

YAKIMA VALLEY
MUSEUM



YAKIMA
VALLEY
MUSEUM



YAKIMA VALLEY
MUSEUM

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

Our Museum. Our Community.





Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Table of Contents

1	Our Staff and Board of Trustees
2	The Yakama Nation Land Acknowledgement
3	A Letter from Executive Director Liz Hobson
4	Mission, Vision, and Values
5	Plan + Process
7	Hearing From You
9	Rooted in the Valley...Growing for the Future
	Goals & Initiatives:
11	Engage
13	Educate
17	Preserve
21	Sustain
23	Our Shared Commitment

Staff

Liz Hobson, *Executive Director*

John Baule, *Archivist*

Evelyn Delgado, *Manager of Operations
and Strategic Initiatives*

Katie Macica, *Curator of Collections and
Exhibitions*

Anna Halgash, *Assistant Curator of
Collections and Exhibitions*

Tara Jennings, *Education and Community
Programs Coordinator*

Coy Kloster, *Facility Maintenance Coordinator*

Thatcher Weedon, *Visitor Services and
Events Coordinator*

Marcos Ramirez, *Visitor Services
Representative*

Kiriele Garretson, *Visitor Services
Representative*

Board of Trustees

Cragg Gilbert, *President*

Bertha Ortega, *Vice President*

Janice Ridgway, *Treasurer*

Carrie Moore, *Secretary*

George Allan

Tyler Beauchamp

Erin Black

Thomas Hull

Dana Kovats

Ed Marquand

Jo Miles

Diane Patterson

Akbar Rezaie

Juana Rezaie

Sally Tonkin

Leslie Wahl

Ann Willis



THE YAKAMA NATION LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Yakima Valley Museum occupies lands ceded by the 14 Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation in the Treaty of 1855. Land that was ceded in exchange for solemn promises of peace and sovereignty, and promises of self-government, preservation of culture, tradition, and identity. All of that at the barrel of a gun.

The Yakama people have been on this land since time immemorial. They remain committed stewards of this land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by their elders from generation to generation. We are honored and grateful to be on their traditional lands and give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants who make their home here today.

Letter from the **Executive Director**



Seventy-five years ago, a group of women began collecting and preserving the Yakima Valley's past because they believed that the story of this place was worth saving and sharing. Their determination laid the foundation for what would become the Yakima Valley Museum. That spirit of stewardship, curiosity, and community has never left us.

As we mark our 75th anniversary and look ahead with this new strategic plan, I am filled with genuine optimism about what this museum can be and do for our community. When I joined the Yakima Valley Museum two years ago as Executive Director, I made it a priority to listen before I acted, to understand this place, its people, and its potential. What I found was an institution with deep roots, a dedicated board, and a community that cares deeply about what happens here. We are in a strong place, financially, programmatically, and as a trusted voice in the Valley. I can say with confidence that our best years are ahead of us.

This roadmap belongs to more than just our staff and board. It was shaped by over 100 people, including community nonprofit partners, members, donors, former board members, and Yakima neighbors, who gave their time and candor to help us chart this path. Their voices are in every page of what follows.

From 2026 to 2030, we will deepen our commitment to reflecting the full and diverse story of this Valley, reach new audiences, and strengthen the partnerships that make this museum a true community institution. We will build on our momentum and grow with intention.

Thank you for being part of this story. We are just getting started.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Hobson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Hobson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
YAKIMA VALLEY MUSEUM



Yakima Valley Museum

Our Values

We are dedicated to telling the whole story of the Yakima Valley, honoring the Indigenous nations, agricultural communities, and the many cultures whose labor and traditions have shaped this place. Every story matters.

We are inclusive and welcoming. We meet our community where it is, in all its languages and backgrounds, and we are committed to making this museum a place where everyone belongs.

We believe in the power of education. We are committed to growing the next generation of curious, informed, and engaged community members, and we see young people as central to our future.

