



AGENDA

JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

May 12, 2026

THE ERNIE PADGETT BOARD ROOM

11:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

I. REPORTS AND REQUESTS

1. Request: Board approval of Museum Business Plan and Immediate Short-Term Goals
- Kelsi Jackson, TDC Director



AGENDA ITEM # 562026-506
AGENDA DATE: 5/12/2026

TO: The Honorable Chairperson and
Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kelsi Jackson, Jackson County Tourist Development Council

SUBJECT: Request: Board approval of Museum Business Plan and
Immediate Short-Term Goals - Kelsi Jackson, TDC Director

Background: BOCC will be provided a presentation going over the Museum
Business Plan and recommended immediate short term goals.

Strategic Plan Goal: Vibrant & Growing Economy
Innovative Facilities & Infrastructure

Previous Action:

**Amount of Funds to Be
Expended or Requested:**

Source of Funds:

Originating Office: Jackson County Tourist Development Council

Reviewed By: Kelsi Jackson
Jennifer Collins
Lynsey Darragh
Jim Dean

Recommendation: Accept

Potential Motion: I move to adopt the museum business plan and short term goals and
authorize the Chairman to sign.

Immediate Short-Term Goals for BOCC Review

Following the completion of the museum workshop series and draft business plan, the following immediate short-term goals are recommended for BOCC approval to move the project forward practically and visibly. These actions will demonstrate progress to the community, capture important stories and artifacts before they are lost, and strengthen future grant and fundraising efforts.

1. Develop an Exhibit & Community Awareness Plan

- Conduct outreach to municipalities, schools, churches, and organizations
- Host “Collection Days” at public spaces to gather photos, artifacts, and stories
- Partner with Jackson County School District to support student-led oral history projects
- Conduct focused outreach related to Dozier, including White House Boys, individuals with varied experiences, and former staff or families
- Continue to build online presence to share updates and allow public participation

2. Begin Tier 1 Memorial Park Improvements & Preliminary Planning

- Clear basic walking trail paths and install simple wayfinding signage
- Complete light landscaping and site cleanup
- Identify locations and themes for future interpretive signage
- Outline initial exhibit priorities within the museum
- Map trail connections between the museum and White House Monument

3. Establish Collections Storage & Intake Process

- Identify a secure, climate-appropriate temporary storage location for donated items
- Develop a basic intake and tracking process for artifacts and materials
- Prioritize collection of time-sensitive items from donors
- Coordinate with staff or partners to manage and organize incoming items

4. Build a Grant & Fundraising Plan

- Create a grant calendar aligned with project phases
- Match funding opportunities to exhibits, trails, and accessibility needs
- Identify donor, sponsor, and naming opportunities
- Prepare basic materials for future grant applications

Requested BOCC Action

Approve and adopt these immediate next steps as the County’s short-term priorities for the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park.



Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park Business Plan

Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

Draft - April 2026

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1. Executive Summary

The Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is a forward-looking initiative designed to honor the past, engage the present, and create a meaningful cultural asset for the future. Led by the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners and the Jackson County Tourist Development Council, this project will transform the former Dozier School for Boys campus into a place of education, reflection, and community connection.

The Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys operated in Marianna from 1900 until its closure in 2011. Over time, the site became the subject of statewide and national attention due to reports and investigations into its history. While many aspects of that history have long been known within the local community, the renewed attention has created an opportunity for Jackson County to take a proactive role in shaping how the full story is preserved, understood, and shared. This project seeks to provide thoughtful context—acknowledging the complexities of the past while ensuring the broader history of Jackson County is also represented.

Following the transfer of the property to Jackson County, and in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018, the County began re-envisioning the site as a place of opportunity and growth. Today, Endeavor Park is emerging as a hub for economic development and community services, including the Endeavor Convention Center, NextStep at Endeavor Academy, and residential and rehabilitation programs that serve diverse community needs.

At the heart of this transformation is the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park. The museum, located in the historic cafeteria building, will feature exhibits highlighting the people, places, and defining moments of Jackson County's history. Surrounding the museum, the memorial park will provide outdoor spaces for reflection, including walking trails, interpretive signage, and connections to the existing White House Monument.

In partnership with Emancipation Day of Northwest Florida, plans are also proposed for an adjacent Emancipation History Museum. Together, these efforts will create a more comprehensive and inclusive cultural destination, offering multiple perspectives that contribute to a deeper understanding of the region's history.

This business plan outlines a phased and financially responsible approach to development, emphasizing grant funding, community partnerships, and long-term sustainability. Through this initiative, Jackson County has the opportunity to create a destination that supports tourism, strengthens community identity, and ensures that the stories of this place are preserved with context, care, and purpose.

2. Museum Overview and Acknowledgements

The Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will serve as a cornerstone of cultural and historical preservation in Marianna, Florida. By integrating an indoor museum, outdoor memorial park, and community gathering spaces, the project is designed to offer a well-rounded visitor experience that connects people to the history, heritage, and natural resources of Jackson County.

The museum will feature a range of exhibits focused on five core themes: ecological history, agriculture, the Dozier School for Boys, military history, and significant people and places that have shaped the county. These exhibits will combine artifacts, storytelling, and interactive elements to create an engaging and educational environment for visitors of all ages. The Children's Discovery Center and flexible programming spaces will further support family engagement, school partnerships, and community use.

The surrounding memorial park will extend the visitor experience beyond the walls of the museum, offering walking trails, interpretive signage, and spaces for reflection that connect key locations across the historic campus. Together, the museum and park will create a destination that encourages exploration, learning, and meaningful engagement with the site.

This plan is the result of a comprehensive, community-driven process rooted in collaboration and public input. Jackson County hosted a series of workshops across all five districts, providing opportunities for residents, stakeholders, and partner organizations to share their perspectives, stories, and ideas. Additional input was gathered through exhibit applications, stakeholder meetings, and ongoing coordination with local leaders, educators, historians, and nonprofit partners. This process has helped ensure that the museum reflects the voices, values, and vision of the community it serves.

The following individuals, organizations, and partners played an important role in the development of this project and plan:

Jackson County Board of County Commissioners, Past and Present

Dr. Willie Spires, District 1	Alex McKinnie, District 1
Edward Crutchfield, District 2	Clint Pate, District 2
Paul Donofro Jr., District 3	Eric Hill, District 3
Donnie Branch, District 4	Jim Peacock, District 5
Jamey Westbrook, District 5	

Jackson County Tourist Development Council, Past and Present

Allen Ward	Kelly Ziglar
Edd Sorenson	Tracy Hagan
Kerrie Brogdon	Jason Johnson
Kerri Eaton	Mark Panichella
Sami Almaswarmi	Eric Pratt
Phil Spyckaober	Mystie Richards

Jacob Strickland
Linda Wilson
Commissioner Clint Pate
Commissioner Jim Peacock
Commissioner Paul Donofro
Travis Ephriam
Arthur Obar

Chuck McIntosh
Salina O'Brien
Kenneth Hamilton
Garrett Caudill
Charlene Trickey Durham
Kay Shepard
Jay Player

Museum Steering Committee, Past and Present

Lillie Clark
Maria Johnson
Travis Blanton
Paul Smith
John Hamilton
Travis Ephriam
Linda Franklin
Jacob Strickland
Pat Crisp
Jim Dean
Commissioner Pate
Kenny Griffin

Leon Kelly
Tori Willis
Debbie Dennis
Kallie Smith
Hunter Potts
Byron Dickens
Tammy Dasher
Ronda Burke
Ann Marie Shelton
Kimberly Walters
Michael Murray
Melissa Myers

Project Leadership and Staff, Past and Present

Christy Andreasen, TDC
Dylan Bass, TDC
Daniel Darbyshire, TDC
Kelsi Jackson, TDC
Chastity Sheffield, TDC
Brian Walker, TDC
Wilanne Daniels, BOCC

