

# MITCHELL PARK HORTICULTURAL CONSERVATORY

524 S. Layton Blvd. Milwaukee, WI. 53215

*DRAFT*

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: FUTURE PATH  
AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

January 2017



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Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services  
Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services Unit  
633 W. Wisconsin Ave. suite 1000

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January 12, 2017

To All Interested Consultants

**Project:** *Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory  
Future Path & Feasibility Study*  
**Project No.:** *P490-16653*  
**Subject:** **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (R.F.P.)**

Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services along with the Milwaukee County special task force on the Conservatory is requesting proposals for professional consulting services to help develop a vision for the future of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. The Conservatory building complex includes three 50+ year old display domes, a green house and annex complex added in 2015, and support and educational structures. The display Domes are in need of extensive rehabilitation along with repairs and updates needed for many support spaces. Planning is underway for the next phase of this long time Milwaukee attraction. Here at a crossroad, we find that there is an opportunity to review the services that the Conservatory provides to the community as well as provide for a sustainable facility and operating model. Multiple aspects of future planning are in need of refining and studying in order to determine the most appropriate path for the future of the Conservatory.

## I. BACKGROUND

- **See attached map for location.** *The Horticultural Conservatory is located at 524 S. Layton Boulevard in the heart of Milwaukee, WI. A mid-sized city on the western shores of Lake Michigan. Mitchell Park is roughly a 61 acre urban park with a variety of amenities in natural settings.*
- **Ownership:** *The Conservatory is owned by Milwaukee County and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture. Planning is to be a cooperative effort between Milwaukee County, The Task Force, and the public.*
- **Conservatory Mission Statement:** *To provide the residents of Milwaukee County and all visitors a horticultural showcase featuring five changing floral shows per year; examples of tropical and arid flora displayed as naturally as possible; educational opportunities; cultural programs; horticultural information and the protection of certain rare and endangered species.*
- **Task Force:** *The Milwaukee County Board has established a special Task Force given the responsibility of developing a comprehensive long term plan for the Domes and the Horticultural Conservatory. Any planning efforts and studies will be in cooperation with this committee and the Parks Department in order to develop the final recommended long term plan for the Milwaukee County Board. See attached Substitute Resolution 16-200.*

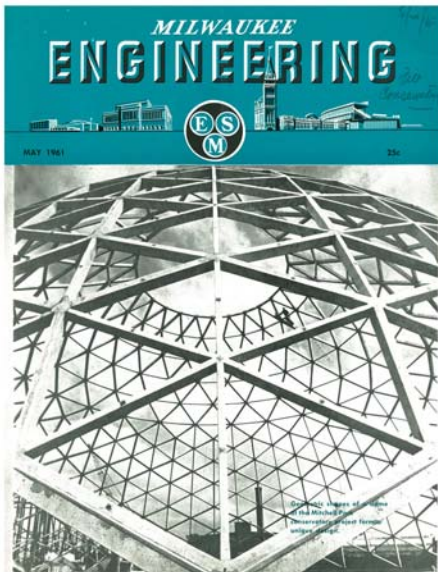
- **History** : Milwaukee's Mitchell Park Conservatory was first built in 1898 with a greenhouse style conservatory in Milwaukee's first public park. To the south, the Sunken Gardens displayed a large water-mirror pond with fountains and extensive parterre gardens surrounding it. In 1955 the existing structure was determined to be unsafe and impractical to repair.



- The current Horticultural Conservatory was dedicated in 1965 for a total cost of \$4,200,000. A national design competition was held and a local architect, Donald Grieb had the winning design with three bee-hive shaped glass domes. The process of construction began with demolition of the old conservatory in 1955 and developed in phases. The existing facility contains three conoidal glass covered concrete frames called the "domes", each containing a different climate. The Tropical Dome, Arid Dome and Floral Show Dome have become iconic on the City's landscape. Each "dome" is approximately 85 feet tall and the base has a 140 foot diameter. The Domes provide 46,000 sq. ft. of display space.



