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project goals and key priorities

The goal of the retreat is to provide the Campus Master Plan architect with concrete directions that align the campus with the Smithsonian’s vision and strategic plan. The retreat builds on previous planning work, drivers for change, and ongoing strategy, and provides direction through a sequence of 5 key questions.

• Visitors: Who are the visitors, and what are the visitor experiences and activities that the Smithsonian wants to support?

• Space and Program Priorities: What spaces, services, and amenities are most important to support these activities and experiences? In particular, what’s needed to make the best use of 21st century technology and communications?

• Relationships: How should these spaces relate to one another in terms of adjacencies, connection, access?

• Entry and Circulation: How should visitors enter the Smithsonian? Is one "Front Door" or "Signature Entry" needed? How should visitors enter and circulate among the individual museums?

• Alternatives: How will different future decisions about funding and AIB programming impact the above? What would change? What might move off-site?
**program priorities**

In preparation for engaging an A/E firm to create a Master Plan for the Campus on the Southwest portion of the Mall, the Smithsonian assembled key leaders as well as work to date for a retreat on June 7, 2011. The outcomes of this retreat are the vision, priorities, and direction to guide the future planning process. This is summarized below, according to the five questions answered in the retreat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Smithsonian Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experience:</strong></td>
<td>The future Smithsonian visitor experience will move from being somewhat static and collections-oriented (“stuff”) to one that is more dynamic, social, and participatory as part of a lively, connected place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space and Program:</strong></td>
<td>Priorities include clarified entries (with one “signature” entry from the Mall), visitor orientation spaces, amenities like food and retail, strategic high impact exhibit spaces to reflect our Strategic Plan’s Grand Challenges, showcase history, brand and the Smithsonian’s off-Mall museums, zoo and research centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships and Adjacencies:</strong></td>
<td>Creating an east-west connection is a priority as is relocating as much office space offices space off-site as possible, enabling a conference center within the Quadrangle building. Amenities should be distributed throughout campus and the AIB should function as an education and event hub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry and Circulation:</strong></td>
<td>Entries should be reconfigured to engage traffic from the Mall. Clear physical, programmatic, and digital connections must be made between spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternatives to Consider:</strong></td>
<td>If the Smithsonian American Latino Museum (SALM) is located in the AIB, the same program needs exist (e.g.: for orientation, event space, and amenities) albeit in smaller quantities. Consider “flipping” the quad so Sackler and NMAfA are on the north and other spaces on the south. Also investigate full-excavation of the campus precinct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
context and background info
The Smithsonian in the 21st century will be distinguished for its interdisciplinary collaboration, entrepreneurial culture, excellence, and accountability.

- The four Grand Challenges (e.g., Understanding World Cultures, Unlocking the Mysteries of the Universe) will act as an “overarching strategic framework” for enabling interdisciplinary programs and operations. **Physical and virtual Grand Challenge centers** will exhibit research and activities.

- **Emerging tools and technology** will allow the Smithsonian to offer more resources and access to the Smithsonian’s collection and expertise.

- **Pan-Institutional innovation in educational programs and spaces** will strengthen American education.

- Growing, sustaining, and expanding access to **Smithsonian resources** will be vital.

- Engaging **human resources** will be imperative to furthering the strategic plan.
branding

The brand supports the strategic plan in creating a Smithsonian for the 21st century. “Smithsonian—Seriously Amazing” can be exemplified through offers, communications, capabilities, and people.

“Exciting the learning in everyone”
The Smithsonian’s mission (“The increase and diffusion of knowledge”) will be accomplished through learning and education that is active, iterative, and never-ending, and in which any one can participate.

Not only, but also...
The Smithsonian will shift from being a destination to an experience. The Institution will be...

not only... but also
National institution → universal lens
inside out → outside in
the public → real people
knowledge delivery → collaborative learning

Staff engagement
Front- and back-of-house staff can play more visible roles in visitor experience.
Complementing the strategic plan, interviews with 18 leaders at the Smithsonian highlighted essential opportunities for change.

**Engage through multiple channels**
On-site and online; physical and digital

**Enliven the campus with activity**
What the Smithsonian does; events to bring people together

**Connect the Smithsonian inside and out**
Pan-institutional, global, conversational, experimental

**Improve the visitor experience**
Front door(s), circulation, food and retail
previous planning work

Previous work identified areas for change and conceptualized new spaces.

