Within this Strategic Plan, you’ll see exciting and historic projects opening on Zoo grounds and in our community, as well as our refreshed VISION, MISSION, and VALUES. You’ll learn more about our focus on KEY COMMITMENTS and our STRATEGIES for realizing our mission and vision. Finally, you’ll see articulations of our expected OUTCOMES.

We hope that on reviewing this plan, you’ll be as excited as we are about the future, focus and direction ahead for Zoo Atlanta.

**KEY COMMITMENTS**

**ANIMAL CARE:**
We lead in animal care through world-class habitats, health care, animal well-being, and industry-leading staff.

**CONSERVATION:**
We guide conservation action, both locally and globally, using our unique expertise and position. We lead by example and are excellent stewards of our environment.

**RESEARCH:**
We contribute to the body of scientific knowledge by utilizing the diversity of our living collections and the expertise of our staff.

**EDUCATION:**
We create fun and engaging experiences to connect our visitors with wildlife, provide and support curricula to improve students’ understanding of the natural world, and empower individuals to take action.

**GUEST EXPERIENCE:**
We create and deliver a guest experience that is fun, interactive, inclusive of our diverse audience, and inspires our guests to take conservation action.

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:**
We manage our resources responsibly, ensuring long-term financial strength, sustainability of our physical footprint and pursuit of our mission. We serve and support our community as a dynamic contributor to Atlanta’s cultural and economic landscape.
VISION:  
We envision a world where wildlife and humans flourish together.

MISSION:  
We save wildlife and their habitats through conservation, research, education and engaging experiences. Our efforts connect people to animals and inspire conservation action.

VALUES:

Integrity  
We are respectful, honest, transparent and accountable. We expect the same from our industry colleagues and partners.

Collaboration  
We are inspired by the contributions of the individual and the power of a team.

Innovation  
We are creative, resourceful, and resilient. We celebrate a culture of continuous improvement, and we aspire to be the leader in our field.

Passion  
We are united in our common commitment to preserve wildlife and serve others.

Diversity  
We see collective power in our differences and embrace the notion that we all have something special to offer. We respect and value the diversity of all life.

Stewardship  
We are stewards of the animals in our care and all the resources we use.

Safety  
We are committed to protecting the safety and health of our employees, animals, guests and Members, our community and partners.
ANIMAL CARE:

We lead in animal care through world-class habitats, health care, animal well-being, and industry-leading staff.

1. In accordance with the Zoo’s Master Site Plan, build a state-of-the-art Animal Care Complex (ACC) (Animal Health/Clinic).
   The ACC will support the medical needs of the animal population and provide a dedicated research space that supports Zoo Atlanta research initiatives and conservation objectives. Building design is to exceed standards in animal care and in accordance with green building standards.

2. Develop an improved and holistic collection plan that supports animal well-being, research, conservation and guest experience and maximizes the Zoo’s footprint and regional climate.
   Animal acquisitions, dispositions, breeding and habitat decisions will balance excellence in maximizing animal well-being, ensuring a conservation impact, and delivering excellent guest experiences. Strategic considerations of the climate of the southeastern United States, the physical size and topography of the Zoo, and the expertise of the animal care divisions will also factor into these decisions.

3. Develop world-class, innovative animal habitats that support the long-term collection plan and the Zoo’s Master Site Plan.
   Design and habitat enhancements will meet or exceed industry standards, improve staff efficiency, and support a healthy animal environment that encourages natural behaviors.

4. Create a formalized, Zoo-wide animal management program to develop and implement long-term, measurable standards which optimize animal well-being and promote natural behaviors.

