



Mitchell Park Domes Future State Planning and Construction Cost Estimating

Committee on Parks and Culture

7/18/2023



INTRODUCTION

Today's update will provide a preliminary response to the Board's request for action with a more complete response presented at the next County Board meeting cycle



PURPOSE

Continued data gathering to make an informed decision

Despite years of planning and studying the Domes and its future, there are still some missing data points that are required to make an informed decision

- Accurate cost of each future state option
- Estimate the potential for philanthropic support for the future of the conservatory
- Refinement of the Task Force recommendation based on the Husch Blackwell-Baker Tilly analysis (2022)
- Production and installation of a “mockup” of a new panel of glass and aluminum at the Domes to test the concept of repair or restoration of the Domes’ exterior



WHY

Something has to be done now

At the 12/6/2022 meeting of the Committee on Parks and Culture, and approved by the County Board on 12/15/22, File #22-1184 was adopted.

- “WHEREAS, inaction by Milwaukee County, or the “do nothing” option, when considering paths forward for the Domes, is tantamount to demolition by neglect as the facility continues to deteriorate;...
- WHEREAS, despite significant resources in both time and money spent on planning for the future of the Domes, the County has not yet been able to take a definitive step towards a chosen outcome...”



HOW

A team of experts has been engaged to advance this analysis of all options for the future of the Domes -

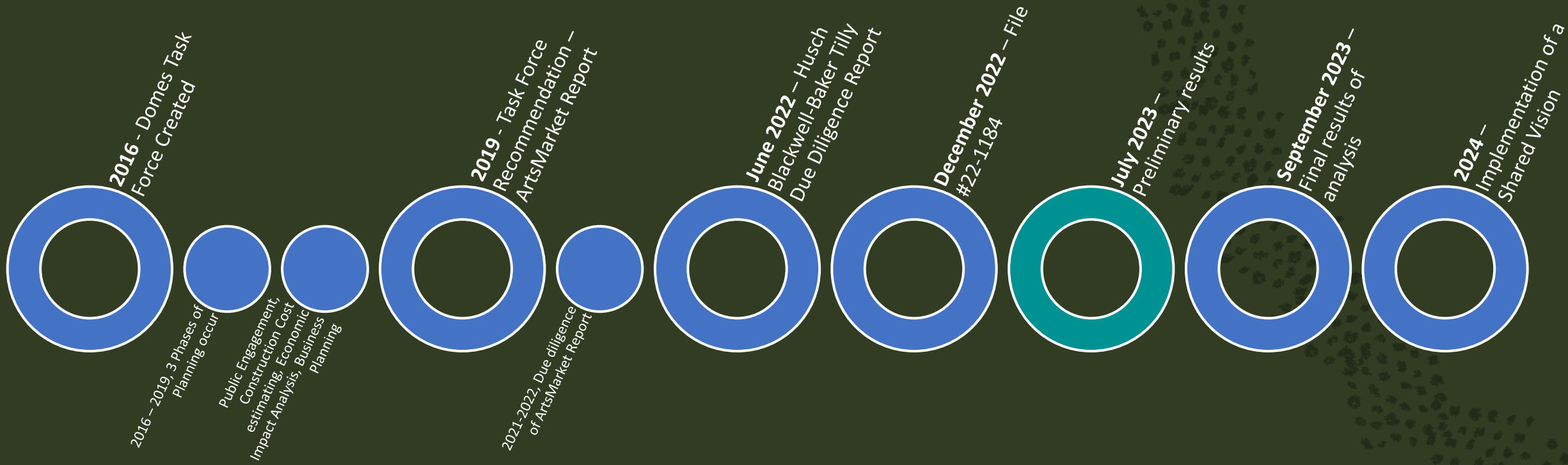
- Ter Molen Watkins & Brandt (TW&B) - Fundraising
- Concord Group, GRAEF, McEnroe Engr, TKWA – Cost Estimating and Alternatives Analysis
- ZS LLC, Supersky – Mockup
- Public Engagement – Various – Supervisors, TW&B, County Parks

File #22-1184, continued -

- “WHEREAS, as the policymakers for the County, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors should have the opportunity to weigh all relevant strategies and their respective fiscal impacts and constraints, economic impacts, and alignment with the County’s strategic plan regarding the future of Mitchell Park Horticultural Center (the Domes).”