5 Key Campus Goals
Sheryl Kolasinski

Create a **front door**, enable **universal access**, re-imagine the **Castle**, welcome the “rebirth” of the **AIB**, and increase space, support, and technology for **education**.

SIB Revitalization Planning
ennead + SmithGroup

Considered how the Castle, AIB, and Quad could function together: Castle = **Academy**; AIB = **Exposition Center**; Quadrangle = **Gateway**

Freer-Sackler Master Plan
Kyu Sung Woo Architects

**Improves entry and circulation** of Freer-Sackler by adding entrances, expanding spaces, removing barriers, and re-programming spaces.
drivers for change

The opportunity and need to move forward arises from several streams: pressing repair and construction, needs for space, potential developments / upcoming openings, and envisioned roles of the Smithsonian in the future.

Need to replace quad roof membrane

Need to vacate Castle for major renovations

Expiring SI staff office leases

New technologies to engage

Connecting within & outside SI

Global exchanges and access
upcoming developments

Proposed projects and upcoming openings on and around the Smithsonian campus:

- Hirshhorn “Bubble”: Would be inflated once a year.
- Arts + Industries Building: Re-opening and currently being programmed for interim use (~10 years). May be the site of the SALM.
- Southwest EcoDistrict: Would be redeveloped as a sustainable, mixed-use community.
- Perimeter Security Master Plan: Re-aligns Jefferson Drive; plants sculptural stone barriers north of the Castle; and adds bollards and security booths.
- Smithsonian Collections Space Plan: Upgrade existing spaces and build specialized, off-site storage.
AIB and SIB interim planning

New programs, exhibits, and amenities may be sited in the AIB and SIB.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives and Possibilities</th>
<th>AIB</th>
<th>Castle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make <strong>minimum interior upgrades</strong> to permit public use</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the <strong>infrastructure</strong> for diverse public programs and events</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a <strong>dynamic, highly interactive program</strong> focused on the Grand Challenges</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage <strong>changing or travelling exhibits</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce an active program of <strong>Special Events</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve and create <strong>cafés and shops</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the <strong>story of Smithson’s life</strong> with expanded and updated exhibits</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the <strong>recognition of benefactors</strong> and emphasize their role</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing Castle Café

AIB interior renovations

AIB exterior renovations
castle visitors survey

Visitor information and orientation behaviors and needs were gathered through 24 interviews and 416 questionnaires in April 2012 by the Smithsonian Office of Policy and Analysis.

- **70% of visitors plan their visit before arrival.** 39% of Castle visitors go for information.

- **“Planners” vs. “Improvisers”:** Planners go to the Castle for information, stop at the info desk, and see the orientation film. Improvisers go to the Castle to eat and drink and have no preference for how to get information.

- **Info from print vs. digital vs. staff:** Overall strong preference for print materials, however media preferences depend on the info being delivered. **Print**—maps and directions, general Washington D.C. info; **Digital**—Castle info (touchscreens), web site access; **Staff**—exhibitions, individual items on display, Smithsonian in general.

- **Castle as orientation and guide:** Helps clarify information gathered online by providing a physical and mental scale to the space; could provide 1-day self-guided highlights tour; has the most up-to-date info (vs. books or web).

### Pre-visit resources

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from people</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide books</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Why enter the Castle?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI museum info</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits in Castle</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Why go to info desks?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maps &amp; directions</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum exhibits &amp; tours</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle info</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI events</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**givens, constraints, and unknowns**

Campus master planning must address the givens, work within the constraints, and anticipate the scenarios arising from the unknowns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Givens</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Unknowns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guidelines</strong></td>
<td><strong>Programming</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quad roof membrane needs replacing</td>
<td>• Endowment stipulations</td>
<td>• SALM: When legislation will go through and where it will be situated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Castle is failing and needs to be vacated for renovations</td>
<td>• Perimeter security requirements</td>
<td>• Southwest EcoDistrict details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• AIB will be re-opened</td>
<td>• Historic structures and External Agency reviews</td>
<td><strong>Offices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SI Staff Offices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff offices in 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leases in Capital Gallery and Crystal City will end in 5-10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Growth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Growth of Smithsonian, visitation, funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
current conditions and issues
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Amenities

• There are limited dining options on campus for staff (Boiler Room), visitors (Castle Café), and important guests. Each museum or building does not have its own food service.