We are community centered. We listen, we partner, and we show up. This museum exists because of the Yakima Valley, and we are dedicated to giving back in equal measure.

We operate as one team, with transparency, integrity, and a shared commitment to our mission. We support one another and hold ourselves to the highest standards.

We are open to growth. We seek new ways to reach new audiences, tell new stories, and deepen our impact across the Valley and beyond.

We are committed to accuracy and truth. We take seriously our responsibility as stewards of history. We tell stories with integrity, cite our sources, correct our mistakes, and earn the trust of our community through honesty, even when the truth is complicated.

Mission

We conserve our stories to inspire our community, learn from our past, celebrate our present, and guide our future.

Vision

The Yakima Valley Museum shall always be one of central Washington's crown jewels, unequalled for providing high-quality, engaging, accurate and educational, cultural, and natural history exhibitions and programs for all.



Plan + Process



Our Planning Process

The Yakima Valley Museum began a strategic planning process in December 2025, in partnership with Erin Simon of Intrepid Fundraising. This was a comprehensive, community-driven effort to listen deeply before charting a path forward.

The process unfolded in several phases. From January through March, the team engaged in pre work to lay the groundwork for deeper community engagement. This included reviewing existing data and past program evaluations, conducting an environmental scan of peer institutions and regional trends, identifying key stakeholder groups, and developing the questions and frameworks that would guide the listening sessions ahead.

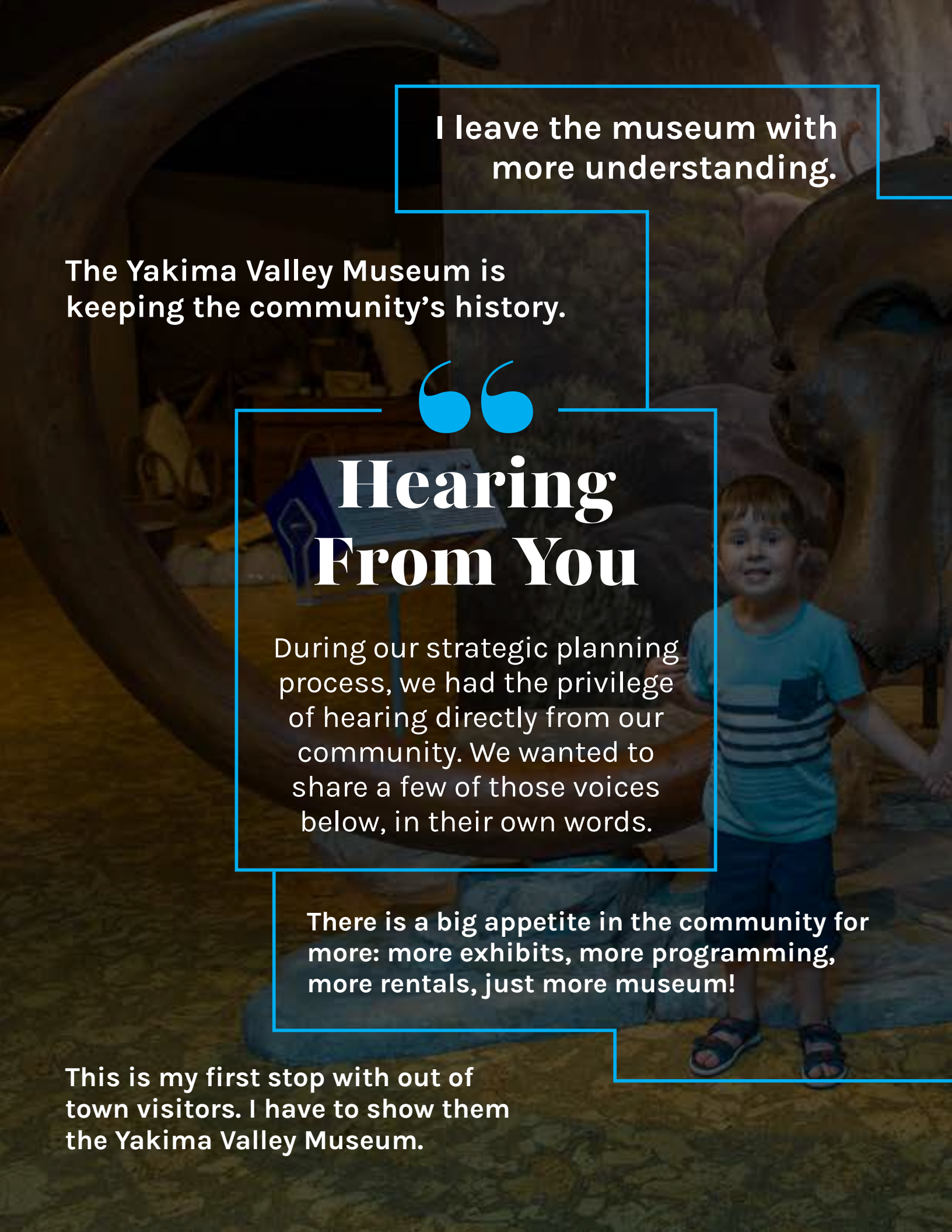
In March, the museum hosted an intensive season of community listening, including all-staff meetings, staff drop-in conversations, and three days of one-on-one and group sessions with more than 100 participants. Those conversations included museum members, community partners, current and former board members, donors, and organizational stakeholders from across the Yakima Valley. Their insights shaped the emerging themes and priorities of this blueprint.