WHEN



4 OPTIONS

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, coordinating with the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance, Office of Corporation Counsel, and Office of the Comptroller if necessary, shall present a report to the County Board at the July 2023 cycle which shall evaluate options including:

- (1) Demolition, which should include an estimate for recommended site improvements for Mitchell Park if the Domes are demolished
- (2) Limited scope repairs to address deferred maintenance and code compliance concerns
- (3) Full building renovation including the building envelope (glass, seals, concrete coating)
- (4) Phase III ArtsMarket, LLC proposal for a New Urban Botanical Park and Conservatory”

Husch Blackwell - Baker Tilly report

Conclusion

Each capital source may be available in some amount in isolation, we find it highly unlikely that all capital sources will be available in the amounts needed to pursue the Domes Redevelopment Project as envisioned in the Plan

Highly unlikely that the total OZ funds raised would come close to \$12,000,000

The fact that various capital sources require varied organizational structures means that pursuing one capital source may make it impossible to pursue another

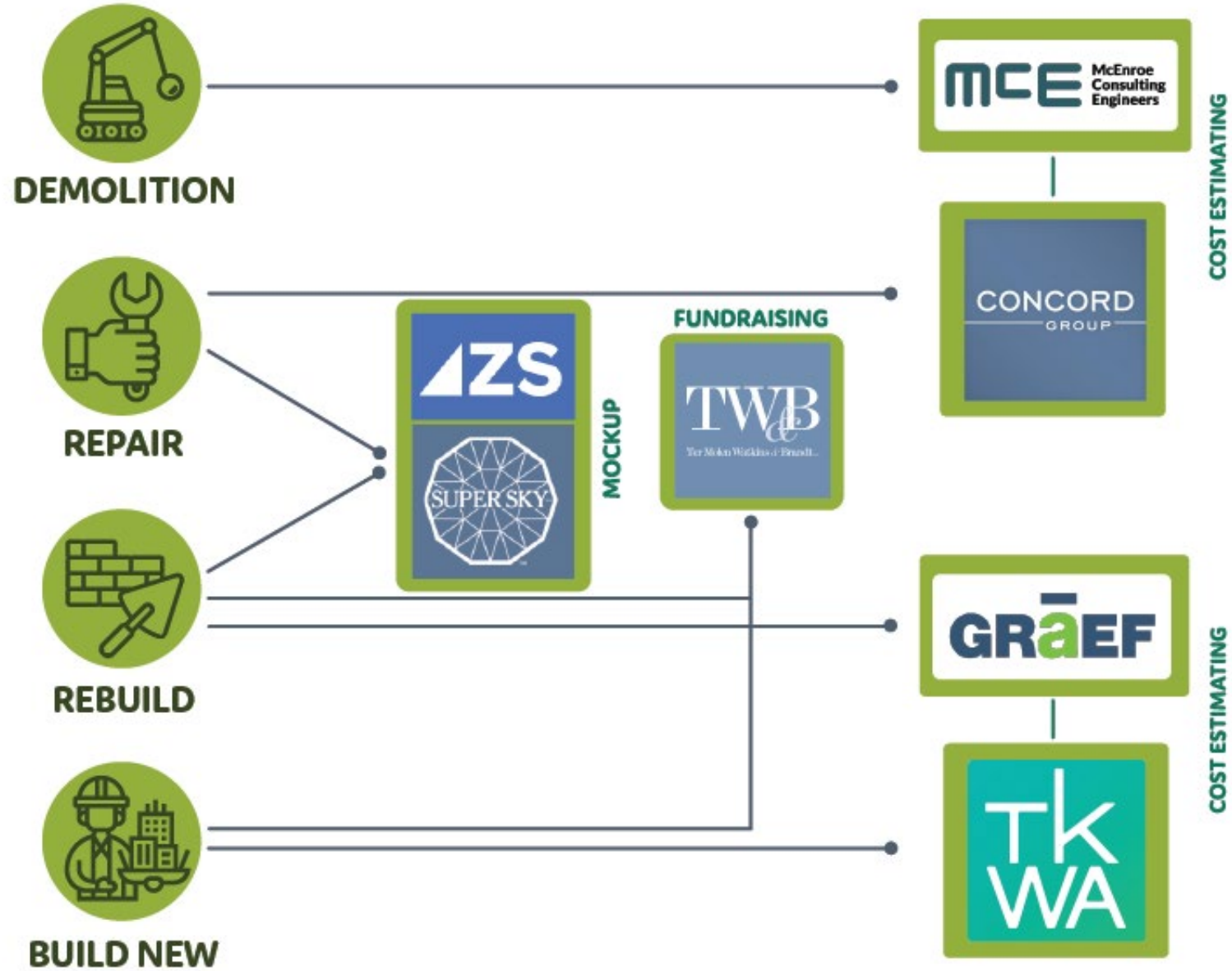
This may be the case when we look at County bonding, which must support a public entity, and PACE financing which requires a non-public entity. Similarly, fundraising requires a 501(c)(3), but 501(c)(3)s present a structuring challenges for HTCs.

