The Saint Louis Zoo is playing a key role in sustaining critically endangered wild species, such as the Grevy's zebra. Through its WildCare Institute Center for Conservation in the Horn of Africa, the Zoo is supporting community-based coalitions and actively establishing a variety of conservation, research and education programs.

Our Mission

The mission of the Saint Louis Zoo is to conserve animals and their habitats through animal management, research, recreation, and educational programs that encourage the support and enrich the experience of the public.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY A FRAMEWORK PLAN?
The Saint Louis Zoo’s Expansion Framework Plan is intended to be a dynamic, living document—a starting point for long-term planning decisions. It will guide the Zoo in making short-term decisions as a tool for making decisions now and well into the future. The framework plan will allow the Zoo to make smarter short-term decisions as it continues to realize the long-term vision.

The framework plan is necessary because the Zoo’s mission has changed over the past century to include research, conservation and education—all to ensure that more of Earth’s species can be saved and protected. Urban zoos have a unique role in conservation and education—all to ensure that more of Earth’s biodiversity can be preserved. The framework plan will allow the Zoo to make smarter short-term decisions as it continues to realize the long-term vision.

WHY IS THE FRAMEWORK PLAN SPECIAL?
The Expansion Framework Plan includes a number of eliminating ideas to expand the Zoo’s mission and boundaries. The Zoo is a major attraction to the city, and a way to do something new and different. Here are some of the key objectives of the Framework Plan:

- Expand animal habitat on the site of the current Zoo south and west. This new attraction will benefit the community and the Zoo. These would include innovative and robust public engagement. The 6-month process engaged over 500 individual participants.
- Support the Saint Louis Zoo’s mission—Animals Always
- Create a cohesive zoo campus experience
- Engage the community in a public participation process
- Improve the visitor experience
- Enhance neighborhood connections and Forest Park
- Improve parking supply
- Improve wayfinding and traffic congestion
- Strengthen visibility and the identity of the Zoo
- Consider revenue-generating concepts
- Develop market-based and mission-based programs
- Consider funding and donor opportunities
- Strengthen Zoo operations and employee retention

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS

The Saint Louis Zoo’s framework plan process was constructed to be innovative and robust public engagement. The 6-month process engaged over 500 participants.

- WE LISTENED: During the planning process, brainstorming sessions and workshops were used to define the plan’s goals and objectives. Early in the process, the planning team engaged the community to share their ideas and concerns. The planning team used these ideas to design the framework plan.
- WE ENGAGED: The planning team engaged the community to share their ideas and concerns. The planning team used these ideas to design the framework plan.
- WE INTERPRETED: A team of consultants and an appointed Zoo steering committee led the planning process. Brainstorming sessions and workshops were used to define the plan’s goals and objectives. Early in the process, the planning team engaged the community to share their ideas and concerns. The planning team used these ideas to design the framework plan.
- WE SHARED: In the final stages of the framework planning, the Zoo held a design charrette (an intensely focused session that uses a collaborative approach to create realistic and achievable designs.) It included guest design consultants, a team of consultants and an appointed Zoo steering committee. The concepts from the charrette served as the launching point for the land use planning and design phase of the expansion framework plan.
- WE SUPPORTED: The framework plan process was committed to innovative and robust public engagement. The 6-month process engaged over 500 participants.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ANd PLANNING PROCESS

The Saint Louis Zoo’s framework plan process was constructed to be innovative and robust public engagement. The 6-month process engaged over 500 participants.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles were developed by the design team, in consultation with the Zoo staff and board. They capture the key goals and objectives that should shape the framework plan.

1. CONNECT: The framework plan will help establish a physical connection with Douglas and serve as a catalyst for neighborhood improvement. The vision for a unified Zoo campus is to ensure successful and strong community engagement.

- ATTRACTION: The expansion and enhancement of the Saint Louis Zoo will draw new and repeat visitors and further the Zoo’s conservation mission by creating new and improved exhibits and educational opportunities.

- ENHANCE: The framework plan will help establish a physical connection with Douglas and serve as a catalyst for neighborhood improvement. The vision for a unified Zoo campus is to ensure successful and strong community engagement.

- SUPPORT: All aspects of the framework plan will sustain and reinforce the Saint Louis Zoo’s mission. Research, conservation, education and operations will be emphasized in the expansion and enhancement of the Saint Louis Zoo.
ExEcutivE summary

MAJOR ATTRACTION

The framework plan envision many opportunities to expand and enhance the visitor experience. New exhibits could occupy both the expansion site and the existing Zoo campus by changing the use of land on existing sites. A major attraction could draw new visitors, encourage repeat visitors and extend visitor stays. Revenue-generating concepts would integrate unique opportunities for close animal encounters, rides, and/or additional food and beverage venues, while supporting the expansion and maintaining the Saint Louis Zoo’s status as one of the nation’s only free zoos.

