



## **MARYLAND SCIENCE CENTER ANNOUNCES \$10 MILLION IN ENHANCEMENTS TO VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND STATEWIDE ACCESS**

BALTIMORE, October 9, 2024 - The Maryland Science Center (MSC) announced today more than \$10 million in enhancements over the next two years to its Inner Harbor location and expansion of programs around the State of Maryland. The plans represent the largest renovations to the Inner Harbor anchor institution in more than 20 years.

Improvements to the on-site visitor experience (detailed below) will include the installation of a new exhibit on space exploration, the relocation and expansion of the popular *Shed* makerspace, and major upgrades to the *Dinosaur Mysteries* exhibit and Demonstration Stage. In addition, a new set of initiatives will expand access to MSC's interactive experiences by significantly reducing admission prices for low-income audiences, bringing hands-on programs to communities throughout Maryland, and extending support for the free admission program for Maryland school groups until 2030.

The Maryland Science Center is furthering its commitment to reducing its impact on the environment; today's announcement includes plans to renovate its Inner Harbor plaza and Key Highway entrance with more welcoming and greener outdoor education spaces created with sustainable materials, a shade canopy and native plantings.

"These extensive and exciting enhancements are the largest transformation of the Maryland Science Center since our Dinosaur Hall expansion opened in 2004," said Mark J. Potter, MSC President and CEO. "As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary next year, we're making sure that our content and our experiences remain accessible, wide-ranging, and relevant to the next generation of explorers and leaders. We want to provide them with the engaging, hands-on moments of learning that encourage them to ask "why," the support to explore new ideas and options, and the joy of making discoveries and connections."

The Maryland Science Center reaches more than 400,000 people each year at the Inner Harbor and through its programs across Maryland.

To date, the Maryland Science Center has raised three-quarters of its initial \$10 million investment for these enhancements from public and private sources, including the State of Maryland, The Kahlert Foundation, the Northrop Grumman Foundation, and the Constellation Foundation. (Details below.) A capital campaign - dubbed "Inspire, Empower and Engage" - is anticipated to exceed the \$10 million goal for improvements.

### **\$10 million in enhancements**

#### *Visitor Enhancements*

**Space Exhibit:** In late 2025, a new 5,000 square foot exhibit on space exploration will replace the *Our Place in Space* exhibit on the museum's second floor. Dozens of interactive components will invite visitors to ask important questions as they consider *their* life beyond earth: What if we can travel to other planets? What might the challenges be and how can we overcome them? What do we need to do to understand how to live somewhere other than on our home planet?

The exhibit will explore such concepts as infinity, distance, speed, force, gravity, and, at the request of educators who note that students often mistake one for the other, revolution vs. rotation. Visitors will simulate launching and landing a futuristic spacecraft, manipulate robotic arms to perform tasks in space, and explore how the human body might react to the pull of gravity on different planets or when approaching a black hole. By designing an interstellar community, they will make collaborative decisions about allocating precious resources. Updated images and videos from the Webb Space Telescope and rocket launches will be displayed on a huge video wall. The Northrop Grumman Foundation is the sponsor of this new exhibit.

The Shed: The *Shed* makerspace will be relocated to the second floor gallery space overlooking the Inner Harbor promenade. The new *Shed* will feature 36 workstations that can accommodate more individuals and group activities, such as introductions to tools, activities that blend art, craft, science, and engineering, or creating a prototype for an inventive object. The new *Shed* will be named for The Kahlert Foundation, which made a \$1 million gift to the Science Center.

Dinosaur Mysteries: The 12 huge dinosaurs will remain but the first floor exhibit will be refreshed with new technology, graphics, lighting and hands-on components. Content will also be revised to reflect new understanding of how dinosaurs lived.

Demonstration Stage: A new, larger Demonstration Stage on the third floor will accommodate more visitors and provide a more flexible environment for the robust schedule of daily educator-led science explorations.

### *Enhanced Access*

Access Science: The Maryland Science Center is committed to removing obstacles so that all Marylanders can enjoy its exhibits and programs. The *Access Maryland* initiative enables anyone with a Maryland SNAP or Maryland WIC card to purchase admission tickets for \$5 per person. It's anticipated that this program will accommodate up to 7,500 visitors a year.

Science Beyond the Classroom Powered by Constellation: Thanks to a renewed commitment from The Constellation Foundation, this initiative has been extended to 2030. Each year, more than 85,000 Maryland students and teachers visit the Maryland Science Center on field trips for free.

MSC Across Maryland: More Marylanders across the state will experience informal, hands-on STEM education as MSC participates in and hosts events in their communities.

### *Sustainability*

Harbor Plaza renovation: As part of its commitment to sustainability and to be more welcoming to visitors, the Harbor-side plaza and entrance will be transformed into an inviting and educational green space. Improvements will include replacing hard surfaces with reclaimed paving and native plants, creating a shade canopy along a sloping lawn, and improving water management to reduce the impact on the Chesapeake Bay. Pathway markers will introduce visitors to noted Maryland scientists and scientific discoveries.

Constellation Learning Entrance: As with the Harbor entrance, the Key Highway entrance to the Science Center will feature more natural surfaces, more grass areas, and a shade canopy.

HVAC replacement: The first project of the \$10 million enhancements has recently been completed: A new building-wide HVAC system is creating a more pleasant environment for visitors and improving the building's energy efficiency. This \$2 million project was made possible through a grant from the State of Maryland.