

## American Rescue Plan Act Task Force on 2022-09-08 9:00 AM - HYBRID MEETING

This meeting will be held in Room 203-R, and will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center:

<https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Meeting Time: 09-08-22 09:00

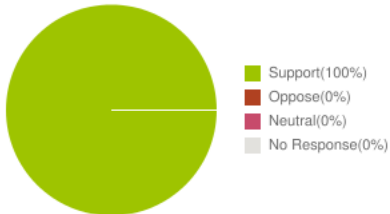
### eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
American Rescue Plan Act Task Force on 2022-09-08 9:00 AM - HYBRID MEETING This meeting will be held in Room 203-R, and will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center: <a href="https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx">https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx</a>	09-08-22 09:00	18	10	10	0	0

### Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

#### Overall Sentiment



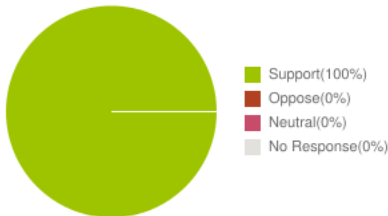
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**09-08-22 09:00**

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
8 HRA22-273 A request to consider of \$19 million for Capital Project WP0764012 - Mitchell Park Domes Rehabilitation, to restore the historic domes of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. (ACTION ITEM)	10	10	0	0

**Sentiments for All Agenda Items**

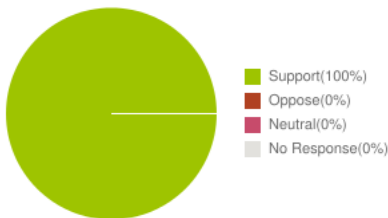
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**Overall Sentiment**



**Agenda Item: eComments for 8 HRA22-273 A request to consider of \$19 million for Capital Project WP0764012 - Mitchell Park Domes Rehabilitation, to restore the historic domes of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. (ACTION ITEM)**

**Overall Sentiment**



**Shannon Winterhalter**

Location:  
 Submitted At: 10:16am 09-08-22

I am a resident of the Clarke Square neighborhood in Milwaukee and a historic preservation professional. I am writing to urge the county to consider ARPA funding for the Mitchel Park Domes Rehabilitation. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fund this badly needed work, and to make a investment in quality of life on the near south side, taking a strong step forward for equity in the city. ARPA funding for the Domes will save the County and the taxpayers money by using federal dollars for this necessary work rather than stretching a tight County budget with the full cost of repair or demolition. By promoting health and wellness and providing access to the proven physical and mental health benefits of green space to all County residents year round, the long term preservation of the Domes will help Milwaukee County be prepared to respond to future public health

emergencies.

**Andrew Swant**

Location:

Submitted At: 9:29am 09-08-22

I strongly support this investment into the Domes, which is also an investment into the community and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Domes are a Milwaukee icon. Milwaukeeans clearly love the Domes and are outspoken about it. It's the most visited county park. People come from all over the world to see these gems. It's the only time most of us will ever get to feel what it's like to be in a jungle. I go to the Domes ever week in the winter to get fresh air and sunlight. This may be our last chance to finally give the Domes the love they so badly need, please invest in their future!

**Sarah Luther**

Location:

Submitted At: 9:26am 09-08-22

I cannot say enough in support of preserving this historic, iconic, and invaluable attraction. The Domes are the most accessible of all the museums/attractions - tickets and membership prices are so much more affordable than other large MKE attractions. We recommend them to all our friends and out of town visitors and get much excited positive feedback in return. Many times when we go there is a line out the door, or they are packed inside, and the crowd is always thoroughly diverse in all ways. The Domes are already an anchor and an asset to a unique Milwaukee neighborhood - but could be so much more to the neighborhood and city if invested in.

**Dn McCarthy**

Location:

Submitted At: 9:20am 09-08-22

To the honorable ARPA co-chairs and Task Force members,

I am writing today to thank Supervisors Martinez, Clancy, Zerpa, and Martin for drafting a resolution requesting that the ARPA Task Force consider \$19 million for Capital Project WP0764012 - Mitchell Park Domes Rehabilitation, to restore the historic domes of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (HRA22-273) and to ask the ARPA Task Force to make a recommendation to use \$19 million to restore the Domes.

