

THE FALLS ON THE COLORADO
Museum

STRATEGIC PLAN
SUMMER 2023 TO FALL 2026





Introduction

HISTORY OF THE FALLS ON THE COLORADO MUSEUM

In 1999 Madolyn Frasier and Billy Becker formed a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, The Falls on the Colorado Museum (FOCM). The mission of the FOCM was and is to preserve our history, to further our heritage, to protect artifacts and to provide an ongoing history of Marble Falls and the surrounding communities. Madolyn Frasier was the unofficial historian of Marble Falls and donated the majority of the museum's original artifacts, photographs and other historical documents from her personal collections. Operating solely through donations, the FOCM first opened its doors in 2001 in a small building in Johnson Park. After several relocations, the museum moved into its current home, the historic Old Granite School at 2001 Broadway Street, in 2010.

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Through the years, the FOCM has progressed from simply displaying artifacts to telling stories through exhibits that appeal not just to locals, but to all visitors. The exhibits include a hand-made model of the Mormon Mill grist mill, a Central Texas geology display, a collection of Native American artifacts and a 700-year-old bison skeleton. Portions of the railroad that carried millions of tons of granite worldwide from Granite Mountain highlight Marble Falls' importance beyond the local level. In addition to exhibits, the FOCM has also developed collaborative relationships with community partners to develop a range of programs.

Currently, Marble Falls and the surrounding region is experiencing rapid growth. The FOCM is poised for expansion and development to meet the needs of our growing and diversifying community.



Statements

Vision

Our vision is for a dynamic and interactive museum that inspires interest and learning about our history by bridging the past, present and future.

Mission

The FOCM's mission is to preserve our history, to further our heritage, to protect artifacts and to provide an ongoing history of Marble Falls and the surrounding communities.



Summary

We have developed a three-year plan that:

- Presents a road map for restoring the second floor of the museum's historic building
- Proposes solutions for achieving financial sustainability
- Bolsters the volunteer base
- Enhances our community presence and fosters a closer connection with Downtown Marble Falls
- Increases youth engagement
- Boosts exhibits and museum programming
- Improves the accessibility of our archives and promotes the museum as a source for local history research

Strategic Priority Areas

- **Building Restoration & Preservation**
- **Finances/Fundraising**
- **Museum Staffing**
- **Community Presence**
- **Education**
- **Collections and Research**

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

Building Restoration & Preservation

- Restore the second floor of FOCM's historic building to expand the museum's capacity

Finances/Fundraising

- Work towards financial sustainability by increasing the diversity of the museum's funding sources.

Museum Staffing

- Increase volunteer base and make volunteers feel like valued members of the FOCM community
- Establish long-term plan to hire 1-2 staff members

Community Presence

- Expand FOCM's physical presence within Burnet County
- Foster a closer connection between FOCM and Downtown Marble Falls

Education

- Increase youth engagement and develop a cooperative learning relationship with schools
- Boost exhibits and museum programming

Collections and Research

- Increase accessibility of archival collections
- Promote FOCM as a source for local history research

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:
Building Restoration & Preservation

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:
Restore the second floor of FOCM’s historic building to expand the museum’s capacity.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Secure community support for project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Obtain MFISD backing ● Notify members and encourage financial support for project ● Promote project through media and other platforms 	Year 1 and ongoing
Raise funds for project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch the “Old Granite School Restoration Fund” ● Apply for grants ● Hold fundraising events ● Increase membership & donorship 	Year 1 and ongoing
Draw up plans and estimate for restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design ● Discuss use of new space ● Tie to fundraising 	Year 2
Implement renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address structural issues ● Restore second floor ● Install new stairway ● Maintain accessibility (at least an exterior freight elevator) 	Year 3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Finances/Fundraising

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Work towards financial sustainability by increasing the diversity of the museum’s funding sources.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Set up an advisory board to support fundraising goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruit professionals (CPA, attorney, banker, etc)	Year 1
Expand membership and cultivate donorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update contact list of members, donors and supporters and keep in regular contact (letters of appreciation, invite to events, etc.)Hold special events for annual Membership Drive and to attract potential donors and sponsorsDevelop more visible membership opportunities at the museum (e.g., sign near front desk, visitor handout)	Year 1 and ongoing
Develop a corporate sponsorship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Acquire corporate sponsors for special exhibits, events and projects (LCRA, PEC, Huber, Coldspring, CO River Alliance, Johnson Sewell)Give sponsors recognition (credit lines in exhibits and promotional and press materials, invitations to opening events)	Year 2
Increase grant-writing efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Actively identify and apply for local, regional and national grants to support exhibits, programs, and projectsCreate and maintain a grant calendar to track current and past applications	Year 1 and ongoing

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Museum Staffing

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Increase the museum’s volunteer base and make volunteers feel like a valued member of the FOCM community.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Form a proactive volunteer recruitment committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recruit members● Create youth volunteer opportunities	Year 1 and ongoing
Create a volunteer welcome packet/manual that clarifies volunteer roles, expectations and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review and update current volunteer manual	Year 1
Develop a volunteer recognition plan - Volunteer of the Year, Docent of the Year, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recognize award recipients at the Annual Meeting● Update volunteer name badges● Have a visible “Patron Honor Roll”	Year 1 and ongoing
Organize periodic volunteer mixers and training/enrichment workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Workshop topics can cover local history content, artifact interpretation strategies, teaching methods for young learners and adults, etc.	Year 1 and ongoing

