The priorities set forth in the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan guided Marie Selby Botanical Gardens to new peaks and positioned the institution for continued advancement. In the planning process for the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, we determined that the priorities guiding our work since 2022 remain relevant. Building on this strong foundation will be the focus of the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, which calls for bold, deliberate, and pioneering action by Selby Gardens' many and various stakeholders.

In the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, we will continue to advance the priorities set forth in the following key pillars:

- Stewarding and Expanding our Collections
- Building our Visitor Engagement
- Diversifying our Revenue Model
- Securing our Brand and Global Position
- Creating the Infrastructure for our Future
- Fostering Full Community Engagement
- Promoting Environmental Sustainability

Mission: To provide bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history



The completion of Phase One of the Master Site Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus positioned Selby Gardens as a leader in sustainable design and green building technology. We recognize the need to include a new pillar in the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan emphasizing our commitment to environmental sustainability. This pillar establishes priorities for the application of environmentally sustainable practices in all areas of our operation.

Invigorated by past success, we aim to take full advantage of new opportunities that encourage innovation, further our brand and global position, and deepen our connection to the local and regional communities. We will continue to build upon the success of The Living Museum® operating model, further improve our infrastructure to care for our collections and constituents, and significantly contribute to worldwide conservation efforts. We will also continue to advance the institution through community outreach and collaborations with new and existing partners.

Investing in the future of Selby Gardens is a gift to the community. Guided by our mission, we are committed to realizing the vision for Selby Gardens laid out in the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan.



1 STEWARDING AND EXPANDING OUR COLLECTIONS

Strategically steward and expand our collections to inform worldwide conservation efforts and confirm our leadership position as the international authority on air plants (epiphytes), while underscoring our focus on native nature and regional history.

STRATEGIES



BOTANY

- Optimize staff, collections, and facilities to efficiently care for, interpret, and display a greater percentage of our collections to the public, and make them more widely available to the scientific community.
- Conduct research and inventory programs in tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas that lead to a better understanding and conservation of plant species and their habitats.
- Promote the sharing of plants between botanical gardens to enrich our collections and to provide reliable backup growing sites for our most important collections.

HORTICULTURE

- Improve the health, quality, and composition of our living collections, and ensure their long-term safety.
- Realize plans for state-of-the-art greenhouse facilities to house, grow, and display our world-class living collections.

EDUCATION

- Integrate collections information, images, and specimens into exhibitions and educational programs.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Safeguard our historical and archaeological collections.
- Implement collections management software to share our historical and archaeological collections worldwide.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Grow our recognition as a research institution regionally, nationally, and internationally via earned media coverage.
- Further define our brand as an institution of botanical, archaeological, and historical research.
- Continue to tell the stories of air plants (epiphytes), native nature, and our regional history.



2 BUILDING OUR VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

Enhance our visitor engagement by building on the proven success of The Living Museum® operating model and leveraging the unique features of our two bayfront campuses.



STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Optimize collections and displays to foster increased visitor engagement and educational opportunities.
- Disseminate scientific knowledge about plants and their natural habitats with a focus on air plants (epiphytes) and native nature.

HORTICULTURE

- Improve the health, quality, and composition of our living collections, and ensure their long-term safety.
- Optimize horticultural plantings and exhibition programs at both campuses.
- Realize plans for state-of-the-art greenhouse facilities to house, grow, and display our world-class living collections.

EDUCATION

- Share the significant work that we do in botanical research, horticulture, archaeology, and regional history through educational interpretation and programs that advance our mission and increase our visibility.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Optimize collections and displays to foster increased visitor engagement and educational opportunities.
- Produce a wide range of historical programs to connect constituents with archaeology and regional history.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Enhance current and create new development programs to increase annual contributed income.
- Identify and engage new individuals, corporations, and foundations who will support our strategic priorities.
- Expand membership programs to engage new audiences.
- Develop an array of giving opportunities to support programs at both campuses.
- Maintain current and expand government relationships.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Employ multi-channel, integrated marketing strategies for The Living Museum® model to increase visitation, membership, and philanthropic support.