• In comparison, other Smithsonian museums on the Mall have dining options that attract. Of note is the Mitsitam Café at the National Museum of the American Indian, which features cuisine from numerous indigenous areas and uses food as an opportunity for learning.

• Museum shops across campus require revamping.

• Amenities should primarily support the visitor experience, but also attract new audiences.

• Amenities will need to accompany the growth in programs, events, and activities.
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Education

- The vision for experimental, interdisciplinary, hands-on education requires flexible spaces that support collaboration, prototyping, and distance learning (asynchronous and classroom capture).

- Learning should be possible anytime, anywhere, and by anyone, and can be achieved through mobile and online content. Furthermore, mobile and online content can enhance on-site learning.

- The Smithsonian should fill the void of a children’s museum in Washington D.C.

- A visit to the museum will be a personalized learning experience.
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Entry / Orientation

- Though the Castle is recognized as the symbolic home of the Smithsonian and a place to start and/or plan visits, its orientation services could be much improved, especially in its ways of distributing information, its orientation theatre, and its campus model.
- The Ripley Center as well as the NMAfA and Sackler entrance pavilions are poorly recognized as entrances to the Quad.
- There is no central, signature entrance.
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Events

• There is a need to support large (500-1000-person) gatherings and conferences, with flexible, technology-rich auditoria and break-out rooms.

• Special events such as NMAfA’s Africa Underground are popular, but lack appropriate spaces (eg. for performances, screenings, “making”).

• Spaces should enable more participatory, social, and group experiences.

• Events should engage the public with conversation and opportunities to directly engage with leading thinkers and creators.

• Events can enliven the campus after-hours.
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Exhibits

• Remote Smithsonian sites need a greater presence on-campus.

• Exhibits will bridge physical and digital tools and information to enhance the learning experience.

• Programming will speak more to what the Smithsonian does, not just what it has.

• Exhibits and programs will highlight the four Grand Challenges of the strategic plan.

• Exhibits, like education, will be pan-institutional, interdisciplinary, experimental, hands-on, and technology-rich.
programs and activities

As the number and variety of programs, events, and exhibits increases, the Smithsonian will need more and better spaces to support growth.

Work and Visitor Support

- Staff experiences can be improved through healthier workplaces, and more opportunities for face-to-face meetings and collaboration.

- The ability to do interdisciplinary work is imperative for pan-institutional and interdisciplinary exhibits, education, and events.

- Increase in exhibits, programs, and amenities will require appropriate support spaces.
space use – total area allocations

Reflecting on current space, a few key allocations emerge: There is ~47,000 square feet of assembly and meeting space on campus but it is perceived as much less since it is distributed. There is ~117,000 square feet of office space on campus.
In the South Mall / campus, visitor-oriented spaces (visitor lobby / information, retail, food service, assembly + meeting, exhibits, ½ circulation) account for 42.5% of programmable space. This supports needs for amenities, orientation, meeting, and exhibit spaces.
space use – interview comments

SMITHSONIAN CAMPUS INTERVIEW COMMENTS SUMMARY
Collected from leadership interviews, Spring 2012

The text below is color coded to show comments from leadership about campus features that are working well, not working so well, or thoughts and ideas about the future of the campus. The talking bubbles are weighted to represent how many times a comment was expressed. They range from A LOT, SOME, to A FEW.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON QUAD
- "Serious a maze"
- Underground educational space is a mistake
- Poor work space, lacking natural light
- Hard to find, hard to navigate, and underutilized

GENERAL COMMENTS ON OVERALL PRECINCT
- Retail lacking and not innovative
- Lacking meeting spaces for scientific conferences
- Architectural mish-mash
- Lacking of parking
- Dead at night, may not be perceived as safe, "uncomfortable atmosphere"

- Make more attractive to casual visitors
- Outdoor gathering spaces and food services
- Connect south to 10th Street (signature entry)
- Direct encounters with artists 'creating' on-site
- Make spaces between buildings part of the experience
- Leader in accessibility in historic buildings (physical, emotional, intellectual)

- Create places to experiment with new approaches
- Represent units not physically on mall
- Pan-institutional educational spaces and programs
- Flexible, technology-rich gathering, education, and distance learning spaces

- Position gardens as destinations unto themselves
- Enhance experience beyond benches and signage