4th OPTION

- If the “Phase III ArtsMarket, LLC proposal for a New Urban Botanical Park and Conservatory” has been deemed not feasible, what is the 4th option we will be studying in this analysis?
- Requires a re-definition and re-scoping of this option. To do that we pull themes from the ArtsMarket proposal and repackage it as the 4th option representing the construction of new conservatory elements
- The ArtsMarket proposal envisioned the restoration of the Domes and the construction of new Conservatory buildings and campus, Alternative 2 and 3 will provide information on the Domes restoration work and this Alternative 4 will capture all 1) **new buildings** and 2) **campus elements**



Alternative	1) Demolition	2) Repair	3) Rebuild	4) Build New
Description	Demolition and site restoration	Repair what is broken or needs updating	Rebuild the Domes	Build a new Conservatory facility and outdoor campus
In Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition of the 3 Domes, transition house, lobby and entrance structure, building and mechanical systems, all site improvements such as utilities, circulation Restoration to turf grass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair of the concrete structures of the 3 Domes Replacement of broken glass panes of the 3 Domes Sealing/Caulking glass panes Critical building mechanical system upgrades (boilers and heat, electrical, plumbing) Building façade repairs Building modernization Show Dome LED light system replacement Wi-Fi connectivity Building comms (PA system, lobby enhancements) Security Needed repairs to “back of the house” facilities ADA compliance upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebuilding the exterior glass structures of the 3 Domes New glass panes and aluminum framing elements Repair and repaint/seal concrete structure of the 3 Domes Critical building mechanical system upgrades (boilers and heat, electrical, plumbing) Building façade repairs Building modernization Show Dome LED light system replacement Wi-Fi connectivity Building comms (PA system, lobby enhancements) Security Needed repairs to “back of the house” facilities ADA compliance upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build an additional new addition to the Conservatory A Whitebox facility built to the standards of modern sustainable building design An outdoor park campus with new public gardens
Out of Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition of greenhouses Demolition of public park amenities that may also serve the park (parking on 27th St) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebuilding the exterior glass structures of the 3 Domes Greenhouses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domes Greenhouses



