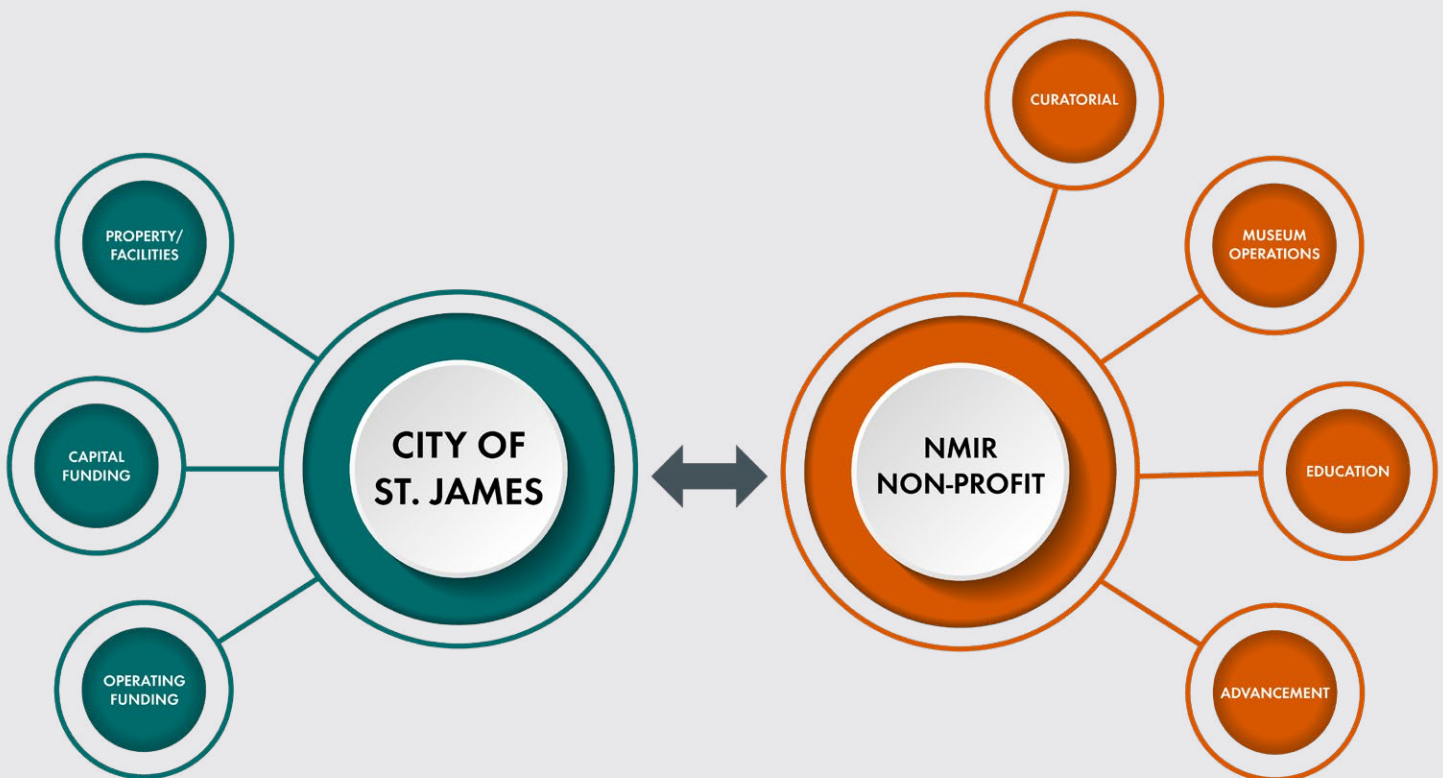


## Ownership

Some museums in the United States are owned and operated by for-profit organizations or directly by government agencies, but most operate as non-profit organizations to gain tax-exempt status and facilitate contributions. As mission-based organizations created in the public interest, many museums receive some sort of government support. This can include bonds for capital projects, direct operating subsidies, or indirect support.

- The Virginia Air & Space Science Center in Hampton Virginia, is in a purpose-built facility paid for, owned, and maintained by the City of Hampton. The museum is a tenant and is responsible for all museum operations. The city has also provided matching funds for specific projects and programs on a case-by-case basis.
- The St. Joseph Museums, Inc. in St. Joseph, Missouri, is a private non-profit that operates the museums through a contract with the city. The city also provides ongoing operating subsidies and supports capital projects on a case-by-case basis through bonds or regular operations budgets.