- Make gardens more inviting and usable
- Ripley kiosk blocks Quad–Mall access
- Need better retail options – quality, quantity, and location (esp. food)
- garden is a great asset that all visitors encounter and that is visited regularly by people around campus (e.g. USDA, DOE staff)
- Dining options for donors, other important visitors, staff
- Relocate staff to free up space on campus
- Lacking orientation
- Doesn’t support work well
- Disappointing interior when you expect something magical
- Lacking modern interior, technology, vibrancy
- Good as symbolic center
- Create a "happening place"
- Short-term expo / conference space (e.g.: TED-like programs)
- Early-learner’s space
- Educational spaces for active learning
- Lacking connections
- North-facing entrances
- "Making" event spaces
- Lacking visibility, scale
- Lacking event spaces
- Africa Underground scattered on all levels
- Create East-West connection

- International Gallery links two museums that have lots in common to share
- Better connections and flow

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physical conditions

Spaces across campus require renovation and/or reprogramming to enable the strategic plan and create great visitor and employee experiences.

Freer-Sackler
- The loading dock for the Freer, Sackler, NMAfA, Quad, and Castle is located between the Freer and Sackler buildings, thus requiring staff to often move materials across campus.

Quad
- Occupies 360,000 programmable square feet, some of which is underutilized.
- Out-of-sight and difficult to navigate. Spaces are disconnected and moving among museums is confusing—there is no direct public connection between Sackler and NMAfA.
- Poor work environment with limited natural light.
- Holds the majority of education spaces, which do not support current event, activity, and program needs (eg. in terms of space, tech capabilities, connectivity, flexibility, atmosphere, etc.)
- Roof waterproofing membrane needs to be replaced.

Castle
- Building systems are failing and building needs to be vacated.
- Upper floors are primarily offices even though the space is not the most appropriate for this use.
- Upper floors cannot be event spaces because of poor entry and egress.

AIB
- Currently undergoing basic renovations and upgrades to support special programs, events, and travelling exhibits.
- Poor museum exhibit space.

Hirshhorn
- Limited events space.
- Lacks connection to other nearby buildings.
- Sunken Sculpture Garden doesn’t attract visitors well.
functional relationships

The campus needs better physical and programmatic connections to support great visitor experiences and interdisciplinary work.

Poor space-program fit across campus
- eg. Below-grade offices in the Quad and sub-optimal offices in Castle

Programmatic connections are not supported by physical connections
- eg. Difficult to transition between Freer and Sackler.
- eg. Distributed education spaces in each building are convenient, but the lack of an education hub does not speak to the significance of learning and education in the Smithsonian’s mission.

Disconnected “back-of-house” and “front-of-house” operations create inefficiencies for staff
- eg. Castle kitchen and dining room
- eg. Freer-Sackler loading dock and exhibit spaces

Various groups located in Quad could be located elsewhere as part of a long-term office strategy

Underground education spaces may limit their accessibility and lower their utilization
circulation

Circulation and entry on campus need improvement, particularly in the Quad and Castle.

Lack of connectivity and visibility among spaces above- and below-ground

• There is a lack of connectivity between buildings, which are separated above and below ground by gardens, walls, service drives, and tunnels.

• The Quad is sectioned and moving between museums often requires level changes. For instance, there is no direct connection between the Sackler and NMAfA, or between Freer and Sackler. Furthermore, visitor-oriented spaces (exhibits, galleries) are positioned behind office and event spaces when entering from the Ripley Center, which itself is a key entrance.

• Visibility across campus and underground are poor, making wayfinding confusing and spaces difficult to mentally map. In particular, underground space is invisible so visitors do not know where to enter and cannot see where they are going.

• Circulation should support a visit “flow” whereas now it is often disjointed and disorienting

Poor entry placement and visibility

• Visitors enter the campus from all directions (via public transportation, the Mall and other museums) but entrances do not orient visitors.

• Entries and exits are unclear or blocked
  • eg. Visitors approaching the Castle from the east expect an entrance, but it is for staff only.
  • eg. There are no visible entrances to the Sackler of NMAfA even though signage is prominent.
relationship to surrounding area

This section of the Smithsonian campus currently acts as the south “edge” of the National Mall and is disjointed from other Smithsonian buildings, but context could change with upcoming developments.

Distributed Smithsonian museums and events across campus and Mall

- Larger Smithsonian museums (e.g. NMAH, NMNH, NMAI, NASM) are elsewhere along the north side of the Mall or east of 7th Street, creating regular flows of visitors between the campus and Mall along the north and south boundaries.

