

STRATEGIC

PLAN

FISCAL YEARS JULY 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2026



SARASOTA
PERFORMING ARTS
FOUNDATION



OUR LETTER TO YOU

On behalf of the Foundation and our Board of Directors, we are delighted to share this strategic plan for the future of the performing arts in Sarasota. As you read through the mission and goals, you will see that this is a plan for people—a plan for you.

The Foundation has long been a cultural leader in Greater Southwest Florida, with a legacy and mission that mirror each other. We know that to remain relevant, we must also be responsive to the changing needs of our communities. By agreeing to lead the creation and operation of a new performing arts center in Sarasota, we are ensuring that both the performing arts and our mission-driven impact will endure.

All of these dynamics—culture, community, responsiveness, relevance and change—have led to this strategic plan. The origin of our plan was three years of steadfast collaboration between the Foundation and the City of Sarasota, in tandem with the Bay Park Conservancy's Master Plan. Working together, and with input from the public, it became clear that we all share the same vision: a contemporary performing arts center that both entertains and educates, while elevating Sarasota as a cultural icon.

As exciting as this is, our larger responsibility will be to ensure that the new facility fully reflects the diversity of communities and connects with many different cultural perspectives. We are passionate about broadening our reach so that the performing arts can uplift all people, touch them emotionally, and help them transcend stressful or discouraging times.

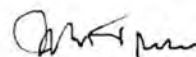
We are also interested in exploring how the performing arts can address critical issues of social inequity by sparking dialogue and prioritizing inclusivity. And, we want to leverage more digital capabilities to convey the shared human experiences of language, dance, music, drama and humor, where we can all find common ground. These aspirations are grounded in ideas, rather than in bricks and mortar or specific geographies. A new facility will be a catalyst for ideas without boundaries.

As the venue takes shape in the coming years, we will be engaging in diverse audience-building to attract individuals and families of all ages, incomes and interests—giving many people their first live experience with the performing arts on a world-class level.

By the time the door opens, we hope that everyone will appreciate not just the cultural power of the performing arts, but also the social, economic and reputational value this new venue will bring to our area.

We invite you to join us in this opportunity of a lifetime to make Sarasota's new performing arts center a reality. You can take pride in supporting a powerful vision with a very personal impact: A Place for the Arts. A Place for Ideas. A Place for You.

We look forward to sharing our progress with you. Thank you.



Jim Travers

CEO, Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Our Vision, Mission and Values
- 2** A Dynamic Public-Private Partnership
- 3** Measures of Success
- 4** Five-Year Strategic Framework
- 5** A Place for the Arts. A Place for Ideas. A Place for You.
- 7** Communicating the Vision
- 9** Reimagining Arts Education
- 11** Key Milestones
- 12** In Grateful Acknowledgment





The Foundation's philanthropic purpose has deep roots in the rich cultural history of Sarasota. In 1987, we entered into a cultural partnership with the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall through its owner, the City of Sarasota. The Hall has served as a beloved performing arts center for over half a century—a home to international creative experiences and a springboard for the Foundation's educational collaborations.

Now, we are leading this partnership into a new era. The strategic plan that defines our path will ensure a contemporary performing arts model of national significance for Sarasota. The venue will be a magnet destination for generations, with the potential to advance education and enrich communities across the state and country.

OUR VISION

To be a preeminent destination for the performing arts in the nation by offering extraordinary cultural and educational experiences that open a world of new possibilities for all.

Our mission is essentially our promise to our stakeholders. It puts our vision into practice and informs how we think about our leadership role in the arts, while our values guide how we act.

OUR MISSION

To create and sustain a vibrant performing arts center, advance education, and enrich communities by inspiring minds through the power of the arts.

OUR VALUES

Passion. We are inventive catalysts for artistic exploration.

Inclusivity. We seek out diverse perspectives and foster cultural equity across our programs.

Collaboration. We build forward-thinking partnerships to extend the impact of our mission.

Stewardship. We operate with integrity and transparency to expand our rich history of culture-building and philanthropy.