Given the leadership and commitment from city leaders to the project, a public-private partnership appears realistic and advantageous for the success of the museum. The structure and division of “ownership” and responsibilities should be based on the strengths each partner brings, as shown in the diagram.



### PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

*City of St. James partners with private, non-profit museum organization*





### ***Becoming a 501(c)(3)***

*From the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)*

As primarily educational entities, most museums choose to establish as nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations and apply for tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Organizations with 501(c)(3) tax status are exempt from federal taxes and contributions are deductible by donors for income tax purposes. There are legal and tax requirements for museums that file as 501(c)(3) organizations and understanding these implications will help you decide if a nonprofit organization is right for your goals. Nonprofit museums are not the only answer for preserving cultural heritage.

[www.aam.org](http://www.aam.org)



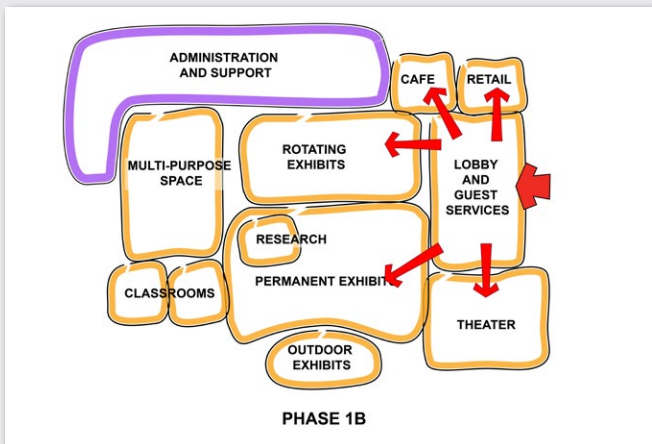
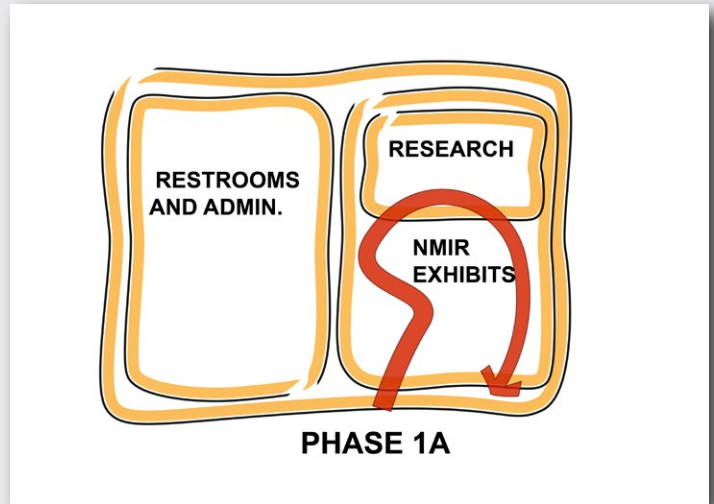




## PHASING MULTIYEAR TIMELINE

### Phase 1A

Planning, designing, and building a large museum will take many years. St. James has an opportunity to develop an interim solution by creating exhibits and interpretation of Indian removal in the Tourist Information Center. The exhibit could tell an overview removal story and identify places in St. James and Missouri, such as the Trail of Tears, where people can extend their experience. We imagine this phase taking shape within the next one to two years.

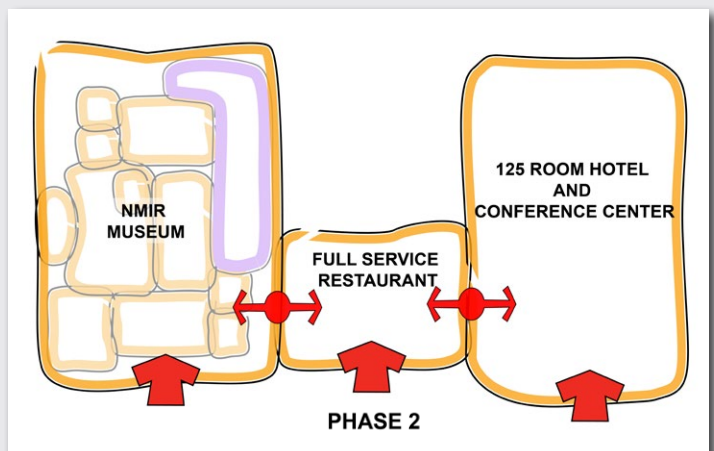


### Phase 1B

Upon successful site selection and acquisition, Phase-1B represents the permanent museum. In conjunction with Phase-1A, and a robust capital campaign, we imagine this phase being implemented within the next five years.

