



LSZ MASTER PLAN

VISION

A future where all living things thrive together.



MISSION

To provide close-up animal experiences that inspire connections to wildlife and action toward conservation in our region and around the world.

VALUES

Community

We strive to be a place of gathering for our community and empower our neighbors in conservation.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility & Inclusion (DEAI)

We value and welcome all people and understand that diversity makes our organization stronger and more successful.

Innovation

We take pride in our work and pledge to ensure ethical excellence in every function of our organization.

Safety

We provide a safe space for all guests, staff, volunteers, and animals in our care.

Stewardship

We compassionately act each day to protect wildlife, the environment, and all resources entrusted to us.

INTRODUCTION

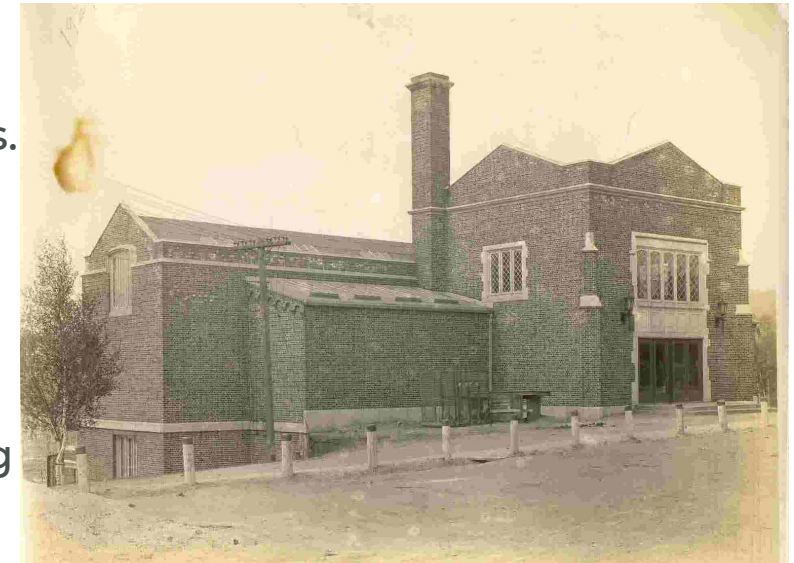
The Lake Superior Zoo was founded in 1923 by Bert E. Onsgard, a local businessman with a passion for animals. It all started with one animal originally – a white-tailed deer named Billy – and the Zoo has now grown to be an educational and conservation-based organization that is home to animals of over 140 species.

The Lake Superior Zoo, lying astride the waterfalls and riffles of Kingsbury Creek as it spills down the basalt hills that line the northern edge of the St. Louis River, occupies one of the most dramatic sites of any zoo in North America. The developed areas of the lower Zoo merge into the densely forested slopes of the upper Zoo, and no area is ever far from the sounds of the tumbling water. Although it is not a large site (the existing developed portion is only 16 acres), once guests find their way to the pathways adjacent to the Creek or start winding their way through the forest, it's easy for them to forget that they are actually in a developed park adjacent to a busy highway. It is a magical place that is full of promise.

The past five years have been a turning point for the LSZ, from the restoration of our cornerstone exhibit, Bear Country, to a global pandemic, to financial growth and stability. Through it all, both the City and the Zoo have persevered by coming to understand the challenges – and the opportunities – that lie in being yourself and living within your means. To that end, the Lake Superior Zoo aspires to take its place among the great small community zoos, with vibrant animals and plants that is well-suited to both its setting and its means, conducting energetic education and conservation programs, and benefiting from the excitement generated by extensive community support.

To accomplish our mission and goals, we are committed to the Zoo's legacy of conservation, education and connections with animals, underscored by our passion and our commitment. We have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of our staff, animal collection, volunteers, members, constituents and community, as well as play a role in protecting the future for wildlife and wild places.

This Master Plan Update is a key step in our continued revitalization - it will ensure the wise stewardship of our two most precious assets, the collection and the Zoo grounds themselves, and will provide a framework for how the Zoo fits into the lives of the community that supports it.



HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1923

The zoo opens to the public.

1940

New bear den exhibit completed by the WPA.

1963

Mr. Magoo, a mongoose, is pardoned by JFK.