A DYNAMIC PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Cultural partnerships are in a unique position to uplift societies and economies. In our case, the decades-long partnership between the Foundation and the City has helped Sarasota thrive. Together with the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, our impact in the region has fostered not just the arts, but also the well-being of individuals, families and the business community.

Now, within the scope of our City partnership, we are embarking on a cultural first for Sarasota: the creation of a sustainable, national model for the performing arts, anchored by a venue that integrates arts education and broad community engagement.

A thoughtful transition

In 2015, the Foundation began collaborating on the Bayfront Master Plan to determine the best way forward for the performing arts in Sarasota.



With the support of our board, we invested in a seminal study by a national theater research and planning consultant who looked at the lifespan of the Van Wezel Hall and alternative solutions. The research concluded that the challenges facing the Hall irrevocably hamper its environmental sustainability, as well as its ability to qualify for future public capital investment.

The study found that the Hall is located in a high-risk flood zone, with certain parts of the building below the flood plain. This is consistent with the findings of the City's 2017 Climate Adaptation Plan, which identified the Hall as one of Sarasota's most vulnerable public structures. In addition, the idiosyncratic layout of the building falls short of contemporary needs for patron comfort, accessibility, capacity and technical support. Even if these issues could be solved, the flood zone would remain an obstacle to long-term sustainability.

The strong recommendation of the study was to replace the current Hall with a state-of-the-art facility jointly developed by the public and private sectors and operated by the Foundation as a 501c3 nonprofit entity. This model is widely recognized as the best practice for performing arts centers across the nation.

Going forward

The Foundation has committed to lead a \$300+ million capital project for the new performing arts center envisioned in the Master Plan. The cost of the building's design and construction will be shared equally by philanthropy and public funding, and the Foundation will oversee the planning, design, construction, private funding and public communication for the venue.

Once construction is complete, the Foundation will be responsible for the artistic and educational programming and facility management. The City will own the land and the building, and will continue to serve as our municipal partner.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Today, the work we do is more vital than ever. Our entire organization is committed to the strategy we set forth in this plan—the roadmap to a larger, more mission-driven and contemporary venue where people of all ages can create, experience, perform and learn from the arts.

Each objective in the plan will be assigned a measure of success that we will use to assess progress. Some will be quantitative outcomes, such as the number of student engagements or philanthropic dollars, while others will be qualitative. **For example, we want to:**

- **Understand more fully the public perceptions about who is, and should be, served by the arts;**
- **Establish community feedback loops that will help shape future educational programming; and**
- **Incorporate best practices from venues around the world into our creation of a new performing arts center.**

Efficacy data will be shared with the Foundation's Board of Directors and utilized by our management to refine the operating plan over time.



5 YEAR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

THE FOUNDATION'S STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES REFLECT OUR MISSION'S THREE MAIN COMPONENTS, TRANSLATED INTO ACTIONABLE TERMS. THE FRAMEWORK IS DESIGNED TO BE SYNERGISTIC—PROGRESS ON ANY ONE GOAL SUPPORTS PROGRESS ON THE OTHER TWO. THIS MAKES THE MOST OF EVERY ACHIEVEMENT.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Create a state-of-the-art Sarasota performing arts center that will be a cultural icon and civic asset.

OBJECTIVES

- Complete the pre-planning framework.
- Develop and implement a \$200 million, five-year capital campaign.
- Execute the design timeline.
- Execute the construction timeline.
- Develop the transition plan in partnership with Van Wezel Hall.
- Establish the structure to operate and govern the new center as a 501c3 nonprofit entity.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Bolster communication of the vision for the new performing arts center to engender broad support.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and implement an advocacy plan for community engagement.
- Complete the case for support tailored to a wide range of constituencies.
- Develop a visual brand and narrative, and execute tactics to deliver it to the community.
- Develop an integrated marketing and communications plan to transition the Foundation to its new identity as the Sarasota Performing Arts Center Foundation.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Deepen and broaden the current work in arts education and explore new platforms that enhance quality of life for children and adults through the arts.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop clear ways to measure, evaluate, and communicate the efficacy of programs.
- Ensure programs are inclusive and culturally responsive.
- Identify partnerships, alliances, and collaborations that extend impact deep into the community.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

CREATE A STATE-OF-THE-ART
SARASOTA PERFORMING ARTS
CENTER THAT WILL BE A CULTURAL
ICON AND CIVIC ASSET.

