

# BOLDLY LOOKING FORWARD





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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to create a roadmap for the future of the Little Rock Zoo. It articulates the existing conditions and current needs of the Zoo; a compelling, long-term future; short and mid-term improvement plans; and opinions of probable budget for each component. This document and the master plan process took into consideration the knowledge and input from staff and other important stakeholders. Priorities, funding, animal populations, and more will change over time. This plan is a roadmap that allows flexibility in how goals are accomplished over the next 15 years and beyond.

This Master Plan describes capital projects to be undertaken with a recommended order of priority and provides conceptual descriptions of capital projects and why these projects are so important to the future of the Little Rock Zoo. The community is proud of this organization and the amazing work they do. This plan, when realized, will continue to increase the already tremendous community and economic impact, as well as improve the lives of hundreds of animals, the staff, and the hundreds of thousands of people who come to be inspired by them.

## Acknowledgments

This Master Plan was created in partnership between The Little Rock Zoo and GLMVZoos. The Master Plan was published in November of 2022 and is intended to be the roadmap for growth and development for the next 10-20 years. This is a living document and should be revisited quarterly by the Zoo to ensure its execution and accuracy.

Thank you to all of those who participated and shaped this Master Plan: Little Rock Zoo

- Susan Altrui, Zoo Director
- Fran Lyon, Assistant Director
- Little Rock Zoo Executive Team and Senior Staff

#### Little Rock Zoo Board of Governors

- Brad Cazort, Chairman

#### Arkansas Zoological Foundation Board of Directors

- Lisa Buehler, Chair

#### City of Little Rock

- Frank Scott, Jr., Mayor
- Bruce Moore, City Manager
- Leeland Couch, Parksand Recreation Director
- Board of Directors

GLMVZoos, a leading national zoo design firm, was the design partner and lead for the development of this Master Plan

- Craig Rhodes, Principal and lead Architect
- Mike Clifford, Director of Innovation and Planning
- Dale Stafford, Zoological Designer

