

A NEW URBAN BOTANICAL PARK  
AND CONSERVATORY

Re-envisioning Mitchell Park  
and its Domes for the Next 50  
Years

A Business Plan

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## Executive Summary

There is a new kind of urban botanical park growing in America and around the world. Here, visitors enjoy magnificent flowers, beautiful garden beds, and the tranquility of an urban green space.

Some might think this new park has changed little from the urban botanical parks of 100 years ago or more, but that would be wrong.

The very best of today's urban botanical parks have evolved. This new kind of urban botanical garden is deeply relevant to our world today, a world in which few young children know where the tomato in their salad comes from and a world where back-yard gardeners know little about sustainable plants that work in today's changing climate.

Ours is a world where the “doing” of horticulture – tending a garden, growing a flower, greening a neighborhood – is an antidote to a host of urban-related diseases including diabetes, cardio vascular disease and numerous types of cancer.

Yet too few of us know how to “do.” Plant based diets are recommended by doctors everywhere, but for many households in today's cities, access to fresh produce is both rare and priced beyond what is affordable. The connection between healthy lifestyles and gardens is for many an unknown. Today's best urban botanical centers respond in at least three ways:

- There are children's learning gardens and teen apprenticeship programs.
- There are outdoor and indoor culinary programs and demonstration kitchens.
- There are health clinics where physicians prescribe fresh produce grown and provided to patients throughout the clinic service area.

## Background

In the Phase 1 and 2 reports previously presented to the Domes Task Force, focus was placed exclusively on the reinterpretation and use of the Domes themselves. Some discussion was given to the Domes historic architectural importance, yet one of the options presented to the Task Force in Phases 1 and 2 was to tear down the Domes. The Task Force at the time opted to focus on two approaches that were presented to them: Targeted Investments, and adding to the Targeted Investments with a single updated “eco-Dome.”

Early in Phase III (this planning project) and after review of the Phase 1 and 2 reports, the consultant team reviewed the fiscal viability of these two options, within the context of the extensive list of other Milwaukee County capital projects either underway or awaiting attention. The RFP called for the consultant team to evaluate various financial alternatives to a typical bond financed project, including use of Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and other funding.

This early work included analysis by a historic preservationist – something that had not been previously done – as to whether the Domes should be considered a historic building to the standards of the Department of Interior and therefore be eligible for Historic Tax Credits.

The conclusion:

- 1) *Create a new approach that builds upon and supports both “Targeted Investment” or “Single Eco Dome” is required for success.*
  - a. *The need for a non-traditional financing and investment strategy to rehabilitate the Domes and Mitchell Park requires a plan that also reinvents the Park as a multi-faceted urban botanical conservatory and park. This includes wide ranging services and programs that qualify the Domes for Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, PACE Energy Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zone investment as well as a private sector campaign.*
  - b. *There are two reasons why Targeted Investments and Eco-Dome alone will not work within this capitalization approach : the NMTC and OZ investment strategies require a diversity of programs and services that create new quality jobs and contribute to the economic vitality of the Clarke Square neighborhood; and the loaned elements of these strategies requires a robust operating plan that generates enough revenue to pay down the loans in a short period of time.*
- 2) *Rethinking the Domes as historic buildings opens the door for utilization of Historic Tax Credits as a part of the capital strategy. This is an attractive opportunity when twinning this tax credit with New Market Tax Credits, PACE, and OZ Investment.*
  - a. *However, the Domes buildings lack the minimal types of spaces – offices, sizable retail, food service - required by successful botanical conservatories, space that makes possible the necessary revenue mix to sustain operations and meet the financing and funding approach.*
  - b. *There is underused, unused, and adaptable space in the Domes complex and Mitchell Park. And, if Milwaukee County thinks of the Park and Domes as one – the way that other successful botanical conservatories operate within their parks – there is both opportunity and program demand to add more buildings to the site. This will make possible the “sustainability” of the park as an urban horticultural center and meet the requirements of NMTC and OZ Investment.*
- 3) *There are important additional learning and service opportunities related to the Domes mission and the Park location that cannot be accommodated within the existing footprint. These opportunities support the applicability of Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zone investment.*
- 4) *The consultants identified ways to accomplish this within a preliminary capital budget of \$59 million for the historic rehabilitation of the Domes and the transformation of Mitchell Park. Using the range of tax credits available, and incorporating a private sector capital campaign, the total amount required from Milwaukee County (or the need for some other funding source is twenty-nine cents per dollar invested. A \$14.5 million private sector capital campaign is envisioned. The operating budget pro forma included in the plan demonstrates capacity to repay New Market Tax Credits and Opportunity Zone loans by 2031, as required by these two capitalization mechanisms.*