- The Mall hosts some Smithsonian events, such as the annual Folklife Festival.

Nearby Smithsonian, government, and corporate office workplaces

- Capital Gallery, off-campus but nearby, is occupied by many Smithsonian offices.

- The south side of campus is bordered by government buildings.

- Employees from Smithsonian and government buildings do visit the Smithsonian during breaks and/or lunch. The Haupt Garden is easily accessible through the South gates.

- The area south of the campus is primarily workplaces, with few visitor attractions. It is slated to be redeveloped as the Southwest EcoDistrict, which would bring more visitors along 10th street down to the waterfront and more offices, residents, and amenities, including potential cultural venues.
vision
visioning cards exercise

In teams, participants conveyed their vision for the Smithsonian using brightspot’s “visioning cards.” They picked 3 images each to represent the Smithsonian as it is today and their visions for the Smithsonian. Each image was described with a keyword or phrase.
visioning cards findings

The exercise set clear aspirations for the future to move from multiple directions to be more unified and integrated, to be more connected, dynamic and exciting – inside and out.

Current

- multiple directions
- frayed connections
- snail’s pace

Future

- working together in harmony
- joyful, dynamic, social
- excitement
**campus vision**

The exercise set clear aspirations for the future to move from multiple directions to be more unified and integrated, to be more connected, dynamic and exciting. The key direction for the future vision of the campus include:

- **Integrated**: While it is important to acknowledge that different areas, groups, and programs have different strengths and may serve different audiences, the Smithsonian is striving for a future in which they are more integrated (e.g.: pan-institutional programming).

- **Connected**: There is a shared sense that current spaces and experiences are often disconnected – it is hard to get oriented, to move from one museum to another, or to know what’s happening – and so the future must be one in which the Smithsonian is better connected physical and digitally, inside and out.

- **Dynamic**: The Smithsonian aspires to move from a somewhat static experience that is predominantly collections-oriented to offer a more dynamic, participatory, and social experience to visitors and be a more lively, “happening place.”

- **Front and Back**: There is acknowledgement that to improve the visitor experience, the Institution must also invest in what goes on behind the scenes: upgrading infrastructure, providing storage and support spaces, and improving both the visitor and the employee experience.

- **Old and New**: Going forward, the Smithsonian needs to make the branding strategy of “Not only, but also...” a reality by building on the existing history and context but also introducing new spaces, programs, and technologies which can comfortably co-exist.
recommendations and key question answers
ideal visits to the Smithsonian

Each of the three participant teams imagined ideal visits to the Smithsonian for two personas. They recorded the activities participated in and the spaces used along time, specifying if the persona was indoors or outdoors. Where possible, the teams also recorded tools and other users that supported the visits.
**personas**

*Who are the Smithsonian’s visitors? For the purposes of the retreat, six personas were created, combining Falk’s Museum Visitor Identities and the branding learning personas.*

**Falk’s Museum Visitor Identities**

**“WHY” — Why do people go to museums? What motivates them?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Personal curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional / Hobbyist</td>
<td>Specific interests or goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Seeker</td>
<td>Reputation / status of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recharger</td>
<td>Restoration, contemplation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Affinity</td>
<td>“I” identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Branding Learning Personas**

**“HOW” — How do people learn? What is their learning “style?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persona</th>
<th>Learning style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Challenging own thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Improver</td>
<td>Applying learning to goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introspective</td>
<td>Creative means to experience info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental</td>
<td>Social learning; whatever piques their interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networker</td>
<td>Sharing info to build relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritan</td>
<td>Using knowledge to help others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 personas

Who are the Smithsonian’s visitors? For the purposes of the retreat, six personas were created, combining Falk’s Museum Visitor Identities and the branding learning personas.

Tom, the exploring Samaritan: elementary school teacher, SI Special Support Volunteer, 32 y.o.

Philip, the accidental learning recharger: SI accountant, sports and woodworker enthusiast, 29 y.o.

Rick & Kate, experience-seeking intellectuals: overseas tourists, recent grads, 22 y.o.

Lynn, the professional self-improver: medical anthropologist, usually on-the-move, 58 y.o.

Eva, the introspective cultural identifier: first-generation Chinese-American, excels in art, 16 y.o.

