

# CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY IN SCIENCE



**MUSEUM of LIFE + SCIENCE**

Carrie Heinonen, CEO

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# Agenda

- BRIEF HISTORY
- RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- BOND UPDATES
- WHAT LIES AHEAD



# Museum History: Serving Durham for Eight Decades



## June 15, 1946

Durham Children's Nature Museum opens

## November 1, 1947

Museum moves to Old Hester Home Place

## 1958

City gifts 12 acres on Murray

## Sixties & Seventies

Museum opens on Murray Ave.

Prehistory Trail open to the public

Name changes to North Carolina Museum of Life & Science

Aerospace Exhibit Center opens

Ellerbe Creek Railway opens

City grants 72-acre expansion

## Eighties & Nineties

Education, Exhibits & Development departments established

Adopts "Master Plan" for expansion

New Additions:

- Northside buildings
- Indoor animal habitats
- New space exhibits
- Indoor nature center
- Mercury Meeting Room

## 2000s - Present

Development of hands-on outdoor exhibits

New Offerings:

- Magic Wings Butterfly House*
- Explore the Wild*
- Catch the Wind*
- Dinosaur Trail*
- Into the Mist*
- Parking Deck*
- South Labs 1-4*
- Hideaway Woods*
- Earth Moves*
- Play to Learn*
- Lobby Expansion*



# COMMUNITY CONNECTOR



## MISSION

Sparking curiosity and respect for nature and science

## VISION

A community connected to science and invested in playful learning as a way of understanding and enriching ourselves and our world.