2009

The City of Duluth turns over management to the Society.

2019

The zoo begins construction on revitalizing exhibits damaged in 2012.

1930

New elephant exhibit completed by the WPA.

1959

The Arrowhead Zoological Society is formed.

1985

The zoo is awarded its first AZA accreditation.

2012

A historic flood causes major damage and loss of animals.

2021

The zoo welcomes over 105,000 guests, the highest in more than a decade.



SWOT Analysis Matrix

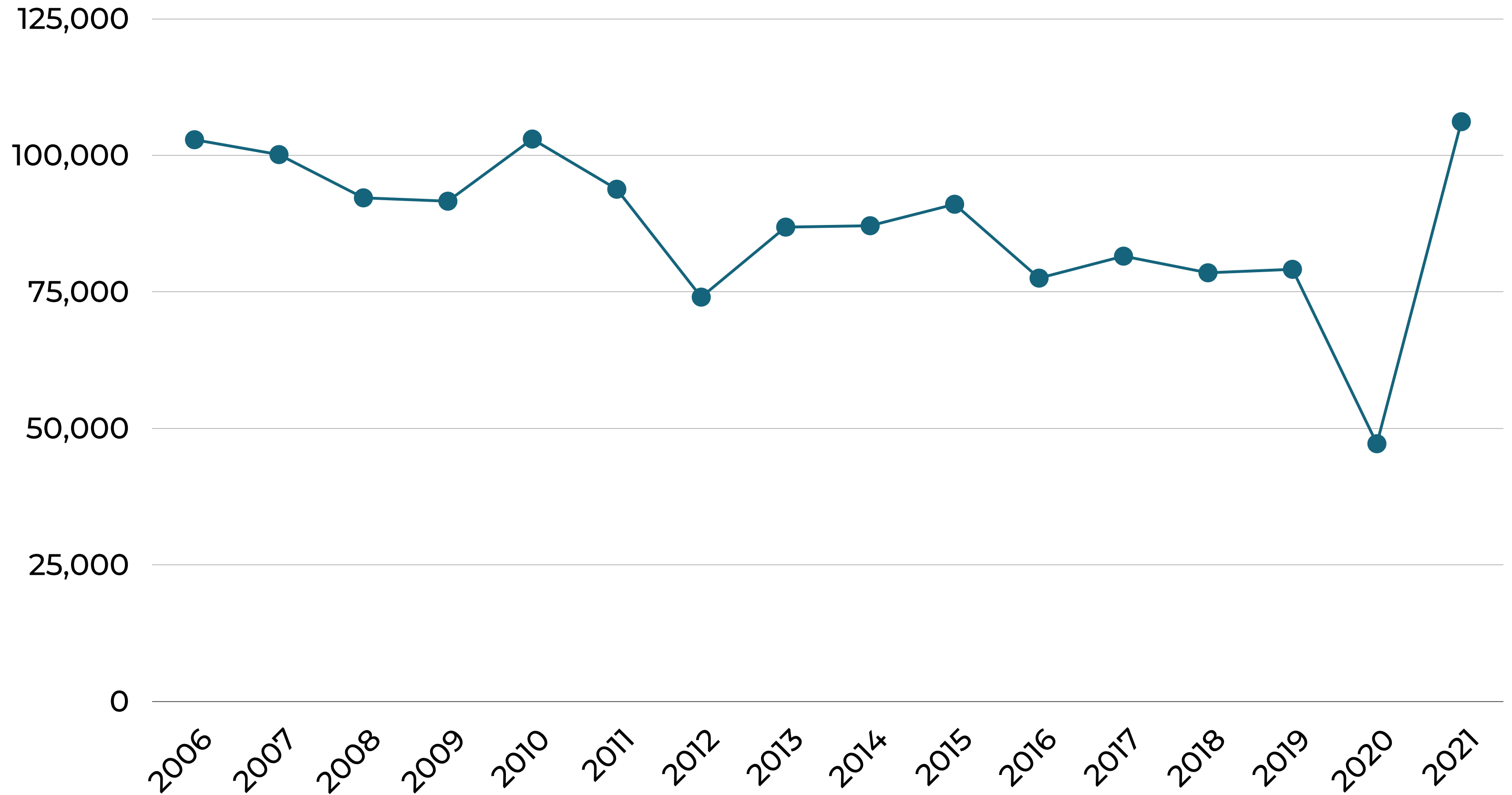
SWOT Analysis and Action Steps	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing access to opportunities for development of our staff• Building donor relationships focused on animal care and educational programs• Developing mission-based partnerships that would increase our impact through opportunities and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building and leveraging mission based partnerships for staff recruitment and retention• Intentionally connecting with potential donors for future plans• Creatively capitalize existing space
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize AZA Accreditation to inform attitudes and perceptions of animals in captivity• Address aging infrastructure and maintenance while enhancing unique outdoor experiences• Thoughtful engagement with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create attainable future plans to mitigate aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance• Uphold AZA standards in existing spaces to improve attitudes and perceptions of animals in captivity.• Reflecton past experiences to continue to grow as an organization