Domes Mockup

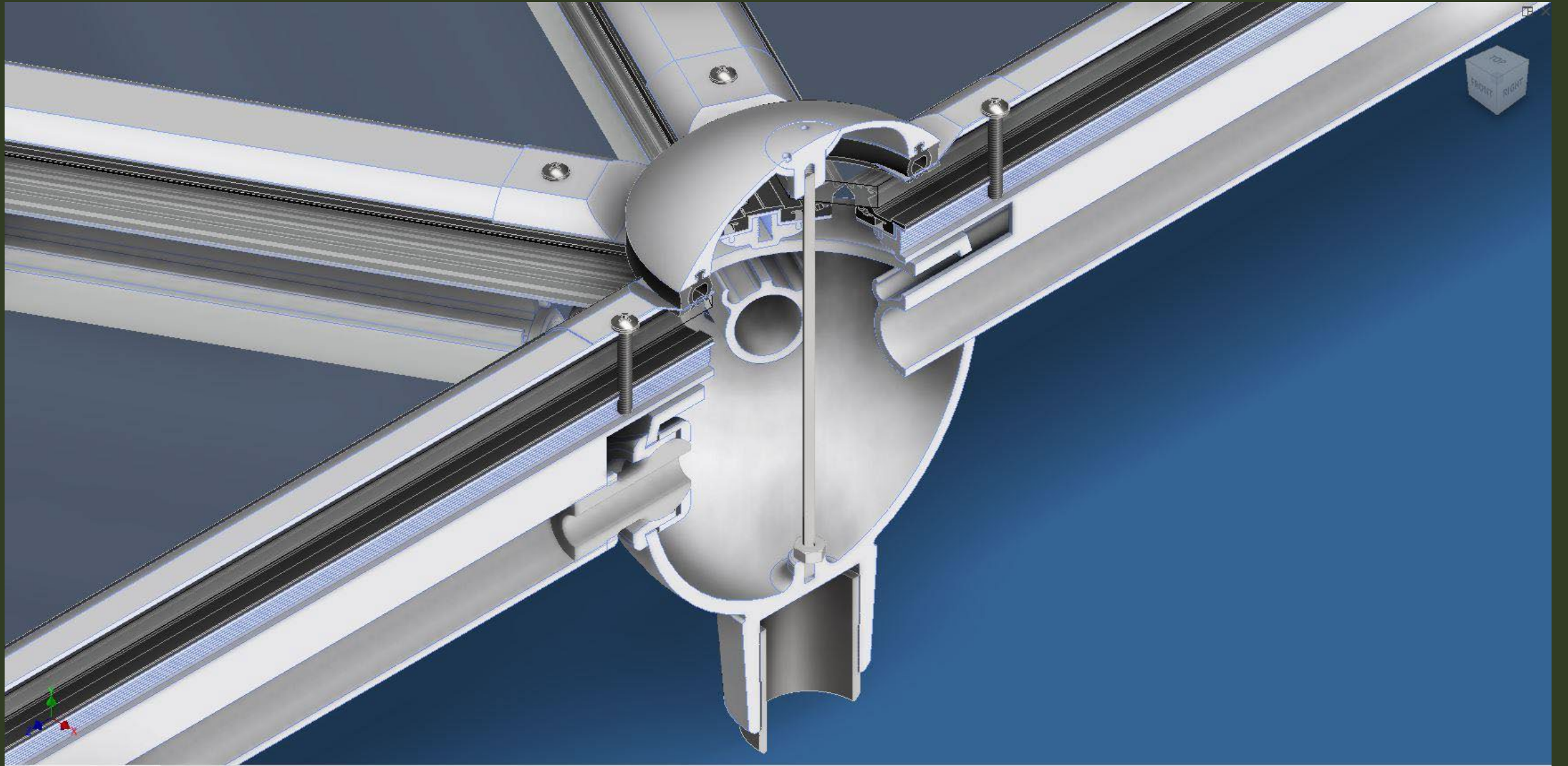
Glass and aluminum frame
production and installation