Two engineering firms (Wiss, Janney, and Elstner and ZS LLC Engineering and Construction) have concluded that there can be a long-term restoration solution for an estimate of approximately \$20 million. The alternative is to allow the Domes to continue to experience deterioration and ultimately demolition at an estimated cost of approximately \$15 million.

The restoration of the Domes directly relates to Milwaukee County's stated mission that by achieving racial equity, Milwaukee will be the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

The restoration of the Domes will answer the Health Outcome question, "Are people reporting a good quality of life?" by ensuring that County policies are fair and just (investing in a dense, diverse, frequently overlooked section of Milwaukee) and that services are meeting people's needs (providing safe quality green space and recreation).

Furthermore, the Domes are a beloved Milwaukee icon and a place that Milwaukee families have traditionally and continue to celebrate landmark events in their lives. The public when surveyed by and large support the restoration of the Domes. The Domes are architecturally unique in the world. They have been determined by the State of Wisconsin to be historically significant and by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to be a National Treasure. The horticultural conservatory is in itself a wonderful, educational, and healing experience.

Please use this opportunity to invest in Milwaukee where an investment is in critical need.

Thank you,

Dawn McCarthy

Milwaukee County

53211

**J. Patrick Mullins**

Location:

Submitted At: 8:58am 09-08-22

I would like to speak from the heart in favor of the \$19 million allocation of federal ARPA funds on behalf of rehabilitation of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. This is the godsend which Milwaukee County has needed, not just to help the Conservatory bounce back from the pandemic, but to preserve the Domes for generations of Milwaukeeans, Wisconsinites, and visitors from out of state and abroad.

As Marquette University's Public History Director and an Associate Professor of History, I teach my students about the inestimable value of the Domes to architectural history, and I would like to testify on behalf of its rehabilitation. While Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes is well known throughout the world, Donald Greib's cone-shaped domes for the Milwaukee County Conservatory are unique architecturally in the United States. If these structures were demolished, or allowed to degrade further, it would mean the loss of a cultural treasure—not just for the city, county, or state—but for the whole nation.

I also teach Marquette students about the ways in which architectural landmarks can define one place as distinguishable from others, and the Domes help set Milwaukee apart from other American cities. In an era of bland uniformity in American building, the Domes are structurally distinctive, eye catching, and memorable to even the casual observer who is unaware of their architectural importance. Like the Calatrava building for the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Greib building for the Conservatory helps define our skyline and embody what is quirkily special about this city.

As a Milwaukee County resident, I should add that my family and I have long enjoyed visits to the Domes. Ten years ago, when we were first moving from Pittsburgh, I asked my friend (who grew up in Milwaukee in the 60s) what would be the best place to take my young family. He immediately said, "You gotta go to the Domes!" That was indeed the first place we visited, and we've gone many times since.

Other than the building itself, Milwaukee residents and visitors to the city come to the Conservatory to experience immersion in biological systems to learn about environments very different from our own. The horticultural exhibits provide escape into the rain forest or the desert during long Wisconsin winters. For many poorer people in the inner city, the Domes provides the closest experience they may ever have to visiting exotic places and gaining an appreciation for the need to conserve these distant but still globally important environments. And for many Southside residents from Latin America, the jungle and desert habitats provide a little taste of home.

You have an opportunity to save a Milwaukee landmark and a national treasure. I implore you to seize this moment, and thank you for your service on the ARPA task force.

**Andrew Stern**

Location:

Submitted At: 8:14am 09-08-22

I strongly support the allocation of ARPA funds to support the rehabilitation of the Mitchell Park Domes. It is time for the County to act to support a beloved Milwaukee County treasure and move forward with a large part of the funding needed to ensure the Domes will be around for generations to come. Using ARPA funding will save Milwaukee County residents money by using federal funds for the Domes. Please move forward with using ARPA funding to help save the Domes!