In April 2026, a board session brought together leadership to analyze what had been heard and begin translating community input into strategic direction. The themes, goals, and initiatives in this plan reflect that collective wisdom.

This strategic plan, covering 2026 to 2030, was approved by the Yakima Valley Museum Board of Trustees in July 2026. It represents not just a roadmap for the museum's next four years, but a reflection of the community it proudly serves.





**I leave the museum with
more understanding.**

**The Yakima Valley Museum is
keeping the community's history.**

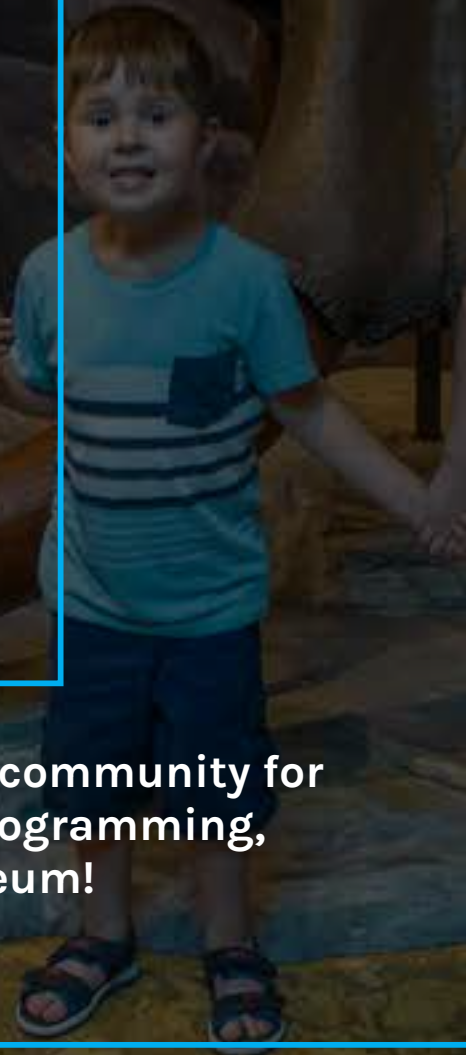


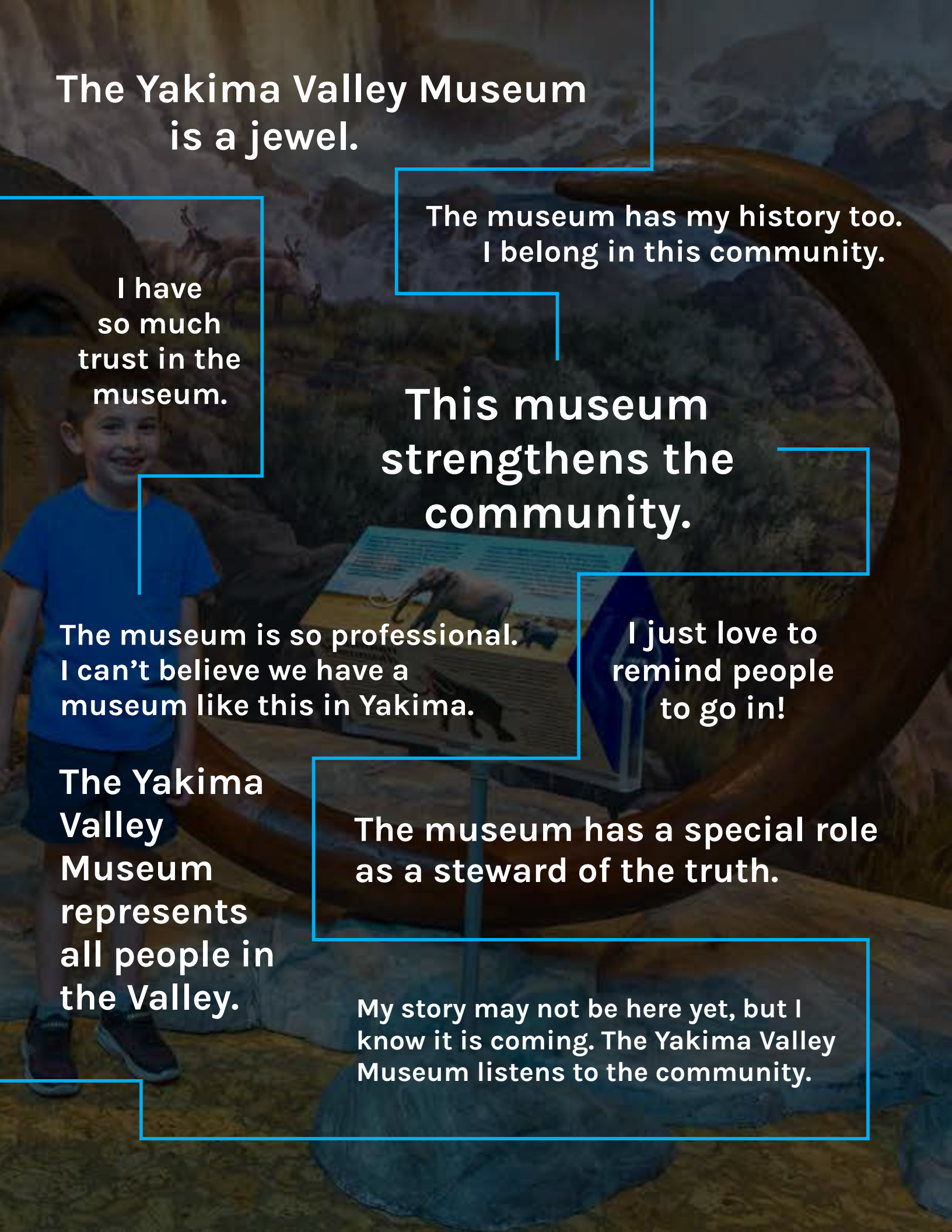
Hearing From You

**During our strategic planning
process, we had the privilege
of hearing directly from our
community. We wanted to
share a few of those voices
below, in their own words.**