- *The original concrete structure was precast on site in hexagonal shapes and erected on temporary steel framing. The glazing system is composed of triangulated aluminum frames and single pane wire glass. The frames rest on the concrete structure through stainless steel posts at nodes. This design in the late 1950's used advanced concepts in design and state of the art construction techniques.*



*In 2014, the County's greenhouses were relocated east of the Facility. This added 61,000 square feet of facilities, including a 10,000 sq. ft. green house like conservatory annex. It houses the winter Farmers Market and corporate and individual events. The greenhouses serve the horticultural needs of the Conservatory and the Boerner Botanical Gardens.*



- *Further information on the recent studies, photos and County action can be found at the following links:*

- <http://county.milwaukee.gov/Domes> (Domes update site with studies)
- <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2862809&GUID=728C247C-2D42-4585-8EDF-9B793C27DC22&Options=&Search=> (Legislative information Center, see attachment 23)
- <http://county.milwaukee.gov/MitchellParkConserva10116.htm> Domes web page

## II. GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mitchell Park long-term plan is intended to present a vision and conceptual plan for the future of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory and the park in which it sits, as well as to acknowledge and address the neighborhood in which both are located. A condition report of the Facility and cost estimates for their repair, rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement has been completed. (<http://county.milwaukee.gov/Domes/Condition-Reports-on-the-Domes.htm>) Preliminary study of the programs offered, and of circumstances limiting their scope and scale, requires further examination. While the Conservatory enjoys widespread support, the facility is not as prominent an attraction for visitors to the area and region as it once was. Milwaukee County seeks a vision that will draw people to visit and re-visit the facility, creating a sustaining facility for the future. This feasibility study should address key elements of the facility: programs offered, structure, facility operations, and financial plans needed to sustain and invigorate this facility for the future. It is expected that the concepts proposed in the study will lead to phased planning work and plan development.

A. *Milwaukee County is accepting proposals for consulting services to develop an integrated Feasibility Study with at least the following elements:*

1. ***Programming and Operations.***

The Feasibility Study should assess current conservatory collections, programs, and operations against a framework of other successful conservatories nationwide, as well opportunities unique to Milwaukee, and identify key gaps and possibilities. What do leading conservatories offer the public to strengthen or reshape the visitor experience? What additional groups do they target, such as families with children, event or group rentals, business retreats, health practitioners, the scientific and/or educational community, or others? What opportunities might the Mitchell Park Conservatory have to partner with other facilities in the area or region, such as the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Urban Ecology Center, or local universities? What impact could such enhancements have on attendance and revenues? What is the potential for increasing educational program offerings? Should gardens outside the structures be expanded? Elements to complete in this analysis would include:

- a. ***Future trends in Horticultural Conservatories***
- b. ***PEST Analysis- (Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors of Market)***
- c. ***SWOT analysis-of opportunities (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats for each viable idea)***

2. ***Site, Structure and Facilities.***

What limitations does the current structure and site have in supporting today's programs, and what requirements might an expanded operation place on the facility? The County has recently completed an assessment of repair options and costs for the current facility, which could be as high as \$64 million, but has not begun assessing the impact of expanded or modified programs on the facility or site, nor the additional structures and facilities such programming would require or might be necessary to improve operations and revenue. The feasibility study should provide at least a preliminary assessment of needs, options and cost ranges. Elements will include:

- a. ***Required infrastructure and space use analysis***
- b. ***Capital cost analysis (Including full life cycle costs)***