The future of the performing arts in Sarasota is focused on connecting culture and community. Far more than just a building, the new performing arts center will be a place that belongs in the lives of everyone for generations.

Sarasota is already renowned as a cultural epicenter, known for the presentation of national-caliber performing arts at the Van Wezel Hall. A new, universally designed building will be the third largest venue of its kind within a 60-mile radius, delivering inventive experiences to a wider range of audiences. This aligns with the four guiding principles the Foundation established when we agreed to lead the new performing arts center:

ELEVATE Sarasota as a first-choice destination for the most acclaimed performers, artists, dancers, musicians and ensembles.

ENHANCE the patron experience through contemporary facilities, advanced technology and universal accessibility.

EXPAND educational programming and engagement to serve more teachers and students, and provide access to the arts for underserved communities.

RAISE our sights for creative exploration to reinforce Sarasota as the cultural mecca of Greater Southwest Florida.

A gateway among communities

The Bayfront Master Plan calls for improved connectivity between the Bay Park, all neighborhoods and downtown Sarasota, with the new venue as an anchor. Studies have determined that the northeast corner of the site will create the most seamless relationship between the building and the Park.

The building is envisioned as an iconic, 200,000 square foot structure of digitally connected, universally designed spaces, including a main stage with capacity for 2,250 seats. A second theater space will accommodate 400 seats, and there will be 10,000 square feet of flexible space for rehearsals and classrooms. Multiple outdoor venues will have technical capabilities.

When the center opens, we will be able to reimagine arts education using multimedia techniques and deploy multilingual content more easily. The year-round operation of the facility will provide opportunities for summer learning and family programming, with remote and on-site interactivity.

Integrating arts education

At the same time, the new facility will be a place for ideas, unbounded by bricks and mortar. At the Foundation, we think about arts education holistically—a single learning experience can have pervasive impacts: increasing well-being and bringing joy to someone's life. When children have this experience, it can make them more empathetic to others, and more successful as adults. The physical building will support this, while ensuring the future of arts education well beyond its four walls.

Currently, our academic partnerships with the Van Wezel Hall, the Kennedy Center Partners in Education, and the Sarasota area school districts are reaching over 50,000 students and training hundreds of teachers in artistic and academic literacy and cultural responsiveness each year. We look forward to engaging with diverse students, educators, families and community leaders on a larger scale through the new venue, and utilizing more teaching artists.

The arts mean business

The demographics of Sarasota and Manatee Counties are shifting toward young adults and families, balancing the traditional older migration. This diversity contributes to the long-term economic health of the region. A new performing arts center is an opportunity to embrace wider audiences and support the vibrant economy of residents, visitors and hospitality providers.

The center's operating model calls for 12 months of artistic and educational programming each year, leveraging its greater capacity, flexibility and technical capabilities. As a financially robust, year-round civic asset, the operation will create sustainable jobs and enhance Sarasota's reputation as a regional, national and international cultural destination.

A magnificent, sustainable landmark

The design of the new center is an exciting prospect, and one that will involve the entire community. The Foundation will be asking the public for aspirational input into the building design over a six- to nine-month period.

Constructing an environmentally resilient facility of this magnitude on the Bay is a complex undertaking, and we will ensure that the design respects the surrounding site. As currently envisioned, the building will be elevated over ground-level parking to safeguard it from potential flooding. Over time, the current parking lot will be converted back to greenspace as the Bayfront Master Plan moves through its stages to completion.