**There is a big appetite in the community for
more: more exhibits, more programming,
more rentals, just more museum!**

**This is my first stop with out of
town visitors. I have to show them
the Yakima Valley Museum.**





**The Yakima Valley Museum
is a jewel.**

**The museum has my history too.
I belong in this community.**

**I have
so much
trust in the
museum.**

**This museum
strengthens the
community.**

**The museum is so professional.
I can't believe we have a
museum like this in Yakima.**

**I just love to
remind people
to go in!**

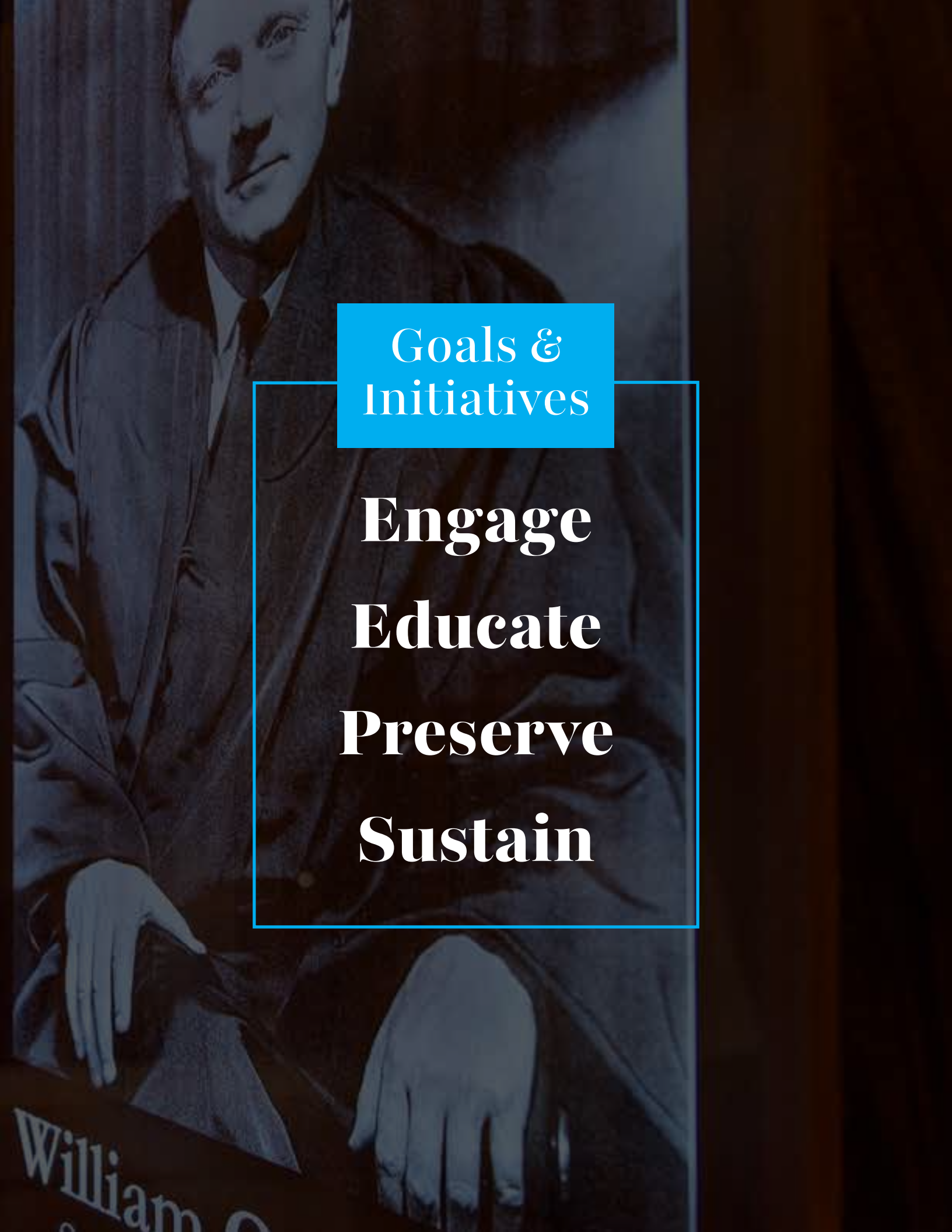
**The Yakima
Valley
Museum
represents
all people in
the Valley.**

**The museum has a special role
as a steward of the truth.**

**My story may not be here yet, but I
know it is coming. The Yakima Valley
Museum listens to the community.**



**Rooted in
the Valley...
Growing for
the Future**

A dark, monochromatic portrait of William O. Douglas, a man in a suit and tie, looking slightly to the left. The image is overlaid with a blue semi-transparent rectangle containing text.

