



# The Olana Partnership

**STRATEGY 2030**







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We are very pleased to present The Olana Partnership's Strategy 2030 plan. This builds on the remarkable success of our 2020-2025 plan, which included the completion of the Frederic Church Center for Art & Landscape, the first new building at Olana since Church's lifetime. The nine-month-long strategic planning process began in March 2025 and involved multiple engagements with our board of trustees and staff as well as with our colleagues at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

We express our appreciation to the members the Strategic Plan Task Force: Meredith Kane, Jennifer Krieger, Beth Mason, and Jane Smith, Peter Warwick and to the organization's Co-Chairs, Joe Baker and Robin Key, and Executive Team members, Mary Lawrie and Mark Prezorski, for their substantial contribution of time and thought to guide and shape this process.

Our past accomplishments and ability to achieve future goals both derive from the commitment and talents of our staff, volunteers, members, and supporters. While The Olana Partnership is the private non-profit partner of New York State Parks as a public agency - forming one of our country's most potent public-private partnerships - our energy and success comes from engaging the public in the largest and most diverse sense possible. Olana not only welcomes all but depends on all to steward its extraordinary landscape and collections and bring them forward to future generations.

With appreciation,



**Sean E. Sawyer, Ph.D.**

Washburn & Susan Oberwager President



**Peter Warwick**

Chair, Strategic Plan Task Force

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# Introduction

The Olana Partnership's Strategy 2030 builds on the success of our previous strategic plan and more clearly defines what we aim to achieve through our work. This plan continues our commitment to enhancing the in-person visitor experience and to advancing the restoration of the entire site. It deepens our connection with regional communities and brings new life to Olana's collections, using them to spark creativity, scholarship, and a richer understanding of Frederic Church's national and international significance. Launching in Church's bicentennial year, Strategy 2030 positions us to elevate Olana's visibility through a more cohesive communications and branding effort. Equally important, this plan strengthens our internal capacity and financial foundation through investments in staff and board development, organizational systems, and long-term revenue growth, ensuring we remain a strong and adaptable partner with New York State Parks. Our Envisioned Outcomes will help us and those we serve understand the impact of our work in securing a thriving future for this remarkable place for years to come.

## Strategy development process



A joint staff-board Task Force led the process with regular meetings throughout the year.

# Mission

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The Olana Partnership's mission is to restore and enhance Frederic Church's Olana, elevate its significance, and welcome diverse, contemporary audiences for learning and enjoyment.

The Olana Partnership is the cooperative nonprofit partner of New York State Parks at Olana State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark and a public work of art, architecture, and landscape.



# Vision

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Olana will be a globally recognized American landmark—vibrant and alive with activity—that sparks deep connections with art, landscape, and nature.

# Enduring Goals

Strategy 2030 renews our commitment to the three primary goals established in our previous plan:



**1**

Engage visitors and communities in Frederic Church's holistic vision for Olana and its relevance for contemporary audiences

**2**

Make Olana and the Hudson Valley national and international icons for American art and cultural history, historic preservation, and environmental conservation

**3**

Strengthen The Olana Partnership's capacity to expand Olana's reach and impact

# Accomplishments

Our previous five-year plan, launched in 2021, enabled significant organizational progress. Here are a few key highlights:



**Opened the Frederic Church Center for Art & Landscape**, a state-of-the-art and sustainably-designed welcome center and interpretative hub for Olana as a holistic, designed historic landscape experience.

**Expanded public programming**, including family programs, off-site engagement, free community days, and a webinar series featuring speakers from around the world and across all disciplines.

**Increased library membership** from 13 to 70 participating libraries, allowing residents of the Hudson Valley and neighboring free access to a variety of public tours.

**Increased year-round, whole site interpretation**, including expanded landscape tours, special winter exhibitions, and a regular program of site-specific contemporary art installations in the landscape.

**Increased school field trip participation** from across the region by 75% due to initiative offering no-cost field trips for Columbia & Greene County schools.

