

A photograph of two young girls in a museum. The girl on the left is pointing her right index finger upwards towards a large dinosaur skeleton hanging from the ceiling. Both girls are looking up with expressions of wonder and excitement. The background is filled with other museum exhibits, including another dinosaur skeleton and various artifacts.

Strategic Framework Executive Summary

JANUARY 2018

NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

LA BREA
TAR
PITS
& MUSEUM

WILLIAM S.
HART
MUSEUM



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD

For the people of Los Angeles and the world beyond, the Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County explores connections between nature, culture, science, and history like no other institution can.

This framework charts a course that fulfills our vision, and ensures the museums' vitality and relevance for years to come.

Shannon Faulk
President, Board of Trustees
Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County




LETTER FROM LORI

Our strategic priorities re-imagine how our museums, through our research and unparalleled collections, interact with our communities—onsite and beyond our walls.

By committing to principles of accessibility and engagement, we'll truly be a hub for discoveries and dialogue around critical issues of global significance and local impact.

Dr. Lori Bettison-Varga
President and Director
Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County



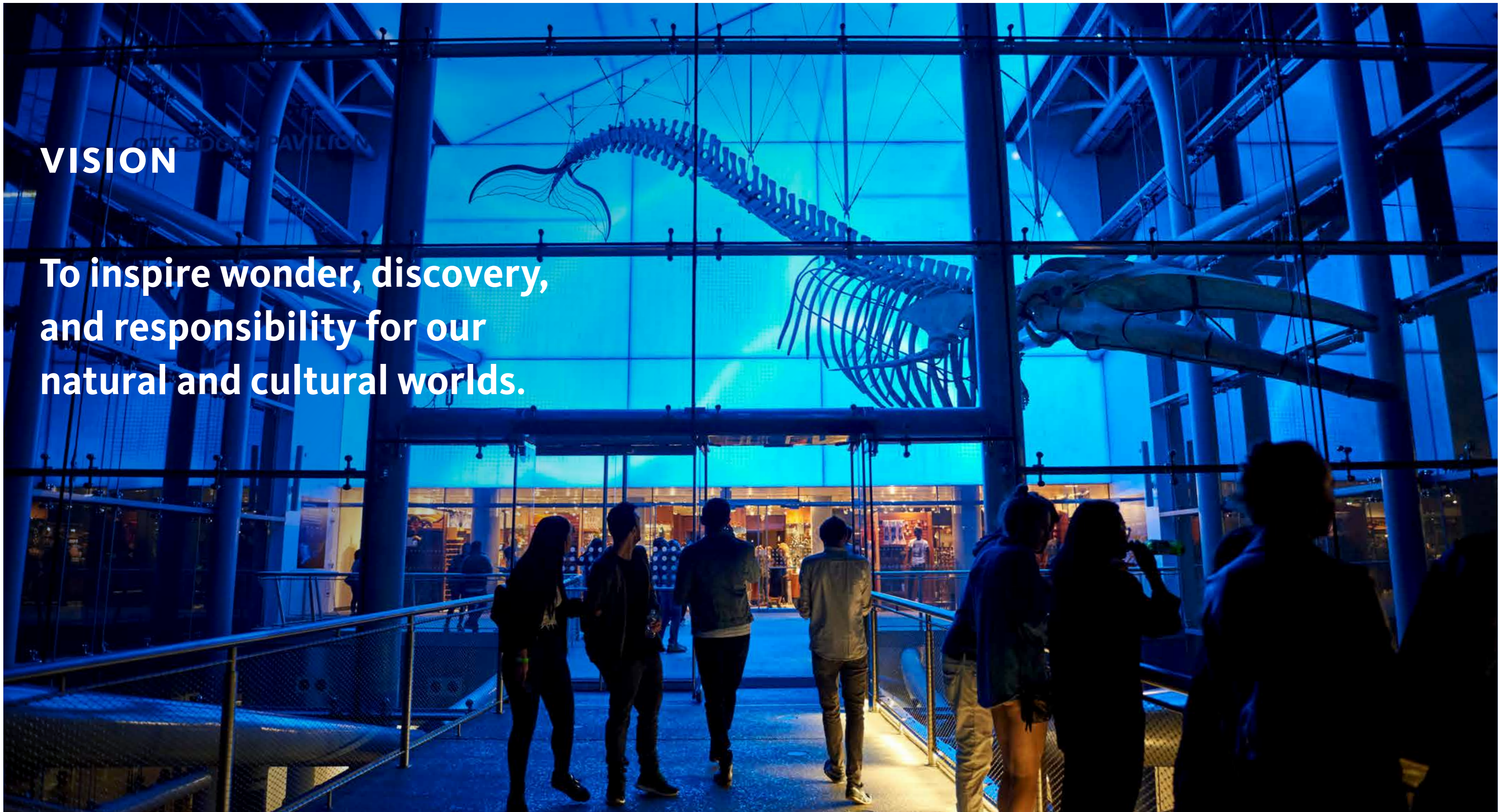
Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County — the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, La Brea Tar Pits, and the William S. Hart Museum — occupies an unrivaled position in its natural and cultural landscape. As home to over 35 million specimens and artifacts, we have the largest natural and cultural history collection in the western United States, a range of indoor and outdoor experiences across our three sites which served 1.3 million visitors in FY16, and the only active urban paleontological excavation site in the world at the Tar Pits.

