

Strategic Plan

The Atlanta History Center's Midtown Women's Center



Katie Stockdale, Sarah Craig, Jessica Higgins, and Sheridan Kearns
Hist 6301 Administration of Museum and Historic Sites
Dr. Ann McCleary
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I. Executive Summary

This is the first strategic plan to be implemented after reimagining the Atlanta History Center's Midtown Women's Center, formerly known as the Margaret Mitchell House. As the institutional focus shifted to community connection and outreach, the Midtown Women's Center needed a new mission, vision, and goals. The focus of this strategic plan is to create a working plan for adult programming with a specific intent to engage local audiences in history and civic participation.

This plan was developed by outside consultants: Katie Stockdale, Jessica Higgins, Sarah Craig, and Sheridan Kearns in collaboration with the Atlanta History Center (AHC). Over the course of several weeks in the third quarter of 2021, the planning committee met with the AHC staff and visited the site. During this time, we developed a new brand for the Midtown Women's Center, the Midtown Women's Center. Through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and assessment of the Midtown Women's Center's stakeholders, the planning committee feels confident that the strategic plan allows for the successful implementation of the new mission.

In order to acknowledge the history of the site as the home of Margaret Mitchell, the Midtown Women's Center will focus on exploring the complex history of women. We are aware that Margaret Mitchell's name is divisive and that her legacy is intrinsically connected to the harm caused by anti-Black racism in this country. This plan has been made to help us confront this history and the many struggles that have come as a result of this history. Through the strategic plan, we will provide a roadmap to assist in learning from the past to better the future.

We will center our focus on connecting to diverse communities as we attempt to tell honest stories through multiple truths. Our intent is to be connected to the local community by building a relationship with them and engaging with the needs they voice. We wish to provide programming that will be practical and useful to the community, specifically women. It is our goal to provide space for the community to gather and build stronger ties together.

The new *mission statement*: The Midtown Women's Center is committed to an inclusive view of women's history through partnerships with other cultural institutions and local businesses.

New *vision*: The Midtown Women's Center will be a safe space for diverse audiences, will work in partnership with the residents of Midtown and the surrounding community, will be recognized as a leader in recentring marginalized communities in historical discourse, and will empower and uplift women through accessible educational opportunities.

With the reimagining of the Midtown Women's Center to become the Midtown Women's Campus, it became apparent that new goals would be needed to help achieve the new mission and vision.

1. A robust and sustainable community programming calendar each year.
2. Building connections with the surrounding community and local businesses.
3. Offer personal development courses.
4. Educate the public on the diversity of women's experiences.

II. Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement: The Midtown Women's Center is committed to an inclusive view of women's history through partnerships with other cultural institutions and local businesses.

Vision Statements:

The Midtown Women's Center will be a safe space for diverse audiences.

The Midtown Women's Center will work in partnership with the residents of Midtown and the surrounding community.

The Midtown Women's Center will be recognized as a leader in recentering marginalized communities in historical discourse.

The Midtown Women's Center will empower and uplift women through accessible educational opportunities.

III. Organizational Mandates

We will be dedicated to being a *community-centered museum*. In this role, we will work not only to provide knowledge to the community but services that the community itself identifies. We will provide our resources, not solutions, and will be dedicated to asking how we can help?

As a community museum, we are dedicated to *shared authority*. We will work to include outside perspectives at every step of our decision-making processes and be intentional about incorporating the advice and suggestions we receive. When appropriate, we will work with those who have more knowledge to use our platform to advance underheard voices.

As an institution dedicated to shared authority, we will uplift *multiple perspectives*. Our exhibits and programming will provide space for marginalized communities to tell their stories. We will respect multiple truths and will provide the space for dialogue and understanding.

In order to authentically present multiple perspectives, we will be committed to *education through honesty*. We will ground our exhibits and programming in the facts and will engage with movements and theories meant to distort the facts in order to correct the narrative. We will never seek to distort the facts, and through our commitment to multiple truths, we will provide more context for the events, movements, and historical figures we discuss.