## Recommendations

1. Over the next ten years, implement a capital and operating approach that will be the foundation for a sustained, dynamic Mitchell Park and Domes for the next 50 years, placing it on par with important Milwaukee cultural destinations such as the Zoo and Milwaukee Public Museum.
2. Rehabilitate the historic Domes as architectural icons for Milwaukee, positioning the Domes, through its iconic architecture, to be on the National Historic Register.
3. Maintain the valued plant collection housed in the Domes as a foundation for animating the programming of the Domes, to make the experience relevant to today's Milwaukee community.
4. Build upon the Task Force's Phase 1's "eco-Dome" concept: expand this to three eco-domes that each become the context for telling multiple stories through changing exhibitions: The Deserts of the World Dome; Rainforests of the World Dome; and "Our World" Dome, which may also become the Wisconsin Center for Urban Horticulture. Use these changing, culturally relevant exhibitions to again make the Domes and Mitchell Park a place of wonder and fun, learning and exploration, involvement and community.
5. Re-envision all of Mitchell Park as closely linked to the domes, shaping an urban horticultural destination. Making the Domes successful requires building the Park for success indoors and outdoors.
6. Adopt a Park and Domes mission that adds people to plants: "connecting and inspiring people through the world of plants."
7. Create a new entrance and retail area without taking away views of the current historic façade.
8. Make possible the adaptive reuse of non-historic elements of the complex of greenhouses/work areas, attached to the rear of the Domes.
9. Transform the largely unused pavilion boathouse at the lagoon into a state-of-the-art event/wedding/catering center, with an in-door/outdoor wedding ceremony area/garden.
10. Reinstall gardens throughout the Park, re-envisioned for sustainability, including a Children's and Family Garden, a Wedding Garden and an area devoted to Urban Ag and Health, and improve upon the small existing amphitheater as an events venue.
11. Establish new spaces or buildings that will make possible lifelong learning engagement and education programs including apprentice, workforce development and degree programs in horticulture, horticultural therapy, and culinary arts as well as to support community services in horticulture, health and wellness. This will also support applied horticultural and medical research. In so doing, engage in partnerships with entities such as the Medical College of Wisconsin, MATC, UW Extension, and others. Include classrooms for K-12 and adult learning, a culinary arts/healthy food demonstration kitchen, seminar rooms, research space and a wellness clinic area.
12. Within this campus establish an apprenticeship program that will give teens a chance to learn horticulture as well as learn marketing and sales as they operate their own garden floral and vegetable market.
13. In the type of partnership demonstrated as successful in other Milwaukee County Parks, add a full-service year-round restaurant to the Park that will become the center of the Park's catering services and its operation of outdoor dining spaces and food trucks, and the hub of its expanded weddings and special events program.