As an organization, we have not only survived the last 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have found innovative ways to evolve our operations and thrive during an unprecedented time. In the midst of the early months of the pandemic, \$204,000 was awarded to the City of Duluth and the Society for the planning and predesign of a new or renovated main building (Zoo Central). This collaborative effort between the City and the Zoo will begin in early 2022. This master plan document will serve as the complementary basis to our strategic plan, providing context and a solid guide to the investments we will make for the future of the LSZ, the animals we care for, and the community we serve.

The strategic plan and master plan was developed in 2021 and finalized in February 2022. The process was led by a task force comprised of Zoo Society board members. A formal SWOT analysis session was conducted with all staff during the summer of 2021, and these plans incorporates feedback and data from those sessions, as well as guest qualitative feedback from reviews and interactions.



Attendance Trends



Strategic Goals



- Build a compelling animal experience that meets the highest standards of animal welfare.
- Develop and implement a sustainable financial strategy that promotes the longevity of our presence in the community.
- Empower staff through development and education.
- Establish the Zoo as a trusted conservation leader in our community.
- Develop and maintain a long-term facilities plan.

Master Plan Objectives

- 1** Create a compelling and practical framework that supports the continued revitalization of the Zoo.
- 2** Position the Zoo as a trusted gathering place and resource for education about conservation, wildlife and wild places, as well as impactful experiences with the natural world both at the Zoo and beyond.
- 3** Improve accessibility across the Zoo to enhance the overall guest experience
- 4** Boost guest amenities, play opportunities, and interactive experiences
- 5** Expand educational opportunities for all people.
- 6** Identify key animal species and experiences that support conservation awareness and implement modern zoological practices.
- 7** Expand the ability of the Zoo to increase and diversify earned revenue.
- 8** Make full use of the site in a way that can be sustainably managed.

Phase I - Preparing for the Future

- Predesign & development process for new main building (Zoo Central)
- New Animal Habitats and Spaces
 - Parrot flight run
 - Nocturnal building: Egyptian fruit bats, new prehensile-tailed porcupine exhibit (SSP)
 - Cabot's tragopan exhibit (SSP)
- Centennial Celebration Interpretive & Interactive Exhibit
- Facility Updates and Enhancements
 - Pathway and front apron renovations
 - Administrative office remodel
 - Targeted deferred maintenance projects
- Nature Trail Restoration
 - New immersive experience to connect visitors with nature
 - Seasonal pavilion for additional program space
 - Additional restrooms - composting toilets

Key Funding*

- \$204,000 - State Bonding for predesign of new Zoo Central
- \$150,000 - Legacy Amendment for interpretive and interactive exhibit
- \$140,000 - Additional DNR funds to supplement annual budget for accreditation and updates
- \$250,000 - Woodland Park Zoo Empathy Grant

**all funding has been awarded and secured*

Timeline

- Q1 2022 - Q4 2023

Related Objectives

- 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Phase II - Enhancing Our Experiences and Animal Exhibits

- Update Immersive Play Experiences
 - All projects to enhance accessibility
 - Nature-based with parallel play elements
 - Additional revenue generating opportunities (rentals)
- Animal Exhibits
 - Expand snow leopard exhibit to accommodate increased participation in SSP program
 - Identify SSP species to replace African lion exhibit
 - Caribou and white-tailed deer exhibits on hillside
 - Identify additional opportunities related to Institutional Collection Plan
- Kingsbury Creek Restoration
 - Address retaining wall issues