As a place dedicated to education, we are a *welcoming space for dialogue*. Discussion is critical to learning and we are committed to promoting constructive dialogues that remain respectful to the institution and its guests. We will not tolerate hate speech or antagonism in any way.

As a public history institution, we are committed to the *preservation of these historic buildings*. We will work to keep these sites safe and operating at the highest standards of the field.

IV. Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Expectations for the Museum	Expectations for the Stakeholder	Potential Grant Donor (Y/N)
Grassroots International, Inc. https://grassrootsonline.org/	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Initiate programs, activities, and other efforts that confront the issues of economic inequality, environmental, social, and civil injustice, and food accessibility.</p> <p>Promote women’s leadership and education, “and movement building toward long-term systemic change.”</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Connecting our visitors with “global movements addressing the root causes of injustice and oppression.”</p> <p>Funding and limited collaborative assistance for urban gardening projects.</p> <p>Funding and limited collaborative assistance for projects promoting female leadership and education.</p> <p>Funding and limited collaborative assistance for projects promoting civil and social justice for Atlanta’s LGBTQ+ community.</p>	Y: BEAI Fund
Mama Cash https://www.mamacash.org/en/our-grantmaking	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Must “support women’s, girls’, trans and intersex people’s in their efforts to uphold their rights.”</p> <p>Must “have a vision and strategy to challenge and transform gendered power structures.”</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Funding for and limited collaborative assistance in projects to create and direct revenue supporting and defending gender and LGBTQ+ equality</p> <p>Connecting our organization to funding sources and other</p>	Y: Women’s Funds Solidarity Fund

	Promote vocal representation and active efforts to fight against oppression on the basis of gender, orientation, or identity.	institutions with similar visions and goals.	
Ms. Foundation for Women, Inc. https://forwomen.org/grants-2/	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Work directly with the women in their community.</p> <p>Use cultural spaces to create social change.</p> <p>Centralize stories of “women and girls of color, trans women and girls of color, and indigenous women and girls.”</p> <p>Create “solutions across race and class and to build social movements within and across three areas: Economic Justice, Safety and Women’s Health.”</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Funding for and limited collaborative assistance in projects and programs that uplift diverse stories of women. These projects will incorporate collaboration with local WGOC, trans-WGOC, and indigenous women and girls.</p> <p>Funding for and limited collaborative assistance in projects and programs that openly discuss and work toward bettering the issues of economic justice, safety and women’s health.</p>	<p>Y: Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC)</p> <p>Activist Collaboration Fund</p>
Women Who Code Atl https://www.womenwhocode.com/atlanta	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Value and empower women’s place as leaders and mentors in the workplace.</p> <p>Diverse and inclusive hiring practices.</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Provide valuable educational and career-oriented resources for visitors.</p> <p>Offer insight and limited collaborative assistance in the aim of better understanding the diverse needs of women in our community and nation as a</p>	<p>N: Collaborative Partner</p>

		whole.	
<p>The National Congress of Black Women, Inc. https://ncbwinc lac.org/</p>	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Active commitment to highlight issues of healthcare, military family support, women’s abuse/ domestic violence, and educational development, especially considering how these issues uniquely affect Black women and girls.</p> <p>“Confront forces in the cultural, economic and community environment that threaten the physical, mental and moral well-being of African American youth, especially those most at risk.”</p> <p>Encourage and promote services that uplift African American women’s autonomous participation in politics, leadership roles, and roles as mentors.</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Provide valuable educational resources for visitors.</p> <p>Offer insight and limited collaborative assistance in the aim of better understanding the diverse needs of women in our community and nation as a whole.</p>	<p>N: Collaborative Partner</p>
<p>The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum https://www.napawf.org/</p>	<p>This organization expects that partners or grantees:</p> <p>Actively work to amplify the voices and promote the leadership roles of AAPI women and girls.</p> <p>Join their “fight for policy and cultural change.”</p> <p>Commitment to highlighting issues of</p>	<p>We expect this organization to assist in uplifting women in our community via:</p> <p>Provide valuable educational resources for visitors</p> <p>Offer insight and limited collaborative assistance in the aim of better understanding the diverse needs of women in our</p>	<p>N: Collaborative Partner</p>