OUTCOMES

- ACC includes a dedicated space for minimal lodging, a research facility to support focused research staff and the scientific research needed to lead successful conservation initiatives based on science.
- ACC design accommodates the current animal population’s health needs, as well as future animal population needs based on master planning projections.
- The collection plan is reviewed biannually to ensure all animals in the population meet the needs of the Zoo’s mission.
- The collection plan is utilized when new habitats are being developed and/or species focus changes due to conservation and research needs.
- Animals continue to benefit from dynamic and enriching environments to encourage natural behaviors and physical activity.
- Visitor stay times at habitats are increased, promoting increased satisfaction on visitor surveys.
- A formalized animal welfare assessment tool is in place.
CONSERVATION: We guide conservation action, both locally and globally, using our unique expertise and position. We lead by example and are excellent stewards of our environment.

1. Make a demonstrable, meaningful impact to conservation by committing resources, both financial and professional.
   - Develop a conservation plan that leverages staff expertise and is the most effective use of Zoo Atlanta’s unique resources, including providing long-term support for key conservation programs and the ability to respond to emergent conservation needs.

2. Lead and support conservation initiatives based on science.
   - Utilize a conservation committee made up of staff with expertise in conservation, research and education to develop metrics and evaluation tools for conservation initiatives supported by Zoo Atlanta. Employ staff expertise, affiliations and partnerships to contribute directly to conservation initiatives. Investigate initiatives related to elephants and other Grand New View species.

3. Educate and empower people to take conservation action.
   - Use Zoo Atlanta’s educational programming to integrate conservation messaging in all of our communications and interactive opportunities, as well as effectively advocate for policies that positively affect conservation.

4. Amplify Zoo Atlanta’s conservation impact through collaboration.
   - Partner with conservation-focused organizations, provide expertise to increase impact, and continue to participate in cooperative breeding programs.

5. Develop, enhance, and expand Zoo Atlanta’s sustainability programs and practices.
   - Promote green practices both internally and with partners, increase the number of LEED certifications, and educate our staff and the public about sustainable practices.

OUTCOMES

- An annual conservation document is published highlighting Zoo Atlanta staff expertise and conservation involvement.
- Long-term support (3-5 years) is provided for two to three select field conservation programs based on Zoo Atlanta’s expertise and taxa.
- Sustainable and diverse funding streams dedicated to Zoo Atlanta conservation initiatives, including a dedicated emergency conservation fund, are in place.
- A rubric is used to evaluate conservation initiatives and funded projects; the rubric includes methodology, effectiveness and evaluation tools.
- The impact of our publications, peer-reviewed and applied documents/reports published by staff is evaluated.
- The Zoo has increased the number of collaborative programs and post-doctoral candidates doing dedicated research focused on conservation initiatives.
- Conservation messaging is articulated in all educational programming.
- A Zoo Atlanta conservation “brand” and action steps are utilized throughout the Zoo in interpretive signage, educational programs and all conservation messaging.
- Policy / advocacy actions are incorporated in an annual conservation report.
- The Zoo has increased the number of cooperative breeding programs in which Zoo Atlanta participates.
- Numbers of collaborative projects/activities drawing from Zoo Atlanta resources and staff expertise are tracked and quantified.
- Funding of green initiatives has increased, and Zoo Atlanta’s green initiatives are promoted and celebrated through lectures, on social media and the website and in internal documents.
We contribute to the body of scientific knowledge by utilizing the diversity of our living collections and the expertise of our staff.

1. Conduct research to develop best practices for the care of our animal population and conservation.

   Use the scientific method and the best science to evaluate animal behaviors and develop conservation strategies, focusing on impactful research that guides action.

2. Utilize and expand collaborations with universities and other organizations to broaden Zoo Atlanta’s research focus.

   Collaborate with mission-complementary organizations and organizations that may utilize the Zoo’s unique animal population to enhance research and develop staff, interns, and graduate students.

3. Publicize research results and successes to our staff, guests and the scientific/zoo community to communicate this important role of a modern zoo.

4. Create education programming and messaging to highlight Zoo Atlanta’s research programs.

Types and purposes of research conducted at the Zoo to further animal well-being, conservation and/or science are included in the annual conservation report. This report includes a “so-what” section to explain why this research makes a difference.