#### JBP Architects

- Randy Palculict, Vice President
- Heather Lewis, Associate Architect





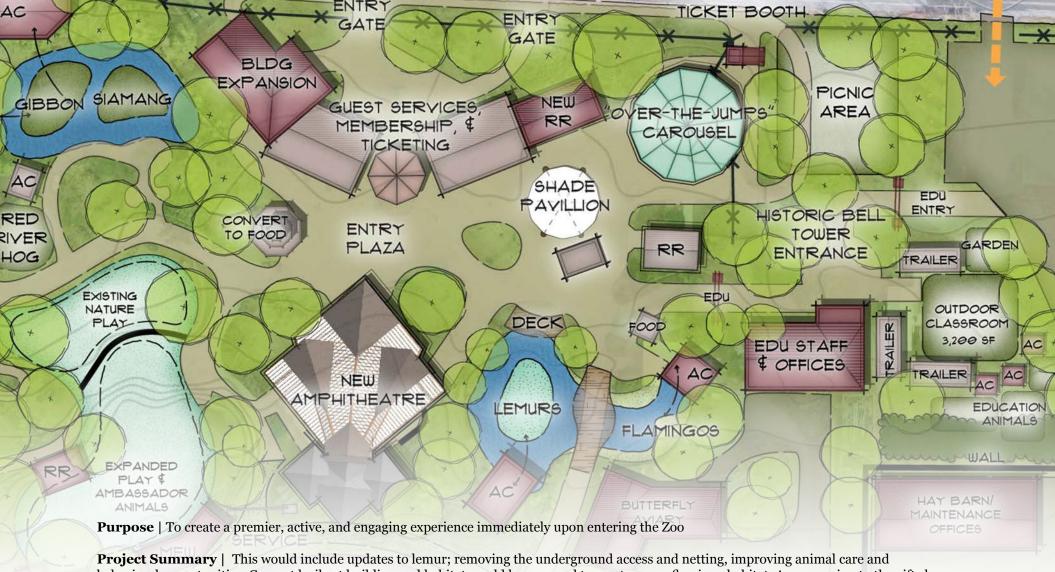












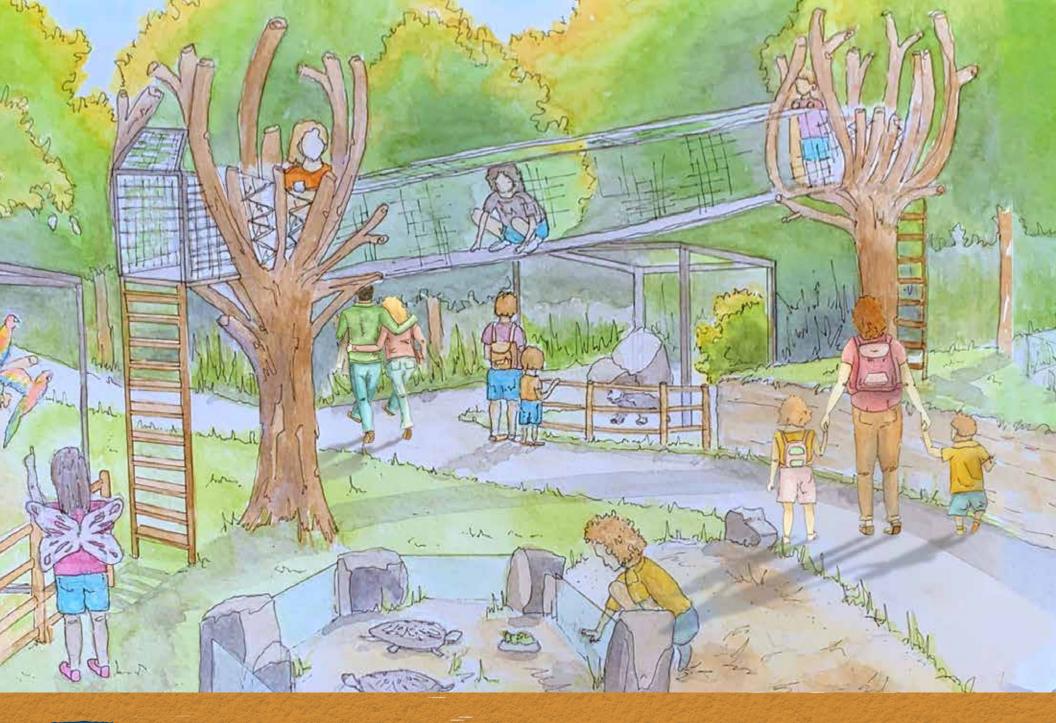
**Project Summary** | This would include updates to lemur; removing the underground access and netting, improving animal care and behavioral opportunities. Current lorikeet building and habitat would be removed to create a new flamingo habitat. An expansion to the gift shop would allow more storage of product and scooters. A brand new, state-of-the-art Ambassador animal play area will be where the old spider monkey habitat is located. A variety of spaces designed for a wide range of natural behaviors will allow animals to thrive while guests can see and mimic many of these behaviors like climbing, digging, brachiating, running, jumping, and more. This will be a dynamic, energy-filled space right as you enter the Zoo. This project will also enclose the historic carrousel to help preserve it as a unique asset on the Zoo's campus.

Opinion of Budget | \$8,000,000











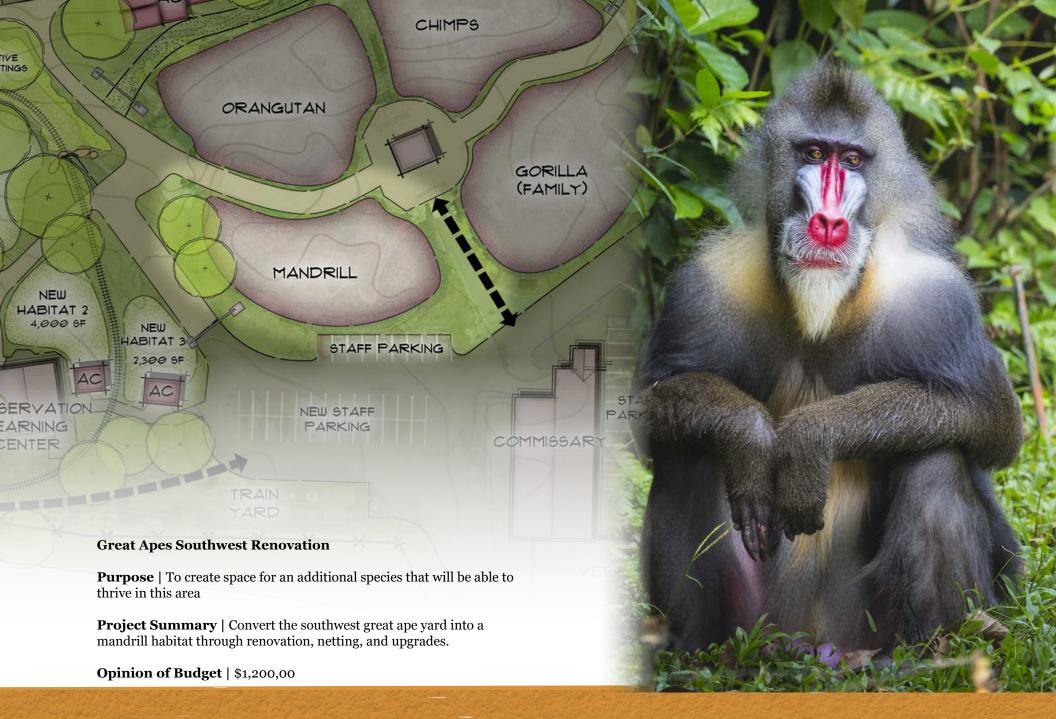


**Purpose** | Energize the grasses and plains area which currently has some empty or underutilized areas, and create better animal care and welfare for a number of species the Zoo is committed to caring for

**Project Summary** | Create over 10,000 square feet of new animal space for species like porcupines, tortoises and more. These can be interchangeable spaces allowing flexibility and variation for guest experience and animal welfare. Expand the rhino yard to create more holding space to support the successful breeding of this SSP species. Cheetah outpost would receive some interior updates and a new viewing deck to prepare for the removal of the old walkway.