Goals &
Initiatives

Engage
Educate
Preserve
Sustain

William O.



Engage

We will grow and deepen our relationships with the communities of the Yakima Valley, welcoming new and returning visitors through vibrant programming, meaningful membership, and experiences that reflect the full diversity of our region. We will tell our story more boldly and invite more people to be part of it.



Engage



Goal 1

Deliver a dynamic museum experience, built on robust public programming and stronger partnerships, that grows visitation and welcomes new audiences.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Increase the frequency and variety of public programming, intentionally planning strategic programming for different audiences in connection with each initiative and exhibit, to welcome a broader range of ages, backgrounds, and communities
- Build an annual calendar of member events and gatherings that bring members back to the museum throughout the year
- Cultivate and deepen partnerships with regional organizations and the Valley's diverse cultural and community groups to expand our reach and ensure their stories and perspectives are reflected in our programming and exhibits on an ongoing basis, with particular attention to new audiences and new exhibits
- Seek regular input and feedback from community members through annual surveys and listening sessions to guide how we represent the full diversity of the region
- Build on free and reduced-admission opportunities to prioritize access for all audiences

Goal 2

Increase awareness of the museum across the Yakima Valley to drive growth in visitation.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Expand and invest in outreach and promotion through digital advertising, radio, print, and direct mail, which will require dedicated budget beyond current levels
- Pursue new digital advertising strategies, including maximizing the Google Ad Grant for nonprofits
- Produce new multimedia assets with a focus on social media to promote shared experiences and tell YVM's story to new and existing audiences, while ensuring our digital channels are accessible to all
- Build relationships with hotels, the regional tourism board, and business organizations to reach travelers exploring the Yakima Valley, and develop promotional assets to support these partnerships



Educate

We will expand our commitment to learning at every age, with special focus on youth. We will reimagine the Children's Underground, grow our William O. Douglas education programs, and build partnerships with schools and community organizations that bring the Valley's history to life for the next generation.



Educate



Goal 1

Reimagine the Children's Underground as a modern, inclusive teaching space for children of all ages and abilities.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Complete the redesign of interactive, hands-on exhibits that promote imaginative play, storytime, and creative exploration
- Incorporate ADA-compliant and sensory-friendly design elements throughout the renovated space
- Activate the renovated classroom as a dedicated space for programming, workshops, and community use, with a clear plan to maximize its availability and impact

Goal 2

Strengthen YVM's role as a regional teaching resource for students, teachers, and families.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Align education programs with state and regional academic standards, strengthening their structure and creating thematic frameworks such as civic life, agriculture, and cultural heritage to reach more schools and students across the Valley, including through traveling trunk resources
- Launch new teen programming to engage an age group currently underserved by the museum
- Develop educator resources and professional development opportunities that help teachers bring Valley history into the classroom, guided by a standing Teacher Advisory Committee



Educate



Goal 3

Deepen our educational offerings to serve learners of all ages and expand interpretation of key regional stories.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Develop and refine programming, including lecture series, workshops, and member talks, to ensure the museum continues to serve learners of all ages
- Expand William O. Douglas Legacy programs and broaden use of the exhibit to more deeply support related themes across our programming
- Create out-of-school learning opportunities for children, including summer, winter, and spring break programs







Preserve

We will invest in the long-term health of our collections, modernizing how we store, catalog, and care for the artifacts and stories entrusted to us. We will ensure that what we conserve today remains accessible and meaningful for generations to come.