EVENTS

- Develop a broad range of public events that engage a wide audience and take full advantage of both campus locations.



3 DIVERSIFYING OUR REVENUE MODEL

Foster a diversified revenue model that will continue to yield sustainable funding for the institution by significantly increasing earned and contributed revenue, engaging new individuals and philanthropic organizations, and building upon existing relationships.

STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Identify and engage with relevant government funding sources interested in supporting botanical research and plant conservation.
- In partnership with the institutional advancement team, identify and engage with foundations and individuals interested in supporting botanical research and plant conservation.

HORTICULTURE

- Optimize horticultural plantings and exhibition programs at both campuses.

EDUCATION

- Enhance The Living Museum® model with the creation of high-profile, multidisciplinary, and immersive exhibitions that increase revenue by broadening audiences and heightening our visibility.
- Develop a traveling exhibition program to maximize investment in, and potential of, The Living Museum® model.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Identify and engage with relevant government funding sources interested in supporting archaeology and regional history.
- In partnership with the institutional advancement team, identify and engage with foundations and individuals interested in supporting archaeology and regional history.



INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Enhance current and create new development programs to increase annual contributed income.
- Identify and engage new individuals, corporations, and foundations who will support our strategic priorities.
- Expand membership programs to engage new audiences.
- Engage new corporate partners.
- Maintain current and expand government relationships.
- Create a comprehensive endowment giving framework and implementation plan for financial sustainability.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Grow earned revenue through effective marketing and communication of The Living Museum® model, resulting in increased visitation and membership.

EVENTS

- Expand our reach and visibility through philanthropic and donor cultivation events.
- Maintain our event programming that attracts tourists and the local community.
- Generate diverse revenue streams through event rentals while enhancing our brand and ability to cultivate constituents.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Further develop collaboration with our retail partner to maximize branding and earned revenue opportunities.
- Further develop collaboration with our food service partner to maximize potential of the world's first net-positive-energy, garden-to-plate restaurant.

FINANCE/OPERATIONS

- Maximize performance management system that drives accountability and collaboration by aligning human capital with strategic priorities.
- Ensure high-level financial management of our assets and appropriate reporting for critical decision-making.



4 SECURING OUR BRAND AND GLOBAL POSITION

Further develop our national and international visibility by strengthening our institutional branding and global positioning.

STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Develop a robust and rich information source on our website relating to air plants (epiphytes), native nature, and their habitats.
- Seek and promote scientific collaborations to expand the reach of our mission.

HORTICULTURE

- Develop a robust and rich information source on our website relating to air plants (epiphytes), native nature, and their habitats.
- Optimize horticultural plantings and exhibition programs at both campuses.

EDUCATION

- Enhance The Living Museum® model with the creation of high-profile, multidisciplinary, and immersive exhibitions that increase revenue by broadening audiences and heightening our visibility.
- Develop a traveling exhibition program to maximize investment in, and potential of, The Living Museum® model.
- Share the significant work that we do in botanical research, horticulture, archaeology, and regional history through educational interpretation and programs that advance our mission and increase our visibility.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Seek and promote archaeological and historical collaborations to expand the reach of our mission.
- Develop a robust and rich information source on our website relating to archaeology and our regional history.



MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Grow our recognition regionally, nationally, and internationally via earned media coverage.
- Leverage the resources of tourism agencies and other relevant partnerships to further secure our brand and global position.

EVENTS

- Expand our reach and visibility through philanthropic and donor cultivation events.
- Generate diverse revenue streams through event rentals while enhancing our brand and ability to cultivate constituents.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Further develop collaboration with our retail partner to maximize branding and earned revenue opportunities.
- Further develop collaboration with our food service partner to maximize potential of the world's first net-positive-energy, garden-to-plate restaurant.



