

# Franconia Sculpture Park

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### 2021-2023



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# Letter from the Board

Our strategic planning to guide Franconia Sculpture Park's future has been forged with intensity, intentionality, and inquisitiveness. The confluence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued fight for social justice spurred by the killing of George Floyd initiated a surge in attendance as our community looked to Franconia for a safe, healing, and inspirational outdoor arts venue. This increased attendance came as our new staff members were acclimating to their positions while simultaneously racing to complete the Franconia Commons building.

Strategic planning happening against the backdrop of global and local change allowed our board and staff to contemplate our future in a living lab. Franconia is an incubator, a place of experimentation, and in constant evolution. The experiential learning approach suited us. Our location defines our ethic, and we know acutely that external forces (a strong wind, thunderstorm, or social justice awakening) compel us to respond.

While thinking about Franconia's future we spent time listening to artists, naturalists, visitors, local community members, donors, and thought leaders. We made sure we listened to artists who had troubling past experiences with Franconia, as well as people who shared nothing but praise. We present this plan when Franconia is learning from its legacy (including successes and painful mistakes) and leaning into its future as a mature, nationally recognized nonprofit organization. Franconia aims to create a welcoming, inviting space for all visitors to learn more about contemporary art, the environment, and the changing world we inhabit.

We offer this plan as Franconia steps into its 25th year. We have a vision of stretching from an unexpected and charming roadside attraction into the region's premier rural contemporary arts destination. To have artists create new work and spark dialogue informed by topics of justice and equity, while being inspired by prairie, pollinators, and climate.

Our goals will guide us to reach 2024 as a flourishing community hub. Without the burden of debt, our operating model will be self-sustaining, our artists and staff will be fairly compensated, and our programming will be bold and inclusive.

Best,

Board of Directors

Dorothy Goldie, Eric Bruce, Davis Klaila, Amy McKinney, Stacy O'Reilly, Heather Rutledge, Linda Seebauer Hansen, Sharon Loudon, Sara Rothholz Weiner, Rosie Kellogg



*Franconia Tablet (Dedicated to the memory of George Floyd who was murdered by police on May 25, 2020), 2020  
Don Edler*

# Reflections on Franconia's recent past

Franconia's last strategic plan guided the organization through 2014 – 2018. A major goal was to launch the capital expansion project. In 2018, Franconia moved away from the founder to new leadership. The board used this transition to claim the transparent and inclusive future it envisioned for the organization. In 2020, with new leadership in place, we accelerated into high gear as we completed Franconia Commons, enhanced programs to safely respond to COVID, and strategized about Franconia's future.

In 2019, Franconia Sculpture Park outlined the following primary goals:

**Goal:** Conduct a successful national search and hire a new executive director and chief curator

**Outcome:** In September 2019, after an extensive national search, Franconia Sculpture Park hired Executive Director & Chief Curator Ginger Shulick Porcella, formerly the executive director and chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson. Porcella comes to Franconia with nearly twenty years of experience in contemporary art and museum programming, with a history of developing and running experimental artist-residency programs for emerging artists.

**Goal:** Complete fundraising on the five-year "Imagination in Action" campaign

**Outcome:** In September 2019, Franconia received the final \$200,000 needed to complete the five-year "Imagination in Action" capital campaign. The 7,000 square foot Franconia Commons (visitor center, multi-purpose education space, gallery, gift shop, café, and administrative offices) opened in September 2020.

**Goal:** Secure the purchase of adjoining land through the Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Outcome:** In December 2019, Franconia was able to secure the purchase of a parcel of land on the corner of Highways 95 and 8 in Shafer, Minnesota, adding a crucial five acres to Franconia in the most publicly visible area for traffic and visitors.

**Goal:** Delineate between youth education and residency programs; create two distinct departments

**Outcome:** In December 2019, Franconia created discrete departments for youth education and artist residency programs. This separation will allow artists to be provided with increased and individualized attention while in residence at Franconia.

# Mission

To foster an inclusive community to create and contemplate contemporary art inspired by nature and our ever-evolving world.

# Values

Franconia Sculpture Park is:

**Contemporary**

**Bold**

**Inclusive**

**Local and Global**

# Vision

We aim to be a national model for how a contemporary outdoor art museum can engage and collaborate with the community.