# SERVING DURHAM FY24

**640K+**

ANNUAL VISITORS  
+60K v PY



**\$12.4M ANNUAL**  
Operating Revenue (FY24)

**107K+**

FREE VISITS

14K Community Days  
6K School Groups  
4K Educators  
85K+ Free Under 3



**16.6K**

Member Households

**1.2K+**

IGNITE MEMBERS

**16.7K**

IGNITE VISITS



**70K**

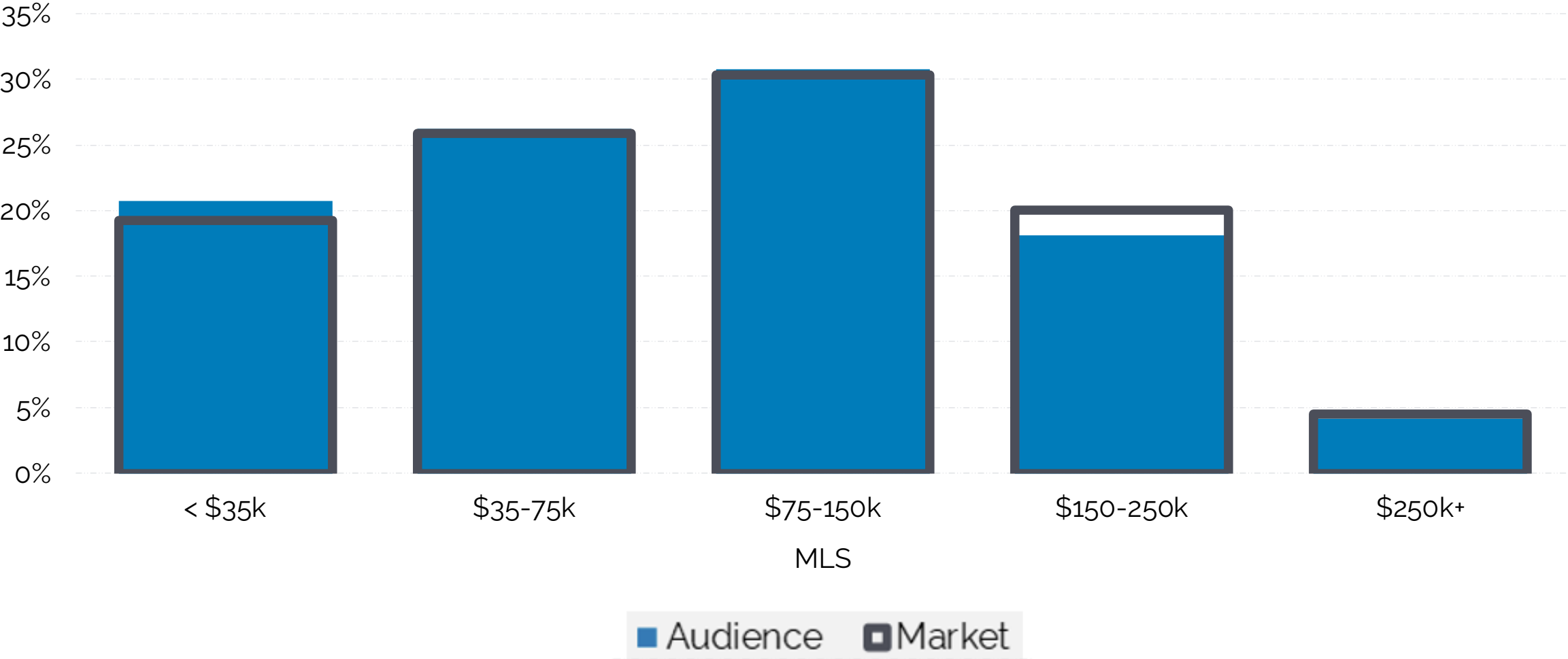
PROGRAM ATTENDEES

3K Campers  
40K School Programs  
10K Community Programs



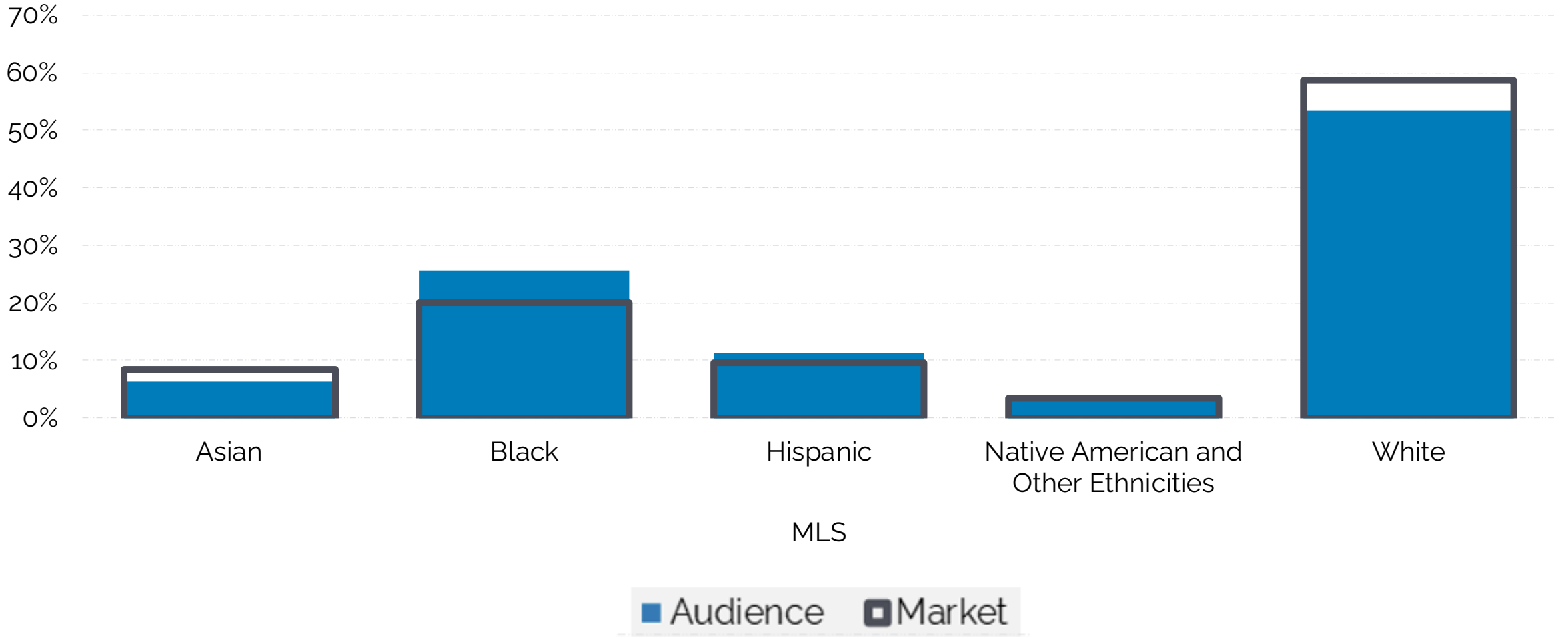
# Household Income\*

\*within 30 mins of MLS



# Race & Ethnicity\*

\*within 30 mins of MLS





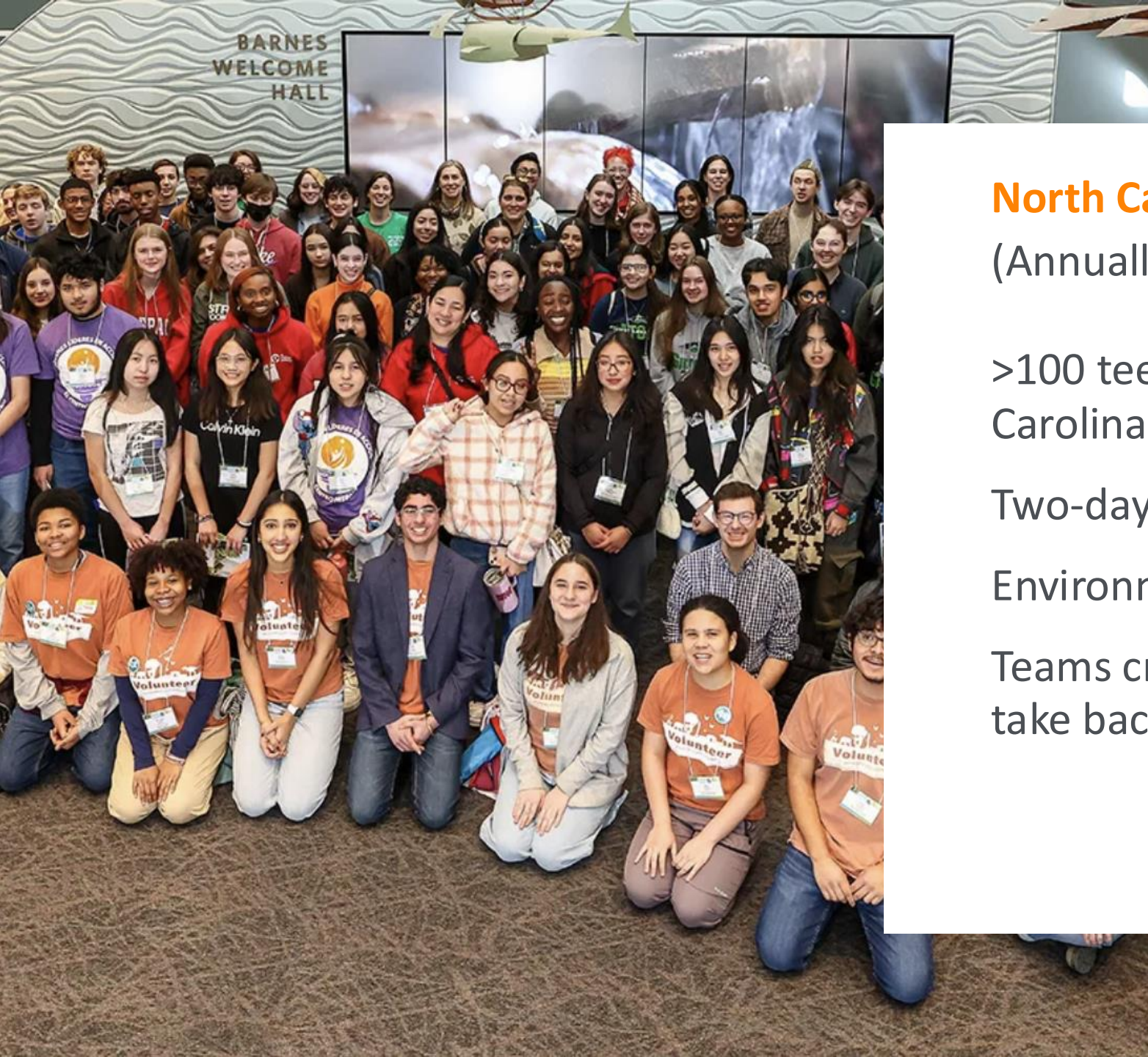
# Durham Community Engagement

## *TACKLING RELEVANT ISSUES*

- Youth Climate Summit
- Climate Exhibit (beta)
- Red Wolf Conservation
- NOAA Center for Collaborative Heat Monitoring







## North Carolina Youth Climate Summit

(Annually since 2022)

>100 teenagers from across North Carolina