Opinion of Budget | \$1,700,000









**Purpose** | To bring energy and revive this beautiful historic structure into a functional and iconic experience within the Zoo

**Project Summary** | The exterior archway portion of the building would be restored to create an indoor/outdoor beer garden and event venue in the short-term. The aviary component and some adjacent rooms will be converted into an aquarium and touch tank area. In the short-term, reptiles will remain here, while the long-term plan would convert the space into a beautiful, historic large event venue.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$6,000,000

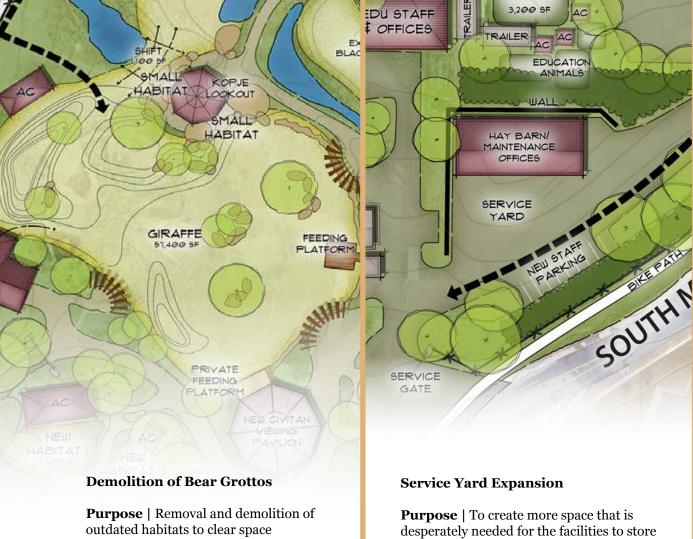












for future Africa savanna expansion

**Project Summary** | Demolish and level land for future development. Create pollinator gardens or restore prairie areas until ready for Africa expansion.

Opinion of Budget | \$204,000

and operate to maintain the Zoo's campus

**Project Summary** | This expansion will create a new protected service road, add a new hay barn, provide additional staff parking, and create space for compact composting.

Opinion of Budget | \$106,000



MISTING

WATER

Project Summary | Remove old caging and expand the deck, adding modern safety railings and roll-up doors to create a great view into the elephant habitat.

Opinion of Budget | \$1,000,000













forests and to create ample breeding space for Sloth Bear as one of the dedicated SSP species of the Little Rock Zoo

**Project Summary** | This would be a highlight project for the Little Rock Zoo. It would remove the old overlook boardwalk, create new forest Sloth Bear habitats, new animal care buildings and habitats for primates, forest-dwelling hoofed animals, and a jungle café. This would be the first phase of this expanded habitat zone.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$9,500,000