We cultivate critical dialogue between artists and audiences; support artists through the production and presentation of new, experimental work; and educate artists and audiences of tomorrow. Franconia applies creative solutions to topical issues through the vehicle of contemporary sculpture, land art, performance and social practice. We create bold programming that is ambitious, innovative, and that is responsive to the wants and needs of artists and our community.



*Pollinator Rhyton, Agave and Bats, 2020*  
Rachel Frank



*Sun Ritual, 2020*  
Tsohil Bhatia



Franconia Beehives



# MAJOR GOALS

*We Move Still, 2017*  
Jordan Rosenow & April Martin

## GOAL 1

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**BECOME A MODEL FOR NURTURING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ECOLOGY, LAND STEWARDSHIP, AND THE ARTS**

## GOAL 2

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**SUPPORT CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS THROUGH MANY CAREER PHASES**

## GOAL 3

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**INSPIRE PERSONAL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING FOR YOUTH**

## GOAL 4

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**ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

## GOAL 5

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**STRENGTHEN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROFESSIONALISM**

# GOAL 1

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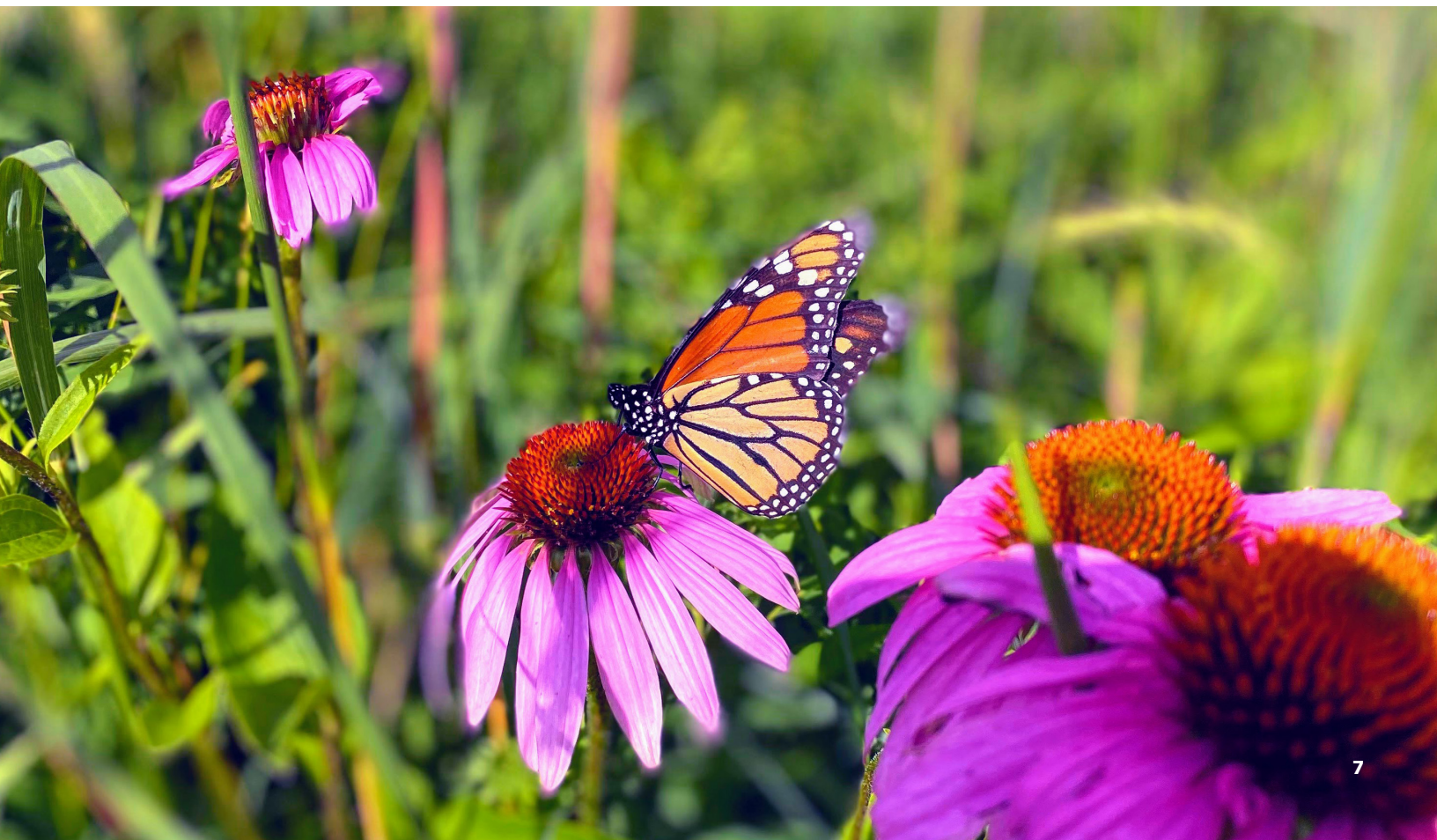
## BECOME A MODEL FOR NURTURING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ECOLOGY, LAND STEWARDSHIP, AND THE ARTS

