



A Path Forward

In April 2022 the park received a Schematic Design 1 submittal from EDX, the project's exhibit design firm. This document presents three unique schemes with different options for organizing exhibit content, visual style, audiovisual elements, and strategies for displaying cultural items. All three were based on the priorities that came out of the content development process—completed at the end of 2021. See Exhibit Framework on page 2 for details.

After getting input from park staff and the Native Interpretation Working Group (NIWG), a Value Analysis Workshop was held to select a preferred alternative. Design schemes were ranked on factors including organization of interpretive themes, visitor flow, protection of cultural items, and potential to inspire visitors and provide a welcoming experi-

ence for tribal community members. As often happens in exhibit design, participants identified different strengths in each scheme. Based on that feedback the park has asked EDX to develop a hybrid approach that incorporates the most advantageous elements of each.

EDX is refining the preferred scheme and will provide the final Schematic Design in August 2022.



Members of the park Senior Leadership Team, exhibit designers, and partners from CU Boulder Museum and Field Studies Program at the Value Analysis Workshop in April 2022.

Thank you Mesa Verde Association!

Mesa Verde Association (MVA), one of the park's non-profit partners, supports educational and interpretive programs, and operates park bookstores. They are also providing significant financial support for the museum exhibits project.

Park entrance fees paid for much of the design process. Additional funding from MVA supports tribal engagement and will cover costs to develop production documents, detailed specifications that an exhibit fabricator can use to construct the new exhibits.



Visit www.mesaverde.org for more information about Mesa Verde Association

Exhibit Framework

Museum exhibits are often built around a “Big Idea” that serves as a framework for how information will be presented. The Big Idea that came out of the content development process is that “Mesa Verde is an ongoing story of people in relationship with the landscape.” This overarching theme allows us to highlight the lifeways of the people who built the mesa top and cliff dwellings, and also encompass the broad spectrum of people who have interacted with this place over time. This includes a diverse group of tribal communities, archeologists, early park supporters and managers, the Civilian Conservation Corps, park staff, and generations of park visitors.

A foundational understanding for the exhibits is that many of today’s native communities are of this place. Exhibits will emphasize the cultural continuity between present day Pueblos and Tribes and their ancestors who made their homes in what is now Mesa Verde National Park.

The exhibits will explore multiple ways of understanding Mesa Verde National Park—including both Indigenous and western archeology and science, oral histories, stories, and traditions. Ensuring visitors understand the sacred nature of this place and how to visit with respect is also a high priority.

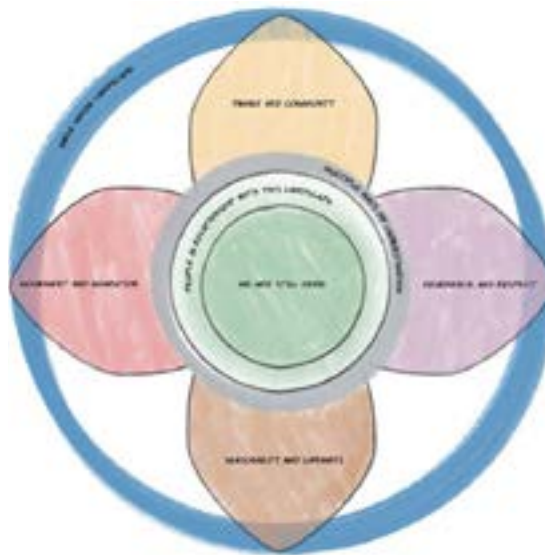


Diagram of relationships between thematic elements in the Schematic Design 1 submittal.

The NIWG has been instrumental in developing this framework and helping re imagine the Museum for the next century. After listening sessions with tribal members, the NIWG requested that the dioramas not be included in the new exhibits. They provided a detailed report listing concerns, including that the dioramas make tribal members feel unwelcome, perpetuate stereotypes, and do not accurately depict daily life.

The park has honored this request and the dioramas are no longer on display. For more information visit <https://home.nps.gov/meve/museum-dioramas.htm>. The dioramas will be preserved as part of the park’s collection and will be accessible for research purposes.

Improving Visitor Flow

To alleviate congestion in the hallway to the auditorium, the park is considering changing the existing visitor flow and encouraging people to travel counter clockwise through the new exhibits.

In this scenario, the bookstore and information desk would switch places providing an enhanced visitor information area that could include displays about the building’s history and architecture.



Conceptual floor plan with reverse visitor flow.