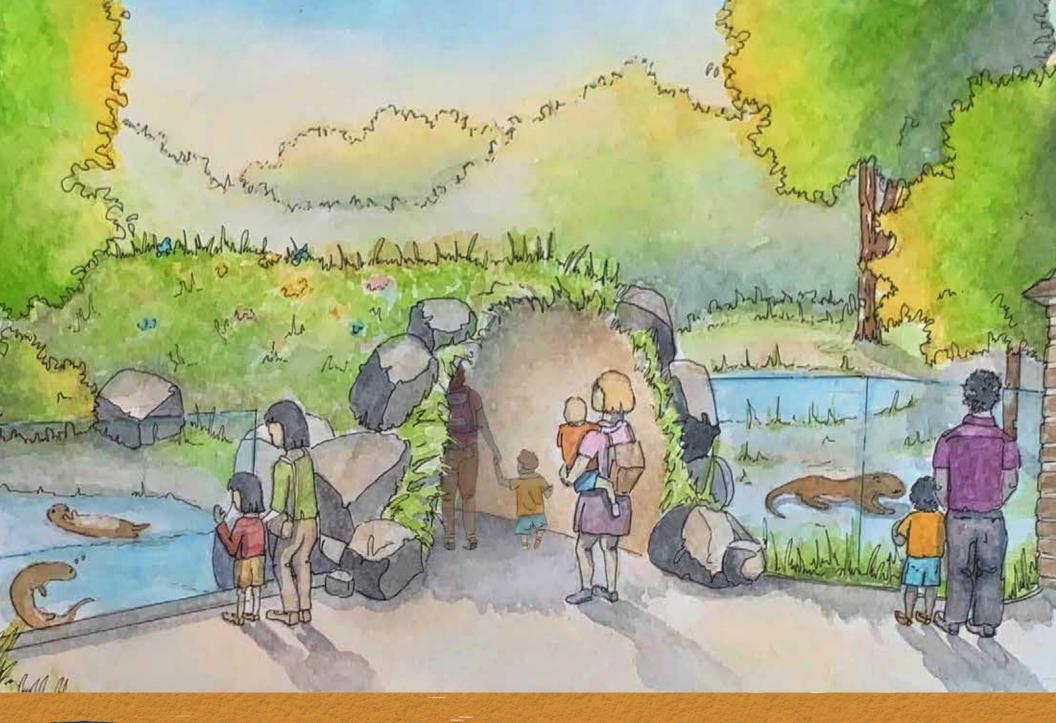




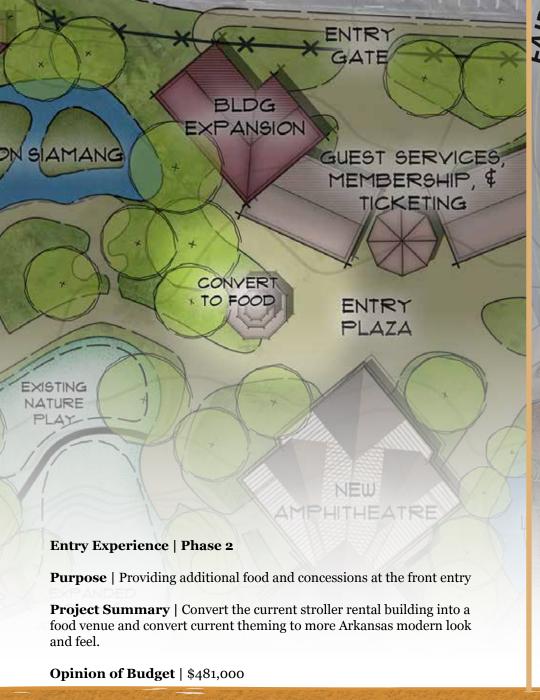














conpostable animal and human waste.

Opinion of Budget | \$313,000









**Purpose** | Giraffe are one of the most fascinating and amazing species and they provide the opportunity for up-close, eye-to-eye experiences with guests to develop love and empathy for animals. The Grasses and Plains habitat would be a world class facility for Giraffe and a variety of other species.

**Project Summary** | Guests would approach this expansive savanna habitat and be able to look through the trees and rocks to see Giraffe, Gazelles, Antelope and a variety of other species. A new Giraffe barn would allow guests to see all the world-class animal care provided for these animals as well as views of the animals during the winter. Multiple feeding areas allow guests and private event parties in the Civitan Pavilion to have the chance to feed a Giraffe. The current Veldt habitat would expand over the water way and allow smaller Antelope, Zebra, and Gazelles to gross and choose which part of the habitat they would like to be in while restricting Giraffe from going into the existing Veldt area. This also gives us the chance to divide the habitat if needed. Additional smaller habitats and a Kopje Rock outlook would create an intimate nestled in setting to explore other animals one might find in the grasslands of Africa. This would expand and improve the current Lion habitat and create a new Caracal habitat near the Cheetah outpost.

Opinion of Budget | \$22,500,000









**Purpose** | Education is one of the key components of the Little Rock Zoo's mission and vision. Expanded space and more functional space would improve efficiency and safety.

**Project Summary** | Expanding and paving a parking lot for bus parking and expanded weekend public parking. New access to Zoo Drive and South Monroe Street to improve access and safety. A new education entrance would keep large school groups off the main Zoo Drive road.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$1,400,000





**Purpose** | As the Zoo grows, guests continue to need more basic amenities.

**Project Summary** | A new restroom building easily accessible from the entrance and the education and picnic areas. Improved picnic areas with controlled access to Zoo Drive and the education area. Upgrades and exterior ticketing to the Carousel allow for park guests to come and just ride the Carousel.

Opinion of Budget | \$1,200,000





storage access and deliveries.

Opinion of Budget | \$1,300,000









**Purpose** | To honor and invite people to better understand the Osage Tribe's relationship to this land and the animals that they would have lived with. We want native Arkansans to realize how amazing our local Arkansas animals are.

**Project Summary** | Expanding on the otter habitat, this would add three additional native Arkansas habitats. The intention is that each of these habitats would be flexible in design, allowing variation in which species call this area home. Guests could find species like Bobcats, Grey or Red Foxes, Flying Squirrels, Opossums, Racoons, Armadillos, Skunks, Turtles, Geckos, a variety of Song Birds, Shore Birds, Fish, Snakes, Lizards, and more. The stories told in this area will be told from the perspective of the Osage Tribe and the relevance and importance of the animals their communities respected, cared for, and relied on.

 $\textbf{Opinion of Budget} \mid \$9,\!600,\!000^*$ 

\*estimated at a 10 year inflation factor





**Purpose** | The forests and jungles represent some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems on the planet. The Little Rock Zoo has fantastic, dense forested areas on its site. Utilizing the natural tree cover and topography of this area, we are able to expand this immersive experience deep into the "forest" habitats.

**Project Summary** | Expanding beyond the Sloth Bear habitat, guests will wander through the forest and down toward the forest floor as they look back up to see primates in the trees, Peccaries, Maned Wolves, and Okapi searching the forest floor. A new reptile and amphibian building allows people to see the many smaller animals that call the forest home. This indoor conditioned space creates a cool place to hang out in the heat of summer. A new canopy experience off the cheetah outpost gives people the chance to be up in the trees and experience a totally different view of the world. As guests finish their journey through the forest, they will get to see an improved Jaguar habitat, one of the worlds more fierce forest carnivores. This project would also include new primate animal care buildings with indoor viewing for winter season guests.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$26,000,000





**Purpose** | Wetlands and meadows are critical ecosystems that are responsible for filtering and cleaning fresh water and creating homes for a tremendous number of plants and animals. This area will activate the water retention ponds and create a highly immersive wetland and meadow habitat. It will also give us the opportunity to re-activate the train experience.