Once we engage the architect, we expect the actual design process to take about two years. The full design and construction process is expected to span six to seven years from the onset in mid-2021, during which time the Van Wezel Hall will remain open. The leaders of the Foundation and the Hall are working together to ensure continuity during the transition.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

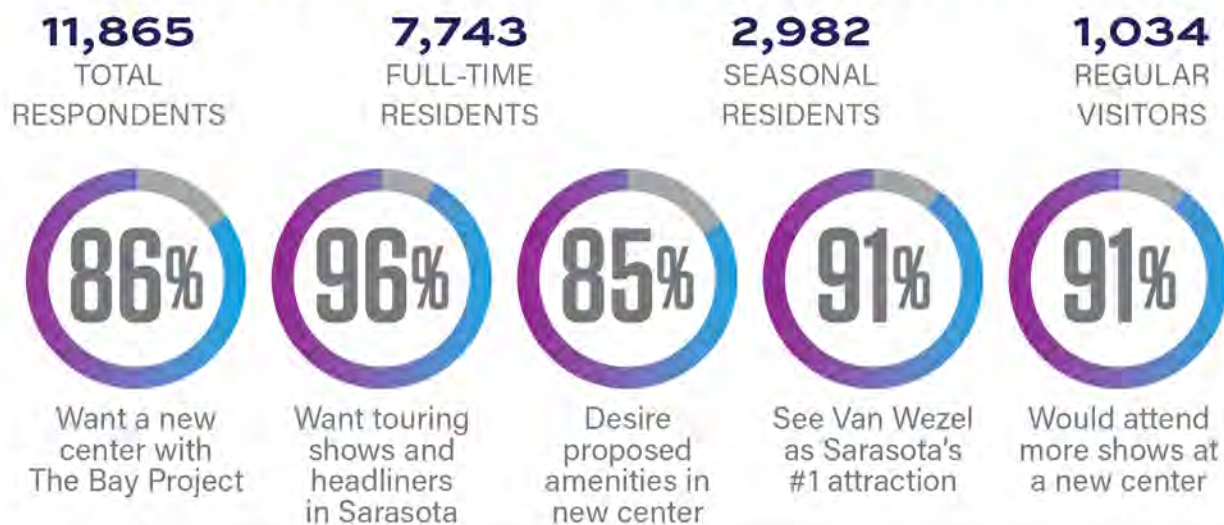
BOLSTER COMMUNICATION OF THE VISION FOR THE NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO ENGENDER BROAD SUPPORT.

COMMUNICATING THE VISION

Our work in cultivating public engagement begins now. By communicating the community benefits for the new center, we can help engender support long before the walls go up. Eventually, we will reach out nationally and internationally, but our primary focus for engagement in the development phase is Sarasota and Greater Southwest Florida. This comprises our largest potential audience, and we want to communicate directly to the communities we serve.

The process starts with an understanding of our various constituencies: what is important in their lives, how they feel about the arts, and how they get their information. We laid some key groundwork with surveys in 2018 and 2020.

2018 PATRON SURVEY RESULTS BY THE NUMBERS



Two years later, we initiated a community engagement survey to help inform our planning. We opened this 2020 survey to the region-at-large, with the intention of using a multichannel approach. Due to the constraints of the pandemic, the survey was delivered solely online, supported by 36 community partners who circulated it to their constituents. It was gratifying to see such a diversity of community groups get behind this effort.

2020 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ONLINE SURVEY

150,000+
Touchpoints

36
Community Partners
across the region

84%

Believe the performing arts are important to make the Gulf Coast an attractive place to live

93%

Believe a new performing arts center will enhance the Gulf Coast's art and cultural offerings

The most consistent theme expressed by the 4,600 respondents was the need to make the new center more inclusive of the entire community. A full 88% said that the performing arts should be accessible to all people regardless of socioeconomic status, and 91% said that it is important for communities to provide cultural learning opportunities for children and their families. Both of these findings connect directly to our strategic priorities.

The majority of respondents also prioritized a safe, well-organized and accessible venue, with relevant, affordable performances. And, they strongly agreed that the performing arts contributes to the economic health of the area, with 90% seeing a benefit to jobs, tourism, retail and hospitality.