14. To support this vision, create a new nonprofit entity to co-implement the plan together with Milwaukee County: the Mitchell Park and Domes Conservancy. Reporting to it, establish new subsidiary entities: Domes Support Services, and Mitchell Park Partnerships. Through these entities, support the capitalization and ramp up of the Park and its learning campus through Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zone investment as well as a private sector capital campaign financing to limit the need for public sector funding to less than 30% of the total redevelopment cost.
15. Maintain the historic Green Bay Packers practice field, operated by Journey House, and the tots play area as important neighborhood assets. Add to these community spaces two additional community recreation assets, a soccer field and tennis courts that serve partners such as Journey House and Cristo Rey High School.
16. Add additional pathways for better walking and bicycling in the park including better connectivity to Three Bridges Park and the Hank Aaron Trail, and to provide additional public access to formerly underused areas in the Park. Reinstall the roadway through the park providing access to all of the essential garden spaces and buildings. This will also increase parking within the park.
17. Implement a water recirculation plan that ensures a sparkling clean lagoon, re-envision a water garden as was once at the front of the Domes, and connects the two to a clean water stewardship system include underground cisterns, water reuse for the gardens inside the Domes, and to provide all water for the Park while mitigating storm water run-off, ideally through a partnership with Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.
18. By operating the rehabilitated Domes and the full Park campus, become a jobs creator for the neighborhood, providing an estimated 300 quality jobs by full operations. (2026-27)
19. Anticipate a ten-year capital plan of \$59 million<sup>1</sup> and, when operating at full capacity, an annual budget over \$5 million, making this one of Milwaukee County's leading civic institutions.
20. Prepare for the 2020-2021 ramp up year, which will include many essential elements of this plan: creating the legal structure for the Domes and Park with its partners and the utilization of tax credits; build upon the conceptualization of the building and park spaces with a complete architectural and engineering plan; create the NMTC/OZ structure; gain bridge grants; win lead donor support; create detailed enterprise and operating plans for the Park and partners; set up a public art program and process for the Domes and park that will integrate art effectively into the Domes and park.

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<sup>1</sup> Recognize that there may be changes to this pending completion of current glazing and concrete studies, and that a full Park master plan of additional facilities and gardens may require more years and additional, future capitalization beyond the ten-year plan proposed in this report.

## Why All This and Not Just the Domes? Why Not Just Start Over?

- The Domes building alone lacks the space for the operations required to drive programming operations and revenue for NMTC, OZ Investment, HTC, and private sector giving.
- The Domes qualify for National Historic Landmark status, meaning that they cannot legally be torn down. They already were named among the most endangered historic buildings in the USA, and in part because of that, it would be highly controversial to tear them down or modify them. Adding to them with other buildings and spaces in the Park brings the total square feet to the required level for programming and services that significantly drive revenue.
- If for some reason, they were to be torn down, estimates suggest it could cost as much as \$12 million, not including hauling or land fill costs.
- Starting over would be prohibitively expensive. One of the most recently completed new glass conservatories in the country, a 2006 addition to the Phipps in Pittsburgh, cost \$833 a square foot, just for the construction costs.
- The consulting team was challenged with “find new ways to make this work.” By keeping and redeveloping the Domes, utilizing the available tax credits and opportunity investment, and in so doing by bringing together major partners who will program and provide services in the Park, the model is a powerful example of what scholars and field leaders have identified as “the sustainability model needed for 21<sup>st</sup> Century parks.”

## The Reinvention: The Next Fifty Years

In this model, Mitchell Park becomes a new type of park – and a model for Milwaukee County Parks - programmed through partnerships with experienced Milwaukee organizations that know how to provide expertise in areas ranging from children’s summer camps to green teens programs year-round, to master gardener classes, culinary arts degree programs and horticultural degree programs. These relationships are designed to be a win-win, eliminate replication of what exists, taking every organization’s work to the next level. Architecturally, this work will be done in a sustainable, 50-year plan for the rehabilitation of the Domes, and in a collection of other spaces Park-wide that invite and involve community, from gardens to learning spaces, urban health clinic and training center for new horticulturalists. The plan is intended to be implemented in phases over a ten-year period starting in 2020.

When completed, Mitchell Park and its Domes will once again be the national breakthrough leader as was the case when the Domes were built more than 50 years ago. This time they will provide a best practice example of a sustainable, urban botanical park - a place that demonstrates excellence and stewardship while showcasing history through its Domes.

## The Success Nexus

Remaking Mitchell Park and the Domes will be challenging, but viable. Milwaukee County has identified three elements for success in major ventures. This plan addresses all three of its criteria.





# The Plan for the Park

## A New Urban Botanical Park and Conservatory

### Re-visioning Mitchell Park and the Domes for the Next Fifty Years

#### Introduction

There is a new kind of urban botanical park growing in America and around the world. This park usually has a glass conservatory and a collection of plants. Here, visitors enjoy magnificent flowers, beautiful garden beds, and the tranquility of an urban green space.

Some might think this new park has changed little from the urban botanical parks of 100 years ago or more.