**Project Summary** | This expansive new habitat would invite guests into this water-filled world. The most dynamic way to experience this area is from the train. The train would head around the farm, see unique views into otter and head across the water on a trestle where you have great views into a new habitat which could be a species like flamingo or alligator. The tracks continue as they pass another new habitat and head into the bear tunnel. In the tunnel, the train would stop and one of a series of experiences would start. One experience would be hearing and feeling bats pass you as your journey through their cave-home (only simulated bats) as you learn about the critical role bats play in Arkansas. A second experience would be all about bear hibernation. A third experience is all about the life that lives underground as you can see tree roots, insects, and all sorts of critters crawling on the walls of the cave. And guests might even get lucky and catch a glimpse of bigfoot running-through the cave. The train would continue on its way around additional new habitats, across the water again on a large trestle bridge and finally back to the train station.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$22,000,000







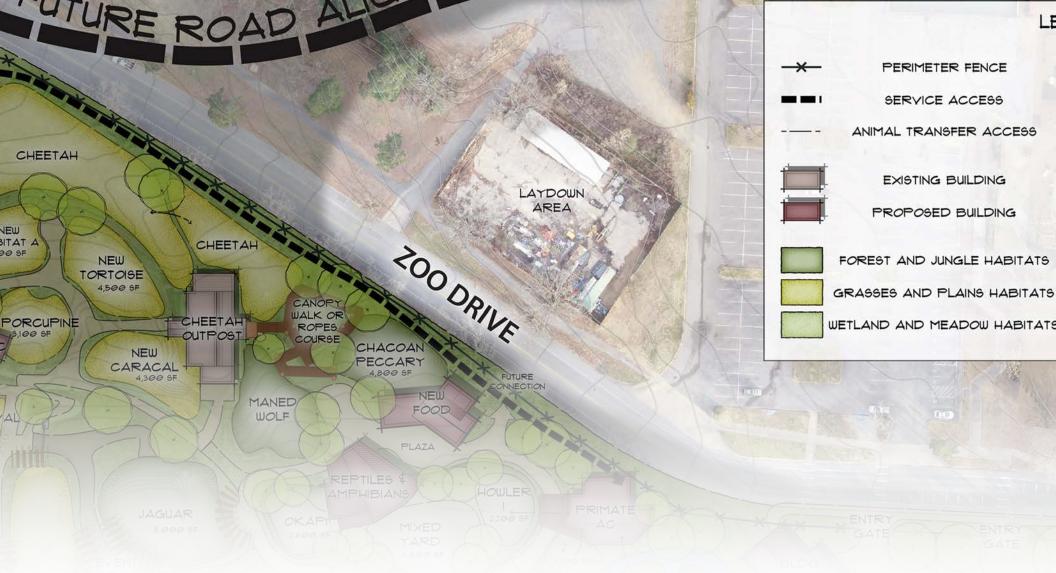


**Purpose** | To expand capacity for the Little Rock Zoo to engage in educational programming for all ages

**Project Summary** | New classroom buildings, staff spaces, meeting rooms, and storage would be added to enhance the educational work of the Zoo. Outdoor classrooms and new education animal homes would bring this space to life for kids and education program groups.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$3,400,000





**Purpose** | To remove the current laydown area and create space for long-term expansion of the Jungles & Forests zone as Zoo Drive is rerouted to the North.

**Project Summary** | With expanded service in key parts of the Zoo, this space can be cleared and prepared for future use, included additional parking or habitat additions.

**Opinion of Budget** | \$258,000



#### **Existing Conditions Site Plan**

An existing conditions assessment was completed with expertise from the Zoo's staff and facility team and GLMV's experience with animal habitats. The site plan on the adjacent page identifies areas and buildings in need of immediate attention (red and orange) and facilities that could or should remain.

#### **Expansion Outside the Zoo's Perimeter**

Our initial findings indicated that roughly 1/3 of the current zoo's campus is in need of or available for redevelopment. There is also an opportunity to consider expansion of the Zoo into the three golf-course holes to the north of the Zoo in the park. This creates an opportunity for more synergy between the park, the stadium, and the Zoo. There are opportunities to expand parking, create new entrance plazas, increase public safety due to high traffic flow and increase public utilization of this area. We'd recommend additional study of these areas and opportunities.

For future growth of the Zoo, we recommend creating an expanded entrance plaza to the north of the Zoo's current entrance when the road is rerouted as shown in this plan. A new entrance plaza will eliminate the public safety issues due to high-traffic volumes as children and visitors cross the road to access the Zoo. This new plaza should also serve as an entrance to the current pool facility.

The rerouting of the road creates additional space where the future Forest Habitat could be expanded to create more space for species like Sloth Bears, Okapi, forest primates, and more.