Karlyn Tidwell, BOCC
Rett Daniels, BOCC
Hunter Potts, BOCC
Sarah Sun, BOCC
Lynsey Darragh, BOCC
Lucas Mayo, BOCC
Jim Dean, BOCC

Local Governments, Community Partners, and Organizations

City of Marianna
Town of Sneads
Town of Alford
Town of Bascom
Town of Campbellton
Emancipation Day Festival of NWFL
Chipola Historical Trust
Jackson County Republican Club
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 100
Chipola Regional Arts Association

Two Egg TV / Dale Cox
Jackson County School District
Main Street Marianna
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
Jackson County Economic Development
Committee
NextStep at Endeavor Academy
Jackson County Rotary Club
Jackson County Joy Club
Marianna Woman's Club

Community Workshop Participants

Judy Stanton	Mark Skinner
Bill Stanton	Kenny Griffin
Robert Daffin	Roy Johnson
Rhonda Dykes	Mark Johnson
Kelsi Jackson	Nadine Standland
Chastity Sheffield	Michelle Porter
Leon Kelly	Roger Clay
Melissa Myers	Chalullah Clay
Kim Walters	Betty James
Commissioner Dr. Willie Spires	John Alter
Commissioner Paul Donofro	Billy James
Jim Dean	Elizabeth Alter
Kay Shepard	Mary Pettis
Samantha Angersbrandt	Rick Pettis
Byron Dickens	Shelley Murray
Tammy Billups	Michael Murray
Kallie Smith	Leontyne Clay
Peyton Gay	Annie Porter
George Gay	Curley Spires Porter
Ronda Burke	D. Scott Yant

3. Mission and Vision

Mission: Our mission is to preserve, interpret, and celebrate the rich history, cultural heritage, and natural wonders of Jackson County, Florida. Through engaging exhibits, immersive educational programs, and meaningful partnerships, we honor the past, connect with the present, and inspire future generations.

Vision: Our vision is to be a leading cultural and historical destination, where the diverse stories and heritage of Jackson County come to life. We strive to honor our roots, preserve vital histories—including the complex history of the former Dozier School for Boys—and inspire future generations to cherish and contribute to the shared legacy of our community.

4. Historical Significance

The Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys operated from 1900 until its closure in 2011 and has since been the subject of significant state and national attention. Investigations and historical accounts have brought increased awareness to the experiences of those who lived there, including reports of mistreatment and the discovery of unmarked graves on-site. This project seeks to provide a space for reflection and remembrance while contributing to a broader understanding of both the site's history and the wider story of Jackson County.

5. Keys to Success

- **Community Engagement:** Actively involve residents and stakeholders in the museum's development and programming.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Develop diverse revenue streams, including grants, donations, and earned income.
- **Educational Partnerships:** Collaborate with schools, universities, and advocacy groups to create meaningful programming.
- **Visitor-Centered Design:** Prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, and innovative visitor experiences.

6. Market Opportunity

Tourism

Jackson County, Florida is a small, rural destination located in the Panhandle, uniquely positioned within driving distance of several major Southeastern travel markets and high-traffic tourism hubs. The county sits along primary north-south corridors used by travelers heading to and from Central and South Florida destinations like Walt Disney World and Legoland, and it is proximate to highly popular destinations such as Panama City Beach, 30A, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Pensacola, Fort Walton-Destin, Apalachicola, Port St. Joe, and Dothan, Alabama. For travelers coming from Atlanta, Birmingham, Dallas-Fort Worth, Nashville, and other major Southern cities, Jackson County serves as a natural and accessible stopover — and increasingly, a destination in its own right.

Jackson County's current tourism brand centers around its exceptional outdoor assets. Known for its natural beauty, the area is home to Florida Caverns State Park — one of the state's only publicly accessible dry cave systems — as well as Jackson Blue Springs, the Chipola River, Lake Seminole, and extensive hiking, paddling, and fishing opportunities. However, the local tourism offering is heavily skewed toward outdoor experiences, with few indoor options available, particularly for families or groups during inclement weather. Given Florida's frequent summer rainstorms, heat advisories, and red flag beach days, this lack of all-weather attractions creates a missed opportunity to capture visitor traffic from neighboring beach destinations seeking alternative experiences.

The Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will help fill this gap in the market by providing a meaningful, engaging indoor experience for heritage travelers, families, and day-trippers alike. Its development represents an important diversification of the county's tourism portfolio, supporting longer visitor stays, greater year-round resilience, and broader appeal.

Target Markets

- Local residents seeking a deeper understanding of their community's history.
- Domestic tourists interested in Florida's historical and cultural narratives.
- School groups and educational institutions.
- Advocacy organizations and survivor networks.
- Interstate travelers looking for a convenient cultural stopover.

Dozier Memorial Park

The Dozier School for Boys has garnered significant national attention due to its troubling history, including reports of systemic abuse and the discovery of unmarked graves on its grounds. This notoriety offers a unique opportunity to expand upon the existing Dozier Memorial at the White House monument, transforming it into a comprehensive site for reflection, education, and hope.

Plans for this expanded memorial include creating spaces that allow visitors to reflect on the past while emphasizing stories of resilience and redemption. Thoughtfully designed areas within the memorial park will invite contemplation, offering a message of healing for the community as it moves forward. The narrative of the property's transformation mirrors the journey of boys who left Dozier, highlighting themes of renewal and progress.

Marketing efforts will capitalize on this national interest, positioning the museum and memorial as a destination for those seeking to understand and learn from history. By leveraging the site's significance, the project can draw visitors from across the country, creating lasting economic and cultural benefits while honoring those impacted by the school's legacy.

In addition to its natural assets, Jackson County holds significant — though complex — cultural relevance due to the national attention surrounding the Dozier School for Boys. The institution's complex and often controversial history has been the subject of ongoing national conversation, including investigative reports, documentaries, and dramatizations such as *The Nickel Boys* (based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel), *Deadly Secrets: The Lost Children of Dozier*, and the upcoming series *Boys School*. Despite no current interpretive infrastructure, visitors familiar with the story already stop by the site, seeking reflection and connection.

The development of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park offers an opportunity to create a structured, thoughtful response to this public interest. With careful curation and community engagement, the site can become a respectful space for education, commemoration, and dialogue. Strategically naming the facility to include "Dozier Memorial Park" honors that history while also serving as a marketing mechanism — leveraging the name recognition of Dozier to draw travelers from major highways and into the underdeveloped Endeavor Park area of Marianna. This awareness will serve as an anchor attraction that can drive broader redevelopment in the area, including walking trails, future exhibit spaces, educational installations, and community gathering places.

However, any use of the Dozier name must be undertaken with sensitivity. Messaging and branding must be crafted with extreme care to ensure that the tone is respectful, historically accurate, and survivor-informed. The goal is not to commercialize the pain associated with Dozier's history, but to provide a space for healing, remembrance, and learning — and in doing so, support the economic and cultural revitalization of Jackson County.

Economic Impact

The Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is expected to generate substantial economic benefits for the local community:

- **Estimated Costs:** The construction and opening phases of the museum and memorial park are projected to cost roughly \$8-15 million. These costs include facility renovations, exhibit design, and operational setup.
- **Job Support:**
 - **Direct Jobs:** Approximately 100-200 jobs will be supported during the construction phase, including roles in construction, design, and project management.
 - **Indirect Jobs:** An additional 100-200 jobs will be supported through local suppliers, hospitality, and services during construction.
 - **Operational Jobs:** The museum is expected to support 4-10 permanent positions for curators, educators, administrative and facilities staff, and visitor services. This number will vary depending on revenue and operational growth and scale.
- **Visitor Spending:**
 - **Museum Spending:** Visitors are projected to spend an average of \$20 per visit at the museum on admissions, gift shop purchases, and donations.
 - **Local Economy:** An average visitor is expected to spend an additional \$50-100 per day on accommodations, dining, and local attractions. With an estimated 20,000 annual visitors in the first three years, this translates to \$1-2 million in additional revenue for local businesses.
- **Multiplier Effect:** The increased economic activity from visitor spending is anticipated to support local jobs, generate tax revenue, and enhance community infrastructure.