**Increased attendance in offsite community programs** (from 0 to 1200 in 2025).



**Increased access to Olana for diverse communities**, including a full day of free access to tours and programs each month and the introduction of Spanish-language interpretation and programs.

**Emerged from the COVID 19 pandemic as stronger, more financially resilient organization** that retained all staff and served the public throughout as allowed by public health restrictions.

**Completed a \$10 million capital campaign** and raised \$5 million more in capital funding for the Frederic Church Center.

**Initiated the creation of a publicly accessible online catalogue** of Olana's collections with a major grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

**Increased year-round and seasonal staff expansion**, individual and business memberships increase, and operational budget grows.

**Launch of Frederic Church 200**, a nationwide celebration of the bicentennial of the artist Frederic Church's birth, engaging more than 50 institutions, supporting four new publications, and developing numerous related programs.



# Strategic Action Priorities

The Olana Partnership's Strategy 2030 Plan focuses on seven priorities. The first four speak to our mission-driven work with the public and the latter three to strengthening our organization's ability to achieve our goals.

## 1 Expand whole site interpretation for a fuller visitor experience

- Establish the Frederic Church Center as fundamental to the visitor experience
- Launch and operate the cafe at the Frederic Church Center
- Optimize landscape engagement in public tours and programs, focusing on Olana as a unified work of landscape art and design
- Enhance self-guided tour options outside of touring hours
- Activate the whole site with an annual program of outdoor contemporary art commissions
- Complete long-term site development plan that outlines capital development and interpretative goals in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

## 2 Restore and activate Olana's farm complex

- Partner with OPRHP and other regional stakeholders to develop a shared strategy for Olana's farm
- Develop farm tours and programs
- Stabilize the physical structure of the Main Barn



## Strategic Action Priorities continued

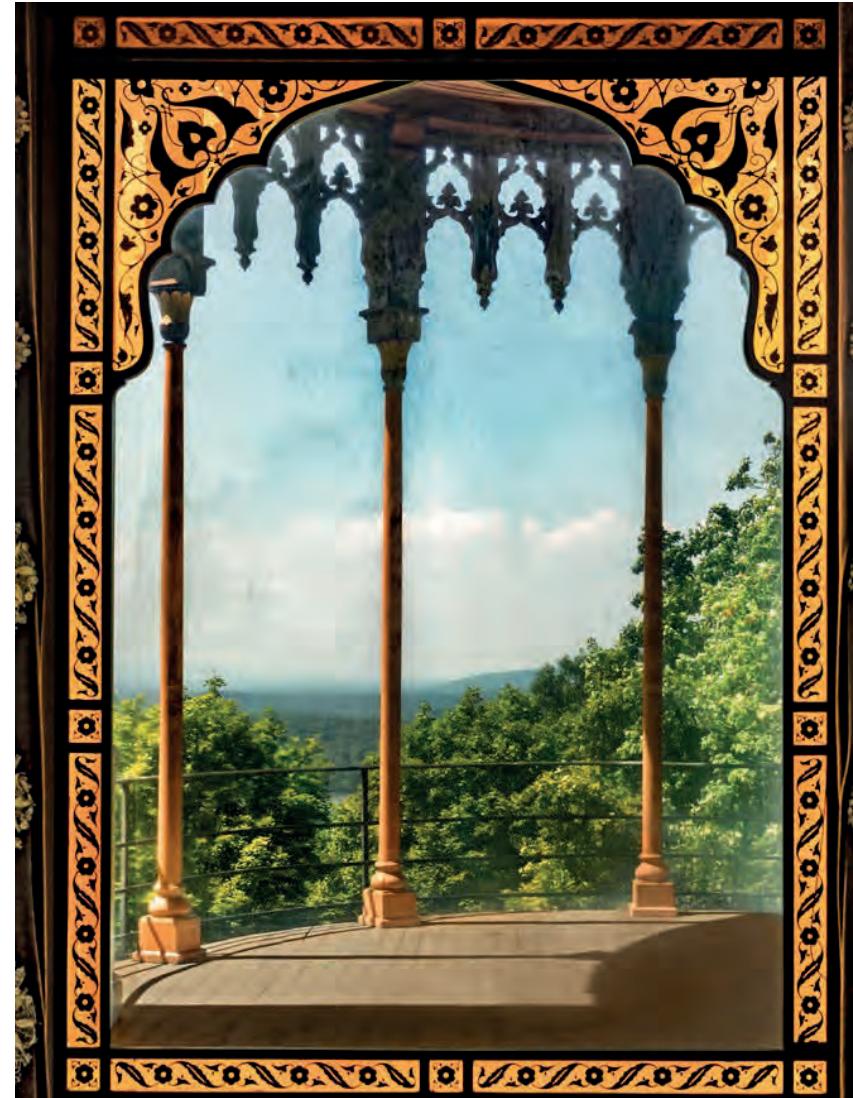
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### **3 Make Olana more accessible and relevant to regional communities**