Research partnerships have expanded to include a diverse suite of organizations throughout the southeastern region of the U.S.

Education programming based on Zoo Atlanta research activities is in place.

Messaging about research conducted by Zoo Atlanta staff has been created for use on social media, website and interpretive graphics.
EducaTion:

We create fun and engaging experiences to connect our visitors with wildlife, provide and support curricula to improve students’ understanding of the natural world, and empower individuals to take action.

Outcomes:

- A suite of programming is available for pre-K through adult participants.
- Recruitment and retention plans are in place for programs involved in the suite/pathway.
- The number of students served in grades K-12 has increased.
- A new line of virtual programs has been launched to enhance face-to-face experiences as well as stand-alone experiences (bridge geography and increase depth of impact).
- A new line of outreach programs has been developed to target underserved communities, bringing about Zoo awareness and inclusion.
- School customer base has increased through implementation of a marketing and outreach plan.
- A Zoo School Partnership Program has been established and expanded to include five schools.
- All evaluation practices in the Zoo are audited.
- A cohesive plan for program evaluation has been developed in collaboration with the Guest Experience Team to ensure maximum impact of studies; these plans have clear, measurable outcomes for programs as well as vehicles for collecting metrics.
- A cross-departmental team of staff has been assembled to collaborate in the design and implementation of program evaluation.
- Conservation messaging is articulated in all educational program documentation.
- All Zoo interpretive signage/programs have been updated to reflect current conservation/research initiatives.
- Conservation action components have been added to all education experiences.
- A plan is in place to educate staff on what and how to communicate when discussing conservation and research with the public.

Strategies:

1. Create a pathway of educational experiences allowing for individuals to establish a lifelong connection to Zoo Atlanta and our mission.
   - This will include innovating programs to have maximum impact on participants, the creation of direct links between programs, as well as close connection to the Zoo’s research and conservation.

2. Implement a program expansion that increases individuals served, geographic reach, types of experiences, and expands the depth of impact.
   - We will do this through virtual experiences, partnerships with other organizations, outreach programs to underserved communities, engaging new school customers and establishing new Zoo School Partnerships that span multiple years.

3. Implement a standardized method to evaluate education programming and guest experiences to serve our target audience effectively.
   - We will focus on clear and measurable outcomes and a test model for new ideas and data management systems.

4. In accordance with the Conservation and Research Strategy, embed messaging and inspire conservation action in all educational experiences, including all in-park experiences (education programs, Keeper Talks, World of Wild Theater, etc.).
   - Through this alignment and/or integration, we will highlight Zoo Atlanta’s conservation and research initiatives and empower people to take conservation action.
GUEST EXPERIENCE:

We create and deliver a guest experience that is fun, interactive, inclusive of our diverse audience and inspires our guests to take conservation action.

1. Instill a guest-centric culture among staff, Volunteers and third-party vendors.

Through ongoing customer service training, employee empowerment and recognition, as well as the implementation of new guest experience initiatives and guest research, we will create a guest-centric culture that results in a seamless journey and memorable experiences for our guests.

2. Identify and accommodate the needs of the guests we serve through operational efficiencies, facilities improvements, memorable on-site experiences and enhanced program and event offerings.

Zoo Atlanta is a destination that welcomes all and as such, we will identify the needs of the guests we serve and ensure we meet those needs whether it is accommodating mothers with infants, addressing those with mobility or sensory needs, or reaching out to new guests through existing or new events, experiences and programs.

3. Establish Savanna Hall as one of metro Atlanta’s premier special event destinations and utilize the space to enhance and expand Zoo Atlanta’s events and programming.

Through best-in-class sales and customer service, flawless event execution, a one-of-a-kind facility, and a strong tie to conservation, Zoo Atlanta’s Savanna Hall will provide event attendees with an experience that will establish Savanna Hall as one of metro Atlanta’s premier event destinations.

