

KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Below are critical steps or recommendations that Zoo, the Society and State Parks leadership must take in order to be successful in implementing the projects outlined in the new Facility Master Plan and ultimately, realizing its bold new vision. These steps will guide Zoo and Society leadership in generating awareness and support for the Plan, identifying the ideal funding mix for those projects, telling the “right” story about the Zoo’s future and raising the necessary private funding to execute the projects in the plan.

MOMENTUM

- As described in the Plan, the Zoo should begin with smaller, short-term projects that can successfully be implemented in a reasonable timeframe, providing visitors with a sense of tangible change at the Brandywine Zoo.
 - The Zoo will be able to grow its attendance quickly, with the implementation of these short-term opportunities, as they will strengthen the visitor experience and offer something “new” for guests to see and/or experience.
 - The new attendance baseline will be higher than it is today with the growth it will see in response to the opening of major new exhibits.

THE BRANDYWINE VISION

- Zoo and Society leadership needs to develop and effectively tell a new “story” about a reimagined Brandywine Zoo. This “story” needs to include the vision told through the new Master Plan; it also needs to be embedded within the larger vision of the entire Brandywine Park, which is in the process of a renaissance – the Brandywine Zoo will be undergoing steady transformation in tandem with Park-wide changes and improvements. This will entice prospects to invest in the Zoo, not only for its improvement as a community asset, but also because that investment can be leveraged for broader impact on the transformation of the Park itself.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Not only does this new “story” need to be developed, it also needs to then be effectively communicated. By sharing this larger vision broadly with the public, with key funders and prospects, community leaders, etc., the level of awareness of the Zoo and its ambitious and exciting plans for the future will dramatically increase. Scheduling meetings with key funders, community leaders and prospects to share the Zoo’s new vision will also serve as a form of cultivation and an opportunity to test both their reactions to the vision and subsequently, their willingness to support it philanthropically. By doing all of this, the Brandywine Zoo will become top-of-mind within the community, allowing it to become an increasingly greater philanthropic priority.

COLLABORATION

- Collaboration will be key to the Zoo’s and Society’s success. It will be important to work with Delaware State Parks, ensuring that all parties invested in the success of the Brandywine Zoo are consistently on the same page and working toward the same goals.

FUNDING

- It will be important early on, before beginning to implement the projects outlined in the Master Plan, to identify the mix of funding sources that will allow for the successful execution of both the short- and long-term projects. This will also help leadership to start planning now for those projects that will require raising private dollars, though the execution of a capital campaign. For private fundraising efforts, it will be crucial to learn about major donor prospects and match their interests and giving preferences with appropriate opportunities and projects from the Master Plan.
 - In some instances, this effort can be accomplished through a conversation with a prospect.
 - At other times, it may require a larger effort that includes conducting prospect research and the development of a case for support in preparation for a conversation with a prospect that will lead to a larger ask.

MARKETING

- Approximately 6-12 months in advance of the completion and opening of a project, improvement, etc., begin marketing efforts to build anticipation with guests and donors that something new is coming to the Brandywine Zoo. The Zoo can draw this attention through the use of social media, billboards, on-site marketing with banners, etc.

By following the steps outlined above, the Zoo will be positioned to successfully plan for and implement the projects outlined in its new Facility Master Plan. This will lead the Brandywine Zoo into a new era that includes a strong visitor experience, a more diversified financial model, a positive and visible image within the community at large and the philanthropic community and finally, an institution that is a destination attraction in Wilmington and beyond.

MASTER PLAN DRIVERS

The planning team identified the following four key drivers and strategic approach for the new Master Plan:

1. IMPROVE THE OVERALL GUEST EXPERIENCE

With new quality animal exhibits, guest amenities and support functions to make Brandywine Zoo a destination for connecting the community to nature.

2. EXPAND THE ZOO PROPERTY

The current 4.4ac site will need to be expanded to accommodate the Zoo guest experience and operations.

3. IMPROVE THE OVERALL 47 ACRE OF PARKLAND

The area located between I-95 and Baynard Boulevard needs to be improved and turned into a community asset for a variety of recreational activities and educational uses.

4. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE MASTER PLAN

The plan needs to be at a realistic scale to be successfully funded through both public support, in particular, the Delaware State Parks System, and private fundraising over the duration of the Master Plan.