7. Visitor Experience

The Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is uniquely positioned to serve a wide variety of visitor types, each bringing a different set of expectations and benefits to the site. Our visitor audience includes local residents, regional and national heritage tourists, school groups, advocacy and survivor communities, and families traveling through the Northwest Florida region. Each of these groups plays a critical role in the success of the museum, not only by providing attendance and revenue but by helping shape the museum as a shared space for learning, reflection, and community connection.

An especially important consideration in our visitor landscape is the presence of NextStep at Endeavor Academy — a post-secondary transition program for adults with autism located nearby at Endeavor Park. This program serves neurodivergent individuals and will be a natural partner and audience for the museum. Our visitor planning will intentionally include design strategies and interpretive tools that are sensory-friendly, adaptable, and inclusive for neurodivergent guests.

Educational

Educational programming will form the backbone of the visitor experience, with engaging workshops, guided tours, and hands-on activities for diverse age groups. Special events such as guest lectures, storytelling sessions, and commemorative ceremonies will provide deeper insights into the history of Jackson County and the Dozier School for Boys.

In addition, the museum will include a dedicated Children's Discovery Center, a hands-on interactive space tailored to younger audiences. This child-friendly zone will promote curiosity and learning through tactile displays, storytelling corners, puzzles, and discovery games — and will be located adjacent to the African American Heritage Museum, creating an ideal connection point for family learning experiences.

Immersive and Interactive

The museum will use dynamic, tactile, and immersive storytelling techniques to enhance visitor engagement. This includes object-based storytelling, soundscapes, and digital screens that share survivor stories and archival content.

Hands-on artifact stations, replica documents, and participatory storytelling projects will allow visitors of all ages to interact directly with history. For neurodivergent visitors, we will offer quiet spaces, sensory toolkits, and clearly designated calm zones throughout the museum.

Additionally, outdoor elements will enhance interactivity. A sitewide interpretive trail system is envisioned, including walking paths, historical markers, shaded rest points, and integrated storytelling panels. These paths will help connect the Jackson County Museum with the White House monument, African American Heritage Museum, and future installations throughout Endeavor Park — allowing for expanded learning opportunities and longer stays.

Innovative

The museum will incorporate rotating exhibits to keep content fresh and encourage return visits. These exhibitions will cover both the history of the Dozier School and broader stories from Jackson County, including agriculture, ecological, important people or places, and military-focused history.

We will also feature community-curated exhibits that invite residents, artists, and students to contribute. Through oral histories and changing narratives, the space will remain alive and responsive to contemporary conversations. As an extension of this work, the museum can explore developing a community memory archive — a physical and digital space for preserving photos, stories, and mementos shared by the public.

Engagement and Retention Strategies

We recognize that enhancing visitor comfort and convenience leads to longer visits and increased spending. To that end, we are exploring the development of a café or small restaurant in the museum space. Located in the former cafeteria of the Dozier School, this café would not only serve visitors but help interpret the building's original function. Original cafeteria tables have been preserved, and 1–2 will be respectfully reserved as a living memorial for the boys who once sat there.

The café could partner with local food providers, offer regional specialties, and provide an additional revenue stream for the museum. With its close proximity to the White House monument, the café entrance will allow for easy visitor access and support walk-up visitation, particularly for those coming to reflect at the memorial.

To further support longer visits throughout the entire site, public-access restrooms will be incorporated into the design. These restrooms will be accessible even during times when the museum itself is closed, recognizing that visitors may come at any time to experience the outdoor components of the memorial and interpretive park.

Sitewide Experience and Destination Integration

Strategic placement within the Endeavor Park campus positions the museum alongside major new developments, including the proposed African American Heritage Museum and the County-owned Endeavor Convention Center. These assets will create a cohesive cultural corridor, connected by signage, unified branding, and coordinated programming.

Beyond the Endeavor site, the museum experience will be promoted as a complement to Jackson County's existing tourism attractions, including Florida Caverns State Park, Jackson Blue Springs, and the Chipola River. As an all-weather, indoor alternative, the museum offers a crucial asset for visitors impacted by inclement weather — a common occurrence during peak visitation months. By pairing outdoor adventure with historical and cultural learning, the museum will help increase the average length of stay in the county and support higher per-visitor spending.

8. Exhibit Development

The Jackson County Museum is committed to building a thoughtful and mission-driven collection that supports education, storytelling, and preservation. To ensure a cohesive and inclusive narrative, the Museum will collect artifacts and develop exhibits based on five core areas:

1. Ecological History – Natural resources, native species, waterways, conservation.
2. Agricultural Heritage – Farming tools, equipment, oral histories, and food systems.
3. Dozier School for Boys – Artifacts, documents, and oral histories that respectfully interpret the complex legacy of the school.
4. Military History – Service records, uniforms, photographs, and narratives of local veterans.
5. Important People and Places – Stories, memorabilia, and items related to notable individuals and landmarks in Jackson County.

Application and Review Process

To maintain integrity and alignment with the Museum's mission, artifact and exhibit submissions will follow a structured process:

1. Submission – Individuals interested in donating or loaning objects must complete the official *Exhibit Application* form, providing documentation of provenance, object history, and condition. Applications are submitted to the Executive Director.
2. Preliminary Review – The Executive Director and museum staff will perform an initial assessment of the proposed item's condition, historical significance, and relevance to the museum's collection scope.
3. Committee Review – Proposals that meet initial criteria are forwarded to the Museum Advisory Committee for further evaluation. The committee will assess historical value, condition, ethical considerations, and storage/display feasibility.
4. Approval and Accession – If approved, items may be classified as either Accessioned Acquisitions (permanent collection) or Non-Accessioned materials (for temporary or research use), in accordance with the Collections Management Policy.
5. Deed of Gift or Loan Agreement – Upon acceptance, the donor signs a legal agreement transferring ownership or outlining the terms of a temporary loan.
6. Cataloging and Care – Artifacts are documented, cataloged, and stored in accordance with conservation best practices.

Only items with clear legal title and appropriate documentation (provenance, condition reports, etc.) will be considered. All donations must align with the Museum's strategic goals and available resources for care and conservation.

Exhibit Development Strategy

Exhibit themes will be developed around the five focus areas with a rotating display strategy to keep content fresh and allow deeper exploration of Jackson County's rich history. Exhibit designs will include:

- Permanent interpretive displays tied to core focus areas.
- Traveling Exhibits sourced from external institutions or curated locally for specific themes.
- Rotating Special Exhibits updated quarterly or biannually to reflect new research, community stories, or anniversaries.
- Interactive Exhibits using QR codes, augmented reality, and multimedia stations to offer immersive experiences.

Exhibits will prioritize local history and will center narratives around the Dozier School for Boys and Jackson County's evolving identity. Programming will be built alongside exhibit development, including:

- Lecture series
- School and group tours
- Public history workshops
- Day camps and teacher resources

Through this process, the museum ensures historical integrity, broad community engagement, and stewardship of artifacts that preserve Jackson County's story for generations to come.

9. Marketing Plan

Marketing for the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will be approached through a phased strategy that evolves alongside the physical development of the site. The goal of the marketing plan is to build public awareness, generate long-term community support, promote tourism, and ensure the museum's mission is effectively communicated through every stage of its development and operation.