Domes Glazing Mockup



Domes Glazing Mockup

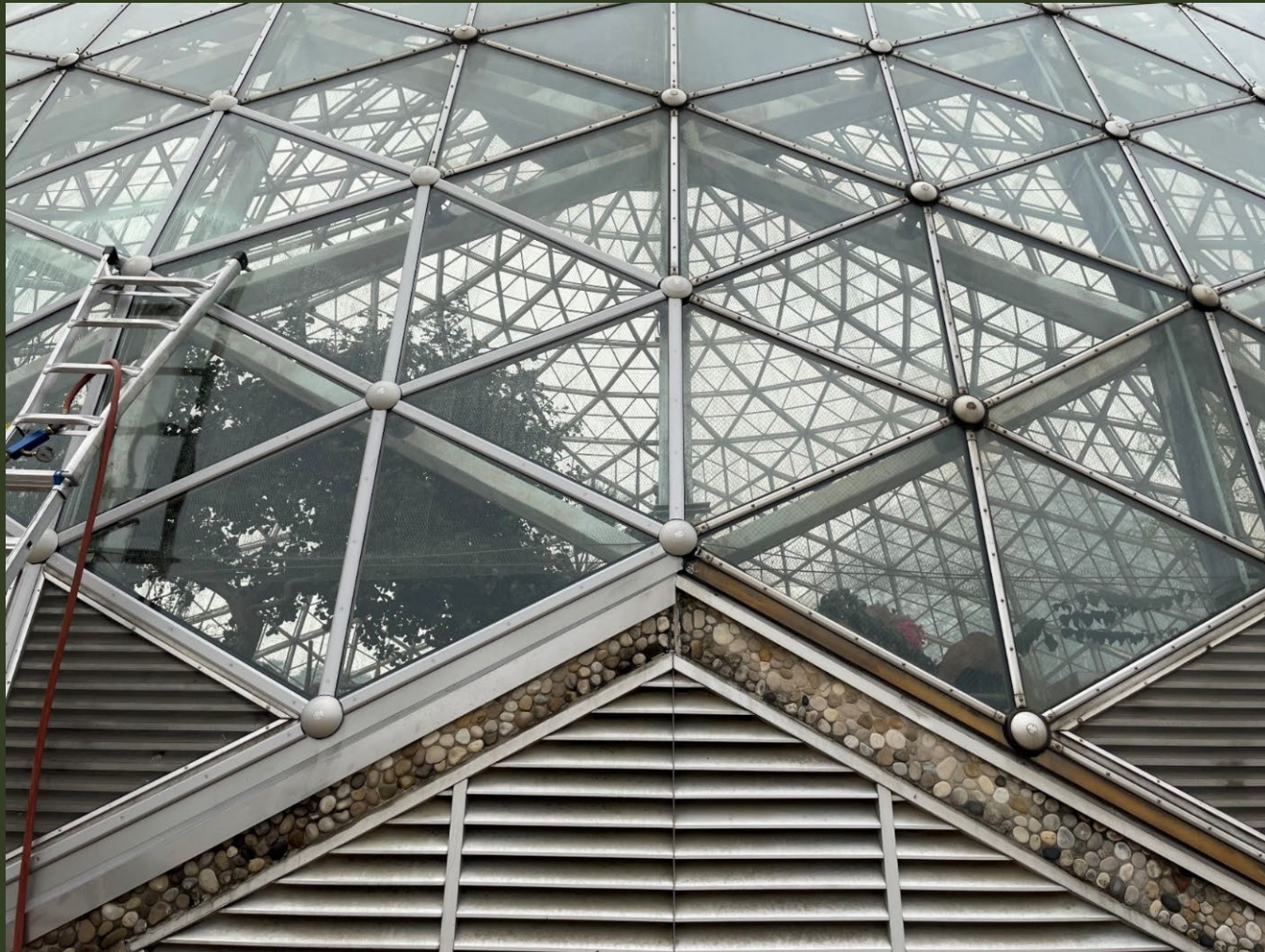




Domes Glazing Mockup



Domes Glazing Mockup



Fundraising Feasibility Study

METHOD – Fundraising Study

- TW&B hired through an RFP process, collaborative effort with Friends of the Domes
- Seeking support for a potential fundraising campaign for the Conservatory and Domes
- Direct interviews with the donor community and a community-wide survey (5,688 responses)
- Alternatives 3 and 4 – Rebuild the Domes or Invest in a new Conservatory
 - Did not ask philanthropists about Alternatives 1 or 2
- Conducted between March and June 2023
- First step towards an actual fundraising campaign, not a onetime effort