Building on the momentum of new leadership at the helm and groundbreaking building and visitor experience projects, we have defined and united around an inspiring, ambitious, and forward-thinking Strategic Framework that will chart our course for the next five years and beyond.

This Strategic Framework also articulates the distinct vision and values that will shape our institution, infused by a spirit of collaboration that guided the very creation of this Framework with the collective input of staff, Board, and outside stakeholders.

VISION

To inspire wonder, discovery,
and responsibility for our
natural and cultural worlds.



VALUES



adventurous

We are curious and bold, with an insatiable desire to discover and share new ideas and knowledge.



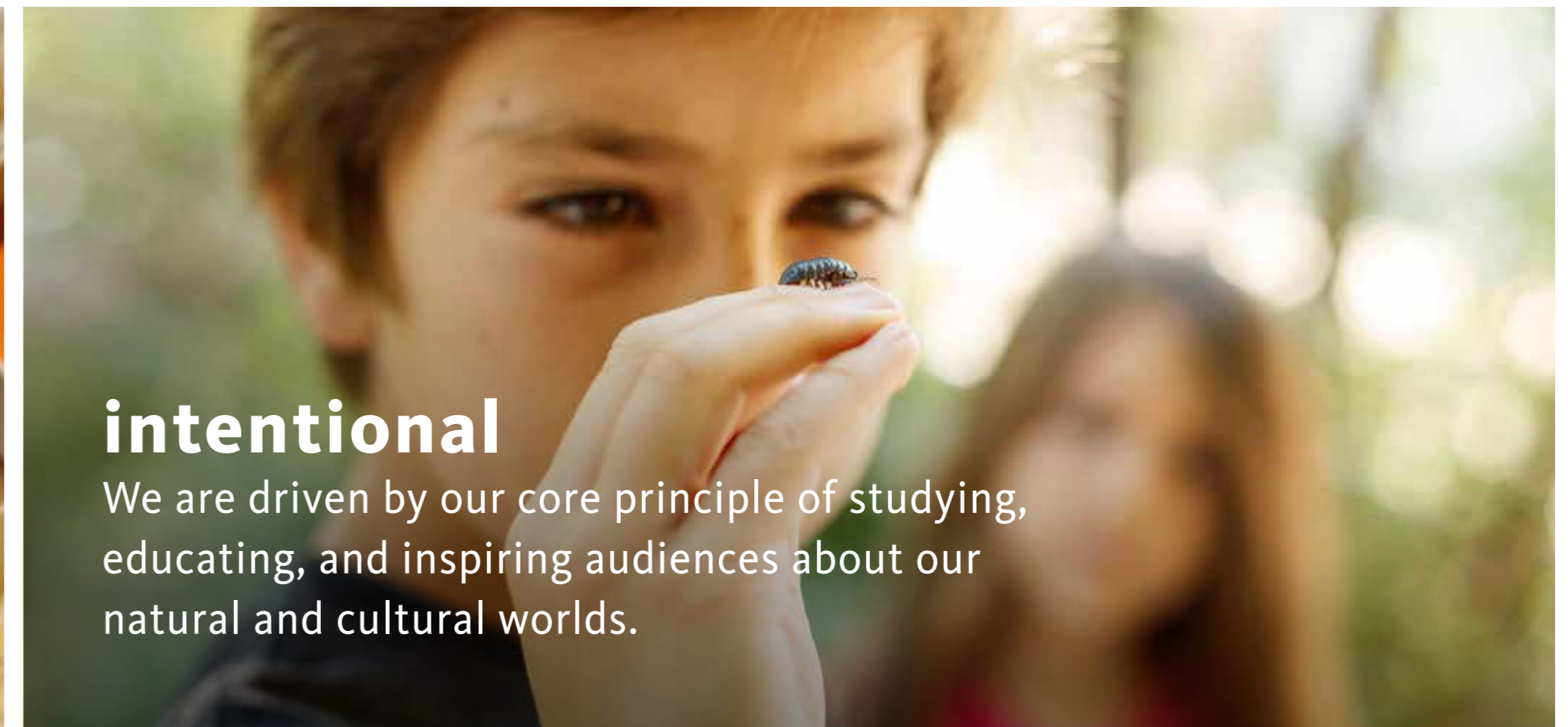
inclusive

We foster and promote accessibility, collaboration, and respect for all both within our museums and out in our community.