Phase 1: Awareness and Brand Foundation

The initial phase will focus on building awareness of the project and establishing a strong, credible brand. A dedicated website and social media presence will be created early in the process to serve as a digital hub for updates, storytelling, and stakeholder engagement. These platforms will feature key information such as the museum's vision, project timeline, fundraising campaigns, how to get involved, and public documents related to the project. A blog will serve as a storytelling tool — sharing updates, behind-the-scenes content, personal stories, and community outreach.

A cohesive visual identity will be developed during this phase, including a logo, color palette, fonts, and messaging style. These branding elements will be designed to strike a careful balance between solemnity and inspiration, reflecting the site's complex history and its forward-looking mission. The name "Dozier Memorial Park" will serve as a central feature of this identity, capitalizing on national recognition while maintaining a tone of reverence and reflection.

This phase will also include community engagement efforts to encourage input on the brand direction, including listening sessions and surveys to ensure the public feels ownership and alignment with the museum's identity.

Phase 2: Community Engagement and Content Development

With the brand and foundational platforms in place, marketing efforts will shift toward growing deeper community involvement and developing compelling content. This will include a structured call for artifacts, oral histories, photographs, and memorabilia to help build the museum's collection from the ground up.

Social media and blog content will begin to focus more on storytelling, highlighting individual narratives connected to Dozier, Jackson County's broader history, and updates on construction progress. Marketing partnerships will also be pursued with schools, civic groups, and regional museums to broaden awareness and inspire collaboration.

This phase will emphasize transparency and visibility — using digital tools, public signage, and earned media to ensure residents and stakeholders can track the project's momentum and milestones.

Phase 3: Pre-Opening and Destination Marketing

As the museum approaches opening, marketing efforts will shift toward broader promotional campaigns targeting both local audiences and regional tourists. This will include traditional advertising (print, radio, and local TV), digital media buys, search engine optimization, and paid social campaigns focused on geographic markets such as Panama City Beach, 30A, Tallahassee, Dothan, Pensacola, and I-10 corridor traffic.

Travel writers, bloggers, and influencers will be invited to preview the museum, with hosted visits and media kits designed to generate buzz. Partnership campaigns with Jackson County Tourist Development Council will integrate the museum into regional travel itineraries that also feature outdoor destinations like Florida Caverns State Park and Jackson Blue Springs. This strategy not only encourages longer stays but also strengthens Jackson County's identity as a destination that combines natural beauty with cultural depth.

A key component of this phase is sitewide marketing infrastructure, including the development of:

- Wayfinding signage throughout Endeavor Park and along major access routes to guide visitors intuitively across the property.
- Interpretive historical markers placed along walking trails and between campus buildings to create continuity in storytelling.
- Gateway signage and monument branding visible from the highway and local roadways to generate curiosity and encourage spontaneous visits.

These efforts will be supported by consistent use of the museum's visual identity, color palette, and naming convention to ensure brand recognition across all visitor touchpoints.

Phase 4: Ongoing Communications and Strategic Growth

After opening, marketing will focus on sustaining public interest, promoting new programming and exhibits, and deepening community ties. Regular updates through newsletters, blogs, and video content will highlight upcoming events, new educational offerings, and visitor stories. Loyalty-building strategies such as membership drives, referral campaigns, and cross-promotions with local businesses will be central to growing the museum's base of supporters.

Analytics from the website, social media, and ticketing systems will be used to refine messaging, identify audience segments, and assess ROI on marketing efforts. Seasonal campaigns will align with high-traffic travel periods, special commemorative dates, and school calendars to maintain a consistent and responsive promotional rhythm.

Together, this multi-phase marketing strategy will ensure that the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is not only successfully launched but remains a vital, visible, and valued institution for generations to come.

10. Organizational Overview

Organizational Structure

At this stage of development, the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is envisioned to operate under the leadership of Jackson County's existing tourism department. The museum will be incorporated into the county's broader tourism strategy and infrastructure, providing immediate organizational support, financial oversight, and marketing alignment. The existing tourism staff — comprised of an Executive Director, Program Manager, and Sales and Events Coordinator — will manage the planning, promotion, and early-phase operations of the museum project.

To streamline visitor services and ensure long-term financial sustainability, the current Jackson County Visitor Center is expected to be relocated within the museum. This co-location will enhance operational efficiency, improve the visitor experience, and reduce duplication of resources by centralizing front-line staff, printed materials, and tourism information within a single facility.

While this shared-services model provides a strong foundation, it is understood that the museum's long-term success will require dedicated staffing and a refined organizational structure. As the project moves into construction and operational phases, a formal assessment of organizational needs will be conducted. This evaluation will include:

- Hiring full-time museum staff, such as a Museum Curator, Visitor Services Coordinator, and general museum staff responsible for the preservation and interpretation of exhibits.
- Recruiting part-time and seasonal staff to support visitor services, event coordination, and daily operations.
- Establishing a facilities and operations team responsible for the care and maintenance of the physical site, including walking trails, restrooms, and shared spaces.
- Exploring the creation of a governing board or advisory council, potentially in partnership with an established nonprofit, to oversee museum governance, fundraising, and long-term planning.

Café and Concessions Model

A café or restaurant is a key component of the visitor experience strategy, particularly given the historic use of the building as the former cafeteria of the Dozier School for Boys. Rather than operating the food service in-house, the current plan is to work with a **third-party concessionaire** to manage and operate the café under contract. This model, commonly used in Florida's state park system, would allow for professional food service operations without placing the administrative burden on museum staff.

This third-party partnership will offer financial benefits through rental or revenue-sharing agreements while also adding value to the visitor experience with quality refreshments and a

welcoming atmosphere. A portion of the original cafeteria tables will be retained in the café, with one or two tables reserved as part of a permanent memorial — honoring the memory of the boys who once sat there.

Organizational Sustainability and Long-Term Planning

To ensure sustainability, the museum's leadership will explore the establishment of a **supporting nonprofit or 501(c)(3) foundation** that can serve as a fundraising and advocacy arm. This organization would manage private donations, seek grants, and oversee the creation of an **endowment fund** dedicated to long-term financial health. These steps will allow for greater flexibility in funding sources, increased donor confidence, and improved access to philanthropic and institutional support.

In summary, while the museum will initially be operated through Jackson County's tourism department, the organizational framework will remain flexible and adaptive as the project evolves. Careful planning will be undertaken to ensure the right balance of public-sector support, nonprofit partnership, and private-sector engagement is maintained — building an institution that is both professionally managed and deeply connected to its community.

11. Financial Overview

The financial strategy for the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is built on a phased development model that aligns with available resources, grant funding timelines, and long-term sustainability goals. Recognizing both the scale and sensitivity of the project, a deliberate and responsible financial approach will be essential to its success — beginning with committed funds and expanding as the institution grows and diversifies its revenue streams.

Phased Development and Capital Planning

The development of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will follow a structured, multi-phase model to ensure financial sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and strategic impact. Phasing allows the project to respond to funding timelines, community readiness, and partnership development while laying a strong foundation for long-term success.

Grant Dependency and Development Timeline

The successful development of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park is closely tied to securing grant funding. While initial funding has been obtained to support early phases — including a \$500,000 Cultural Facilities Grant with a \$500,000 match from TDC funds — the continued construction, exhibit design, and operational build-out will require additional financial support through state, federal, and private grant cycles.

Because each major phase of the project is dependent on the availability and timing of grant awards, delays in funding may directly impact the project timeline. If grants are not secured or if awarded amounts fall short of projected needs, construction and exhibit development may be extended or phased further over time. For this reason, the project team is committed to maintaining flexibility in planning, building strong grant applications, and exploring diverse revenue strategies to reduce financial risk.