GLMV does not recommend utilizing areas 5 and 8 below for expanded animal areas. The complications to extend the appropriate care for exotic animals in the space are significant and include creating and maintaining a perimeter fence and security around this area; moving staff, guests and animals over the new roadway; and providing premier animal care and welfare for animals nestled between the stadium and the park as high public traffic areas.

#### Water Retention Study and Findings

A water runoff study was completed by PMI. The findings of this study indicate that the amount of rainwater retention within the current retention pond is greater than what is needed. These findings allow us to fill in or alter the size and shape of this retention pond. GLMV recommends utilizing this water feature but making substantial improvements to the quality of the water and the guest experience adjacent to it.

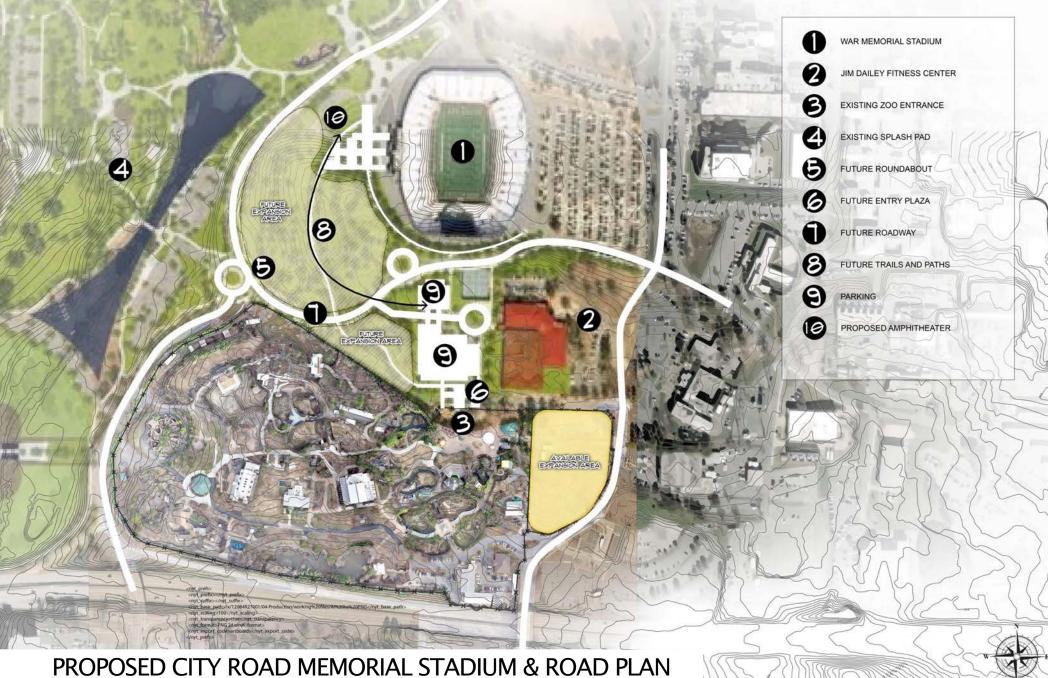
#### **Works Progress Administration Structures**

The Zoo has a variety of beautiful, historic WPA structures on site. This Master Plan has taken these into consideration and is striving to renovate and restore these buildings to retain this historic beauty and value, as well as advance the future of the Zoo and its mission and vision. The primary WPA building, the historic Aviary, will be a focus of renovation and revival for this Master Plan and the Little Rock Community.

















#### **Exterior & Interior Service Access**

Guest pathways and circulation as well as service access are a significant challenge. The map above shows the number of decision points guests have to make (in orange) and the limited behind-the-scenes service access. The Master Plan is looking to streamline guest circulation; reducing the amount of decision nodes; and creating defined, looped experiences. This will help the experience feel more immersive and it will increase stay time for visitors. The Master Plan will also look to remove unnecessary guest pathways and create protected service access, allowing staff carts to move freely without impeding the visitor experience.



#### 1. A feasible, compelling future site plan for 20 years from now

- Anticipated funding of \$40-50 million between 2023-2033
- Funding will be a combination of public and private

#### 2. Must address space for critically endangered species | Red wolves, sloth bears, collared lizards

#### 3. Sustainability Goals

- Strive to reach LEED Certification with future buildings
- Include as many green initiatives as possible | Green roofs, solar, water reclamation
- Johnson Controls, HVAC systems
- Xeroscaping & pollinator-friendly plantings

#### 4. Revenue Generation

- More animal interaction areas
- Animal Training opportunities
- Guest Amenities | Climbing structures, ferris wheel, zip line, animal feeding, touch tank, traveling exhibition space
- Manage increased attendance
- Rental spaces | 200-250 people
- Conditioned spaces
- Improve per caps
- Improve and maintain carousel by adding a building to protect it.
- 5. Determine the best use of the additional three golf course holes.
- 6. Increase respect for and collaboration with the Osage Tribe & Quapaw Nation.