authentic

We inspire trust by sharing with our audiences our unparalleled collections and active research to help them better understand the world around them.



intentional

We are driven by our core principle of studying, educating, and inspiring audiences about our natural and cultural worlds.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Expand our role as museums of, for, and with L.A.

“Name another city in this country that can tell the story of their history and environment with such deep time. This is an opportunity for a whole new brand of museums in L.A.”

NHMLAC STAFF MEMBER

To become a “museum of, for, and with L.A.,” NHMLAC will strive to welcome, understand, reflect, and cultivate meaningful relationships with its local communities. By celebrating and illuminating L.A.’s rich natural and cultural history and diversity, we will serve as a civic anchor for the community, a partner for the County, and a hub for telling stories with global relevance and local impact.

OBJECTIVES

- › Comprehensively assess and prioritize current and potential audiences within L.A.’s diverse communities.
- › Develop and implement strategies to reach prioritized local audiences.
- › Create a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive museum experience.
- › Make the L.A. region a priority content focus area for the museum.
- › Play a major role in and become a hub for regional dialogue around issues pertinent to the museum’s mission.
- › Ensure the future financial sustainability of all initiatives as a responsible museum belonging to L.A. County.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Create a new interdisciplinary model for understanding and connecting to urban nature

NHMLAC has a distinct opportunity to be a global leader in researching and understanding the complex and ever-evolving relationship that lies at the intersection of nature, cities, and people. By harnessing our globally renowned community science and urban nature research programs, our vast collections documenting how nature and culture have changed as L.A. has grown, and the remarkable biodiversity of this metropolitan region, we will play a critical role influencing the sustainable development of L.A., and urban areas worldwide.

“It’s offsite and onsite, but also inside and outside. We used to be just history in the past, now with the nature gardens and community science, it’s past, present and future.”

NHMLAC STAFF MEMBER

OBJECTIVES

- › Transform our urban nature research and community science programs into a unified, interdepartmental initiative.
- › Evaluate and expand urban nature research, initiatives, and programming.
- › Fully engage visitors in urban nature onsite and offsite in the community.
- › Be a model for environmental responsibility in L.A.’s natural and urban environment.
- › Be at the forefront of STEAM in exhibitions, education, programs and public engagement.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Strengthen and activate our research and collections to create and communicate new knowledge about our world

NHMLAC's collection is an unparalleled global resource that must be studied, enhanced, protected, and experienced to advance the discovery and understanding of the natural and cultural worlds in the past, present, and future. By creating a bold and forward-thinking plan to increase resources and expand access, we will inspire the broadest public to become stewards of the Earth.

"Everything that [we feel is possible] can be accomplished if you put resources into this amazing collection. It will touch people no matter what because it's so diverse."

NHMLAC STAFF MEMBER

OBJECTIVES

- › Create a plan for the growth, care, and protection of the collections that distinguishes the institution and guides future decision-making.
- › Build capacity in research and collections to advance the institution's strategic goals and direction.
- › Develop the research pathway and educational pipeline for broader impact.
- › Create a bold, collaborative, and nimble culture to best elevate and enliven the institution's research and collections.

CORE INITIATIVES

Four cross-cutting initiatives to bring our new Strategic Framework to life.



Center for Nature and Culture

Embodying our vision and values, the new wing of our museum in Exposition Park marks a commitment to a greater accessibility and communal space, including a 'front porch' and transparency into our collections, research activities, and public programs.



La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan

Situated in Hancock Park within the Miracle Mile cultural corridor, the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum is being re-imagined as an inclusive and immersive experience that brings the Ice Age to life and imparts a better understanding of global ecological and climate change for visitors and researchers from across the street, the country and the world.



Beyond 'Becoming Los Angeles'

Building upon the foundation of our L.A. history collection and *Becoming L.A.* exhibition, we are developing a broader platform of co-curated exhibitions, public programs and digital engagement around the stories of L.A.'s history, its culture and nature, and the voices of its people.



Community Science

By leveraging our region as a living laboratory for community science, we are developing new ways for all Angelenos to understand and connect to L.A.'s rich biodiversity at our museums and beyond our walls.