Phase One: Shell Rebuild and Structural Stabilization

This initial phase focuses on preserving the structural integrity of the former Dozier School cafeteria building — the future home of the museum. Key components include:

- Roof replacement and reinforcement
- Reconstruction of exterior walls
- Installation of new windows and doors
- Site waterproofing and exterior envelope sealing

This work will be completed using the \$500,000 Cultural Facilities Grant awarded by the State of Florida and a \$500,000 match from the Jackson County Tourist Development Council.

Phase Two: Interior Systems and Infrastructure

Phase Two brings the building to functional condition and prepares it for occupancy. This includes:

- HVAC installation
- Full electrical and lighting systems
- Plumbing, restrooms, and fire safety systems
- Framing and construction of interior walls
- Accessibility and code compliance improvements

Completion of this phase creates a usable, climate-controlled environment ready for public-facing components.

Phase Three: Exhibit Planning and Design

This phase involves the hiring of a professional exhibit designer to lead development of the museum's interpretive plan. Deliverables include:

- A comprehensive narrative and spatial layout
- Storyboarding, community story collection, and artifact review
- Schematics and technology needs for future fabrication
- Budget estimates for implementation

Grant funding will be essential to initiate this phase, with applications planned to NEH, IMLS, and other cultural funders.

Phase Four: Exhibit Fabrication and Installation

Once designs are finalized and funded, the project will enter the exhibit fabrication phase:

- Custom fabrication of display cases, panels, and AV components
- Mounting and preservation of artifacts
- Installation of interactive and sensory-friendly elements
- Final walkthroughs and layout refinement

Phase Five: Café Build-Out and Concessionaire Partnership

Simultaneously, the museum will begin developing the café space within the original cafeteria footprint, which will generate earned revenue while aligning with the museum's interpretative tone. This includes:

- Installation of kitchen infrastructure and visitor dining area
- Preservation of historical features, including original tables
- Reserved memorial tables for those who attended Dozier
- RFP process for identifying a third-party concessionaire

Phase Six: Sitewide Memorial Park and Interpretation Development

In tandem with interior progress, this phase focuses on creating a respectful and immersive outdoor experience for visitors exploring the full Endeavor property and memorial park. Key deliverables include:

- Walking Trail System: Paved or natural trails guiding visitors through significant locations on the property, with shaded rest stops and intentional wayfinding.
- Interpretive Signage and Memorial Markers: Outdoor exhibits and signage providing historical context, survivor quotes, and educational content.
- Landscaping and Gathering Areas: Benches, gardens, and contemplative spaces for reflection and remembrance.
- Lighting and Safety Features: Path lighting, emergency call stations, and ADA-accessible paths to ensure inclusive access.
- Integration with the White House Monument: Seamless physical and narrative connection to the existing memorial through orientation signage and directional paths.

This phase will be coordinated closely with community stakeholders and survivor representatives to ensure accuracy, dignity, and trauma-informed design. Funding will be pursued through state heritage preservation grants, philanthropic support, and corporate sponsorships.

Flexibility for Overlapping Phases

While these phases are designed in sequence, project leaders anticipate opportunities to overlap elements of Phases Four, Five, and Six if funding is secured and timelines allow. For example, concurrent progress on exhibit fabrication and café development may be achieved with a well-timed grant award or donor commitment, while the early implementation of trails and markers could support soft-launch activities and media interest even before interior exhibits are complete.

Project Costs

The development of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will proceed through a phased strategy, aligning each stage with available funding and organizational readiness. Below is a summary of estimated costs by project phase. Future phases are expressed as high-level estimates to allow for planning flexibility as designs evolve and bids are secured.

Phase One: Shell Rebuild and Structural Stabilization

- **Estimated Cost: \$1,000,000**
Funding secured through: \$500,000 Cultural Facilities Grant + \$500,000 Jackson County TDC Match
- This phase includes roof replacement, exterior wall reconstruction, new windows and doors, and weatherproofing to stabilize the existing building.

Phase Two: Interior Systems and Infrastructure

- **Estimated Cost: \$800,000**
- This phase brings the interior of the facility to functional, code-compliant condition with installation of HVAC systems, electrical and lighting infrastructure, restrooms, and interior walls. This phase will also include fees related to Engineering and Architectural services from DHM.

Phases Three and Four: Exhibit Planning, Design, Fabrication, and Installation

- **Estimated Cost: \$1,014,400 to \$4,869,600**
- Cost Breakdown:
 - \$200 per sq ft (baseline): Covers basic display design and build out, such as walls, panels, lighting, and simple interactive elements.
 - \$800 per sq ft (enhanced): Includes design and more complex components such as high-end audiovisual systems, custom interactives, immersive design, and artifact-specific enclosures.
- Museum exhibit design and fabrication has a broad range of cost, starting at a minimum of \$75 per sq ft and ranging upwards of \$800 per sq ft. The building dedicated for the museum is approximately 10,144 square feet. If we were to estimate that approximately 50-60% of the space will be dedicated to exhibit space, we can estimate a range of:
 - Baseline: \$1,014,400 to \$1,217,400
 - Enhanced: \$4,057,600 to \$4,869,600
- This phase includes the production and installation of all exhibits, including display components, audiovisual systems, artifact presentation, and hands-on interpretive tools.

While these estimates reflect industry standards, there are several strategies the County may pursue to reduce overall exhibit costs without compromising visitor experience or educational value:

- **In-House Design Capabilities:** Elements such as layout planning, interpretive writing, and thematic design may be developed internally with oversight from museum staff, volunteers, or local consultants.
- **Pre-Fabricated and Modular Solutions:** Off-the-shelf or modular exhibit systems can significantly reduce fabrication costs compared to fully custom builds. These options are especially effective for rotating or temporary displays.
- **Local Partnerships:** Collaborations with regional universities (e.g., Chipola College, FSU) or skilled trades programs could offset design, carpentry, or fabrication labor costs through student-led projects or internships.
- **Donated Materials and Labor:** Support from local businesses (woodworkers, welders, printers) may help supply materials or services at reduced cost or through in-kind contributions.
- **Phased Installation:** Exhibits can be installed in phases over time, allowing fundraising and grant cycles to align with fabrication needs and spreading out expenses across multiple fiscal years.
- **Repurposed Exhibit Components:** Salvaging display cases, lighting, or digital equipment from other institutions or surplus markets can reduce capital costs.

These cost-saving approaches will be explored during the exhibit design development phase to ensure alignment with both the museum's vision and budget realities.

Phase Five: Café Build-Out and Concessionaire Integration

- **Estimated Cost: \$250,000**
- Focused on outfitting the former cafeteria space into a functional café and selecting a third-party vendor, this phase supports both the visitor experience and ongoing revenue generation.

Phase Six: Sitewide Memorial Park and Interpretation Development

- **Estimated Cost: \$500,000**
- This includes development of outdoor walking trails, interpretive signage, memorial markers, landscaping, lighting, and infrastructure that connects the museum to the White House monument and the broader Endeavor site.

This phase focuses on transforming the grounds surrounding the museum and White House monument into a reflective and educational Memorial Park. The scope includes walking trails, interpretive signage, memorial markers, landscaping, lighting, and future outdoor exhibits.

Given the nature of the site and the potential for in-house contributions, this phase will be approached in tiers, allowing certain components to be implemented more quickly and cost-effectively.