Preserve



Goal 1

Build a more complete, representative, and professionally managed collection.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Transition to a new collections management system (CMS) to better support inventory, cataloging, and long-term collections approach
- Establish best practices and workflows for using the CMS to systematically work through a full inventory of our 48,000+ object collection over time
- Refine and implement a deaccession policy and process to thoughtfully and responsibly reduce holdings where appropriate
- Update our core collections governance documents, including a Collections Management Policy, Acquisition Policy, and Emergency/Disaster Preparedness Plan
- Develop a long-term collections management strategy that addresses storage capacity and future growth

Goal 2

Ensure the physical integrity and long-term care of our collections.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Conduct a comprehensive preservation assessment of our artwork, historical objects, and archival materials
- Adopt best practices for conservation across all collection types
- Identify and address priority conservation needs, including environmental controls, housing, and handling standards



Preserve



Goal 3

Tell richer, more inclusive stories through our exhibitions and interpretive approach.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Develop a refreshed slate of new and rotating exhibits that give visitors a reason to return, drawing on themes ranging from community history and agricultural heritage to personal biography and cultural tradition
- Build and maintain a multi-year exhibition schedule, in three-year cycles, that balances new content with stories of both regional and broader significance
- Expand and diversify public tour offerings, including thematic, behind-the-scenes, and collections-focused tours, to share more of the collection with visitors
- Work with the Collections Committee to assess the collection for gaps in representation, including place, gender, sexual orientation, time period, race, and ethnicity, and prioritize acquisitions that address those gaps
- Engage staff, board, and community stakeholders in a collaborative process to define the museum's overarching interpretive framework, including the core themes, narratives, and values that should guide what we collect, exhibit, and communicate







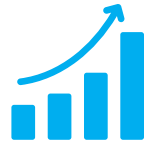
Sustain

We will build the organizational foundation our mission demands by investing in our team, addressing critical facility needs, and strengthening the financial health of the museum through smart revenue growth, fundraising, and responsible stewardship of our resources.





Sustain



Goal 1

Strengthen the museum's financial health through diverse, grounded revenue streams.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

- Develop plans to grow museum store sales, membership, and program revenue, with event rentals and membership growth as the primary near-term earned revenue priorities
- Build a stronger membership program: attract new members, improve the member experience, encourage members to deepen their commitment over time, and re-engage lapsed members
- Deepen relationships with current donors, institutional funders, and supporters, including through a clear leadership and board engagement plan, to build a steady and growing pipeline of philanthropic support

Goal 2

Invest in our team and facilities to build a strong organizational foundation.