The Smiths, facilitating networkers with explorers: self-proclaimed “geeks”; 5, 7, 30 y.o.
ideal visits findings

The Ideal Visit exercise answers, “What the visitor experiences and activities that the Smithsonian wants to support?”

Visitors engage in a variety of interactive experiences

- There are multiple ways to engage with information and people, such as through exhibits, hands-on activities, movies, Segway tours, online networks, performances, conferences, and mixers.
- Staff interact with visitors in-person and through digital media (eg. exhibit podcast) to enhance learning and create a more social, multi-media experience.
- The ideal visit activity suggests that visitors enjoy or prefer alternating between exhibits and events or activities. Thus, museums should provide opportunities to engage in either at any time.
- Interactive experiences can be low-tech, such as performances, or high-tech, such as exhibit touchscreens and personalized, tech-supported visits.

Technology-rich and interactive
Events and performances
Hands-on exhibits
ideal visits findings

The Ideal Visit exercise answers, “What the visitor experiences and activities that the Smithsonian wants to support?”

Information access and collection is seamless from beginning to end

- The Smithsonian can greet visitors the moment they arrive on campus, for example at public transportation sites (esp. the Smithsonian Metro stop) with orientation kiosks / touch screens.
- The Castle remains an orientation center, where visitors can pick up brochures, plan their visits, and check out devices (eg. iPads)—by themselves or with the help of Smithsonian staff.
- Information can be taken home electronically, eg. via download kiosks and personal barcodes.
- Picking up and dropping off devices (eg. iPads) is possible at every museum’s visitor services.
ideal visits findings

The Ideal Visit exercise answers, “What the visitor experiences and activities that the Smithsonian wants to support?”

Full-day visits are supported by events and amenities

- Visitors can get the most out of their visits because traveling to and from the campus and basic needs (e.g., food, rest) are easy to access.
- After-hours events (e.g., movies, dinner) keep visitors on-site and enliven the campus.
- Food anchors all visits and provides an opportunity to relax in different settings.

Elements of surprise and discovery add to the visitor experience.

- Examples from the ideal visits include encountering performances ‘along-the-way’—in transit between destinations—and an impromptu tour of the Washington DC skyline from a security guard.
space and program priorities
space and program priorities exercise

Participants reviewed the activities and spaces from the “Ideal Visit” exercise and added any that were missing. Space and program priorities were then agreed on in terms of importance and urgency.
space and program priorities findings

Participants reviewed the activities and spaces from the "Ideal Visit" exercise and added any that were missing. Space and program priorities were then agreed on in terms of importance and urgency.

- Groups of projects that should be completed together because of program synergies or space relationships were identified. These appear as clusters on the priorities map.

- Top priorities include clarifying the entries, creating a central orientation space and activities, upgrading the Castle lobby visitor experience, and creating a “door-buster” exhibit space and program to draw visitors to the campus. Representing units not on the Mall is also important.

- **Orientation:** Orientation spaces are a priority, including for school groups, an AIB visitor center (service point), outdoor orientation spaces, touchscreens and device check-out options, and distributed kiosks.

![](Clarified_entries.png)  ![Off-campus programs represented](Off-campus.png)  ![Improved visitor orientation](Visitor_orientation.png)
space and program priorities findings

Participants reviewed the activities and spaces from the “Ideal Visit” exercise and added any that were missing. Space and program priorities were then agreed on in terms of importance and urgency.

- **Exhibits:** Immediate, critical exhibit areas are needed to showcase the Grand Challenges as well as interactive family-oriented exhibits. In the future, spaces are needed to exhibit the Smithsonian history and brand, house the Smithson Crypt, and recognize donors.

- **Education:** Education spaces are important to the mission and for the most part will develop alongside other spaces because of programmatic connections. Distance learning and off-campus education spaces will accompany Grand Challenge centers, and download kiosks will be integrated into orientation services. As outdoor spaces develop, outdoor education spaces can also thrive.
space and program priorities findings

Participants reviewed the activities and spaces from the “Ideal Visit” exercise and added any that were missing. Space and program priorities were then agreed on in terms of importance and urgency.

- **Amenities:** A series of related amenity spaces are envisioned: café at AIB (with outdoor areas), themed food options (e.g. African Coffee, Asian Tea), picnic areas, evening dining, and perhaps Freer courtyard café.

- **Event / Meeting:** There is a longer-term need for event, performance, and meeting spaces including a ~1000 seat auditorium with multi-purpose breakout spaces, performance spaces, a gala event space, and a Scholars Lounge (informal work area with access to staff).