4. Develop and implement a comprehensive disruption plan that enables Zoo Atlanta to improve guest experience and exceed guest expectations during the Grand New View construction phase and use this plan as a model for future Master Plan disruptions.

During periods of disruption, we will provide experiences that keep guests focused on the current animal population while educating and creating excitement around projects to come.
OUTCOMES

resource needs by increasing attendance, providing best-in-class guest
through use of analytics and systems integration.

Ensure that the Zoo attracts, develops, and retains talent by providing
for market-based compensation, enhanced professional development
and a work environment that promotes a culture of individual diversity,
collaboration and leadership.

Continue to track diversity of staff, Board and vendors to ensure
alignment with the zoo industry and metro Atlanta population.

Enhance local partnerships and increase community engagement efforts
around underserved audiences and diverse cultural communities.

Develop and execute a plan to leverage Turner Field redevelopment,
Grant Park development and transit expansion.

RESOURCE

MANAGEMENT:

We manage our resources responsibly while serving
our community. We ensure our long-term sustainability
and pursuit of our mission and are a dynamic
contributor to Atlanta’s cultural and economic landscape.

STRATEGIES

1. Continue to build a strong foundation for financial and physical
resource needs by increasing attendance, providing best-in-class guest
experience, growing individual donor base, and improving efficiencies
through use of analytics and systems integration.

2. Ensure that the Zoo attracts, develops, and retains talent by providing
for market-based compensation, enhanced professional development
and a work environment that promotes a culture of individual diversity,
collaboration and leadership.

3. Continue to track diversity of staff, Board and vendors to ensure
alignment with the zoo industry and metro Atlanta population.

4. Enhance local partnerships and increase community engagement efforts
around underserved audiences and diverse cultural communities.

5. Develop and execute a plan to leverage Turner Field redevelopment,
Grant Park development and transit expansion.

We manage our resources responsibly while serving
our community. We ensure our long-term sustainability
and pursuit of our mission and are a dynamic
contributor to Atlanta’s cultural and economic landscape.

STRATEGIES

1. Plans for short and long-term physical facility
needs are in place and incorporate energy and
space-efficient design and funding for planned
facility needs.

2. An analytics platform is developed to collect
information on wayfinding, website traffic and
guest preferences to help drive development of
new programs.

3. A capital campaign for the Animal Care Complex is
complete, and numbers of individual donors to
Beastly Feast, Conservation Society and Legacy
Society have each increased from the 2017 base-
line.

4. Staff professional development programs are
established for each staff member based on
position and individual performance. Talent
management plans are in place to address high
performers and succession plans for
difficult-to-source positions.

5. A compensation strategy is in place that analyzes
market data and addresses staff who fall below
market targets on an annual basis.

6. The staff and Board composition reflect demo-
graphics of the zoo industry and metro Atlanta,
and vendor diversity is maintained at City of
Atlanta-established levels.

7. Relationships with state, county and City of Atlanta
officials and agencies are expanded and strength-
ened to leverage opportunities and advance the
Zoo’s mission while broadening our reach.

8. Plans and programs are in place to attract and
serve the community around Turner Field and the
growing Grant Park business community.

9. A transit solution that connects Zoo Atlanta to the
redeveloped Turner Field community and Georgia
State MARTA station is established in partnership
with Georgia State, Carter & Associates, and the
City of Atlanta.
LOOKING AHEAD

Our five-year Strategic Plan provides a road map of where Zoo Atlanta is headed, but this plan is much more than just a guide. Our mission, vision, values and key commitments – animal care, conservation, research, education, guest experience and resource management – are statements of who we are, what we do and why we do it.

These goals and outcomes not only demonstrate what our community can expect of Zoo Atlanta over the next five years and beyond, but they also demonstrate what we as an evolving organization expect of ourselves.

Thank you for being part of our continuing journey as a 21st-century leader in the conservation of wildlife.
ZOO ATLANTA / Strategic Plan