Two-day, youth-led event

Environmental-themed Workshops

Teams create Climate Action plans to take back to their communities





## CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE HEAT MONITORING

- \$2.3 Million grant from NOAA
- One of two virtual NIHHIS Centers of Excellence
- Community heat-data collection in 32 historically marginalized communities across the US





# Community Engagement

## *COMMUNITY CO-CREATION*

- Youth Climate Summit
- Climate Exhibit
- Sparking Interest NASA Grant
- Black Excellence in Science



# Community Engagement: RTP

## *CELEBRATING BIO-SCIENCES*

- Biotech exhibit
- Lab Space
- Expanded adult programming





# Community Engagement: RTP

*EDUCATION=WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT*

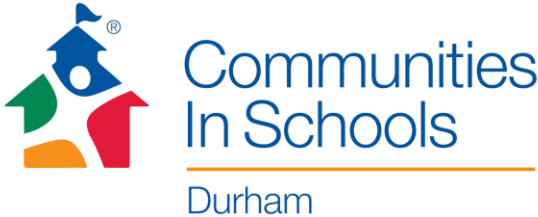
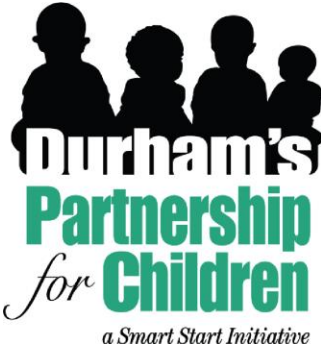
- Narrowing the Education Gap
- Supporting DPS
- Early Childhood Programming