- **Work and Visitor Support:** Several support spaces need attention including some short-term office improvements; a long-term office solution; and storage for mobile demonstration carts, catering spaces, and meeting spaces.
space and program priorities map

Smithsonian Institution
space adjacencies and connections
space adjacencies and connections

Participants took the spaces from the space prioritization exercise and indicated the buildings in which they should be located and the general adjacencies among space types (e.g.: event and education next to each other). Then, they marked how the spaces should be connected. Two scenarios were considered: an “ideal” and a “real.”
space adjacencies and connections findings

This activity answers several questions: how spaces should relate, how visitors should enter and circulate, and how future funding and changes to AIB programming could affect the ideal campus plan.

Relationships:

• Each type of space has a single hub with smaller spaces distributed in each building.

• Event and education have overlapping needs (eg. technology-rich, breakout or working spaces) and thus should be adjacent and flexible enough to support the other. In the alternate scenario, event and education spaces may be one and the same.

• It is advantageous for event and education spaces to be near entrances and perimeters, for ease of access and to maintain a sense of liveliness around campus.

• There should be food service in each building to fill visitor needs and for ease of access.

• Orientation and special exhibits should be central, visible, and attract visitors to the campus.
space adjacencies and connections findings

This activity answers several questions: how spaces should relate, how visitors should enter and circulate, and how future funding and changes to AIB programming could affect the ideal campus plan.

Entry / Circulation:

• The majority of visitors arrive at the campus from the NW—they should be greeted by a grand, symbolic entrance at the NW corner of the campus where the Ripley Center is currently sited.

• Secondary main entrances should draw and orient visitors from the Mall, for example at the East side of the Castle.

• At-grade and underground east-west and north-south connections across campus will improve flow and wayfinding, and link visitors with surrounding areas (Mall, proposed Southwest EcoDistrict).
space adjacencies and connections findings

This activity answers several questions: how spaces should relate, how visitors should enter and circulate, and how future funding and changes to AIB programming could affect the ideal campus plan.

Alternatives:

• The majority of adjacencies and connections do not change, but the number of spaces will need to decrease. Subsequently, spaces must be flexible to accommodate multiple uses.

• Moving events and education off-campus can be considered, though kept as close as possible to the campus to retain the recognition that it is part of the Smithsonian.

• Increasing the amount of space available can be explored through different excavation scenarios and/or acquiring nearby buildings or parcels.
ideal campus plan (2022)

The ideal campus plan in 10 years, with a healthy funding climate and AIB in interim use. Colored areas indicate general program location preferences, approximately scaled. Arrows indicate above- and below-grade connections.
ideal campus plan (2022) recommendations

Space use and needs: Excavate and expand boundaries

- Consider excavating 2-3 stories below ground north of the Quad to Jefferson Drive SW.
- Consider closing Jefferson Drive SW to regular vehicle traffic and increasing activity by adding amenities, exhibits, education spaces, and event spaces along the north side of campus.
- Create visible connections to below-grade spaces so people can see where they are going and are enticed to go there.

Connections: Enable E-W and N-S visitor flow

- Create an east-west connection from the east entrance of Freer to the west entrance of the Hirshhorn.
- Create a north-south connection from the Mall through the Haupt Garden down 10th Street SW.
- Improve underground connections between Freer-Sackler, NMAfA, AIB, and the Castle (Note: underground connection to Hirshhorn may not be feasible due to 9th Street tunnel.)
ideal campus plan (2022) recommendations

**Amenities:** Distribute food services indoors and outdoors

- Create an outdoor café/restaurant between the AIB and Haupt Garden, and a picnic area in the Haupt Garden.
- Distribute additional food services in each building, using themed concepts that build on the successful precedent of NMAI.

**Education:** Create a central hub with distributed facilities

- Create a hub of key education spaces in AIB.
- Create a secondary underground education space in the Quad.
- Distribute additional education facilities in each building.
ideal campus plan (2022) recommendations

Entry / Orientation: Increase scale of front doors and number of entrances

- Create a grand, signature entrance at NW entrance (where Ripley Center currently is).
- Create secondary main entrances at Castle and AIB north entrances.
- Add visitor entrances at the east end of the Castle, and north sides of Sackler and NMAfA.