### Phase 2

Further, assuming successful opening and operation of Phase-1B, the opportunity to expand the building complex footprint would bring with it additional needed community amenities: a hotel, event and conference support, and a full service restaurant. Planned adjacent to the existing museum, Phase-2 expands the opportunities for programming, revenue, and core mission. Area development, parking expansion, and landscaping would require an additional five acres (3.5 for hotel and 1.5 for restaurant). Total developed area, including Phase-1B, for permanent buildings would be an anticipated seven acres.





## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

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### **Tribal Nation Engagement**

During consultations with representatives from Cherokee, Chickasaw, Kaw, and Choctaw Nations, they emphasized the importance of engaging native people early and throughout the process. Tribal support and participation requires making an official request of tribal leadership who will then appoint a representative. This ensures the representative speaks for the nation at large and not as an individual.

Inclusion should be at the heart  
of everything this museum  
strives to be.

Active inclusion of many stories and additional voices should be enhanced through two types of advisory groups: an executive advisory group and a content advisory group.

The executive advisory group or board should be comprised of tribal leaders who will provide input and help guide overall museum direction and voice.

The content advisory group should include scholars, historians, and community members—both Indigenous and not—who can guide research and story development. This group could be selected for specific exhibits or content areas or serve the museum as a whole.







### **Research & Scholarship**

Through partnerships with tribal nations, opportunities for additional research and scholarship could be available in the form of internships, research grants, scholarships, publication support, and public programming, which would supplement both the museum's and tribe's ongoing research.



### **National Connections & Regional Synergies**

There are many national connections and designations to consider, including UNESCO World Heritage Site status, International Coalition of Site of Conscience, Smithsonian affiliation, and accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. Connections with all these programs should be actively sought out and will strengthen the brand identity of the institution.

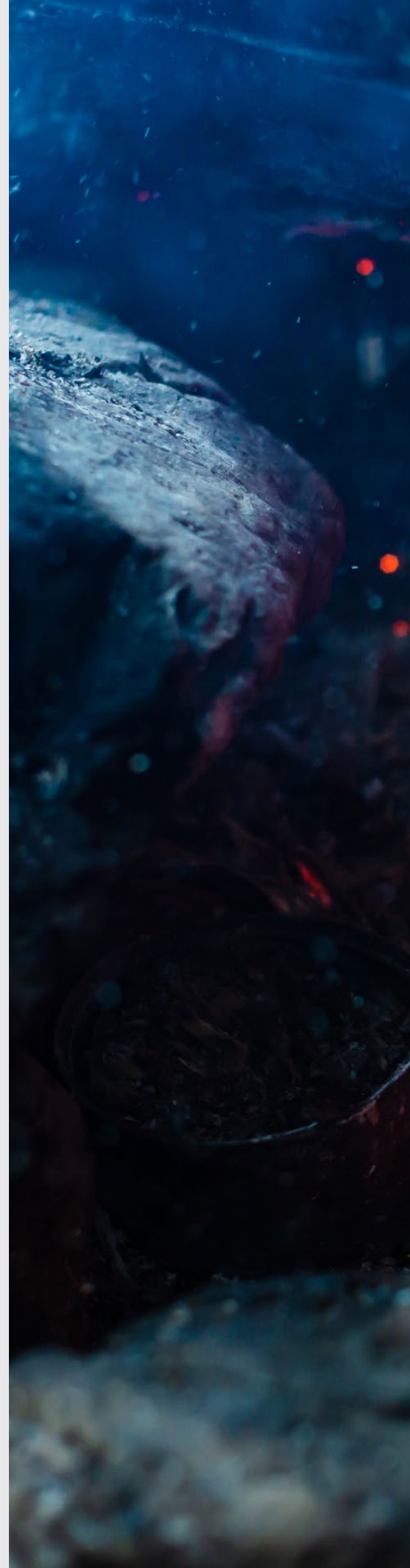
The institution should seriously consider and apply for designation as a Site of Conscience. Recognition of this story and the importance of this site at an international level would bring welcome attention to the institution and its work.

Within Missouri, numerous museums and state parks feature objects and interpretation of native presence from Paleo people to settler contact including significant collections at the University of Missouri and at the St. Joseph Museums. Organizing a heritage association and trail could create synergies and offer cultural tourists a strong motivation to travel to multiple sites in the state.

Regionally, connections should be made with the Trail of Tears Association, which has state chapters in nine states, including Missouri. Their partnership with the National Park Service could be emulated or extended to include NMIR, especially for outdoor interpretation associated with the Trail of Tears through St. James. Additionally, the Missouri chapter of the Trail of Tears Association has stated interest in locating its physical headquarters within the museum building.