Phase Six Continued

- Tier 1: Foundational Development (Short-Term | In-House Feasible)
 - Estimated Timeline: Within 12 months
Potential Cost Range: \$10,000 – \$50,000 (based on trail material and signage approach)
This tier includes essential site enhancements that can likely be achieved using County resources, public works teams, and local partners.
 - Development of walking trails (dirt, mulch, or gravel)
 - Initial landscaping and clearing
 - Wayfinding and interpretive signage design and installation
 - Memorial markers and directional posts
 - Connecting trails between the museum, White House Monument, and existing roadways
 - Lighting along primary paths (solar where feasible)
 - *Note: By using in-house services and simplified materials, costs for this tier can be significantly reduced.*
- Tier 2: Expanded Memorial Features (Mid-Term | Grant/Donation Supported)
 - Estimated Timeline: 1–3 years
Estimated Cost: \$150,000 – \$200,000
This stage builds upon the foundational work and incorporates more structured infrastructure and permanent interpretive features:
 - Paved or ADA-accessible trail enhancements
 - Enhanced interpretive kiosks or digital stations
 - Sculpture or art installations
 - Additional seating and shaded rest areas
 - Historic landscape restoration elements (e.g., plantings representative of time periods)
- Tier 3: Family & Community Amenities (Long-Term | Funding Dependent)
 - Estimated Timeline: 3+ years
Estimated Cost: \$150,000 – \$250,000
Designed to serve community groups, families, and visitors of all ages, this final tier of the Memorial Park includes:
 - Outdoor exhibits and educational elements connected to museum themes
 - Natural play area and nature-based playground equipment
 - Picnic and gathering areas with shelters and seating
 - Interpretive gardens or raised bed learning areas
 - Potential for outdoor classroom or amphitheater space

By segmenting the Memorial Park into manageable phases and utilizing County personnel and local partnerships where possible, development can begin much sooner—potentially within the next fiscal year. Later enhancements can be implemented as grant funding, donations, and resources become available, allowing the project to grow over time while serving visitors early in the museum’s operation.

Total Estimated Project Costs

The current estimated cost of completing the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park project is an estimated range between \$3.8 million to \$7.5 million, based on phased implementation and existing projections. However, to ensure flexibility and long-term sustainability, the planning team recognizes that total costs could realistically reach upwards of \$8-15 million. This broader estimate accounts for potential increases in construction costs, materials pricing, inflation, labor shortages, supply chain delays, tariffs, and the evolving scope of sitewide enhancements and interpretive planning.

By planning for a higher ceiling, the museum can take a more proactive and strategic approach to grant funding cycles, public-private partnerships, and philanthropic investment. This ensures the project remains adaptive to changing market conditions while maintaining a high standard of quality and community impact across every phase of development.

Post-Construction Operating Costs Overview

As the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park transitions into full operations, it will be essential to maintain a sustainable and adaptable staffing model that supports quality visitor experiences, facility care, and community engagement. The estimates below reflect an early-stage framework for recurring personnel costs, though final staffing decisions should be informed by continued research and benchmarking against comparable museums serving similar populations.

1. Staffing and Personnel

The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners' benefits package averages approximately \$20,000. Each full time staff will be eligible for this package. The museum will operate under the leadership of Jackson County's existing tourism team, which includes:

- **Executive Director** – \$55,000 salary
- **Program Manager** – \$37,000 salary
- **Sales and Events Coordinator** - \$38,000 salary

With the large expansion of responsibilities and services, the Executive Director and Program Manager positions will need to have the salaries raised. A recommended amount of \$70,000 and \$40,000 will be factored in for the rest of these estimates.

To support the museum's day-to-day operations and visitor experience, the following additional staff will be required:

- **Curator (full-time)** – \$40,000 salary
 - (Note: This role is suggested based on common museum models, but further review is needed to determine whether curatorial functions may be fulfilled through part-time, contract-based, or shared staffing approaches.)
- **Visitor Services Coordinator (full-time)** - \$30,000 salary

- **Marketing and Communications Coordinator (full-time)** – \$35,000 salary

In addition to core staff, the museum will rely on 2–3 part-time staff, or a combination of 1 full-time and 1 part-time position, to support weekend hours, group tours, and special events.

- Part-time staffing cost (non-benefitted) – up to \$20,000 annually per person

Total Estimated Annual Personnel Cost:
 \$385,000–\$405,000 (salaries + benefits)
 + \$20,000–\$60,000 (part-time wages)
 = \$405,000–\$465,000 annually

The museum may also evaluate the seasonal addition of event or education staff as visitation and programming increase. It's important to note that these staffing numbers are what would be considered the baseline operational staffing model to have the museum fully functioning and operational. As the museum grows or continues to develop its operations, additional staff will be needed, which will increase the operational expenses for the facility.

Given that personnel represents the largest portion of ongoing operational expenses, the County and Tourist Development Council may evaluate alternative staffing models over time to improve efficiency and reduce long-term costs. This could include restructuring roles, sharing staff across departments or partner organizations, utilizing contract or part-time positions where appropriate, and developing partnerships with educational institutions or nonprofit entities. These approaches would allow the museum to maintain a high level of service and programming while remaining fiscally responsible and adaptable to changing operational needs.

2. Utilities and Facility Operations - Estimated Annual Cost: \$60,000–\$85,000

Ongoing facility costs will include electricity, HVAC, water, internet, waste, and basic maintenance.

3. Insurance and Risk Management - Estimated Annual Cost: \$20,000–\$30,000

Insurance needs will include building, general liability, and collections coverage. Based on similar county-owned buildings, insurance is expected to range from \$6,000–\$10,000 annually, but given the nature of the collection and increased visitor risk, a higher estimate is prudent.

4. Software and Subscriptions - Estimated Annual Cost: \$10,000–\$15,000

The museum will utilize Civic Rec for ticketing, admissions, retail, and café coordination, with additional in-house tools like Excel and shared cloud drives for exhibit tracking and database needs.

5. Professional Services and Contracts - Estimated Annual Cost: \$15,000–\$25,000

While the County will continue to provide groundskeeping and landscaping services, the museum may incur costs for:

- Website maintenance
- Exhibit servicing or tech support
- Design services
- Periodic deep cleaning or pest control

6. Programming and Rotating Exhibits - Estimated Annual Cost: Under \$10,000

In the early years of operation, programming and exhibit changes will be limited to ensure sustainable budgeting. Priority will be given to community partnerships and low-cost storytelling methods. As donor and grant support grow, these offerings will expand.

7. Supplies and Consumables - Estimated Annual Cost: \$5,000–\$10,000

Ongoing purchases will include cleaning supplies, basic office items, and restocking retail or exhibit consumables.

Total Estimated Annual Operating Costs: \$525,000 – \$640,000

This total reflects the anticipated range of post-construction operating costs for the museum's early years, based on staffing levels, county-supported services, and conservative programming expenditures. As operations scale and revenue increases, these figures may shift — particularly in areas like special events, rotating exhibits, and expanded staffing. Continued evaluation and grant support will allow the museum to adapt over time while maintaining responsible financial management.

Revenue Strategy and Sustainability

The financial sustainability of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park will depend on a thoughtful blend of public investment, earned revenue, private support, and strategic partnerships. While early operations may require foundational public funding, the long-term goal is to transition to a diversified and resilient revenue structure that reduces dependency on limited public resources and aligns with the museum's mission-driven growth.

Tourist Development Tax (TDT) – Strategic Use, Not Long-Term Reliance

The Jackson County Tourist Development Council (TDC) is funded through the Florida Tourist Development Tax (TDT), authorized under Florida Statute 125.0104. These funds are intended to promote tourism through marketing and destination development efforts. While TDT has played a key role in the early phases of the museum's development, including capital investment and staffing support, long-term reliance on TDT for operational expenses risks diminishing the tax's broader effectiveness.

As fewer dollars are allocated toward tourism marketing and promotion, there is a risk that overall tourism activity will decline, resulting in lower TDT revenue over time. With the continued expansion of tourism assets like the Endeavor Convention Center and Great Oaks Venue, it is essential that TDT dollars remain focused on high-ROI marketing initiatives — and that the museum builds independent revenue to support its operations.