Because the entire community will benefit from the new center, we will invite everyone to help make it happen. The City, corporate supporters, individual donors and members of the general public will all have multiple ways to be involved and show support.

Responsive and relevant

There is no division between the constituents for our communications, the audiences for the new performing arts center, and the recipients of our expanded arts education programming. Our messaging across the board over the next five years will emphasize cultural responsiveness, equitable access and lifelong engagement with the performing arts—the antithesis of a one-size-fits all approach.

While we want our communications to speak with one voice, we also intend to tailor the message to specific groups and neighborhoods, including those that may feel disenfranchised from the arts today. We will engage respectfully with everyone using well-placed, clear messaging.

Prior to the launch of each initiative, there will be a comprehensive planning process that includes benchmarking and narrative development, and afterward, a listening loop and efficacy measures.

A new identity for the Foundation

As part of our evolution, the Foundation will transition to a new identity as the Sarasota Performing Arts Center Foundation. This will better convey our leadership role in the future of the performing arts. The name change is also an opportunity to reinforce the civic, cultural and commercial benefits of locating the new performing arts center at the heart of Sarasota's definitive Bay Park redevelopment.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

DEEPEN OUR CURRENT WORK IN ARTS EDUCATION AND EXPLORE NEW PLATFORMS THAT ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS THROUGH THE ARTS.

REIMAGINING ARTS EDUCATION

Engagement in the arts is a force for good. It channels passionate opinions into constructive dialogue and inspires hope. It also supports academic success and social, emotional, mental and economic well-being. Our belief is that every person should have access to arts experiences, and every teacher should have the tools and resources to make those experiences as meaningful as possible.

In 2020, against the backdrop of the pandemic and the heightened awareness of social injustice, we became acutely aware of the need to integrate the arts more comprehensively into communities. It was a watershed year in our philosophy of arts education. Months of introspection led us to two significant developments: one was the creation of our IDEA virtual learning initiative, which fosters inclusivity, diversity, equity and access to the arts. The other is a pervasive change in how we execute the Foundation's mission to advance education. Cultural responsiveness is now integral to all of our work.

In our strategic plan, we commit to exploring new ways to integrate cultural appreciation into our curriculum to serve communities more completely. This starts with the analysis that will inform our planning and efficacy measures. We are currently evaluating where we can have the greatest impact beyond school-age partnerships—for instance, we hope to integrate the performing arts as a pathway to learning for seniors and multigenerational families.

Arts literacy and access

We are proud that the Foundation's arts literacy and access programs have touched well over half a million lives in the past three decades. This was exemplified again in 2020, when we were one of the first Sarasota area arts organizations to respond to pandemic school closings. The Artworks Anywhere virtual learning tools we created during Covid-19 have been used by the Kennedy Center as a model for scholastic engagement in the performing arts.

We designed Artworks Anywhere to deliver a combination of video-on-demand and high-quality live streaming. While the content was initially intended to support students during at-home learning, Artworks Anywhere has evolved into a valuable resource for in-class instruction.

Children in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 are taught how to explore languages, science, history and other subjects through their favorite art form using everyday items at hand.

Arts education and educator development

Our arts education initiatives focus on providing school-age children in Sarasota County with unforgettable learning experiences through the dramatic arts. In partnership with the Van Wezel Hall, we facilitate classroom visits by artists, schooltime performances, a summer learning academy, family literacy nights and shared learning experiences for students with disabilities. The launch of our IDEA program established international hip-hop artist Olmeca as the Hall's 2020-2021 Artist in Residence.



Our educator development programs are primarily delivered as part of the Kennedy Center Partners in Education program. Together, we bring renowned educators to Sarasota County to train teachers in arts integration techniques. We also offer workshops at no cost to all teachers in Florida to help them prepare their students for live performances.

Partnerships expand access to the arts

Partnerships play a critical role in our educational initiatives, particularly as we strategize about a multigenerational approach. The Foundation has established a framework for educational pilots, including testing tools, to ensure that the expansion of our partner network is both robust and disciplined, with measurable results.