EXHIBIT EXPANSION

The expansion site provides an opportunity to transfer many operational and administrative functions, freeing more space available for animal care. An enriching habitat is significantly important to animal health. Space-efficient habitats could benefit from expansion or renovation. These enhancements to the Zoo would advance the Zoo’s international leadership in animal management, research, conservation, education and guest experiences.

CHILD FOCUS

The Emerson Children’s Zoo is one of the most popular existing exhibits, offering excellent educational opportunities. The framework plan suggests capitalizing on space made available through relocating other operations and expanding the Children’s Zoo. Expansion ideas include nature play, animal enclosures and overnight event areas. Under the plan, the Children’s Zoo could also offer a Farm area with domestic animals and enhanced experiences.

A New Major Attraction

What if the Zoo developed a new exhibit experience that differed from anything currently offered to visitors? Imagine an iconic, architecturally significant facility housing an interior exhibit providing year-round interest and activity. Verticality of the exhibit could easily support exploration of a rainforest habitat or aquarium. Could the exhibit highlight a cross section of the Earth? Avian species in the tree canopies, terrestrial species throughout the landscape, and subterranean and aquatic species beneath the surface would complete the layered, vertical exhibit.

EXHIBIT OPPORTUNITY

Imagine nearly nine acres of existing parking lot transformed to create a unique area of safari fields that the entire family could visit. This new exhibit would fill the gap left by other existing exhibits that are no longer attractive to visitors, and animals required only by localfacilities. An expansive exhibit could also increase visibility of the Zoo from the south. Saint Louis would gain a new gateway park passing on its 100th birthday, or a new place to view wildlife from Forest Park’s south entrance. Never before would the Saint Louis Zoo achieve an exhibit of the magnitude without considerable sacrifice. The framework plan and development of the expansion site may allow this to become reality.
**Executive Summary**

**Mixed-Use**

A variety of market uses are suggested to strengthen the integration of the expansion site with the surrounding community infrastructure. Future development shall be outward-facing and accessible to residents. Market-based uses recommended in the framework plan include neighborhood-based retail units, a boutique hotel, limited residential development, a Zoo-oriented office building and a themed restaurant. Neighborhood-based retail units and mixed-use development could strengthen the existing commercial core of Dogtown and spur future development. Successful mixed-use developments provide opportunities for casual social interaction. The sharing of resources, such as parking and utilities, allow for compact development, a smaller footprint and increased green space and/or public amenities.

**Overnight Experience**

How would you like to overnight at the Zoo? Imagine an elegant, Zoo-themed hotel available to host events, conferences, and guests from near or far. Most importantly, a hotel would extend the stay of Zoo visitors. Out-of-town visitors could visit the Zoo multiple times over the span of a weekend or visit the exhibits once and may return the next. A Zoo theme and proximity to Forest Park would distinguish this hotel from others. A hotel would expand Zoo group sales opportunities as well as allow the Zoo to host industry conferences.

**A Themed Dining Experience**

Could you dine comfortably with a lion only a few feet away? Imagine a unique dining experience within an animal exhibit. A themed restaurant could be a unique new and exciting experience guests will be excited to experience. A food and beverage facility could offer dining up to 15 minutes within the Zoo and Forest Park. Though many new venues for food and beverage may be developed with the proposed expansion, this restaurant opportunity could serve as a new portal to the Zoo campus. Partnered with a secondary welcome center, it could provide an indoor space for the Zoo campus and be easily accessible for a business lunch or weekend brunch.

**Framework Plan Components: Enhance**

**Public Realm**

The public realm is the fabric that holds all the components of the framework plan together. The spaces not occupied by buildings are accessible to the community and available for public amenities. These multifunctional spaces are designed to welcome the influx of Zoo visitors, employees, Forest Park visitors and residential neighbors. These pedestrian areas will encourage public use and establish a sense of place. They could support farmers’ markets, play environments, plazas, dog and sculpture parks and gathering places.

**A Boutique Hotel**

Imagine this...

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**CONNECTIONS**

With two parcels of property bifurcated by a major interstate, solid core connections are critical to the success of a unified campus. The expansion framework plan supports comfortable access whether Zoo guests are traveling by foot, bicycle, vehicle or transit. The path from the existing campus to the expansion site should offer variety, unique experiences, and support Zoo visitors and Forest Park visitors of all ages and abilities. Primary connections should provide clear and direct access to the Zoo. Secondary modes of connection may include trail networks, improved streetscape environments and links to regional transit systems. Future development may support the opportunity to create a transportation hub, or multi-modal transit station, to further extend connectivity.