# Access: Ignite partners



book harvest



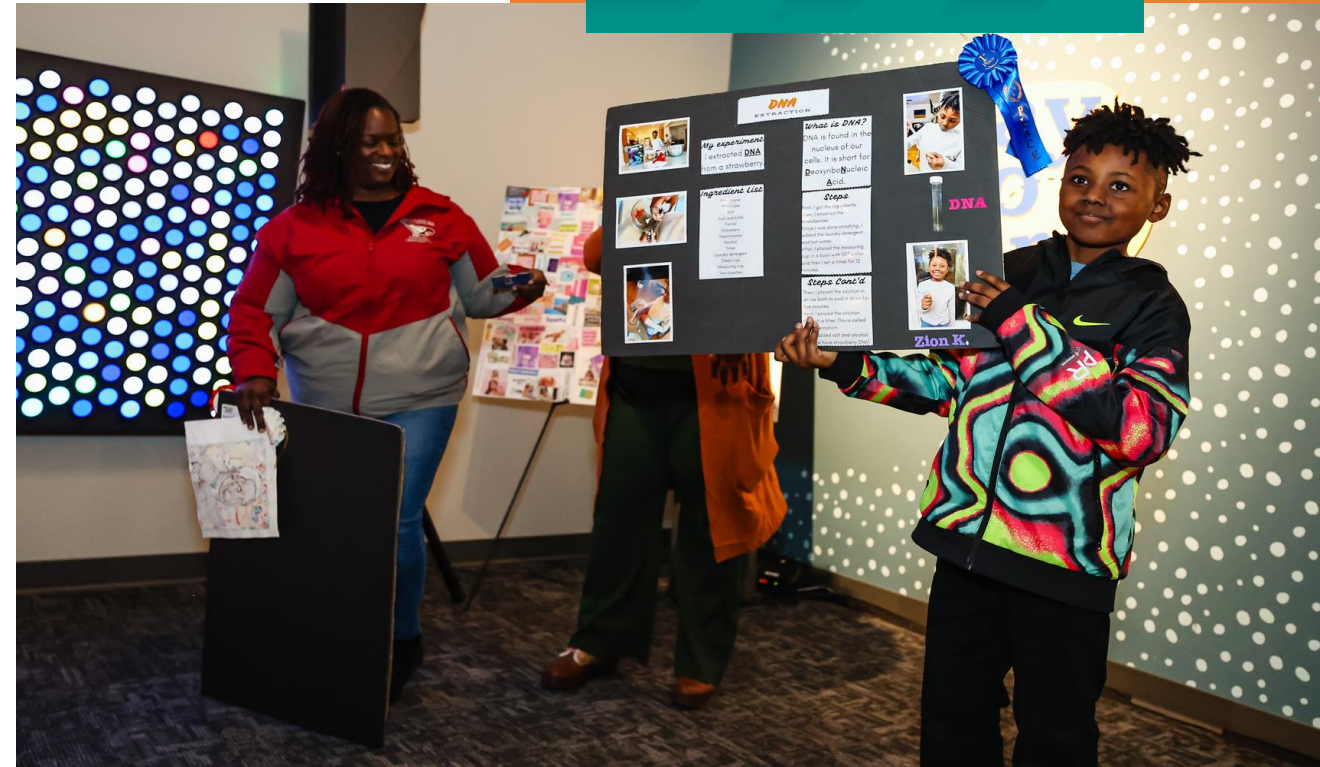
MUSEUM of LIFE + SCIENCE



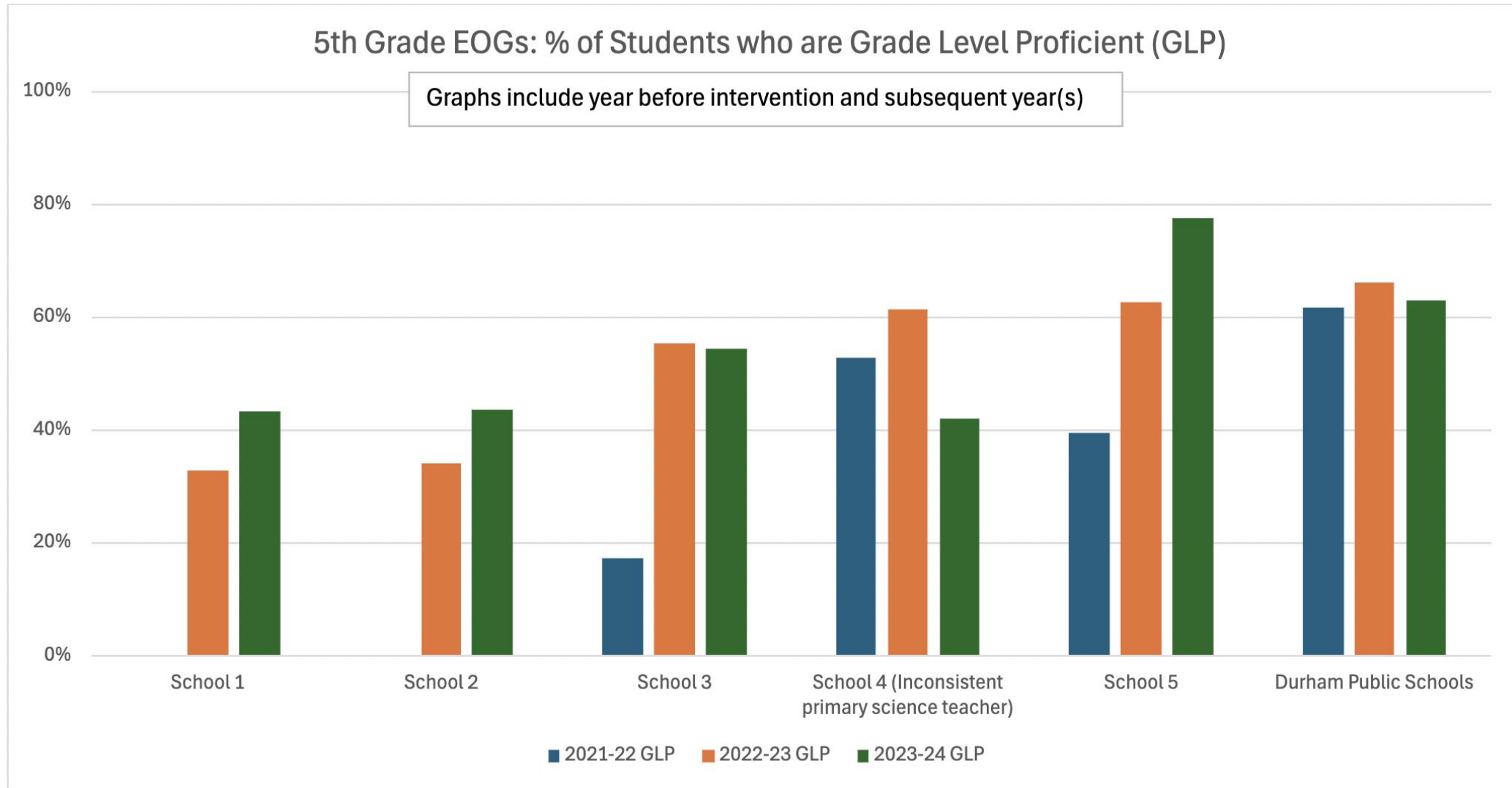


# Access: Durham Community Days

- Free entry for Durham Country residents (Five children welcome per adult)
- 22 Durham Community Days
- 14K+ attendees (+14% vs PY)



# Expanded DPS 5th Grade Partnership – now in 10 schools!







## Expanded PreK Programming

- Facilitated experiences for under 5 years-old