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:
Museum Staffing

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:
Establish a long-term plan to be able to hire 1-2 staff members.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Incorporate the need for permanent staff in financial plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review other small museum staffing● Review “wants”	Year 1 and ongoing
Develop job descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Incorporate staffing research and wants	Year 3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Community Presence

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Expand FOCM’s physical presence within Burnet County and foster a closer connection between the museum and Downtown Marble Falls.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Keep our communities informed of exhibits, events and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Publicize through area media outlets, website & FacebookSend e-blasts to members/supportersSubmit events to tourism boards (Visit MF, Texas Historical Commission, Highland Lakes of Burnet Co.)	Year 1 and ongoing
Expand museum outreach programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install exhibits at various locations to promote the museum as an attraction worth visiting (Visitor Center, hotels, library, downtown businesses, etc)Develop presentations promoting the museum and Marble Falls history	Year 1 and ongoing
Create a Museum Trail that connects the museum and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify potential trail partners (St. Frederick’s, art galleries, library, Visitor Center, historic sites, cemeteries, parks, downtowns)Develop trail map (print & digital)Recruit advisory member from Chamber of Commerce as Downtown Coordinator	Year 3
Expand community partnerships on special programs and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coordinate a region-wide event with local museums and cultural organizations - “Highland Lakes Museum Day”	Year 3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Education

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Increase youth engagement at the museum and develop a cooperative learning relationship with schools.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Work with MFISD to increase student field trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop pre and post-visit materials that incorporate curriculum standards• Align field trips with student curriculum - highlight topics that students are discussing in class	Year 1 and ongoing
Develop kid-friendly teaching tools and interactive elements in the museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install Interactive Grist Mill	Year 2 and ongoing
Develop youth programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mock archeological digs• Artifact Detectives program (how to “read” artifacts and primary sources)• Museum scavenger hunt	Year 2 and ongoing

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Education

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Boost exhibits and museum programming.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Maintain a long-range planning calendar for exhibits and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have 12 months of exhibits and programs planned ahead of time• Review and discuss planned exhibits/programs at every meeting	Year 1 and ongoing
Develop a list of potential ideas for future exhibits and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore existing items in permanent collections• Seek potential lenders for loaned exhibits• Develop new ideas and expand our scope to incorporate previously unexplored topics and communities• Develop corporate-sponsored exhibits, e.g., LCRA exhibit about dams, PEC exhibit about electricity coming to the Hill Country, Coldspring exhibit about Granite Mountain	Year 1 and ongoing
Provide educational programs to spotlight exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold exhibit openings and events with a scheduled speaker whenever possible	Year 1 and ongoing

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA:

Archival Collections

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Increase the accessibility of archival collections and promote the museum as a source for local history research.

ACTION	STRATEGIES & RESOURCES	TIMELINE
Catalog the museum archives into Past Perfect software system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Acquire grant funds to hire temporary cataloger to process archival items● Work with volunteers to describe collections	Year 2 and 3
Install a computer with a searchable catalog in the Reading Room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Computer should include access to online databases for genealogy and history research● Train volunteers on how to use	Year 2
Promote the museum archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Publicize through media outlets● Post regular “Collection Spotlights” on FB highlighting a specific item from the archives● Create a page on the museum website for archives with research and image request procedures	Year 2 and ongoing
Develop archival research and conservation programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Host a how-to presentation about conducting family history research● Offer a conservation workshop on methods for preserving family papers	Year 2 and ongoing

*Our long-term goal is to digitize our collections, making them available online. This goal can be accomplished through a partnership with The Portal to Texas History and UNT University Libraries and their Rescuing Texas History Grant Program.

SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
The museum has a well-established history of working with community partners.	The museum is located a considerable distance from Downtown Marble Falls.	The museum does not have sustainable income.	Expand the museum's capacity by restoring the second floor.
The museum has a wealth of local history to share with the public.	Museum management in the past has been reactive rather than proactive.	No succession plan and an aging volunteer and board of directors base.	Introduce new exhibits and programming to engage visitors and expand audience.
The current board members and volunteers are loyal and work well together.	The museum has an aging volunteer and membership base and no paid staff.	Lack of paid staff makes it difficult to reach goals and maintain consistency.	Recruit new talent to the board of directors.
There is strong community support for preserving the historic Old Granite School Building.	Insufficient youth engagement. The majority of visitors, members and volunteers are seniors.	A public perception exists that the museum is an exclusive club and not accessible by the general community.	Increase the accessibility of the archives and promote the museum as a valuable resource for local history research.
	The archival collections lack accessibility.		Increase youth engagement and develop relationship with schools.
	The museum does not have a reliable source of funding.		Expand membership and volunteer base.
	Shortage of physical space for exhibits, archives, programs and events.		Engage with strategic partners to create more physical presences of the museum in public spaces in the community.
	The museum lacks a physical presence in the local and broader community.		Expand exhibits in local venues outside the museum.