**TRAFFIC**

The local arterial and road network adjacent to, and within, the Zoo expansion site is robust. The network’s multiple connections could result in improved traffic operations for neighborhood residents and visitors. Ultimately the Zoo expansion could offer better access to parking, improved connection on Forest Park roads and an enhanced local road network.

**PEDESTRIAN ACCESS**

Pedestrian access and circulation will be enhanced by the proposed pedestrian bridge connection between the expansion site and the existing Zoo campus. This link and its connection to local paths and trails would facilitate residents’ recreation and residential pedestrian access.

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**A Pedestrian Bridge**

Imagine a bridge connection tying the edge of the Zoo’s north property directly to the expansion site and offering great accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists. Spanning the interstate presents many opportunities to create a physically recognizable gateway, a strengthened sense of arrival and/or an immersionary experience with educational opportunities along the way.

Pedestrian access and circulation would be enhanced by the proposed pedestrian bridge connection between the expansion site and the existing Zoo campus. This link and its connection to local paths and trails would facilitate residents’ recreation and residential pedestrian access.

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**A Gondola**

A gondola experience could be an attraction unto itself. Providing direct connections from the expansion site to a transportation center at the Living World, residents could take in views of Forest Park, Downtown St. Louis and the Gateway Arch while travelling 80 feet above the ground. From an aerial perspective, visitors could preview the variety of exhibits and experiences awaiting within the Zoo gates.

A gondola is a quick, approximately 5-minute, energy efficient and accessible connection providing a unique experience for Zoo guests while also offering an alternative route of transportation for the community to connect with Forest Park and Dogtown.

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**Framework Plan Components: Connect**

**CONNECTION**

Bridge
- Gondola
- Millennium Bridge
- Ground Tram / Trolley

**TRAILS / GREENWAY**

- Pedestrian & Bicycle connections

**ROAD NETWORK**

- Changes to Urban Fabric & Traffic Circulation
- Road Closure

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**IMAGINE THIS...**

A Pedestrian Bridge

A Gondola

CONNECTIONS

Traffic

Pedestrian & Bicycle connections

Traffic

Pedestrian & Bicycle connections

Framework Plan Components: Connect
A Research Suite

Did you know the Saint Louis Zoo is a leader in saving endangered species and their habitats? Care for animals and their future is the highest priority for the Zoo. Enlarging the Zoo’s footprint could bring an expansion of research facilities and growth for its field conservation work, managed by the Zoo’s Wildcare Institute and conducted at 12 centers in Missouri and across the globe. Investing in expanding facilities for these programs could secure the Zoo’s position as a major leader in animal research and conservation.

IMAGINE THIS...

Below Grade Parking

Imagine a parking structure nestled in natural topography and disguised from surrounding neighborhoods by vegetated roofs, plazas, and engaging public spaces. Structured parking provides an opportunity to layer uses, increase the efficiency of the land and its multifunctionality. There are many ways to create pleasant public spaces with direct connections to underground parking. Through thoughtful landscape and architecture, the Zoo could offer welcoming spaces with clear wayfinding and convenient accessibility.
The Saint Louis Zoo has concluded its framework planning effort and is embarking upon a journey of strategic implementation. The expansion framework plan illustrates the Zoo’s 30-year vision and will be a resource for both long- and short-term decision making. The expansion site provides a chance-of-a-lifetime opportunity to expand and reframe the organization and physical environment of the Saint Louis Zoo and position the Zoo as a leader among zoos for the next 100 years.

The Zoo is marketing its comprehensive, long-range strategic plan announced in 2008 after working for months with a range of stakeholders and planning professionals. That detailed plan included seven core goals, more than 40 tactics and myriad action steps.

In addition to a comprehensive long-term master plan for the entire Zoo, the next strategic plan will include selected recommendations from the expansion site framework plan. Again, tapping the expertise of planning experts, community leaders and the Zoo’s own volunteer leadership, this initiative will build upon framework plan goals to make the most of the Zoo’s newly expanded footprint.

However, even before the planning begins, the Zoo and its team of experienced, St. Louis-based construction, demolition and hazardous waste removal firms are moving forward to remove such hazardous materials as asbestos and lead paint and to demolish buildings; slated for demolition are the hospital itself, the East Parking Garage, surrounding buildings on the site and one underground storage tank. The team will also renovate the site’s above-grade existing garage off Berthold avenue on the south side of the site, making it a six-story parking garage. In addition, the team will clean up existing surface parking for the use of Zoo employees and visitors.

