

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: March 21, 2025
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, Executive Director for Milwaukee County Parks
Subject: Update on Domes Reimagined progress
File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes, there is no request at this time.

POLICY

The 2025 Milwaukee County Budget included Amendment #06 which, among other things, stated –

“Milwaukee County authorizes and directs the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture to:

- Collaborate with the Office of Corporation Counsel and other relevant departments to develop an agreement (“Agreement”) with the Friends of the Domes for the implementation of the “Domes Reimagined” plan, subject to County Board review and approval. The Agreement shall, among other things, include the following elements:
 - Creation of a long-term lease which places Friends of the Domes in charge of operations for the facility, while Mitchell Park remains the property of the County Parks Department.
 - Support for County efforts to have the Mitchell Park Domes listed on the National Register of Historic Places after the restoration process has commenced.
 - Clearly defined benchmarks, contingencies and conditions that must be met before County funds are released, expended or redevelopment begins.
 - A commitment by Milwaukee County to allocate \$30 million over a six-year period toward the project.
- Provide a progress update on these initiatives to the County Board no later than the May 2025 meeting cycle.”

| | |
|--|------|
| Wisconsin State Statutes: | |
| Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances: | |
| Specific Adopted Budget: | 2025 |
| Specific Adopted Budget Amendment: | 06 |
| Specific Adopted Capital Project: | |

BACKGROUND

This report is a periodic update on progress between Milwaukee County Parks and the Friends of the Domes in implementation of the vision established in 2025 Budget Amendment 06. Since the adoption of the budget and the establishment of this policy, the Parks and Friends staff have collaborated to achieve the following -

- The Parks and Friends have begun conversations to make progress on a long-term lease agreement to support the project.
- Submit Part 1 documentation of the Historic Preservation Certificate Application. This is a precursor to the process of applying for Historic Tax Credits with the National Park Service.
- The image below is the location that is under consideration for historic designation status

Maps — Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 1
 Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (AHI 52569), Milwaukee, WI 53215



FIGURE B: Map showing the relationship of the Domes (in brown) to the park and surrounding streets. South Layton Boulevard is also known as South 27th Street. None of the historic park buildings are extant. The site boundary, which follows established roads, fencelines, and pathways, is outlined in a red dashed line.

| | |
|---|--|
| Related File No's: | |
| Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets): | |
| Previous Action Date(s): | |

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability – The Domes Reimagined campaign leverages a greater than 2:1 ratio of private investment to the County’s investment.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

FISCAL EFFECT

None

TERMS

None

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Christa Beall Diefenbach, Executive Director of the Friends of the Domes,
christa.fod@milwaukeedomes.org

PREPARED BY:

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks *Guy Smith*

ATTACHMENTS:

None

CC: David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Committee on Parks & Culture Chairperson
Steve Taylor, Committee on Parks & Culture Vice Chairperson
Priscilla Coggs-Jones, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Jack Eckblad, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Anne O'Connor, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB
Sandy Saltzstein, Research and Policy Analyst