Key Funding

- \$500,000 - Legacy Amendment for hillside exhibit
- \$25,000 - Grant for train station
- \$100,000 - Annual budget/residuals for animal exhibits

Timeline

- Q1 2024 - Q4 2025

Related Objectives

- 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

Phase III - Major Construction and Updated Plans

- **Final Development & Construction of New Main Building (Zoo Central)**
 - Emphasis on conservation, modern zoological practices and philosophies, and animal welfare
 - Expand education space (zoo programs and preschool)
 - Indoor and accessible parallel play space for all
 - Provide separate staff and guest spaces (restrooms, entrances, etc.)
- **Engage All Staff in Continuous Planning for Enhanced Animal Habitats**
 - Prioritize SSP and/or SAFE species when applicable
- **Pathway modification project**
 - Improve accessibility and address changes with main building construction
- **Expand Gardens in Available Spaces**
 - Provide sustainable food options for zoo animals, preschool, and the community
 - Partner with local organization to build community access to fresh produce

Key Funding

- \$15,000,000 - State Bonding, capital campaign, grants
- \$250,000 - Earned revenue and private donors for enhanced animal habitats
- \$100,000 - Earned revenue and sponsorships for pathway restoration
- \$25,000 - Grants and private donors for gardens

Timeline

- Q1 2026 - Q4 2028

Related Objectives

- 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Phase IV - Transforming Existing Spaces and Furthering Conservation Efforts

- Repurpose Historic Pavilion
 - Transform existing structure into two-level reptile house
 - Main level exhibits
 - Dwarf caiman, snapping turtle, Chinese crocodile lizard
 - Lower level dedicated to breeding and reintroduction facility
 - Eastern indigo snake (SSP), Blandings turtle (SSP and field work), Wyoming toad
- Build a Butterfly Conservatory
 - Utilize existing green space to expand SAFE participation
 - Identify potential local and regional endangered species

Key Funding

- Amounts will be identified during planning process
- Targeted funding sources
 - State of Minnesota (bonding and Legacy Amendment)
 - Grants
 - Private donors
 - Capital campaign

Timeline

- Q1 2029 - Q2 2032

Related Objectives

- 2, 4, 8

Phase V - Existing Australian Building and Space Updates

- Facilities Relocation and Expansion
 - Phase out kangaroos and wallabies.
 - Expand the facilities building to meet the growing needs of the organization sustainably through energy-efficient upgrades.
 - Increase storage to maximize on existing spaces.
 - Improve accessibility across the zoo through increased efficiency and access to equipment and storage.
- Expand Raptor Habitats (Raptor Ridge)
 - Develop additional habitats along pathways to connect guests to the nature trail with immersive experiences.
 - Phase out Raptor Mews to provide sustainable modern-day habitats that continues to meet and exceed the needs of the animals in our care.
 - Identify native species and create a dynamic and natural experience for guests with opportunities for education and parallel play.

Key Funding

- Amounts will be identified during planning process
- Targeted funding sources
 - State of Minnesota (bonding and Legacy Amendment)
 - Grants
 - Private donors
 - Capital campaign

Timeline

- Q3 2032 - Q4 2034

Related Objectives

- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Phase VI - Primate Conservation Center and Willard Munger Animal Care Center Upgrades

- **Primate Conservation Center**
 - Utilize existing space to enhance guest experience and diversify revenue generating opportunities.
 - Update habitats to innovate zoological practices and uphold animal welfare.
- **Willard Munger Animal Care Center**
 - Continue to excel in animal welfare through sustainably meeting the growing needs of our animal care team for storage and workable space.
 - Uphold and enhance best practices for animal care staff through sustainable upgrades and improvements.