3. **Revenue, Finance & Organizational Management.**

A study presented to the Task Force in early 2017 suggests that opportunities may exist to improve the conservatory's revenue and cost profile, as well as its organizational structure and outreach. Today the Mitchell Park Conservatory is owned and operated by the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture as one of three facilities in its Horticultural Division. The other facilities include the Boerner Botanical Gardens and the Wehr Nature Center, both located in a suburban park about 9 miles from the conservatory. A non-profit group, the Friends of the Domes, operates the gift shop, which contributes 10 percent of proceeds to operating costs. Overall, facility revenues, primarily admissions, cover a percentage of operating costs. Faced with potentially huge repair and investment costs and ongoing operating subsidies, the County is interested in options to improve the facility's financial management and sustainability. Is the current model of managing the facility as one element of a large and complex parks system the most effective way to oversee this asset? What options may exist to meet the facility needs in an era of limited public financing resources? A fundraising feasibility study that assesses the likelihood of success in reaching private, including corporate, fundraising goals should be conducted. It should address whether the case for support is compelling; whether there are prominent community volunteers willing to donate generously and make calls on prospective donors; whether the top 10 donors can be identified as capable, interested and accessible to provide 75-80% of the goal; and whether there is internal capacity to sustain a campaign. Elements will include:

- a. **Personnel planning**
- b. **Projected cash flow and balance sheets**
- c. **Funding opportunities for capital and operating needs & their feasibility**

4. **Social and Economic Impacts.**

Milwaukee County has had a conservatory in Mitchell Park for over 100 years. The adjoining neighborhood views the facility as a local landmark and believes that some type of attraction in the park is important to economic stabilization and growth in the area. Further, the structure itself, with its three distinctive domes, has been an icon on the Milwaukee skyline since the mid-1960's and is viewed by many as an important element of mid-century architecture worthy of preservation in its own right. The study should include an analysis of the Conservatory's economic and social impact on its neighborhood and on the Milwaukee area. Some horticulturists, in contrast, believe that the botanical collection might be better supported and preserved through a more energy-efficient and flexible facility. The County must navigate these varying perspectives and seeks support in developing a rubric for considering and weighing these points of view in designing a long-term plan. Elements will include:

- a. **Likely economic impacts of existing conservatory**
- b. **Criteria for assessing alternatives (such as ROI, Public/Private Interest, Sustainability, etc.)**

5. **Other elements.**

While the County believes that any long-term Feasibility Study must address the four elements outlined above, it is open to proposals that include additional elements that an interested firm believes, in its professional judgement, would be integral to a sustainable long-term solution.

## SPECIFIC GOALS FOR THIS STUDY

- a. Present a vision that:
  - i. Reflects a Culture of Quality, Efficiency and Innovation; a culture that is driven towards continuous improvement, focused on quality, efficiency, meeting and exceeding regulatory, best practice standards and constituent expectations. Technology will be created, implemented, effectively used and disseminated across the continuum of services'
  - ii. Provides a Safe and Secure Environment; an environment that includes modern security practices, technology and architectural features, to not only protect the safety of the public, employees and property within and around the site, but also projects an inviting aesthetic.
  - iii. Is Fiscally and Environmentally Sustainable; a physical space that will create operational efficiencies that maximize revenues and resources, and minimize overhead and unnecessary expenses
  - iv. Includes a Healthy Learning Environment; an environment that will create a positive, learning experience and a culture grounded in respectful communication, research, collaboration, and healthy working relationships as well as teaching the relationships between plant life and ecology.

## B. PROJECT PHASES and DELIVERABLES

- a. **Phase I:** *Feasibility Study as described in section II. Items 1-5.*  
*It is expected that consultant will:*
  - *Investigate a minimum of six(6) opportunities or variations of)*
  - *Attend each monthly task force meeting, 2 minimum. in person presentations and 3 updates of findings. (May be able to Skype updates if unable to attend)*
  - *Meet with County staff as needed to further develop studies and research needs for operations of the facility.*
  - *Attend at least two Milwaukee County Board Parks Committee meetings and give updates.*
  - *Provide a final bound report (also in digital format) to be submitted per schedule.*
- b. **Phase II:** *Consultant to use the findings and ideas gathered in phase I to develop a public outreach program for feedback on all the ideas as presented.*
  - *This feedback to be arranged to provide guidance to task force in preparing a selection of preferred alternatives.*
  - *It is expected that the consultant will attend at least two task force meetings for updates and up to four public gathering sessions as well as on-line data gathering and analysis.*
  - *The findings and statistics will be presented to the task force along with a digital report and Powerpoint presentation.*
- c. **Phase III:** *Development of schematic programming and space needs costs for Task Force selected alternates.*
  - *For up to three selected alternatives, based on the results of phases I and II, work with County staff and prepare schematic programming diagrams and space needs analysis.*
  - *Development of cost estimates for Capital Improvements including structure, support infrastructure, O&M costs and funding alternatives, will be expected in order to present fully the alternatives to the Task Force so they are able to make a thorough and clear recommendation to the County Board.*
  - *A minimum of three Task Force meetings and one Parks Committee meetings will be required for updates*
  - *The diagrams and estimates will be presented to the task force along with a digital report and a Powerpoint presentation.*