FOD – Fundraising Study



- The Friends of the Domes is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) established in 1989. It is responsible for a significant portion of the operations at the Mitchell Park Domes, including educational programming and field trips, membership, cultural events and programs, retail sales including the gift shop, volunteer recruitment and management and fundraising activities

FEEDBACK – Fundraising Study

- It is possible that, in collaboration with Friends of the Domes, we could generate a successful \$20 million fundraising campaign
- In theory, there was a sense that a \$20M campaign could be of a reasonable size, but there was strong emphasis on the need for a compelling project. “Fixing the Domes” was not seen as compelling.
- About 1/3 of interviewees felt The Domes serve Milwaukee best as the home of the Mitchell Park Conservatory; they did not feel the conservatory should be moved out of the park.
- Very few interviewees or respondents preferred an option in which The Domes were repurposed, and the conservatory placed in a new building.

FEEDBACK – Fundraising Study

- Think Big - Most of those interviewed encouraged decision-makers to think bigger and consider the future of The Domes holistically – not only as a historic structure, a plant conservatory, a gathering place, or a provider of environmental education. Interviewees suggested it is unfortunate that the years-long debate about “saving The Domes” has diverted attention from potential community solutions this major project could deliver.
- Until a vision and specific options are brought to the community to consider – alongside a committed level of public funding – a philanthropic campaign cannot move forward.
- While most people have a fondness for The Domes, most were also pragmatic about the level of neglect and anticipated costs of either scenario they were offered
- We heard clearly, and with great enthusiasm, the opportunity for these iconic structures to be not the singular focus of a capital campaign but rather a catalyst for needed changes in Mitchell Park; changes that would increase use of the park, and create a more inviting neighborhood, community, and tourist destination.

FEEDBACK – Fundraising Study

- It Comes Down to Leadership. [Friends of the Domes] is an independent nonprofit organization that operates within the County-run Mitchell Park, similar to the way the Zoological Society of Milwaukee operates within the County-run Milwaukee County Zoo. Most respondents see the potential for FOD to become a catalytic driver of change in the 62-acre Mitchell Park, positioning the Domes as the iconic face of change in a diverse neighborhood on the city's south side that lacks engaging and activated green space and nearby amenities to make the area more vibrant as a park.
- For this to happen, FOD must...demonstrate they can “get something done”
- As the steward of an iconic Milwaukee institution, Milwaukee County Parks must step up. As one interviewee pointedly remarked: “Stop the studies and surveys and make a decision.”

RESULTS – Fundraising Study

- We could, in collaboration with the Friends of the Domes, conduct a \$20 million fundraising campaign
- To be successful, we would need to focus our efforts on a visionary project that moves beyond “saving The Domes”
- Based on the community survey, a public campaign would be successful (with the majority of respondents stating that they would be likely to support a campaign). Important to note that public campaigns typically generate a smaller amount of the overall goal (\$3M or less)
- Prior to a fundraising campaign, we must –
 - Present a compelling vision that encompasses both The Domes as well as Mitchell Park
 - Demonstrate FOD’s capacity to raise significant funds
 - Present solutions for how a new vision can solve community problems; ie support the County’s Mission and Vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity and revitalize Mitchell Park
 - Identify the plan for financing the public portion of the project
 - Clearly define the role and relationship of FOD to the County

Concluding Thoughts

While more information is still forthcoming regarding the cost of each Option, from the feedback of the public and fundraising study, we know that there is incredible value in pursuing \$20+ million in philanthropic support. Doing so requires agreement on the following -

- The future of the Conservatory must be in Mitchell Park
- The future state must be a driver of revitalization in Mitchell Park
- A shared vision, across all decisions makers, needs to be developed
- The Domes are iconic and an important destination for the public
- Philanthropy will support a shared vision for the future of the conservatory, but that does not necessarily mean that philanthropy can be relied upon to fix the Domes
- Smaller individual donations could be solicited to repair the Domes, but a campaign to repair the Domes would require a major investment by the County

While there are other potential funding sources that can be brought into this project, focusing efforts on a \$20+ million fundraising campaign along with public support would be a transformative step to advancing the project



Thank You!

TheFutureOfMitchellPark.com