But the very best of today's urban botanical parks have evolved. Today they are far more than aesthetically beautiful. "Public gardens are working to define the relevance of botanical gardens for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, from what botanical gardens were 100-200 years ago – focused solely on botanists and horticulturalists – to what they have the potential to become. Today, the application of gardens' expertise in sustainable community development helps

build valuable human and social capital in the form of leadership skills and creates opportunities.<sup>i</sup>"

This new kind of urban botanical garden is deeply relevant to our world today, a world in which few young children know where the tomato in their salad comes from and a world where back-yard gardeners know little about sustainable plants that work in today's changing climate.



Image, Brooklyn Botanical Park

Ours is a world where entire tree and plant species are vanishing from geographic areas they inhabited for hundreds of years, but few of us know how to slow that loss and preserve what we have.

Ours is a world where the "doing" of horticulture – tending a garden, growing a flower, greening a neighborhood – is an antidote to a host of urban-related diseases including diabetes, cardio vascular disease and numerous types of cancer.

Yet too few of us know how to “do.” Plant based diets are recommended by doctors everywhere, but for many households in today’s cities, access to fresh produce is both rare and priced beyond what is affordable. The connection between healthy lifestyle and gardens is for many an unknown.

There is a solution.

The best of today’s gardens and horticultural centers “offer new ways of intervening in city fabric at the local level using stewardship, grassroots activity, and neighborhood identity as generators of community-based change.”<sup>iii</sup>

This is the vision for Mitchell Park and its Domes.



Image, Botanical Garden of the Ozarks

*Full page image of the New Mitchell Park and  
Domes\**

## Background

Phase 1 and Phase II analysis for the future of Mitchell Park was conducted by ConsultEcon and HGA and completed in 2018. The Phase I and II team identified numerous requirements for success and developed a series of models for the potential future of the Domes.

Overall, the focus of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 was “the Domes,” evaluating the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory as its own destination entity as compared to evaluating its potential in the larger context of a re-envisioned Mitchell Park inclusive of the Domes. Looking at the Domes alone, the report concluded that it “lacks the staff, programming, relevant governance structure, and versatile spaces needed for success in today’s market. These conditions make the Domes unsustainable for operations and for future maintenance of the facility.”<sup>2</sup>

The report went on to offer six options and additional sub-options for the future of the Domes, ranging from doing nothing to tearing the Domes down; only addressing deferred maintenance; making some targeted investments in the Domes and in parking and signage; to re-envisioning the Domes as destination education, conservation, and recreation attraction - again offering the potential of razing the current Show Dome to accommodate a new building.

The recommendations contained in the report were in many ways a wake-up call for Milwaukee County and for those who have long supported and cared about the Domes and Mitchell Park. Historic preservation activists were rightly concerned about the concept of razing architecturally significant buildings in favor of something new. Civic leaders were concerned about what it would require of Milwaukee County to establish a destination with fresh relevance within the same timeframe as other Milwaukee institutions are addressing major facility projects. The report’s many stated concerns about governance were very direct and of concern to Milwaukee County Parks, which has faced budget and related staffing cuts. To do any significant programming and new level of service, would require a strong public-private partnership and new governance capacity not currently in place.

The Phase 3 work profiled in this report was conducted by a new team led by ArtsMarket, Inc., a national cultural and heritage feasibility and planning firm in Bozeman, MT whose principals, Louise K Stevens and John F. Stevens had previously lived and worked in Milwaukee and brought an understanding of the market and Milwaukee’s cultural nonprofits. ArtsMarket was joined in the analysis by Milwaukee architectural firm Engberg Anderson, by Milwaukee based Preserve LLC, and by Madison based landscape architecture firm. Saiki Design. The team also included pro bono counsel to the consultants provided by Milwaukee Attorney Hal Karas, partner at Husch Blackwell.