Memberships and Community Support

The museum will offer a tiered membership program to engage the local community and provide sustainable, recurring revenue. Each membership tier is designed to be accessible while offering clear value:

- Student Pass – *Free admission* for K–12 students
- Individual Membership – \$40/year; unlimited admission and early access to events
- Family Membership – \$75/year; covers up to 5 household members
- Sustainer Membership – \$300/year; includes name recognition on the website and four quarterly guest passes
- Lifetime Membership – \$1,000 one-time gift; includes lifetime admission for up to 5 household members and recognition in online materials.

Founding Supporter Tiers (Ongoing Annual Campaign)

The museum will also cultivate a network of founding supporters — high-level donors who receive the same benefits as Lifetime Members and are recognized in perpetuity. These tiers will remain active as a recurring donor opportunity to help secure long-term sustainability.

- Supporter – \$1,000–\$4,999
- Advocate – \$5,000–\$9,999
- Builder – \$10,000–\$24,999

- Visionary – \$25,000+

Annual goal: Secure 20–30 donors across all founding tiers in the first three years, with long-term goals of building a pool of 100+ named supporters.

Grant Funding – Strategic, But Not Guaranteed

Grant funding will be a critical tool in supporting the expansion of exhibits, rotating programming, and special initiatives. However, grants are not a guaranteed source of income, and must be pursued with a clear understanding of matching requirements, limitations, and sustainability.

Grants will be prioritized for:

- Changing and rotating exhibits
- Educational partnerships and public programming
- Collections care, technology, and accessibility
- Memorial park enhancements and interpretation

Because new exhibits and programs require staff time, fabrication, and outreach, the museum will plan carefully to ensure that grant-funded initiatives do not overextend resources. Grants will supplement — not replace — core operational revenue.

Admissions and Earned Income

Admissions are expected to be a key source of annual revenue for the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park. A straightforward, inclusive pricing model will make the museum accessible to a broad range of visitors, while encouraging families and repeat guests to return:

- Children (17 and under / K-12 students): Free
- Seniors / Military: \$7
- General Admission: \$10

Initial attendance projections will be heavily influenced by a variety of external factors, including seasonality, regional tourism trends, economic fluctuations, and weather-related impacts. For example, bad weather or red flag beach days may drive more visitors from surrounding outdoor destinations to indoor cultural attractions like the museum.

Jackson County's Florida Caverns State Park draws approximately 130,000 visitors per year. By strategically marketing to these travelers and positioning the museum as a companion destination, we estimate the museum could conservatively capture 30–50% of those visitors over time. However, actual museum attendance will be influenced by available operating hours, staffing capacity, and marketing reach—particularly in the early years of operation.

To account for these variables, projected admissions revenue has been outlined across three tiers:

Estimated Annual Admissions by Visitor Range

Visitor Volume	Avg. Admission (\$6)	Projected Revenue
Low (20,000)	\$6	\$120,000
Medium (35,000)	\$6	\$210,00
High (60,000)	\$6	\$360,000

These estimates reflect an average ticket price across all audience types. At launch, actual visitation may align more closely with the lower end of this range, especially if staffing is limited and hours of operation are reduced. In such cases, opportunities for revenue generation through special programs, group tours, or promotional packages may also be constrained.

As staffing increases and operational capacity expands, the museum should aim to grow visitation steadily through strategic marketing, community partnerships, school field trips, and collaborative efforts with other local tourism assets. Scaling admission revenue will require both a strong staffing model and continuous outreach to key markets.

By building from an initial foundation and gradually expanding hours, services, and marketing efforts, the museum can position itself for sustainable long-term growth while remaining responsive to changing tourism patterns and economic realities.

Hours of Operation

A phased approach to museum operating hours will ensure sustainability while allowing for growth in staffing, community demand, and tourism traffic. Longer evening hours will help meet a current gap in local entertainment and cultural options, giving residents and visitors an opportunity to explore after the typical workday or during slower evening periods.

Proposed Phased Hours of Operation

Phase 1 (Launch – Year 1):

- Days Open: Thursday–Sunday
- Hours: 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Rationale: Focused on peak tourism and local traffic days while keeping operational costs manageable. Extended hours provide an evening option in the community.

Phase 2 (Scaling Period – Years 2–3):

- Days Open: Wednesday–Sunday

- Hours: 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM (with flexibility for seasonal adjustments)
- Rationale: Expands access midweek to accommodate school visits, group tours, and regional travelers as staffing increases.

Phase 3 (Long-Term Goal – Year 4+):

- Days Open: 7 days a week
- Hours: 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Rationale: Offers consistency for tourism-driven visitation while providing extended evening hours that support local engagement, partnerships with downtown businesses, and potential for evening programming or events.

Gift Shop Sales

The museum will operate a small gift shop with mission-aligned merchandise, books, and locally made items. While this offers valuable revenue potential, sales are not guaranteed and retail margins vary.

- Estimated Average Spend per Visitor: \$8
- Estimated Conversion Rate: 30–40% of visitors
- Estimated Net Revenue: \$45,000–\$75,000 annually, after inventory costs and staffing

Educational Program Revenue

The museum will offer low-cost educational programs, including:

- Guided school group tours
- Weekend family activities (crafts, storytelling, hands-on history)
- Summer heritage day camps
- Teacher professional development workshops

These programs are intended to increase access and fulfill the museum’s educational mission. While not major revenue drivers, they will generate modest income to support supplies, part-time staff, and programming expansion.

Estimated Annual Revenue: \$10,000–\$20,000

Café Concessionaire Partnership

The on-site café will be operated by a third-party vendor, with a goal of creating a welcoming, family-friendly experience without increasing overhead for the museum. Revenue will be generated through:

- A monthly lease agreement **or**
- A percentage-based revenue share agreement

Given the scale and mission of the space, conservative estimates suggest:

Estimated Annual Revenue: \$12,000–\$36,000

Utility and facility usage will be addressed through lease terms to avoid burdening the museum's core operating budget.

Summary of Projected Revenue

When considering all earned income sources — including admissions, gift shop sales, educational programs, and café partnership revenue — the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park could generate between **\$187,000 and \$465,000 annually** under current assumptions.

Revenue Source	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Admissions	\$120,000	\$360,000
Gift Shop	\$45,000	\$75,000
Educational Programs	\$10,000	\$20,000
Cafe Concessionaire	\$12,000	\$36,000
Total	\$187,000	\$491,000

These projections provide a conservative to moderate outlook for revenue generation, allowing the museum to adjust operations, staffing, and programming as needed to remain financially sustainable. With continued investment in marketing, partnerships, and visitor experience, these figures may grow over time as the museum builds a stronger regional and educational presence.

Foundational Investment and Ongoing Revenue Goals

To launch successfully and remain financially resilient, the museum's funding strategy includes both one-time foundational investments and annual recurring revenue targets:

- Foundational Investment Goal:
\$1.5 million–\$2 million over the first five years from a combination of founding supporters, major donors, sponsorships, and grant awards.
- Annual Recurring Revenue Goal (Years 3–5):
\$187,000–\$495,000 annually from admissions, memberships, café lease, retail sales, and select program fees.
- These goals ensure that the museum can scale responsibly, respond to community and visitor needs, and maintain high-quality programming without overextending limited public resources like the Tourist Development Tax.

Building for Long-Term Sustainability

The museum's long-term success will be defined by its ability to adapt and grow while preserving its mission. As operations mature, future strategies may include:

- Developing an endowment fund
- Launching planned giving programs
- Securing multi-year corporate sponsorships
- Offering naming opportunities for galleries and features

This financial resilience will ensure that the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park remains a relevant, community-centered, and fiscally responsible institution for generations to come.