Opportunities for a regional heritage trail would naturally include the Trail of Tears and could extend to other sites such as Cahokia Mounds in Illinois and the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma.

Another path forward should revolve around active engagement and respectful cooperation with First American Nations to develop partnerships and advisory groups. Building relationships with each Nation will help to establish a positive and trusted identity.





## Potential Connections & Designations



**TRAIL OF  
TEARS**  
*Association*



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



World  
Heritage  
Convention



International Coalition of  
**SITES of CONSCIENCE**



**Smithsonian**  
*Affiliate*



## ***Decolonizing the Museum***

Museums were originally created as colonial institutions. European countries extended their influence and created colonies around the world, displacing or subjugating indigenous people, often robbing graves and removing cultural assets for display in museums without permission, context, or respect for the people and cultures to whom the assets belong.

The museum field is beginning to recognize its colonial history and practices. New laws, policies and approaches are returning the rights and responsibilities of native stories, remains, objects, and interpretation to the native people. Native people now rightfully demand ownership of their culture. The number of First Americans trained as museum professionals in the field has grown to allow indigenous leadership at all levels of museum operations.







## **Collections Plan**

Collections play an important role in cultural interpretation. Objects, documents, oral histories, and images create connections between visitors and the real people featured in the exhibits. Collections support an evidence-based approach to interpreting history and culture.

A collections plan provides a framework for how the museum will use collections, what types of collections will be accepted, and how the museum will care for the collection. A decolonized museum will require great care to collaborate with native people regarding the possession and use of cultural assets. The plan should include a process for repatriated cultural assets when appropriate.

The proposed museum has no collections at this time. Interpretive planning and collections planning will proceed hand in hand, with one informing the other. Once themes are defined, extensive curatorial research will be required to identify potential sources for the cultural assets. Many objects may be acquired on loan, which requires a policy to ensure proper handling and conditions for the care of the object. Donated and purchased items must be vetted to ensure a decolonized standard. Specific cultural assets, such as human remains, should be clearly off limits for acceptance.



## ABOUT MRPC

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Authorized by state statute, MRPC is one of 19 active, voluntary councils of local governments serving the state of Missouri. Formed in 1969, MRPC serves Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington counties and their respective cities in South-Central Missouri. The 59-member volunteer board, made up of elected officials and appointed representatives, works to enhance the quality of life in the region. Located in St. James, MO, a professional staff assists member communities and counties in the areas of economic and community development, environmental planning, business loans, transportation planning, homeland security planning, hazardous materials and hazard mitigation planning, rental assistance, and housing renovation. To learn more, visit [www.meramecregion.org](http://www.meramecregion.org).





## ABOUT PGAV

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PGAV was founded in 1965 in the City of St. Louis and, throughout our more than five decades of practice, we have worked on thousands of projects in more than thirty states and on five continents. Our staff of more than 140 full-time professionals includes urban planners, architects, brand specialists, financial analysts, policy experts, interior designers, graphic designers, artists, and community development professionals. No other firm offers such an integrated approach to planning and design.

### **PGAV**PLANNERS

PGAV Planners creates lasting community assets through an integrated approach to planning and economic development. We answer the two pressing, intertwined questions “What does our community need?” and “How do we pay for it?” PGAV Planners is a global leader in planning, design, and development consultation to public, corporate, and institutional clients. We are experts in development finance, economic studies, community planning, and public engagement. Our dual understanding of financial intricacies and sustainable planning earns PGAV Planners renown throughout the public and private sectors, and our passion for this work drives us every day.

We support clients across the full spectrum of project sizes, from neighborhood visioning to comprehensive planning for entire communities. We design a thoughtful approach tailored to each specific client’s needs; there is no such thing as a “one-size-fits-all” community plan.

### **PGAV**DESTINATIONS

PGAV Destinations is recognized around the world as a leading master planner and designer of museums, aquariums, heritage sites, destinations, public spaces, theme parks, zoos, retail, and brand-based celebrations. Throughout more than five decades of practice, we have developed thousands of projects in thirty states and on five continents—learning from each client and every project to continually innovate our practice.

Destinations and cities can only thrive through an exceptional understanding of their audience. Because of this, PGAV has become a recognized leader in the incorporation of visitor insights into the planning process. We take a holistic approach in creating places and experiences that exemplify your community, brand, and heritage, leveraging leading consumer insights to plan successful, creative, and fun places!