



The Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum enlivens New Bedford's history, engages our communities, and enriches cultural understanding through stewardship, education, and entertainment.

2021 – 2026 Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Following a planning process that began in November of 2020 and concluded in August of 2021 with a unanimous board vote to approve it, the RJD Strategic Plan was launched. The process included input from stakeholders (interviews, and digital survey); an examination and rewriting of the mission and vision, and the establishment of four goals. Overall, the 21st Century mission established by this strategic planning process is to preserve the house and gardens, contribute to the telling of the history of New Bedford, serve the community, and bring people together for shared experiences. Today, the Strategic Plan serves to guide board and staff in major initiatives, as well as outlining specific objectives, resources needed, and a timeline for achievements.

Goal One of the Plan is to leverage the site's history to develop new programs highlighting ethics, racial justice, domestic life, and horticulture. This goal is part of the foundation of the plan since it focuses on how we engage with our audiences. Collections that are interpreted with diverse audiences in mind, and which develop from best practices, audience research and community input, are more likely to be appealing to those audiences. This goal will serve our vision of the Museum as a vibrant hive of community, cultural, educational and social activities. Newly developed exhibitions, collections interpretation, and educational programming will result in a museum that represents more diverse histories, voices and perspectives. That relevancy is an essential component to sustainability.

Goal Two of the Plan focuses on enhancing and unifying the visitor's experience of Abolition Row. The neighborhood around the RJD has great historical and cultural significance. With the creation of Abolition Row Park and Historic District along Seventh Street, the RJD is now in a unique position to anchor this area. Through the establishment of partnerships, the development of programming, and "outside the fence" beautification efforts, the RJD can be such an anchor. The history of the RJD families, William Rotch's in particular, contributes to the narrative of Abolition in this city. Adding everything from better signage to planters on Seventh Street makes for a better pedestrian experience of the district. The improvements, together with supplemental programming on the topic of Abolition, will help RJD contribute beyond our walls to the vibrancy of a neighborhood and the city as a whole.

Sustainable financial strength is necessary to achieve the ambitious goals in this Plan, and therefore, Goal Three is committed to an assessment of the current financial capacity and

opportunities, as well as implementation of identified opportunities. A significant aspect of this strategy is the emphasis on the ability to sustain this financial development over time. Assuming a sustainable growth mindset, this goal addresses new initiatives such as a business plan for a seasonal café, the prospect of a property acquisition on 7th Street, and a capital campaign during the 40th anniversary of the RJD.

Goal Four of the Plan commits the leadership of RJD to building capacity as a diverse and inclusive organization. RJD seeks to represent diverse histories, voices, and perspectives, and become a vibrant hive of community cultural, education, and social activities. To be successful, the RJD must grow our capacity as a diverse and inclusive organization. The first objective is to create the infrastructure necessary to support diversity and inclusion work. As the RJD leadership looks to be more inclusive, we must address operations that are both inward and outward facing. To get more and different folks involved with the museum we must build and maintain a pipeline that will lead them to events, programs, membership and ultimately becoming a donor. Maximizing the use of social media and digital tools will also assist in reaching a wider and more diverse audience. By embracing these tactics and others, the RJD will move forward in a meaningful way in creating an environment that is welcoming to all.

The 2020-21 Strategic Planning Committee: Stewart Young (Board President), Dawn Salerno (Executive Director), Nat Brayton (trustee), Janet Coquillette (Ex Officio trustee as Garden Club of Buzzards Bay president), Jan Da Silva (community member), Kreg Espinola (trustee), and Natalie Mello (Board Vice-President).

Planning Consultant: Empower Success Corps team, Bill Huss (Lead Consultant), Anne Brazao, David Ellis, and Carol Parker.