12. Plans and Recommendations

The plans for the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park are designed to ensure sustainable growth, community involvement, and effective utilization of resources. A phased approach to construction and implementation is recommended, beginning with sitewide planning and detailed cost estimation for future development. This includes budgets for additional phases of construction, staffing models, and integrated visitor services that align with the needs of the Tourist Development Council. These services will streamline tourism efforts and create a seamless experience for visitors exploring the region.

Renovation of existing structures and the development of new facilities should prioritize accessibility, visitor engagement, and operational efficiency. Exhibit planning and design must focus on creating immersive, educational, and interactive displays that captivate audiences while preserving the historical significance of the site. Incorporating placemaking principles—such as well-designed pathways, gardens, and reflection spaces—will enhance the overall visitor experience and encourage longer stays.

A comprehensive fundraising strategy is critical to the success of the project. Launching a capital campaign targeting individual and corporate donors will provide the necessary financial support. This effort should be complemented by applying for state and federal grants focused on historic preservation and education. Establishing strong relationships with foundational supporters will also be integral, with tiered levels of sponsorship ensuring diverse funding sources.

While Tourist Development Tax revenues may support strategic components of the project, sole reliance on TDT to fund museum construction is not sustainable nor fiscally responsible. Any future use of TDT must be carefully balanced with the need to preserve adequate reserves—ideally one full year’s worth of revenue—to guard against economic downturns, natural disasters, or other disruptions such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead, capital construction and exhibit development will rely on competitive grants, philanthropic support, and private fundraising. Matching grant funds with pledged TDT should be considered only where appropriate and aligned with long-term fiscal stewardship.

Community involvement remains a cornerstone of the project’s success. Strategies include forming advisory committees, offering volunteer opportunities, and creating ongoing opportunities for public input. These efforts foster a sense of ownership among local residents and ensure the museum remains relevant and grounded in the lived experiences of the Jackson County community.

These strategies position the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park as a vital educational and cultural resource—one that honors the past while building a resilient future for generations to come.

Phased Planning Recommendations

Phase 1: Foundation & Awareness (Current – Year 1)

- Fill Advisory Committee Vacancies: Fill the vacant seats on the existing advisory committee with strategic appointees representing museum-related disciplines such as history, education, engineering/architecture, and financial planning.
- Community Engagement: Promote awareness of the museum’s mission and vision, and encourage public involvement through storytelling and exhibit submissions. Distribute and promote the exhibit application to begin building a robust inventory of artifacts, oral histories, and potential exhibit concepts.
- Operational Research & Benchmarking: Visit and meet with operators of regional and national museums to gain insights into operational best practices, visitor experience design, and exhibit management.
- Restaurant/Café Exploration: Meet with café and restaurant owners to explore needs and logistics for the concessionaire partnership, while building early interest in the future opportunity.
- Website & Social Media Development: Launch the museum’s website and social media platforms to house key documents, timeline updates, and opportunities for public engagement.
- Branding & Identity: Finalize logo, font, color palette, and brand language to unify all marketing and planning efforts.
- Grant Calendar Development: Create a comprehensive calendar of grant opportunities aligned with each phase of construction, staffing, and programming.
- Memorial Park - Tier 1 Development: Begin initial improvements to the outdoor Memorial Park with County resources, volunteers, and local partners, including:
 - Trail clearing (dirt/mulch paths)
 - Wayfinding signage and trail markers
 - Landscape cleanup and initial plantings
 - Interpretive sign design and fabrication (e.g., site overview, White House connection)
 - Path lighting
 - These low-cost elements allow early public engagement with the memorial space while larger phases are still in development.

Phase 2: Development & Design (Year 2 – Year 3)

- Continue Construction Planning: Advance through phases one and two of capital development including shell stabilization, infrastructure upgrades (HVAC, electrical), and planning for interior layout and accessibility.
- Exhibit Content Development: Use artifact submissions and the intake process to begin identifying key themes and narrative elements. Begin drafting outlines and exhibit frameworks that can guide future design contracts.

- Collections Management: Implement the existing collections policy and cataloging process to begin organizing items received through community outreach and public submissions.
- Sitewide Planning Integration: Begin developing a plan for trails, wayfinding signage, and interpretive markers that will connect the museum to the White House monument, African American Heritage Museum, and other future site elements.
- Memorial Park – Tier 2 Planning Begins: Design more structured trails, such as gravel or paved, and begin coordinating design with the White House monument for unified storytelling and site experience.

Phase 3: Exhibits, Memorial, & Site Development (Year 3 – Year 4)

- Exhibit Design Contracting: Begin the process of selecting and contracting with a professional exhibit designer. This will involve developing design documents, rendering key galleries, and aligning narrative content with the physical layout of the museum.
- Memorial & Site Planning: Continue funding and development efforts related to the broader site, including integration with the White House monument, outdoor interpretive elements, memorial garden design, and walking trail development.
- African American Heritage Museum Collaboration: Formalize coordination with the adjacent museum on shared programming, landscaping, and site connectivity.
- Memorial Park - Tier 2 Construction: Install paved/ADA-accessible paths and contemplative areas. Implement permanent art, sculpture, or donor recognition features, and begin planning for seating and shaded rest areas.

Phase 4: Exhibit Fabrication & Interior Buildout (Year 4 – Year 5)

- Exhibit Construction & Installation: Once designs are finalized, move into the fabrication and installation of permanent and rotating exhibits, working closely with contractors and staff to ensure quality control and historical accuracy.
- Café Buildout & Concessionaire Selection: Execute construction of the museum café space and finalize the selection of a concessionaire through an RFP process.
- Procure Visitor Amenities: Purchase necessary furnishings, signage, supplies, and retail infrastructure to support an operational visitor center, gift shop, and public spaces.

Phase 5: Launch Preparation & Opening (Year 5 – Year 6)

- Hire Core Museum Staff: Within 3–6 months of opening, begin hiring for core positions including curator, visitor services coordinator, and supporting part-time staff. Finalize staffing plans for maintenance, marketing, and administrative support.
- Marketing & PR Campaign: Launch a region-wide campaign announcing the opening, emphasizing the museum's educational and cultural value, its connection to the Dozier Memorial, and its significance within Jackson County's tourism offerings.

- Community Preview Events: Host soft openings, donor preview nights, and stakeholder tours to test operations, gather feedback, and generate buzz.
- Operational Readiness & Evaluation: Conduct final walkthroughs, test ticketing, retail, and staffing workflows, and prepare for official public launch.
- Memorial Park - Tier 3 Family & Community Amenities: Install natural play areas, picnic tables, and garden spaces. Enhance integration with broader Endeavor campus and trail network.

These phased recommendations provide a clear, strategic framework for bringing the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park to life. By aligning thoughtful planning with community collaboration, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to honoring the site's history, this initiative can become a lasting educational, cultural, and economic asset for Jackson County.

Summary and Next Steps

The phased development of the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park reflects a strategic, adaptable roadmap that balances thoughtful planning with early, visible impact. By combining low-cost, in-house improvements with long-term capital investments, the County can demonstrate early progress—particularly through the initial development of memorial trails and signage—while laying the groundwork for more complex infrastructure and exhibit fabrication in later phases. This blended approach ensures community trust, donor confidence, and public engagement from the very beginning.

Immediate next steps include:

- Promoting the exhibit application to gather artifacts and oral histories
- Beginning Tier 1 Memorial Park enhancements using internal resources
- Advancing preliminary design coordination for both exhibits and trails
- Create a clear grant cycle calendar and fundraising development strategy
- Creating the museum's online presence for storytelling, engagement, and transparency

With broad community collaboration, efficient use of County resources, and a commitment to honoring Jackson County's unique and complex history, the museum and memorial park can become a deeply meaningful legacy for generations to come.