- 16 weekly events: Storytime, STEM crafts
- Age-based meetups
- 85K+ Free < 3 visits (+ 38% vs pre-exhibit)

*Access to quality PreK education strongly predicts HS STEM success.*

*(Ansberry & Morgan, 2019)*



# 2022 Bond Projects\*

MLS is actively fundraising to cover inflation

**THE LAB**  
Summer 2025



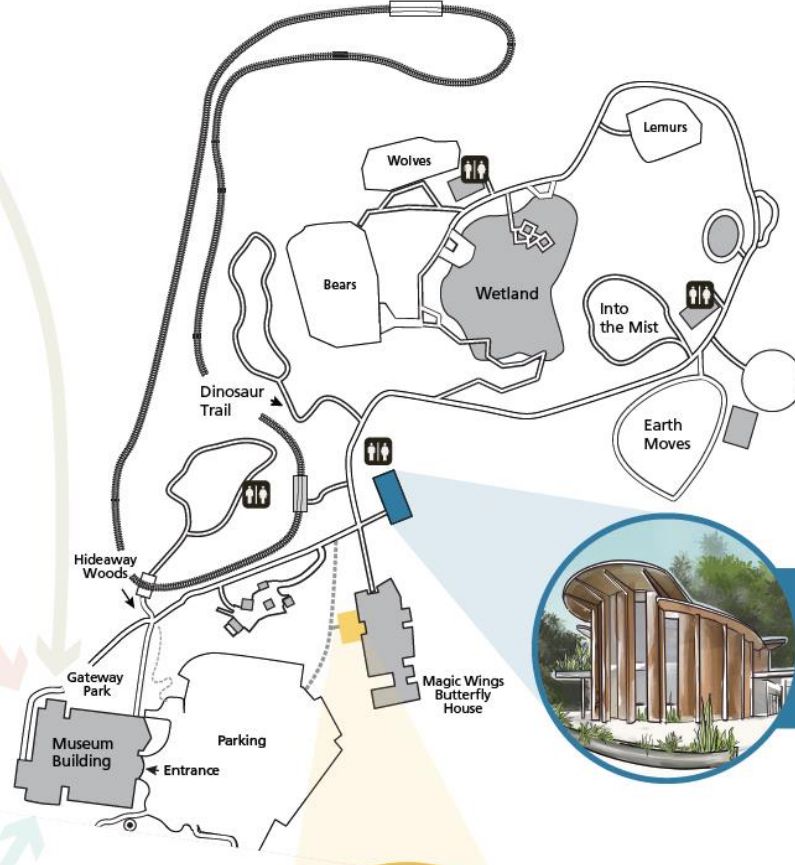
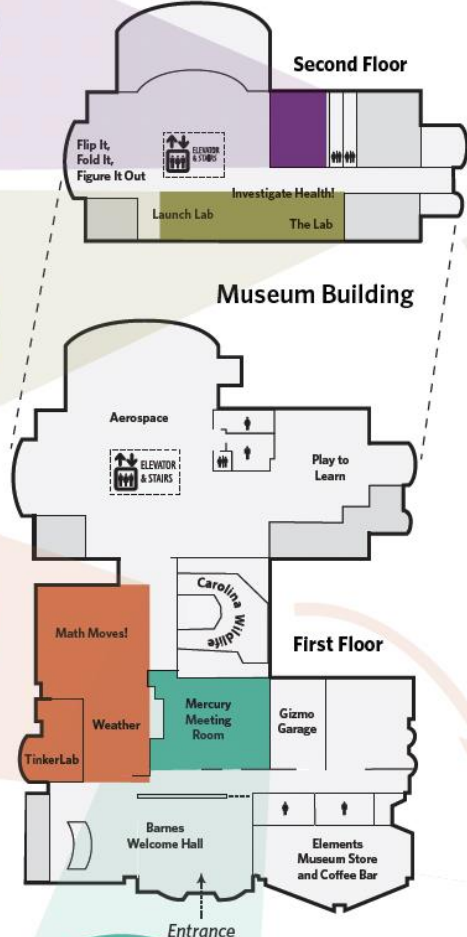
**BIOTECH GALLERY**  
Late 2026