**Trudy Watt**

Location:

Submitted At: 7:47am 09-08-22

I urge the committee to pursue this funding for the restoration of the Mitchell Park Domes. The domes, like all architecture, act like batteries - storing our individual and shared memory as well as sense of identity and place. The concrete and glass of these domes contain not just the memory of holding my mom's hand in the special exhibits dome at age 8 and the joy I felt hearing a student's amazing grad school acceptance news sitting by the koi pond but our shared sense of who we are in this neighborhood and in the city of Milwaukee. Also, the surrounding neighborhoods are struggling with violence and drug addictions (like so many neighborhoods in our beloved city) - choosing not to invest in such a visible and important landmark would be a terrible injury to our already struggling neighborhood. The domes are a recreational and educational respite that serve the health,

happiness and public safety of our neighborhoods and the city of Milwaukee. If they are not restored and instead left in an uncertain status or worse, demolished, all three of those will be made worse. And the people who will feel the impact of this decline in health, happiness and public safety are the people that live in this neighborhood, our families and first responders - who are already stretched to their limits. I urge the committee to pursue this funding to restore the Mitchell Park Dome, with the utmost confidence that doing so is a sound investment in the well-being of generations of Milwaukeeans to come.

**Christopher Wood**

Location:

Submitted At: 11:42pm 09-07-22

The Domes are an essential component of the culture and character of our fine city. If we have a path forward to rehabilitate them we should absolutely make that happen! Any investment in these gems is an investment in Milwaukee's future. In addition, they do a lot to boost the morale, and the prospects for a neighborhood that is depressed and struggling. I say this as a resident of the neighborhood, living on Historic Layton Blvd, just down the street from Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory.

The Mitchell Park Domes are worth far more to the city than what they bring in financially. Please, let's do everything in our power to preserve them.

**Rachel Ebersole**

Location:

Submitted At: 9:12pm 09-07-22

Please allocate arpa dollars to preserve the Domes!

**Jeremy Ebersole**

Location:

Submitted At: 4:48pm 09-07-22

I'm asking you to support this once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the future of arguably the most significant and beloved asset under the County's control: the Mitchell Park Domes. Our organization, the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, has been working with our partners at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and many in the community for 7 years to serve as a resource to help the County move forward with a long term preservation solution for the Domes. National attention has been brought to the Domes, which have been added to 2 national watch lists of most endangered historic places in America. The County Board established an official policy in 2016 to "pursue the repair and preservation" of the Domes. Consistent public outreach has been done, all of which has demonstrated that the public is overwhelmingly in favor of preserving the Domes. We and others even submitted a proposal to utilize ARPA funds for the Domes last year. Through task forces, working groups, and numerous reports, the County has spent years considering how to proceed at the Domes.

Over these years, the cost of restoring the Domes and the lack of available funding has been consistently raised as the primary barrier to moving forward. Through ARPA, we now have an incredibly rare opportunity to fund a sizeable portion of the necessary restoration work using federal, rather than County dollars. The requested amount of \$19 million is based on 2019 County-commissioned estimates of the cost of the most critical long term need at the Domes - the glazing, or glass - replacement. A different 2019 County-commissioned report of the other primary structural component of the Domes - the concrete - demonstrated that the concrete frame can last several more decades if a few maintenance interventions are included in future glazing replacement. The condition of the concrete was confirmed with studies completed just this year while inspecting the mesh. It is reasonable to expect that costs may have risen but that the original \$19 million will go a long way toward the repairs needed to secure the future of the Domes.

Another County-commissioned report released in June demonstrates that Historic Tax Credits could be used to secure up to an additional \$7 million to help complete additional work that might be necessary as well. Appropriating ARPA funds would also demonstrate a commitment by the County to move forward with preservation of the Domes. This commitment is absolutely necessary to forge the partnerships and philanthropic support needed to bring the project to completion.

Further, the neighborhood surrounding the Domes is a diverse, dense, working class community with 42% of

residents living below the poverty level, where residents are 8% more likely to have significant health issues as compared with the City as a whole and have comparatively less access to green space compared to other areas of the County. Funding their restoration is in line with the County's stated goals of "becoming the healthiest County in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity."

In the end, the choice is not ultimately between the Domes and other priorities but between using federal dollars to preserve the Domes while we have them or using County and taxpayer dollars in the future to either preserve or demolish them. There is no County solution for the Domes that does not cost money. In that nightmare scenario where demolition is on the table, there is still an estimated cost of \$15 million for demolition. We are better than that. We don't have to look back and say we had the opportunity to preserve this place that is literally unique in the world that means so much to so many in our community and didn't take it. Let us make the decision today to use the resources we have to preserve rather than landfill the only place in the County that provides the proven physical and mental health benefits of green space to County residents year round.