- Broaden the stories we tell to include diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences
- Design onsite and virtual programming and interpretation to make Olana accessible to visitors of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds
- Build capacity for local student engagement in The Olana Partnership's educational programs
- Deepen local and regional partnerships via off-site engagement, to provide expanded learning and enjoyment (e.g., with schools, libraries, community colleges and cultural organizations)

### **4 Harness Olana's collections to spark creativity, scholarship, and cultural understanding of Frederic Church's lasting national and international relevance**

- Partner with OPRHP to prioritize projects aimed at conserving and making Olana's permanent collections, particularly fine and decorative arts, accessible in ways that resonate with today's audiences, including via a publicly accessible online catalogue
- Develop strategic partnerships with academic institutions and museums on initiatives that promote Olana's cultural significance
- Expand engagement with contemporary artists for research and outdoor contemporary site-specific commissions
- Complete long-term site development plan in partnership with OPRHP that expands access to domestic spaces, including third floor access





## Strategic Action Priorities continued

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### **5 Establish a cohesive visibility, branding, and communications strategy that builds Olana's recognition among new and diverse national and international audiences**

- Leverage Frederic Church's bicentennial to boost Olana's visibility and launch The Olana Partnership's marketing and branding approach
- Develop and fund a comprehensive branding and communications plan, including strategies to expand national and international reach

### **6 Strengthen The Olana Partnership's organizational capacity to better achieve its mission and goals**

- Expand board and staff diversity
- Undertake succession planning for board and staff leadership
- Create staffing capacity assessment and space utilization plan for The Olana Partnership
- Supplement staff capacity with a more robust volunteer program
- Proactively strengthen the partnership with OPRHP at all levels
- Assess and develop organizational systems and resources to support The Olana Partnership workflow
- Build integrated strategic data collection and evaluation capacity

## Strategic Action Priorities continued

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### **7 Position The Olana Partnership for long-term financial sustainability and growth**

- Strengthen the partnership between board and staff to support shared revenue goals, including endowment growth
- Build The Olana Partnership's development capacity for revenue growth, including via integration of development platforms and upgrades of databases
- Create multi-year revenue targets across revenue streams to support annual operations and grow the endowment, including via grants, individual donors/bequests, sponsorship, membership, and earned income
- Develop multi-year organizational budget projections to support strategic growth



# Envisioned Outcomes

We expect the work we will undertake via the seven Strategic Action Priorities will yield the following ten outcomes.

**1**

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## **Deepen Understanding of Olana as a Masterwork of American Landscape Art and Design**

Visitor surveys, academic connections, and digital reach show more people experiencing and understanding Olana as a unified work of landscape art and design.



**2**

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## **Transform and Grow In-Person Engagement**

Annual site visitation increases, with a greater percentage of audiences being first-time visitors, families, or underrepresented groups, and visitors staying longer at Olana, with greater movement throughout the site.