Events: Create a central hub with distributed facilities

- Create a central underground event space in the Quad including a large auditorium and flexible breakout spaces.
- Allocate more event spaces in the Castle and AIB, with state-of-the-art equipment and technology for connecting globally and digitally.
- Distribute smaller event spaces in each building and provide distributed outdoor event spaces.
ideal campus plan (2022) recommendations

Exhibit / Gallery: Expand gallery spaces

- Stage a high-impact outdoor exhibit space in the center of the Quad’s Haupt Garden that attracts and orients visitors.
- Re-program the International Gallery as an experimental exhibit space linking Sackler and NMAfA (in progress).
- Locate priority exhibit spaces (e.g., history & brand, Grand Challenges, non-Mall units) along key connections and entries.

Work and Visitor Support: Move most Castle and Ripley Center offices off-site

- Consolidate and move offices off-site to the greatest extent possible.
- Retain some offices in the Castle, Freer-Sackler, NMAfA, and the Quad for personnel that must be there for functional or symbolic reasons.
- Distribute storage and support spaces throughout the Campus, esp. w/ event space.
- Avoid creating parking spaces on site; encourage public transportation use.
alternatives to consider

Strategies to consider if funding declines and/or the AIB becomes the Smithsonian American Latino Museum (SALM) and/or if other buildings become available.

Space use and needs:

- The same space and program priorities exist for the AIB in the interim and if it becomes the site of the SALM. So, the same types of spaces would be incorporated in the SALM programming, but likely in smaller quantities.
- Excavation north of Quad would be reduced / eliminated because of the underground SMAL North Annex.
- Consider adding space by acquiring nearby buildings, such as a portion of or the entire USDA building.

Connections: Create a connection between the SALM North Annex and the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden.

Entry / Orientation:

- Keep the grand, symbolic entrance at the NW corner of the campus in all scenarios.
- Reconsider the addition of an east entrance to the Castle and a south entrance to the AIB/SALM.
- If there is a grand entrance at the NW corner, do not add a west entrance to the Freer so that all visitors enter through the symbolic entrance.

Events: Keep the event hub on-site unless it is possible to site across the street or in the USDA building. (The conference space must feel like it’s at the Smithsonian and not “off-site”)

Education: Move the education hub from the AIB to the Quad (underground).

Events and Education: Create flexible spaces that accommodate events and educational programming.
planning process going forward
planning process going forward

The development of the Smithsonian Campus Master Plan – Phase I will be guided by the outcome of the retreat, as documented in this report, under the direction of the retreat participants. Key aspects of this process will include:

• **Architect Selection:** The selection committee will provide this brief to the “short-list” of firms who responded to the Master Plan Request for Qualifications (RFQ) so that they can respond to it in the interview and selection process.

• **Steering Committee:** Retreat participants will function as the Steering Committee for the Campus Master Plan to provide continuity and decision-making.

• **Broader Representation:** The Steering Committee and the Project Administration Sub-Committee will be responsible for engaging the various constituencies and programs they represent and bringing this input back to the committee, and will provide direction from the selected A/E through OPPM’s planning branch.

• **Prototyping and Piloting:** Throughout the process, it is recommended that new concepts be piloted in current spaces whenever possible to refine them, mitigate risk, and build momentum. The International Gallery and AIB might serve as useful “laboratories” for such experiments.

• **More than physical reconfiguration:** The master plan can be more than a physical reorganization of space. It can be a way to envision and achieve a 21st century approach to learning, bringing together the physical and the digital.

• **Understanding Visitors:** Though in-depth personas were created for the branding initiative and much is known about museum visitors in general, the Smithsonian must better understand its visitors – who they are, their motivations, and their physical and digital means of access, at a minimum.
acknowledgments

The following people contributed to this first phase of the Campus Master Plan and their contributions are greatly acknowledged:

Retreat Participants
- Patricia Bartlett
- Claudine Brown
- Johnnetta Cole
- Wayne Clough
- Bruce Dauer
- Walter Ennaco
- Barbara Faust
- Andrew Hollingsworth
- Albert Horvath
- Karen Keller

Consulted
- Robert Kogod
- Richard Kurin
- Christopher Lethbridge
- Alison McNally
- Scott Miller
- Debra Nauta-Rodriguez
- Charles Obi
- Michelle Spofford
- Ann Trowbridge
- Sherri Wheeler

Facilitators:
- Elliot Felix, brightspot strategy
- Yen Chiang, brightspot strategy