### III. QUALIFICATIONS TO COMPETE

(Because of this feasibility study's scope, interested firms are encouraged to form teams and to consider partnering with other firms or individuals or sub-contracting in order to fulfill the study's requirements.)

#### A. DESIRED TEAM CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPOSITION

- i. Any interested firm with experience in Business development and analysis, Facility planning and public attraction master planning.
- ii. A typical team may consist of, but is not limited to: Development and marketing specialists, architects, landscape architects, engineers, urban planners, estimators, horticulturalists and or artists.
- iii. Understanding of and experience in business and program development, sustainable development, historic preservation. developing master plans, and fundraising.
- iv. Knowledge and experience with government facilities or horticultural centers that have components of green infrastructure, display design and educational displays/exhibits.

#### B. PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

**Mandatory meeting to be held February 23, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. at Mitchell Park Conservatory.**

#### C. PROJECT TIMETABLE

Feb. 13, 2017	Issue RFP's
Feb. 23, 2017, 9:30 a.m.	Pre-Proposal conference and site walk-thru at 9:30 a.m. in Mitchell Park Domes (524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, WI), for all firms submitting and teams.
Mar. 20, 2017, 2:00 p.m.	Consultant Proposals due at 2:00 Central Time (three bound + one email or digital copy)
Mar. 27, 2017	Notify Firms of shortlist for interviews
Week of Apr. 3, 2017	Interviews (if needed)
April 18 – May 25, 2017	Parks, Finance and County Board passive review of proposed contract for May cycle.
May 26, 2017	Contract issued.
Oct 15, 2017, 2:00 p.m.	Final Phase I - study due to Milwaukee County
Dec. 15, 2017, 2:00 p.m.	Final Phase II -study due to Milwaukee County
Mar.. 15, 2018, 2:00 p.m.	Final Phase III -Report due to Milwaukee County



## IV. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Milwaukee County reserves the right to accept or reject any and all submittals, issue addenda, request clarification, waive technicalities, alter the nature and/or scope of the proposed project, request additional submittals, and/or discontinue this process. The County may choose to award only Phase I at this time, or all three Phases as it deems appropriate. See attached "Proposal Submission Guidelines".

### Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Following a list of general criteria which will be used by County staff to evaluate the proposals:

- a. Quality and responsiveness to the RFP. Weight: 20%
- b. Project approach and understanding, including strategy to perform requested work and time schedule. Weight: 30%.
- c. Qualifications and experience. Weight: 35%
- d. Fee and hourly rates. Weight: 15%.

## V. RELATED WORK BY OTHERS

1. Limited documentation of the existing buildings will be made available by Milwaukee County in PDF format.
2. Previous studies and building condition reports will be made available to consultants.

## VI. SUBMITTAL CONTENT

The RFP submittal shall conform to the Outline below and attached submission guidelines. It shall include the Consultant Proposal Form that is attached and the following information:

- A. **Cover:** Include project number and name, project location, consultant's name, address, telephone number, FAX number, e-mail address, proposal date, etc.
- B. **Table of Contents:** Include an identification of the material by section and page number.
- C. **Letter or Transmittal:** The name and description of the organization submitting the proposal briefly stating the proposer's understanding of the service to be provided.
- D. **Description of Qualifications (Organization's Experience):** Include a list of similar projects that the organization has participated on in the past five (5) years. Attach a separate sheet for each project, up to five (5) maximum, include color photos or sketches, giving a brief description of each project and the organizations participation. Provide a description of your firm's experience with sustainable planning, or related work including but not limited to:

- Economic and Marketing Analysis
- Botanical building development.
- Facility Master planning.
- Design and development of Public Attraction Facilities.
- Historic Restoration.