The Phase III team was given the following direction by Milwaukee County Parks and by the Domes Task Force:

*“This RFP is intended to help the Task Force understand and evaluate the feasibility and long-term viability of the options that it has identified for the future direction of the Mitchell Park Conservatory Domes. The intention is to examine potential partnerships, consider governance changes, develop funding and revenue options, complete programming and conceptual space planning and cost estimating, and provide a recommended business plan for sustained operation of the Domes.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory Future Path and Feasibility Study, Phase 1, page I-2

The team was tasked with the following specifics:

- *“Evaluate 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.*
- *“Provide recommendations on partnership opportunities and related governance necessary to develop and support the two options envisioned by the Task Force, recognizing that Milwaukee County may be unable with current resources and operating structure to develop and manage an expanded facility.*
- *“Provide analysis of likely funding sources for developing and operating each of the two alternatives identified by the Task Force, incorporating any possible impacts from partnerships and to existing partnerships.*
- *“Develop preliminary programming and budgetary cost estimates based on space needs for the Task Force selected alternatives, including the possible impact of partnerships on programming and facility requirements.*
- *“Recommend a preferred feasible solution to the Task Force with reasoning behind the recommendation. Provide a summary report for use by the Task Force, as well as the County Board, that provides overall and integrated understanding of the two options for the Mitchell Park Domes identified by the Task Force.”*

Due to County timing requirements, the team for Phase 3 was given from early May until mid-July to conduct the analysis and develop a feasible solution.

The consultants were directed to provide financial and feasibility analysis around the two options the Task Force had selected out of those provided by the Phase 1 and 2 team. These were:

#### Targeted Investment

- Address deferred maintenance.
- Add key additions and new construction to increase the functionality of the Domes complex, including classrooms, offices, meeting space, storage, ADA upgrades.
- Improve/expand guest entrance, ticketing sequence and group arrival areas.
- Add improved retail space and food service with small seating area.
- Improve connections to Greenhouses and Annex. Enhance annex as a venue for facility rentals, add catering kitchen and air conditioning.
- Increase parking capacity and site wayfinding, improved connections to park and trail.
- Operating enhancements: staff, operations, programs, education, and partnership.
- Increased role for Friends of the Dome.

## EcoDome Destination

- Address deferred maintenance.
- Support targeted investments (per above)
- Add new immersive Ecological Habitat Zone and other enhancements
- Add exterior gardens and activity space.

Within the RFP, the consultants were specifically asked to provide knowledge of securing Historic Tax Credits. At no point in the Phase 1 pro forma work had this type of capital funding mechanism been put forward by its consulting team. And while the Domes and Mitchell Park were both consistently referenced as “historic,” there was no discussion of “historic significance” in the context of architectural landmark status consistent with placing the buildings on the National Register for Historic Places, thus making them eligible for HTC investment.

The addition of this element in the RFP opened the door for the consultant team to consider National Register applicability and the potential of securing HTC. With this potential comes various architectural restrictions making some of the “targeted investment” recommendations from Phase 1 and 2 challenging. However, it served as an important starting premise for the consultants, allowing them to evaluate the Domes as nationally significant historic treasures and providing context for this within Mitchell Park itself.<sup>3</sup>

## Begin with the End in Mind

As the consultants reviewed the two models put forward for study, questions immediately emerged:

- What is the vision?
- To what purpose?
- What needs will be addressed and what opportunities will be made possible for the residents of Milwaukee County and other visitors?
- What is necessary to ensure sustainable success?
- What have other communities with historic horticultural conservatories learned and implemented to guide Milwaukee County in rethinking what an urban horticultural conservatory and surround park space can mean in today’s world?
- The Phase 1 report suggested that any re-do of the Domes would be assumed to last for only 25+ years. Why? Why not think longer term? The Domes are just over 50 years old. Why not re-envision them for the next 50 years?

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<sup>3</sup> The Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory was placed on the National Historic Trust’s list of Most Endangered Buildings in 2016.

The consultants evaluated the success factors and challenges evident in over a dozen major horticultural conservatories located in parks in the US and elsewhere in the world. Among those analyzed:

1. Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, PA
2. Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Columbus, OH
3. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY
4. Missouri Botanical Gardens, St Louis, MO
5. Crystal Bridge Conservatory and Myriad Botanical Gardens, Oklahoma City, OK
6. Garfield Park Conservatory, Chicago, IL
7. Chicago Botanical Gardens and Greenhouses, Glencoe, IL
8. Lewis Ginter Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Richmond, VA
9. Lucile Halsell Conservatory and San Antonio Botanical Gardens, San Antonio, TX
10. Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver, CO
11. Albuquerque Bio-Park Botanical Conservatory, Albuquerque, NM
12. Cleveland Botanical Gardens and Conservatory, Cleveland, OH