5 CREATING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OUR FUTURE

Realize Phase Two of the Master Site Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus and continue to make necessary improvements to our Historic Spanish Point campus.



STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Develop and maintain the infrastructure required to steward existing collections (living, preserved, and bibliographic), and support expanded research and publications.

HORTICULTURE

- Realize plans for state-of-the-art greenhouse facilities to house, grow, and display our world-class living collections.

EDUCATION

- Develop plans for sustainable, state-of-the-art education facilities to accommodate learners of all ages.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Implement infrastructure changes to ensure the long-term self-sustainability of the Historic Spanish Point campus.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Implement and complete capital campaigns to support institutional sustainability and growth at both campuses.
- Develop an array of giving opportunities to support programs at both campuses.
- Create a comprehensive endowment giving framework and implementation plan for financial sustainability.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Employ multi-channel, integrated marketing strategies for The Living Museum® model, which will increase visitation, membership, and philanthropic support.
- Effectively communicate the progress and increase the visibility of our Downtown Sarasota campus Master Site Plan and Historic Spanish Point campus improvements to all constituents.

FINANCE/OPERATIONS

- Ensure high-level financial management of our assets and appropriate reporting for critical decision-making regarding capital campaigns and future improvements to both campuses.
- Optimize network infrastructure and information management tools.
- Maximize performance management system that drives accountability and collaboration by aligning human capital with strategic priorities.



6 FOSTERING FULL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cultivate a culture and environment where all feel welcome.

STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Utilize a broad range of talents to drive the innovation and creativity essential for organizational growth and advancement of our mission.
- Create internal collaborations and external partnerships that attract a wide audience to careers in the plant sciences.

HORTICULTURE

- Identify impediments and increase outreach efforts to people not traditionally attracted to job and volunteer opportunities involving work with the living collections.

EDUCATION

- Broaden the range of students, visitors, and volunteers engaged with our various educational opportunities.
- Employ educational pedagogies that resonate with students from a variety of backgrounds.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Articulate the uniqueness and importance of both campuses and describe their relevance.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Expand the composition of our Board of Trustees to fully reflect various communities.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Develop messaging campaigns that communicate our leadership position on accessibility and demonstrate that leadership within our sphere of influence.

EVENTS

- Develop a broad range of public events that fully reflect and engage various communities.

FINANCE/OPERATIONS

- Identify and remove impediments to full community involvement in all aspects of business and programming.
- Seek opportunities to utilize products and services provided by a wide variety of businesses.
- Equip staff and volunteers with training and resources to nurture a culture and environment welcoming to all.
- Help staff and volunteers gauge whether their verbal, nonverbal, and visual messaging is as welcoming and collegial as possible.





7 PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Apply environmentally sustainable practices in all areas of operation and provide leadership in green building technology.



STRATEGIES

BOTANY

- Work to understand the effects of climate on plants, their natural habitats, and our coastal environments.

HORTICULTURE

- Apply environmentally sustainable practices to the care and maintenance of the living collections.
- Integrate green building technology into the design of the new greenhouse complex included in Phase Two of the Master Site Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus.

EDUCATION

- Develop educational programs highlighting the importance of environmental sustainability.
- Integrate green building technology into the design of the new learning pavilion included in Phase Two of the Master Site Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus.

REGIONAL HISTORY

- Highlight the importance of environmental sustainability to the future preservation of both bayfront campuses.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

- Emphasize environmental sustainability efforts in appeals for institutional support, as appropriate.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Integrate leadership in environmental sustainability and green building technology into institutional messaging, whenever possible.

EVENTS

- Apply environmentally sustainable practices to event planning and execution.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Highlight the importance of environmental sustainability and our role as a leader in green building technology in campus tours and other site-specific interpretation, whenever possible.

FINANCE/OPERATIONS

- Apply environmentally sustainable practices to the daily operation of both campuses.


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