Initiatives & Areas of Focus

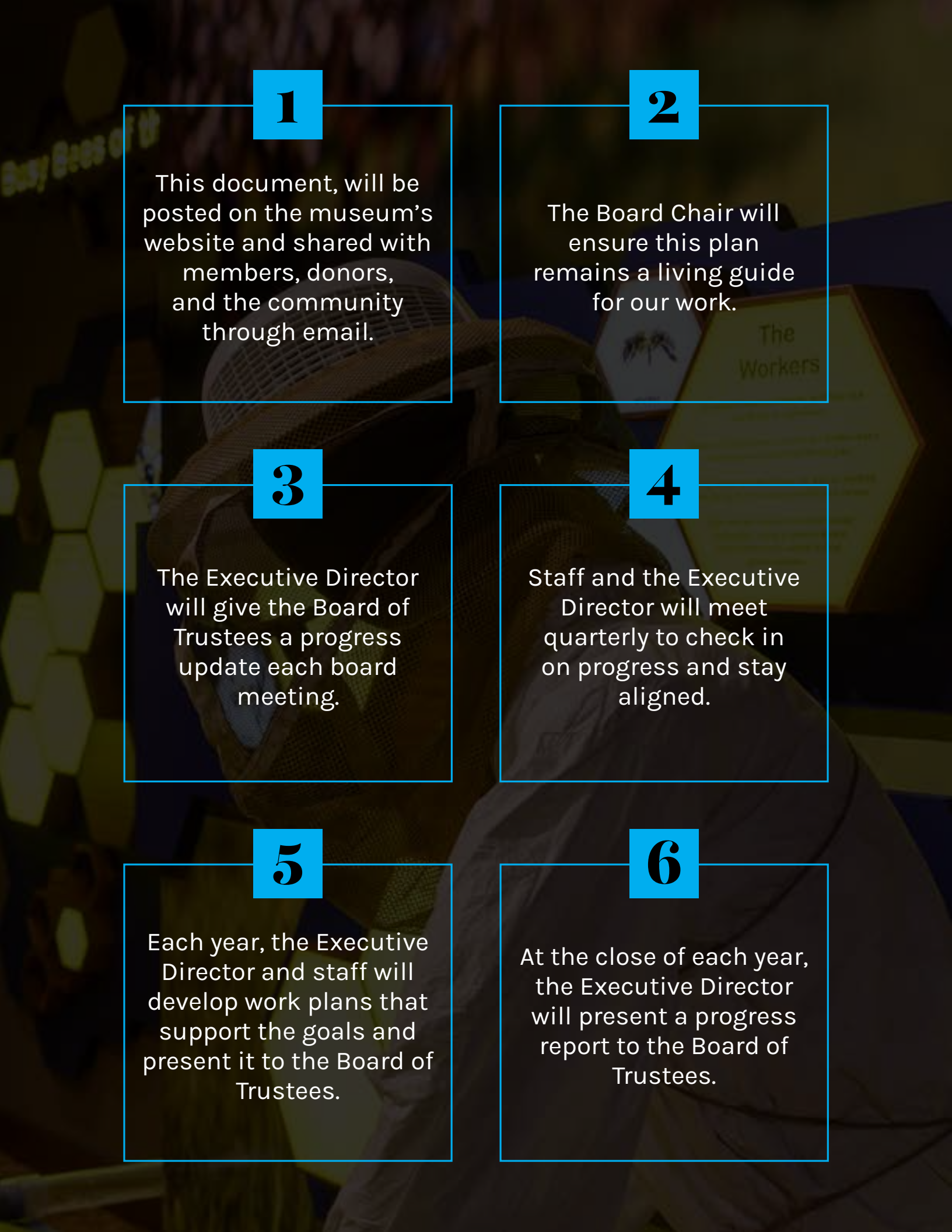
- Expand staffing capacity, including through contractors and consultants, to meet the growing demands of this plan and sustain the work it requires
- Prioritize staff training and professional development as a core budget commitment, building long-term capacity across the team
- Create a five-year maintenance and facilities replacement plan to identify and address critical needs and anticipate future needs over time



Our Shared Commitment

The Yakima Valley Museum is committed to being open and transparent with our visitors, members, donors, board, staff, community partners, and the broader Yakima Valley community.

To make sure this plan stays on track and is not just a document on a shelf, we will take the following steps:



1

This document, will be posted on the museum's website and shared with members, donors, and the community through email.

2

The Board Chair will ensure this plan remains a living guide for our work.

3

The Executive Director will give the Board of Trustees a progress update each board meeting.

4

Staff and the Executive Director will meet quarterly to check in on progress and stay aligned.

5

Each year, the Executive Director and staff will develop work plans that support the goals and present it to the Board of Trustees.

6

At the close of each year, the Executive Director will present a progress report to the Board of Trustees.



FOLLOW:

f Yakima Valley Museum
@ yakima_valley_museum
@YakimaValleyMuseum25

LEARN MORE: yvmuseum.org

PHONE: 509.248.0747

VISIT: 2105 Tieton Drive,
Yakima WA 98902

Tuesday-Saturday, 10a-5p