Each of these important horticultural conservatories operates within the context of its surrounding park. Each feature wide-ranging programs and services. Most are deeply engaged in community service and partnerships. For all, the mission is no longer just about the plants inside the conservatories, but the interaction between people and plants. Most are intensely involved in horticultural, botanical, and water stewardship. Almost all offer diverse exhibitions that address the diverse cultures of the plants and gardens – from Africa to Asia, alpine valleys and mountains to tropical rainforests of the Caribbean.

From this analysis, the consultants began to develop a vision for what a contemporary and urban botanical and horticultural conservatory and park could mean in Milwaukee.



Rutgers Gardens summer fest sale, New Brunswick, NJ



## The Vision for An Urban Botanical Park and Conservatory in Milwaukee

The best horticultural and botanical parks today provide space for:

- 1) Learning
- 2) For becoming healthy
- 3) For being active stewards.

This is the plan for Mitchell Park and its Domes.

In urban areas, where the concept of stewardship can seem remote, botanical and horticultural centers that engage residents as active stewards of the world around us can open new worlds to explore.



Teen apprenticeship program, Chicago Botanical Gardens

That is why today's best urban botanical centers have life-long learning programs that typically include everything from children's garden areas all the way to degree and certificate programs in sustainable horticulture.

In the process, they create engaged communities, and they provide new economic stimulus and job creation. "These investments create a range of economic and social opportunities for underserved communities, including living-wage jobs, opportunities for skill building and advancement, and chances to

increase involvement in municipal and regional planning process."<sup>iii</sup>

## Elements of Success

From the gardens of Brooklyn Botanical Park to those of Garfield Park in Chicago and San Antonio, Houston and Cleveland, Columbus, OH and Richmond, VA, today's urban botanical gardens and conservatories have been rethought.



There are children's learning gardens.



Outdoor and indoor culinary programs and demonstration kitchens.



There are health clinics where physicians prescribe fresh produce grown right there and provided to patients throughout the clinic service area.

There are off-site programs, as well, setting up entire neighborhoods to become green zones through programs like The Greenest Block in Brooklyn and Missouri's Help for the Home Gardener program.

Teen apprenticeship programs lead directly into associate degree programs in everything from horticulture to horticultural therapy. Many offer culinary programs and certifications. Still others offer water stewardship learning and programs.

These centers model what they preach and teach.

They are among the greenest practice and demonstration sites in America. The Center for Sustainable Landscapes, a new learning site within Pittsburgh's Phipps Conservatory and Park, prides itself as one of the "greenest buildings in the world." The newly renovated



Bartholdi Park at the US Botanical Gardens in Washington D.C. has ten rain gardens that capture 100% of rainfall on the site, allowing it to soak into the ground and diverting runoff from D.C.'s combined sewer system.

## Milwaukee has the raw materials to create this new urban horticultural park.

When Milwaukee's Domes at Mitchell Park were first built, they represented the finest and most forward-thinking of botanical conservatory development in the United States and around the world. Visitors crossed the continent and still others flew into Milwaukee from Europe, Asia, and the Middle-East to see the amazing set of three glass domes and their respective gardens.

But over the years, the novelty of the Domes themselves wore off, the uniqueness of the collection dissipated, and the relevance of the Domes to residents and visitors diminished. Today, the Domes have fallen behind their counterparts throughout the country.

Public use and value of the conservatory and of Mitchell Park has dropped year by year.

Once consistently named as among the greatest conservatories in America, the Domes are languishing as a collection of plants and as a

destination for horticultural visitors; they are also physically crumbling.

As for the rest of Mitchell Park, it has little connectivity to the horticultural life inside the Domes. It too was once filled with gardens.

Its lagoon was clean and clear. Milwaukeeans strolled the park to learn about flowers, be a part of nature, and take home with them valuable ideas for their own gardens.

Milwaukee has the raw materials to recreate and reshape the Domes and Mitchell Park into greatness as a new urban horticultural park.