Key Funding

- Amounts will be identified during planning process
- Targeted funding sources
 - State of Minnesota (bonding and Legacy Amendment)
 - Grants
 - Private donors
 - Capital campaign

Timeline

- Q1 2035 - Q4 2037

Related Objectives

- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

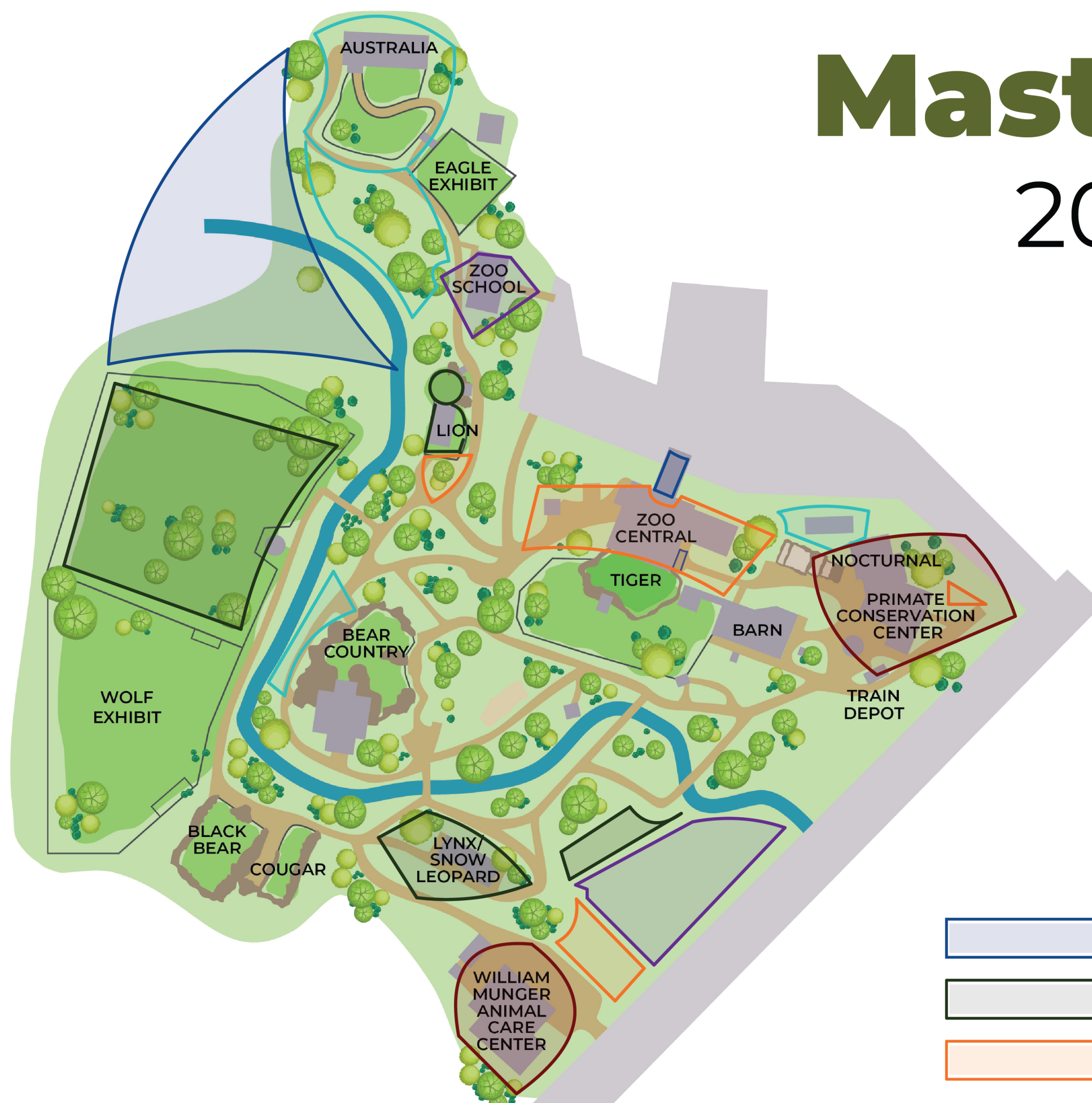
Master Plan

2022 - 2037



Map Key

	Phase I		Phase IV