**CAFE**  
Summer 2025  
**CLIMATE GALLERY**  
Early 2026



**MERCURY MEETING ROOM**  
Fall 2025



**SPROUT CAFÉ**  
Fall 2026



**BUTTERFLY HOUSE PAVILION**  
Spring 2025

\*Projecting 45% MWBE



# Café Renovation

## Living Building Petal Certification

Projected Opening:  
Fall 2026



# Biotechnology

## Gallery and Lab

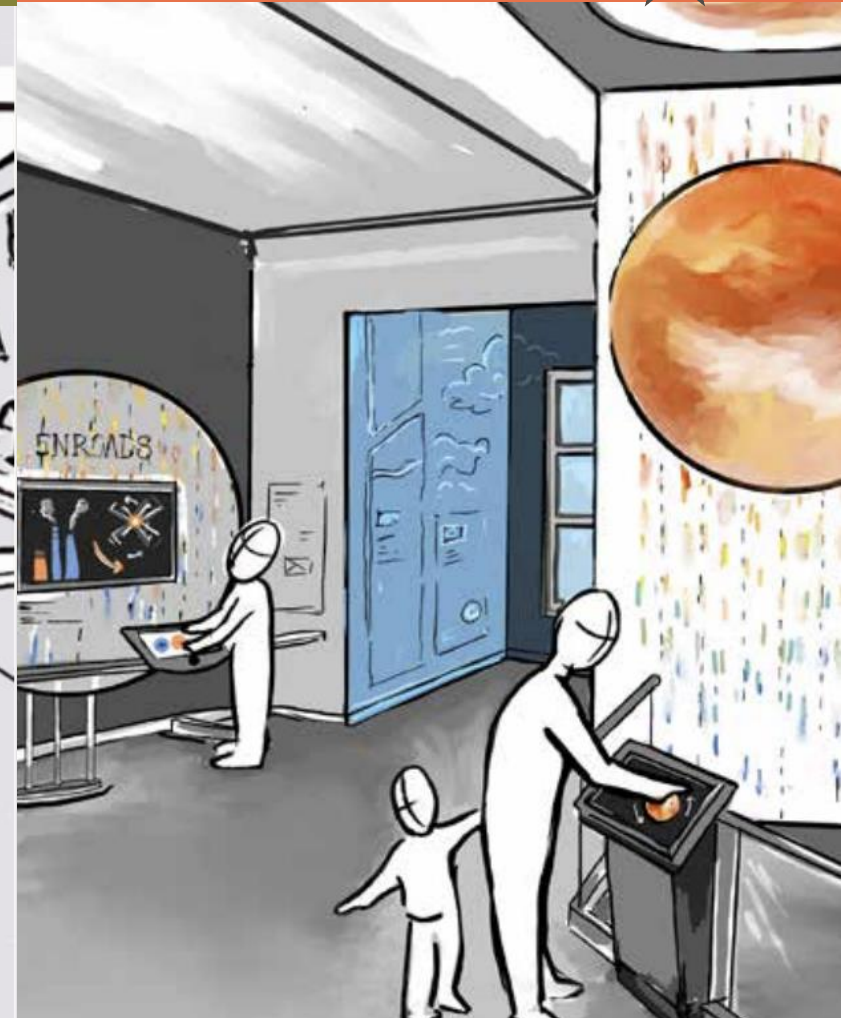
Projected Opening:  
Lab: Summer 2025 ★  
Gallery: Late 2026