## Envisioned Outcomes continued

### 3

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#### **Increase Regional Youth Participation and Learning**

Double the number of Hudson Valley K-12 students served annually, making Olana a living classroom for art, history, and environmental learning.

### 4

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#### **Amplify Olana as Cultural Hub for Hudson Valley**

Visitor surveys show more Hudson Valley and Capital Region residents and visitors who view Olana as a vital community resource, not just a historic site, but a center for cultural life, dialogue, and inspiration.



## Envisioned Outcomes continued

### 5

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#### **Firmly Establish Olana's Place in American Art World**

An increasing number of scholarly works and exhibitions advance public understanding of Church, Olana, and their place in American landscape art & design, with more contemporary artists engaging with Olana through site-specific installations.

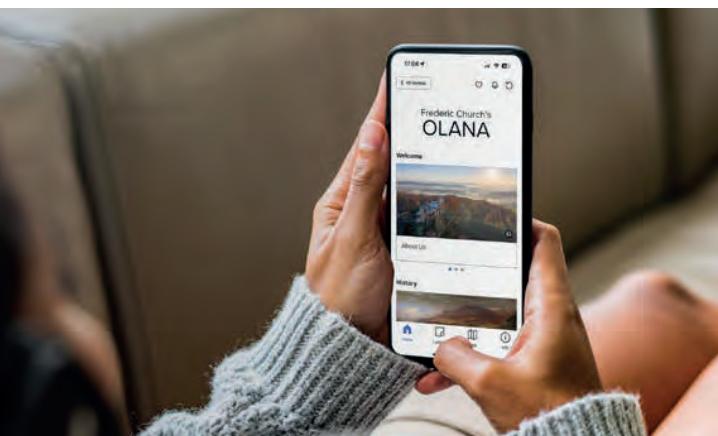


### 6

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#### **Grow Olana's Global Reputation as Destination for American Art and Landscape**

The annual number of connections with national and international audiences increases on site and online, including through online programs, virtual tours, and offerings made possible via vibrant institutional partnerships and collaboration with contemporary artists; and Olana's global brand recognition grows, including via greater social media interaction, website traffic, and press/media coverage achieved as a result of a more cohesive branding and communications strategy.



## Envisioned Outcomes continued

### 7

#### **Broaden Access to Frederic Church's Legacy**

More of Olana's permanent collection becomes available on site and online, with shared preservation and restoration goals with OPRHP established to make more of his legacy, including of Olana's farm complex, publicly available.



### 8

#### **Make Olana A Model of Accessibility for Historic Sites**

Visitors report increasing site accessibility and a greater sense of belonging, with more programs, tours, and printed materials developed according to universal design principles, for multilingual access, and toward expanded use of accessibility aids.



## Envisioned Outcomes continued

### 9

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#### **Further Strengthen Olana's Public-Private Partnership**

The Olana Partnership and OPRHP combine their strengths and resources to provide learning and enjoyment for the public and the best possible stewardship of the site.



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#### **Secure a Path Toward Sustainability**

Increasingly diverse revenue streams support The Olana Partnership's stability and resilience, and endowments expand to support long-term growth.

# Plan Implementation and Assessment

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This strategic plan will be implemented through a process of annual operational planning that The Olana Partnership developed as a result of its last strategic plan. Our approach enables us to reflect on annual accomplishments, learn from experience, and adjust our course as needed in response to evolving internal and external conditions.

Each year, staff meet quarterly to review progress on the annual work plan and make adjustments based on current realities and context. This is reported to the board at its quarterly meetings. Updates will share progress toward:

- Implementing strategic priorities (i.e., did we take the action we set out to undertake?); and
- Achieving our visionary outcomes (i.e., are we seeing evidence of the change we want to have happen?)

This annual progress of assessing both action and our intended associated outcomes will help us ensure accountability and learning as we advance our long-term goals.