Once this work is completed, the Zoo’s team of experienced professionals will continue to ensure that the site responds to needs of the visitors, the surrounding community and the Zoo’s mission to conserve animals and their habitats. In the months and years the site is under development, the Zoo will be considering a number of interim uses from allowing part of the site to include a farmer’s market, a dog park, a community garden or some other community-driven project. This approach will address community needs and allow the Zoo to share maintenance costs for the site as the institution raises funds for the site’s full development.

The Zoo has pledged that throughout this development process, framework plan recommendations and the Zoo’s mission will be the foundation for developing both the expansion site and the Zoo’s existing campus.

**30-YEAR GOALS**

- Provide the highest standards of animal care and welfare while creating dynamic exhibits that are exciting to the public and are linked to the Zoo’s conservation message.
- Build upon the Saint Louis Zoo’s reputation as one of the nation’s best visitor experiences among zoos and aquariums.
- Position the Saint Louis Zoo as a world leader in wildlife conservation, research, development and advocacy.
- Develop a new 21st century paradigm of conservation education that connects people of all ages and backgrounds to nature and wildlife.
- Focus on the need to upgrade and further develop the physical infrastructure of the Zoo, emphasizing innovative technology and environmentally sensitive design.
- Support the development of the human resources necessary for the Zoo to remain world-class and an innovative workplace of choice.
- Provide for generating sufficient financial resources to build a sustainable institution into the 21st century.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Expansion Framework Plan reflects the culmination of a nearly six month process to establish the Saint Louis Zoo and community’s vision for the future.

SAINT LOUIS ZOO PLANNING COMMITTEE
Mary Campbell Immediate Past President, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Hon. James F. Conway Chairman, Saint Louis Zoo Commission
Terry Daugherty Neighborhood Representative
Lou Hamilton Government Affairs and Public Communications Consultant
Lesley Hoffarth President and Executive Director, Forest Park Forever
Bill Kennebeck Neighborhood Representative
Peggy Ritter President, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Winthrop B. Reed, III Commissioner, Saint Louis Zoo Commission
Don Roe Director of Planning and Urban Design, City of Saint Louis
James G. Sansone Saint Louis Zoo Commissioner
Mark J. Schnuck Saint Louis Zoo Commissioner
Dan Skillman Commissioner Parks Division, City of Saint Louis
Todd Waelterman Director, Streets Department, City of Saint Louis

SAINT LOUIS ZOO ADVISORY GROUP
Joseph T. Ambrose Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
JoAnn Arnold Saint Louis Zoo Commissioner
G. Andrew Franz former Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Jeffrey L. Fox Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Walter J. Galvin Past President, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Janis G. Goldstein former Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Karl Grice Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Fred F. Guyton Zoo Planning Strategist, PGAV Destinations
Jay G. Henges Vice Chairman, Saint Louis Zoo Commission
Bill Holekamp former Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Bruce B. Holland Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Joseph F. Imbs, III Executive Committee, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Todd J. Korte former Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Martin J. Lyons, Jr. Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
John McDonnell Saint Louis Zoo Advisor
Patrick J. Moore Board of Directors, Saint Louis Zoo Association
Andy Newman Saint Louis Zoo Advisor

SAINT LOUIS ZOO CONSULTANT TEAM
SWT Design
Jim Wolterman Co-Founder, Principal In Charge
Ted H. Spaid Co-Founder, Lead Designer
Bonnie C. Roy Principal, Project Manager
Derek Don

Uhlir Consulting
Edward K. Uhlir President, Urban Planner

HR&A Economic Advisors
Jamie Toress Spring Partner
Kate Wittels Director
Max Zarin Analyst

Vector Communications
Jessica Perkins Partner
Atia Thurman

Lawrence Group
Tim Rowbottom Principal
Dennis McGrath Senior Associate, Design Director

Crawford Bunte Brammeier
Carrie Falsen Senior Transportation Engineer
Homer and Shifrin
Gino Bernardiz Vice President
Ramin Ashrafzadeh Transportation / Civil Project Manager
Cowell Engineering
Jean Cowell Principal

SAINT LOUIS ZOO EXECUTIVE STAFF
Jeffrey P. Bonner, Ph.D., Dana Brown President and CEO
Dr. Eric Miller, DVM Senior Vice President, Zoological Operations & Director, WildCare Institute
Steve Barth Vice President, Business Operations & CFO
Jack Grisham Vice President, Animal Collections
Wyndell Hill Vice President, Internal Relations
Cynthia Holter, CFRE Vice President, External Relations
David McGuire, AIA Vice President, Architecture & Planning

GUEST CHARRETTE CONSULTANTS
Junama Brodersen The Jco
Greg Dykstra CLA Design
Fred Guyton PGAV Destinations
Ana Hernandez AFH Design
Keith McClintock The Portico Group
Craig Rhodes GLMV Architecture