# Climate & Sustainability

## Gallery and Coffee Bar

Projected Opening:  
Coffee Bar: Summer 2025 ★  
Gallery: Early 2026 ★







# Butterfly House Pavillion

*Opening May 2025*





# Future Focus

## EXPAND ACCESS

- Advocate for public transport
- Explore SNAP/EBT member offering
- Full year of adult/teen programs
- 5th grade science program across DPS
- Maintain PreK programming

## DIVERSIFY FUNDING

- Continue to expand grant applications
- Drive rentals in newly renovated spaces
- \$1.5M state appropriation for lab support

# Future Focus: Transportation



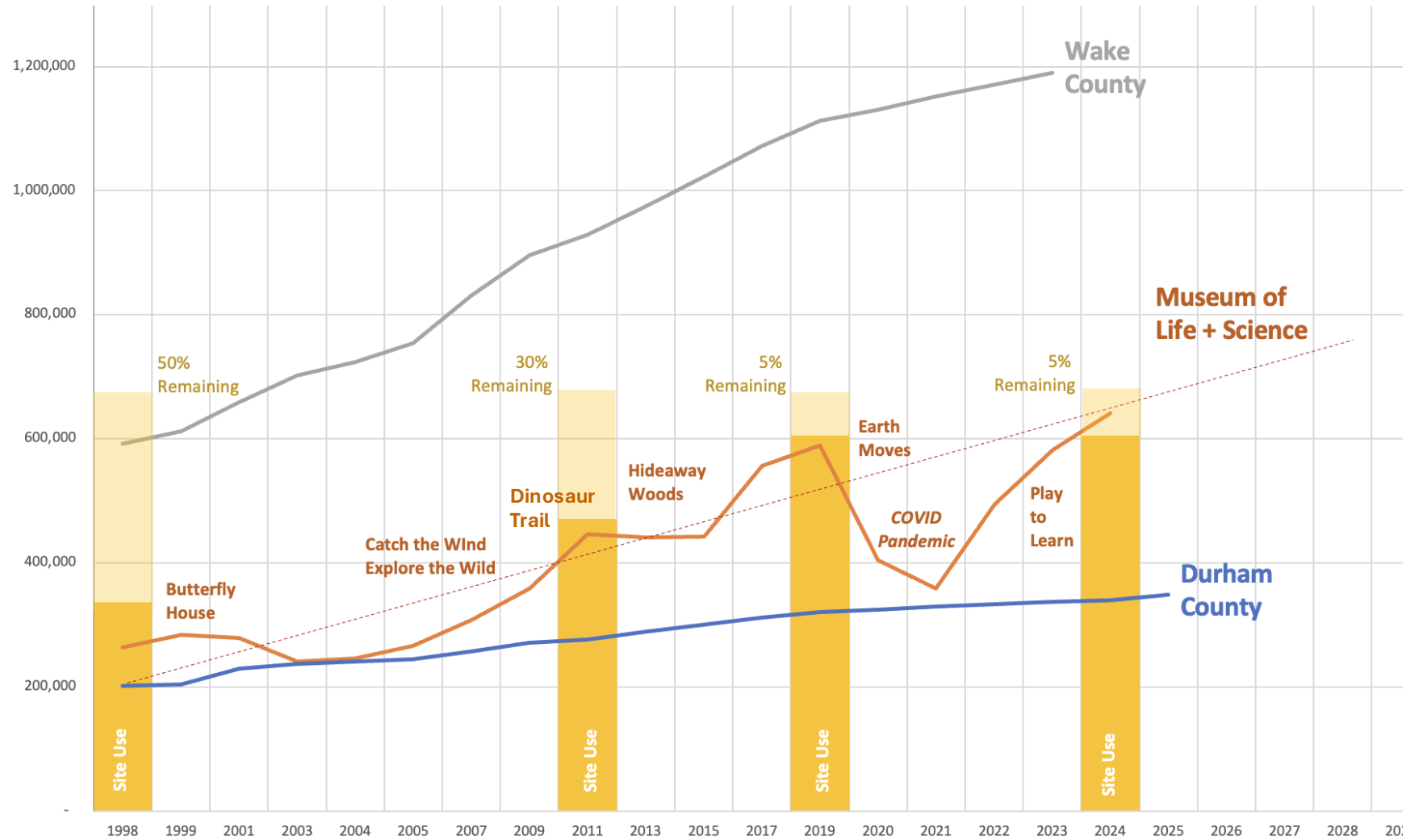
Public transport .6/.8 miles from MLS  
(15 min walk)

Test with Durham County planned for  
2025 (Thank you for the support)