## <u>New</u> Habitats

- Giraffe
- North America | Red wolves & Razorbacks
  - Sloth Bear
    - Otter

## <u>Slated</u> Removal

- Spider Monkeys
  - Small Carnivores
- Lorikeet Landing
  - Bears

## <u>Guest</u> Experience

- Entry Solutions
- Nature Play | Water Feature
- Sound Barrier
  - Theming

#### Internal

- Veterinary Hospital
- Compost  $\mid$  Storage
- Education Space
- Service Area Expansion

## Reimagining Opportunity

- Event Venues
- Birds | Reptiles
  - Elephants

# HIGHEST PRIORITIES

# MEDIUM PRIORITIES

#### Internal

- Carousel Studio
- Maintenance Storage | Workshop
  - Special Event Storage
  - Hay | Train Barns

## New Habitats

- Birds | Reptiles into Mixed Species Habitat
  - Small Carnivores
- Rhino Expansion

## Vehicular

- Paved Parking
- Road to the North
- Employee Parking
  - Bus Entrance

## <u>Guest</u> Experience

- Views into Holdings
- Carousel Enclosure
- Rotational Exhibits
- Landscaping Plan
- Circulation Plan

## Sustainability

- WPA Structure Reuse
- EV Charging
- Grey Water
  - Solar

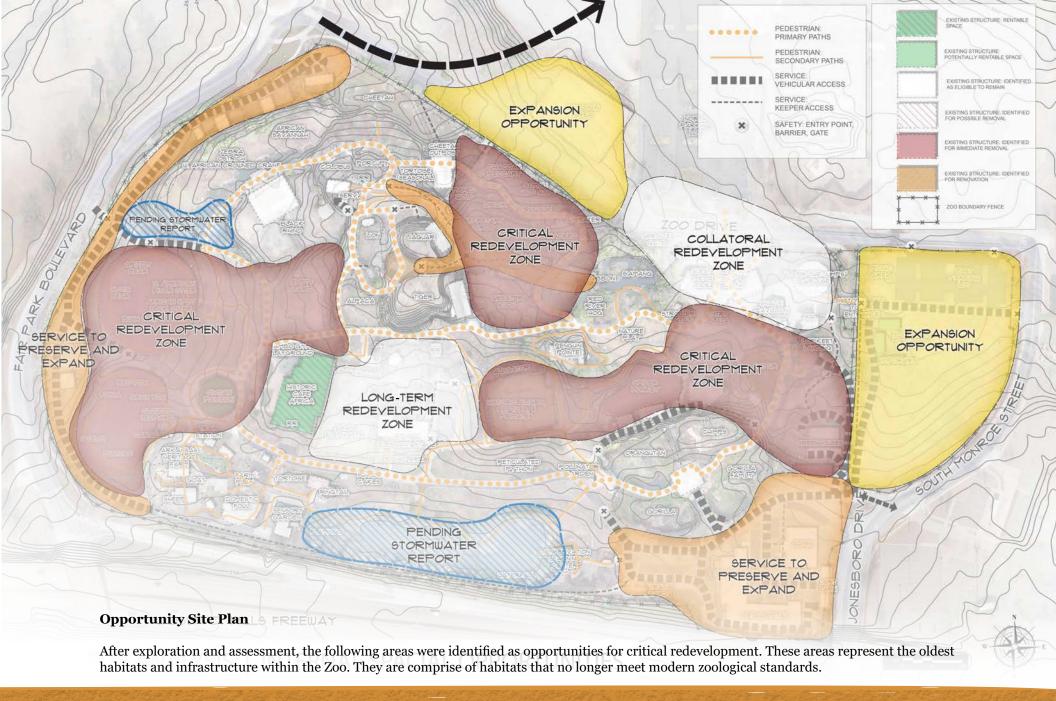
## Reimagining Opportunity

- Mushroom
- The Tunnels
- Pavilion

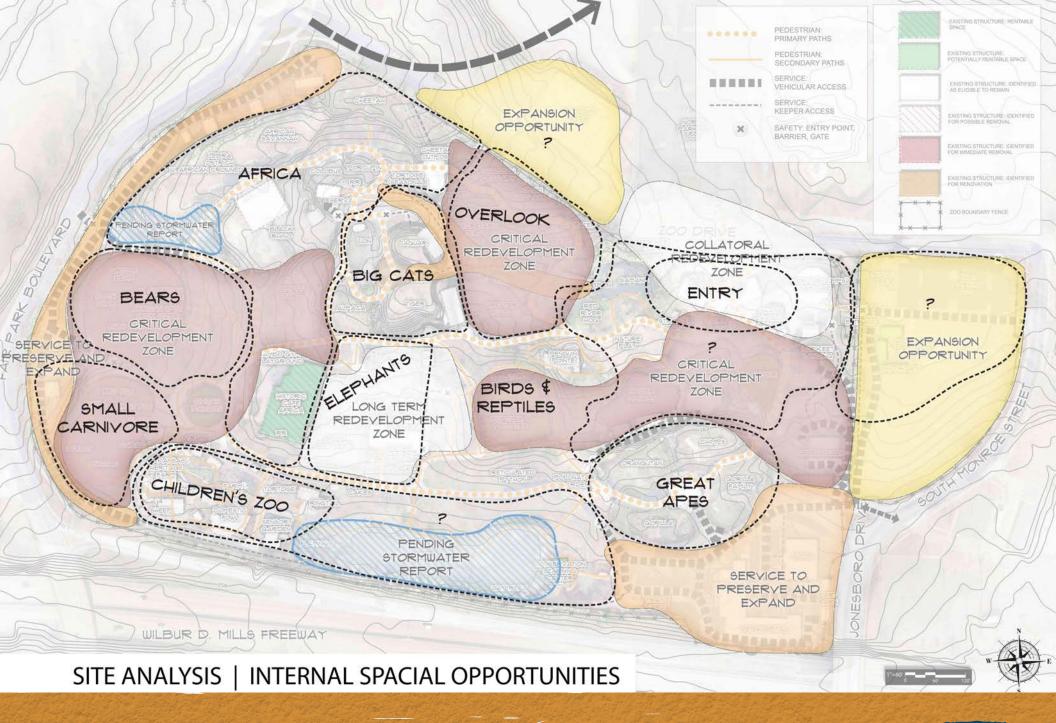
## **Amenities**

- Upgraded Cafe | Patio & Overlook
- Increase Restroom Space
  - Food | Retail Carts















## **Successful Implementation of A Master Plan**

Implementation of a Master Plan starts with a series of intentional steps your team and leadership can take right now.

The Little Rock Zoo needs to set and establish benchmarks and goals on a 0–10-year timetable. To be successful in this Master Plan implementation, there should be overlap between concept design, fundraising and construction to a degree. The Little Rock Zoo and the City will need to decide what percentage of the funds would need to be raised before the Zoo contracts out construction documents. The Little Rock Zoo should determine at what percentage of fundraising being completed they would be comfortable beginning construction.

The Little Rock Zoo Executive/Senior Team should plan to pull out and revisit the Master Plan at least twice a year if not quarterly to evaluate progress of the Plan.

The Zoo's staff should print out and hang up copies of the Master Plan near meeting rooms, offices, and anywhere else the staff will regularly see it.

The Zoo should consider posting the final approved Master Plan somewhere near the front of the Zoo for guests to see and potentially even vote on. A QR code could be added that lets people tell the City they want to see this be the future of the Zoo.

Have the Zoo's staff and board meet with as many interest groups around Little Rock as possible. Campaign everywhere you'll be allowed to.