	reproductive health and rights, economic justice, and immigration/racial justice.	community and nation as a whole.	
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Local Partner	Collaborative Ideas
Dr. Bombay's Underwater Tea Party (The Learning Tea)	Pop-up tea parlor Collaboration with The Learning Tea
Trees Atlanta	Help with flowering garden/ greenspace for meditation, self defense classes, outdoor exercise, and urban gardening space.
Dancing Goats	Reciprocal advertisement
Ponce City Market	Reciprocal advertisement
Piedmont Park	Advertisement Event space
Midtown Arts Cinema	Reciprocal advertisement Women's Film event
Atlanta Mission: My Sister's House	Reciprocal advertisement

V. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Location - The Midtown Women's Center is located very close to many other shops and museums giving the Center opportunities to partner with these other institutions.

AHC branding - The Atlanta History center is well known around the city of Atlanta. The Midtown Women's Center having this branding helps to establish it as a reputable institution within the city.

Accessibility - The Midtown Women's Center is the most accessible of the History Centers campuses as its location in Midtown is within walking distance of a MARTA station.

Weaknesses

Margaret Mitchell - Margaret Mitchell has a divisive legacy as a leading figure of lost cause mythology. Her creative work has created lasting harm against Black Americans and it will take intentional work both to overcome this association and illustrate an institutional culture antithetical to her legacy.

Tourist attraction - The Midtown Women's Campus is currently seen as a tourist attraction for Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind* whereas the Atlanta History Center wishes to promote a space centered on the local community.

Space - Full space on the campus is not fully utilized.

Opportunities

Partnerships - With other museums and local businesses within walking distance of the campus this gives the Midtown Women's Center unique opportunities for partnerships.

Space - Located within the Midtown Women's Center is a row of storefronts. These fronts provide the opportunity for the Center to have traveling exhibits and the ability to showcase different retail partners.

Threats

Other museums - The location of the Midtown Women's Center near so many other museums also poses a threat in that it introduces competition. If the Center's footprint within the community is not large enough the Center is at risk of losing business to the other museums in the area.

VI. Goals and Objectives

1. A robust and sustainable community programming calendar each year.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will sponsor a quarterly community book club partnering with local libraries, both for book distribution and advertising.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will house a Community Little Library located in a stand that matches the architecture of the campus. Partnering with Friends of the Library and antiques shop to start the donation.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will have a combination community pantry and soup kitchen located in one of the storefronts. The food pantry focuses on non-perishables.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will invite the community to start a local garden on the green space of the Midtown Women's Center. Produce collected by the community and any left over will be donated to the food pantry to be used before it spoils.

2. Building connections with the surrounding community and local businesses.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will provide vendor space in the gift shop for local businesses to showcase their products. Priority will be given to businesses that partner with the Midtown Women's Center and charitable organizations.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will host an outside job fair on the lawns to promote hiring locally. Priority will be given to businesses that partner with the Midtown Women's Center.
 - The Midtown Women's Center Farmer's Market will be held both on the lawn of Midtown Women's Center and Piedmont Park repeated monthly. It will be marketed as either "First Friday" or "Second Saturday." Partner with local restaurants and food trucks to provide samples and food.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will have reciprocal advertisement agreements with local businesses and museums. Within the local museum community a membership agreement that gives discounts to all museums after joining one.
3. Offer personal development courses.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will set aside two classrooms for the use of personal development classes, one dedicated as a media room.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will provide self defense, yoga, and meditation classes. (These classes can be held outside in good weather.)
 - The Midtown Women's Center will offer certificate programs including GED, online certifications (including Microsoft and Google), and practical skills including resume work and finance literacy. We will partner with Girls Who Code to provide some of these classes.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will provide English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to help community members become more job-ready.
4. Educate the public on the diversity of women's experiences.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will partner with museums and educational institutions in the area to provide traveling exhibits, lectures, and workshops on global women's history.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will curate a long-term exhibit series with local women artists, including past and present pieces from women artists.
 - The Midtown Women's Center will integrate members of the community as stakeholders in exhibitions along with a calendar of rolling curators in diverse communities working on a contract basis.