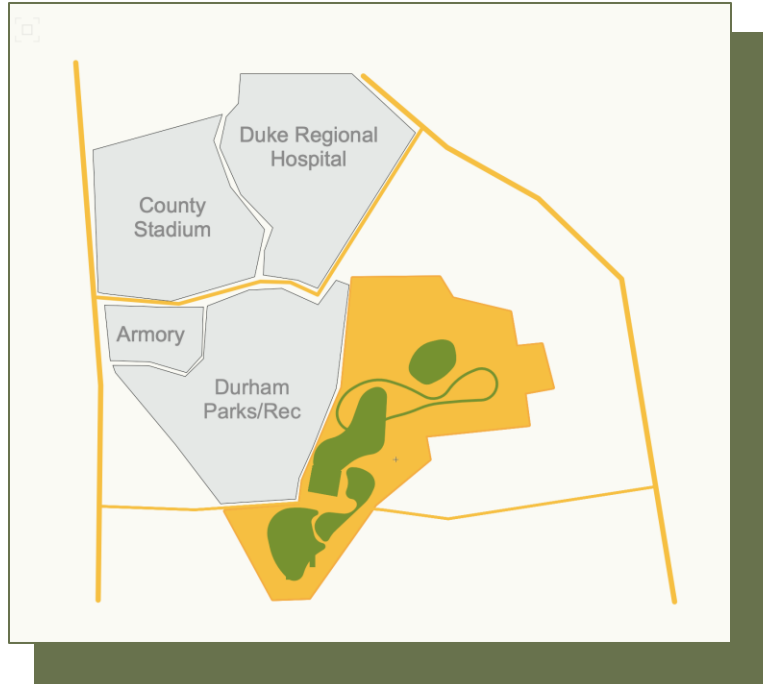




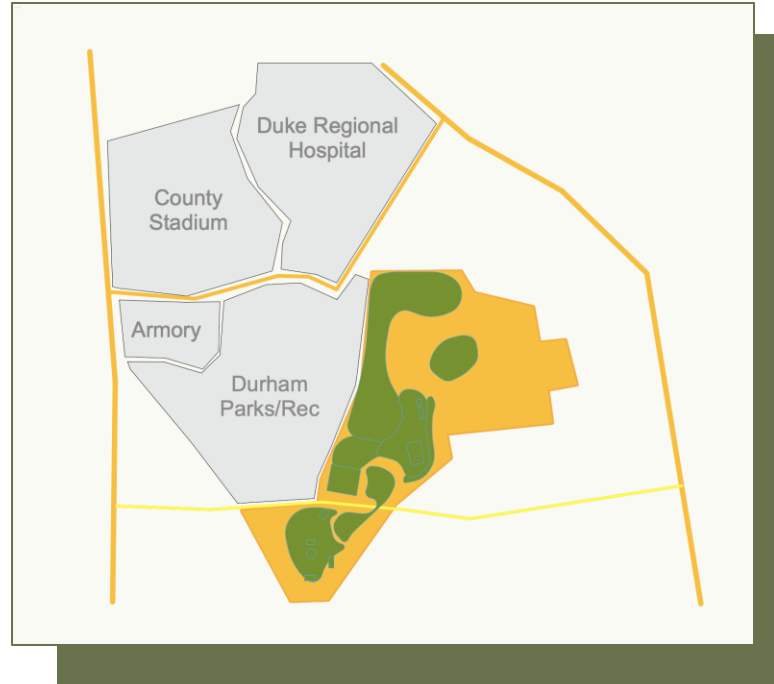
# What Lies Ahead: Museum Growth & Expansion



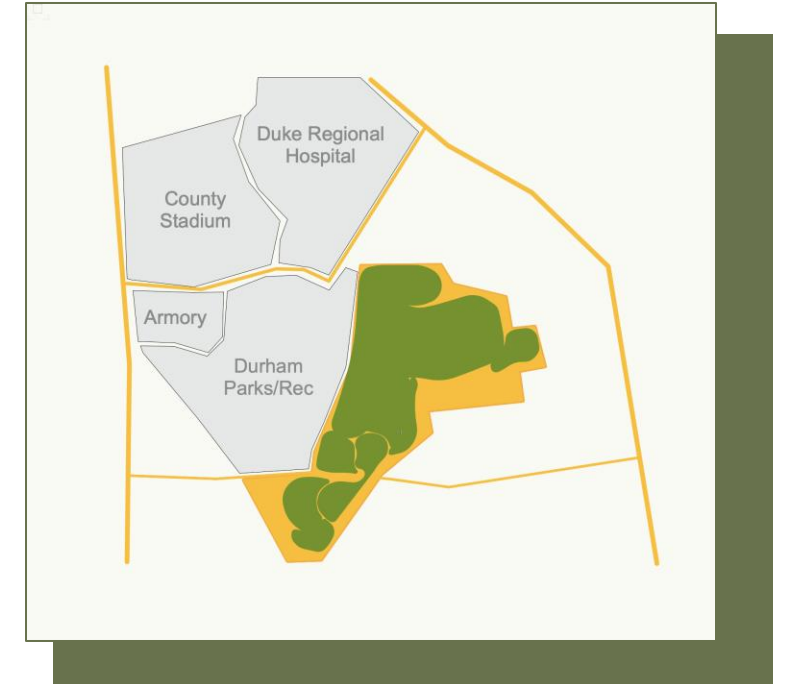
# Museum Land Usage



1998



2011



2019-2025



**THANK  
YOU,  
DURHAM  
COUNTY!**