	Phase II		Phase V
	Phase III		Phase VI



MASTER PLAN TIMELINE



PHASE I

Q1 2022 - Q4 2023



PHASE II

Q1 2024 - Q4 2025



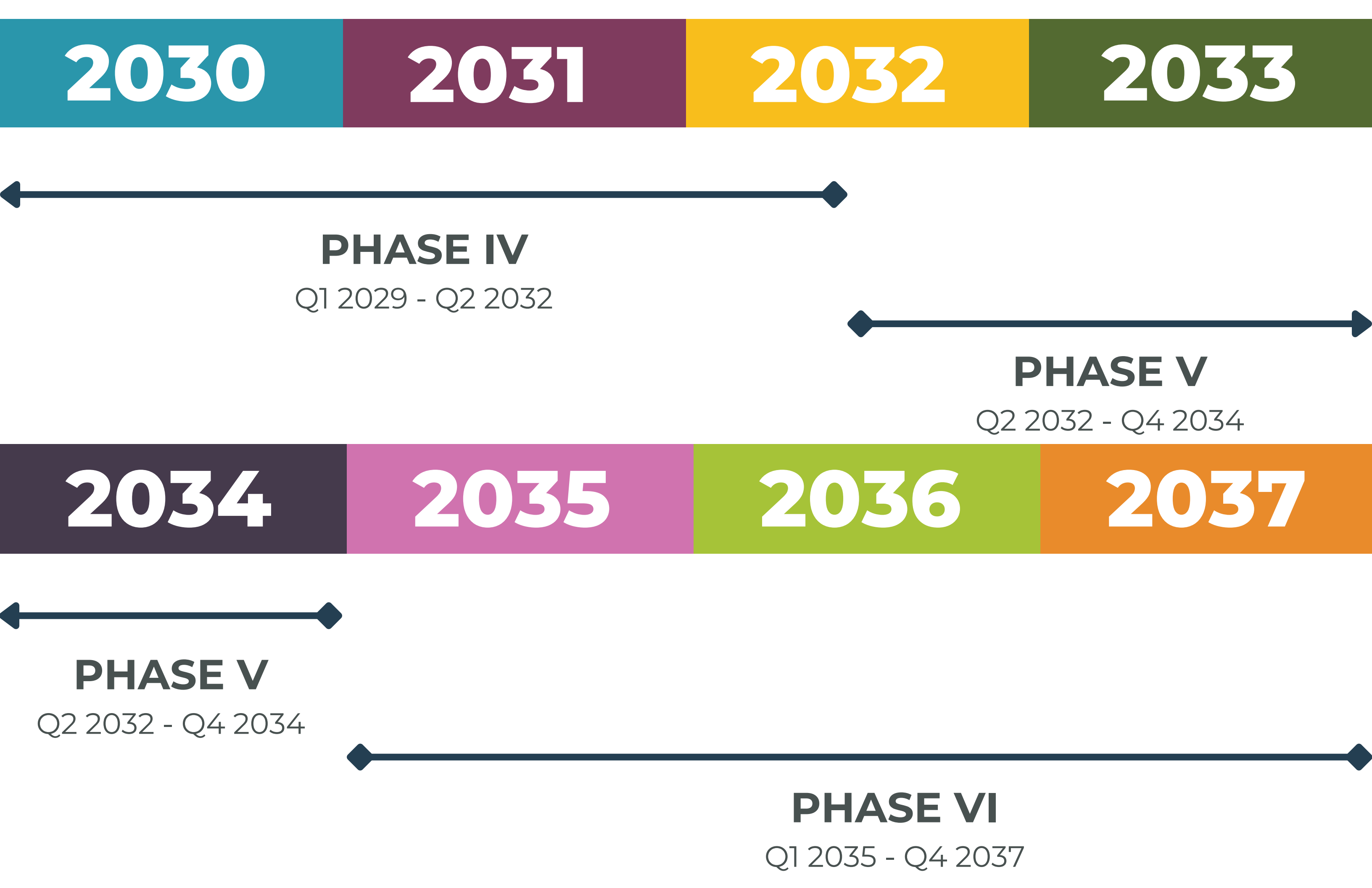
PHASE III

Q1 2026 - Q4 2028



PHASE IV

Q1 2029 - Q2 2032



2030

2031

2032

2033

PHASE IV

Q1 2029 - Q2 2032

PHASE V

Q2 2032 - Q4 2034

2034

2035

2036

2037

PHASE V

Q2 2032 - Q4 2034

PHASE VI

Q1 2035 - Q4 2037