Plan on press and media releases. If you can establish regular meetings or opportunities to be on local media channels, take them. Always bring an animal on camera if possible.



## **Opinion of Probable Budget Summary**

All opinions of budget identified in this Master Plan are based off of square footage estimates and comparable projects being completed in other zoological facilities within the United States. These are rough order of magnitude budgets and should not be considered cost estimates. These Master Plan concepts are intended to be the starting point for concept designs, recognizing that if the scope, scale, or complexity of the project increases during concept design, the probable budget will increase as well. These numbers are considered all-in figures, attempting to include construction cost and soft costs. Based on the phase and number of years into the future, an inflation multiplier has been added. Unprecedented inflation in 2021-22 has made it difficult to anticipate the annual inflation rates for materials and labor. What's shown here is the best estimate based on GLMV's in-house cost estimating team's experience.

Phase 1	Budgeting Totals	Amount from 2023 Inflation (included in totals)	Phase 3	Budgeting Totals	Amount from 2027 Inflation (included in totals)
Entry Experience	\$ 7,935,777	\$ 2,104,077	Entry Experience	\$ 1,198,044	\$ 489,820
Grasses & Plains	\$ 1,662,353	\$ 440,753	Grasses & Plains	\$ 22,469,868	\$ 9,186,793
Great Apes	\$ 1,518,166	\$ 318,166	Education	\$ 1,337,054	\$ 546,654
Cafe Africa	\$ 1,265,138	\$ 265,138	Service	\$ 1,239,024	\$ 506,574
Demolition	\$ 204,120	\$ 54,120			
Service	\$ 105,816	\$ 28,056	Opinion of Probable Budget	\$ 26,243,991	\$ 10,729,841
Opinion of Probable Budget	\$ 9,947,530	\$ 2,637,470			
Phase 2	Budgeting Totals	Amount from 2025 Inflation (included in totals)	Phase 4	Budgeting Totals	Amount from 2033 Inflation (included in totals)
Entry Experience	\$ 480,545	\$ 168,545	Entry Experience	\$ 2,709,715	\$ 1,383,715
Great Apes	\$ 160,182	\$ 56,182	Forests & Jungles	\$ 25,603,554	\$ 12,165,844
Forests & Jungles	\$ 9,463,673	\$ 3,319,260	Native Arkansas	\$ 9,537,134	\$ 4,870,134
Native Arkansas	\$ 7,168,127	\$ 2,514,127	Elephant Expansion	\$377,662	\$127,662
Service	\$ 312,354	\$ 109,554	Education	\$ 3,389,800	\$ 1,731,000
			Wetlands & Meadows	\$ 21,856,860	\$ 11,161,198
Opinion of Probable Budget	<b>\$ 17,584,881</b>	\$ 6,167,668	WPA Building Demolition	\$ 410,516 \$ 257,484	\$ 209,630 \$ 131,484
			Demontion	Ψ 40/,404	Ψ 131,404
			Opinion of Probable Budget	\$ 63,765,053	\$ 31,653,005