### Strategies

- Curate and protect 50 acres focused on indigenous prairie grasses and living creatures.
- Honor the indigenous legacy of the land where Franconia sits and its neighboring communities.
- Host events celebrating the intersection of nature, art, justice, and community.
- Create fellowships for nature-based experts (scientists, ecologists, naturalists).

### Success Measures

- St. Croix River Valley becomes a top destination and national model for artist residencies linking art and ecology, as marked by applications and media attention.
- A majority of programs are done in partnership with community organizations.
- New *4Ground: Midwest Land Art Biennial* launches with 25 sites in 5 states, drawing over 100,000 visitors in first year.
- Nature-based fellowship is launched in collaboration with St. Croix Valley partners.



# GOAL 2

## SUPPORT CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS THROUGH MANY CAREER PHASES

### Strategies

- Nurture emerging artists with residencies and stipends.
- Support mid-career artists in a variety of genres.
- Honor and collaborate with established artists known for community engagement and innovation.
- Experiment with broadening support to multiple artistic disciplines.
- Professionalize and make more equitable the experience for all on-site artists.

### Success Measures

- Annually eighteen Emerging Artists, five mid-career Fellows, and four Visiting Artists are hosted.
- Expansive art forms are represented.
- Applicant pool and slate of selected artists is diverse, inclusive and just. Priority is given to those underrepresented in our nation's cultural institutions—particularly women, artists of color, LGBTQIA+ and indigenous artists.
- All artists are offered financial support.
- Applications to residencies grow each year.
- Selection criteria is transparent.
- Artists report creating new work or expanding creative ideas.





# GOAL 3

## INSPIRE PERSONAL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING FOR YOUTH

### Strategies

- Create an impactful and high-quality school-aligned youth education program based on the intersection of creativity and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math).
- Provide independent opportunities for creativity and learning for youth and families.

### Success Measures

- Full funding is secured to support education program.
- Sixty multi-generational and family-focused educational opportunities are offered annually.
- Curriculum and impact goals are developed. School partnerships and programs are piloted.
- 15,000 students served annually.



# GOAL 4

## ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### Strategies

- Connect people to innovative arts programming by focusing annually on curatorial themes that respond to pressing contemporary issues.
- Expand programming to be more welcoming to a diverse audience.
- Curate the new Mardag Gallery to be inclusive and thematically driven.
- Become a meaningful economic driver and collaborator for the St. Croix River Valley community.
- Improve the visitor experience with focus on creating a welcoming and inclusive experience.
- Bring global artists to rural America to share ideas and learn from each other.

### Success Measures

- Number of visitors is consistently expanded.
- Racial and gender diversity are mandated in annual goals for presenters.
- Diversity is observed in audiences.
- At least two local leaders sit on the board of directors.



New Domestics in Mardag Gallery at Franconia Commons



Wax Lead perform at Franc 'n' Stein Oktoberfest, 2020

# GOAL 5

## STRENGTHEN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

### Strategies

- Balance the budget annually by diversifying revenue sources.
- Retire the inherited long-term debt of \$550,000 (\$350,000 Bond and \$200,000 loan debts).
- Create an atmosphere where staff and volunteers feel valued and respected by prioritizing workplace health, diversity, and inclusion.
- Provide strategic governance by engaged and energized board of directors.

### Success Measures

- Operating budget is balanced annually.
- Long-term debt is retired by 2023.
- Membership and attendance grow annually.
- Staff receive annual raises, report feeling respected and fulfilled in their work, and turnover is limited.
- Staff and contractors are 30% BIPOC.
- Become W.A.G.E. certified.



New Gift Shop at Franconia Commons



Grand Opening of Franconia Commons, September 2020

*For list of strategic plan tactics,  
please email [ginger@franconia.org](mailto:ginger@franconia.org).*



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