Going forward, we will continue to deliver exceptional academic programming through our partnership with the Van Wezel Hall, with the support of its staff, until the new venue opens. This includes the successful models we have developed with our core academic partners—Sarasota County Schools and the Kennedy Center Partners in Education.



Additionally, we will continue to be a vital source of support for other types of access within communities, such as virtual learning tools. We also partner with organizations to provide access to live events at little or no cost for children, seniors, families and members of the military who might not have the ability to see a performance.

These partnership-based initiatives connect many people to the arts for the first time, and they put us in touch with constituent groups that are critical to our mission. We learn from these interactions and use that knowledge to become increasingly effective in our work.

KEY MILESTONES

- 2017**

MASTER PLAN CONCEPT CHOSEN FOR THE 53-ACRE BAY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESS
- 2018**

MASTER PLAN APPROVED BY VOTE OF CITY COMMISSION WITH NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER INCLUDED

FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$10 MILLION ESTATE GIFT DESIGNATED FOR THE NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

FOUNDATION RAISES \$1 MILLION IN ANGEL FUNDING AND LAUNCHES FEASIBILITY PLANNING PROCESS
- 2019**

FOUNDATION APPOINTS NEW LEADERSHIP WITH SELECTION OF CEO AND REFRESHED BOARD

SITE ENGINEERING AND RESILIENCE STUDY COMPLETED
- 2020**

VISION FOR NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER ENDORSED BY CITY COMMISSION

CITY AND COUNTY COMMISSIONS VOTE APPROVAL OF 30-YEAR TAX INCREMENT FUNDING (TIF) PLAN

FOUNDATION LAUNCHES INITIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

FOUNDATION BEGINS BOARD EXPANSION TO PREPARE FOR 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
- 2021 forward**

FOUNDATION EXECUTES ON KEY OBJECTIVES IN STRATEGIC PLAN

FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$284,000 STATE APPROPRIATION FOR ARCHITECT RFP PROCESS

INITIATES RFP FOR SELECTION OF ARCHITECT AND DESIGN TEAM

LAUNCHES "FUTURE IS NOW" CAMPAIGN

ENGAGES COMMUNITY IN DESIGN LEADING TO SELECTION OF ARCHITECT AND DESIGN TEAM

SETS CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

FINALIZES PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR MAKING THIS PLAN POSSIBLE

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation's 2020-2021 Board of Directors Leadership

Jim Travers, Chair
Jenne Britell, Vice-Chair

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation's 2020-2021 Board of Directors

Ali Bahaj
Mary Bensel*
Gerry Biller
Chad Campbell
Vern Chalfant
Mark Famiglio
Julie Harris
Sharon Hillstrom
Michele Hooper
Jaih Jackson
David Koffman
Mike Martella
John Maupin
Elaine McClure
Cheryl Mendelson*
Karl Newkirk
Rochelle Nigri
Walt Pearson
Drayton Saunders
Nanci Weaver
Charlie Wilson
Mike Wilson **Ex-Officio*

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation's 2020-2021 Arts Education and Community Engagement & Strategic Planning Community Council Members

Darrell Ayers
Stephen Griese
Ed Maier
Craig Steinhoff
Christopher Weaver
Patricia Holmes White
Janet Winkler

Special Acknowledgement

AMS Planning & Research
Bascom Communications
Capital City Consulting
CCS Fundraising
Michael Corley
Sasha Hausman
Kelli Maldonado
Lucy Peterson
Elizabeth Virgilio
Van Wezel Foundation & Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall Staff Members

WE EXTEND OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA COUNTY FOR THEIR CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANT SUPPORT THROUGH THE EDWARD K. ROBERTS EMERGING NEEDS FUND.



SARASOTA
PERFORMING ARTS
FOUNDATION

MAILING ADDRESS

777 N Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34236

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

201 Coconut Avenue

performingartsfoundation.org