- E. Project Organization and Staff Experience:** Include an organizational structure of the project team, including the relationship of the sub-consultants to be used for this project. The name of the Principal In Charge of this project with any Professional Registration Numbers in the State of Wisconsin, along with the name, occupation and title of the Project Manager who will be in charge of this project. Provide a resume' for each individual involved in the project, and include their name, title and/or duties for the project, professional registration, relevant certifications, a brief description of related experience including time contribution in this capacity to past projects, and qualifications. Provide a description of your staff's experience with facility planning or related work.
- E. Sub-Consultants:** Indicate the names and addresses of any sub-consultants and/or associates proposed to be used in this project. State the capacity they would be used in and the approximate percentage of the total services they would provide. Also state their past experience in the field. Provide resume's as needed.
- F. Project Approach:** This section will include evaluation of the current Conservatory (Pros/cons) and the preliminary vision (or visions) for the future that you are proposing. Provide a description of building and facility problems you anticipate in this project and how you propose to overcome them. Discuss how you plan to staff the study to efficiently complete the work effort. This section is not included to necessarily find the best proposed idea, but to evaluate your process in prioritizing the most significant issues and finding resolution in that future vision.
- G. Constant Effort:** Include a spreadsheet/matrix listing the names, classifications, hourly rates and hours to be spent by each required task to complete the project study as described in this RFP.
- H. TBE (DBE) Goals:** The Targeted Business Enterprise (TBE) participation goal for this contract will be 17%.

## VII. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The successful consultant and/or any contractor affiliated with the prime consultant shall be prohibited from submitting bids in the construction bidding process for this project.
2. Selected Consultant shall follow Milwaukee County Code of Ethics as follows: No person(s) with a personal financial interest in the approval or denial of a Contract being considered by a County department or with an agency funded and regulated by a County department, may make a campaign contribution to any County official who has approval authority over that Contract during its consideration. Contract consideration shall begin when a Contract is submitted directly to a County department or to an agency until the Contract has reached final disposition, including adoption, County Executive action, proceeding on veto (if necessary) or departmental approval.
3. The successful consultant must be an Equal Opportunity Employer.
4. The submittal shall conform with all attached documents. All submittals should use this RFP and its attachments as the sole basis for the proposal. The issuance of a written addendum are the only official method through which interpretation, clarification or additional information will be given.
5. All costs for preparing a Proposal submittal, attending the selection interview if required, or supplying additional information requested by Milwaukee County, is the sole responsibility of the submitting party. Material submitted will not be returned.
6. The proposal must be submitted in a single bound 8-1/2" x 11" document.



Please return **three (3)** BOUND copies of your proposal and a complete digital copy in Adobe format no later than **2:00 P.M. on Monday March 20, 2017**, to **Julie Bastin**, Project Manager, 633 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1000, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53203 (Telephone (414) 278-3948, FAX (414) 223-1366; email: [Julia.bastin@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Julia.bastin@milwaukeecountywi.gov)).

Please direct any questions regarding this RFP to me at the above address, FAX number or email address.

**DRAFT**  
Sincerely,

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Julie Bastin, P.E.

Attachments:

1. Project Location Map (1 page)
2. Project site map.
3. Proposal submission Guidelines
4. Consultant Proposal Form
5. MPC Task Force Resolution & Charter
6. TBE instructions
7. Milwaukee County DAS Lump Sum - standard Agreement

cc: G. High, DAS-FM A/E  
C. Hardy, DAS-FM  
S. Toomsen, DPRC

S. Folaron, Domes  
J. Bastin, DAS-FM A/E  
J. Theis, DAS –FM

J. Dargle, DPRC  
B. Engel, CDBP  
J. Organ, DPRC