Through two years' public dialogue, Milwaukeeans have provided input through hundreds of surveys and scores of round tables. They have opened their hearts with story after story about the importance of the Domes in their lives, their family histories, and their memories. There is loyalty and passion.

Through scores of discussions, willing partners have already come to the table, bringing imagination and enthusiasm. Milwaukee needs this new state of the art urban botanical park and all that it offers.

And Milwaukee has the talent, the proven capacity by highly regarded partners, and the demonstrated ability to employ new strategies to solve old problems. Milwaukee can do this.

## Just what will it be?

We've all heard of technology campuses, and incubator parks. We have heard of environmental centers and research zones, learning centers and community hubs. In many ways, these are models for the new Mitchell Park and its Domes.

Just as with tech campuses and research zones, this plan draws upon Milwaukee's outstanding tradition of collaboration and partnership, with the Park and Domes serving as home to a collaborative group that brings their best to the Park.

**THE PLAN DOES NOT REINVENT WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE - WITH EXCELLENCE - BY OTHER MILWAUKEE AREA GROUPS. INSTEAD, IT BRINGS THEM TOGETHER IN MITCHELL PARK AND ITS DOMES, TO OPERATE HORTICULTURAL, BOTANICAL, AND RELATED PRACTICES THAT WILL BE DEMONSTRATED AND UTILIZED THROUGH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN THE DOMES AND AT THE PARK.**

This approach is what scholars have come to call the "new model for sustainability" for urban botanical parks.

## Why a Sustainable Park and not just “The Domes”?

In the Phase 1 and 2 reports previously presented to the Domes Task Force, focus was placed primarily on the reinterpretation and use of the Domes themselves. Some discussion was given to the Domes historic architectural importance, yet one of the options presented to the Task Force in Phases 1 and 2 was to tear down the Domes.

Early in Phase 3 (this planning project), and after review of the Phase 1 and 2 reports, the consulting team spent time examining the footprint of the Domes buildings. The current team also began analysis by a historic preservationist – something that had not been previously done – of whether the Domes should be considered a historic building to the standards of the Department of Interior and therefore be eligible for Historic Tax Credits.

The conclusion:

- 1. The Domes fit the profile of a historically-significant building worthy of preservation and use of Historic Tax Credits. This represents a valuable source of capital necessary for the rehabilitation of the comes.*
- 2. The Domes buildings lack the minimal types of spaces – offices, sizable retail, food service - required by successful botanical conservatories, space that makes possible the necessary revenue mix to sustain operations. Thus, to realize the model of Targeted Investment, additional space needs to be identified and included.*
- 3. In response, there is underused, unused, and adaptable space in the Domes complex and the Park. And, if Milwaukee County thinks of the Park and Domes as one – the way that other successful botanical conservatories operate within their parks – there is both opportunity and program demand to add one more structure to the site. This will make possible the “sustainability” of the park as an urban horticultural center.*
- 4. There are important additional learning and service opportunities related to the Domes mission and the Park location that cannot be accommodated within the existing footprint. These opportunities bring with them new financial resources that can assist the capitalization and operation financial plans.*
- 5. At the same time and in concert with the Park as an urban horticultural destination, Mitchell Park is and should grow as a neighborhood and community resource. In addition to maintaining the Green Bay Packers Football field, the Park should once again include a tennis court and add a soccer field as community resources.*

*Responding to these:*

- Implement a capital and operating approach that will be the foundation for a sustained, dynamic Mitchell Park and Domes for the next 50 years, placing it on par with important Milwaukee cultural destinations such as the Zoo and Milwaukee Public Museum.
- Rehabilitate the historic Domes as architectural icons for Milwaukee.
- Maintain the valued plant collection housed in the Domes as a foundation for animating the programming of the Domes, to make the experience relevant to today's Milwaukee community.
- Build upon Phase 1's "eco-Dome" concept: expand this throughout the entire Mitchell Park campus. Use this to again make the Domes and Mitchell Park a place of wonder and fun, learning and exploration, involvement and community.
- Re-envision Mitchell Park as an urban horticultural destination. Plan for the whole Park, not just the Domes. Making the Domes successful requires building the Park for success indoors and outdoors.
- Adopt a mission that adds people to plants: "Connecting and inspiring people through the world of plants."
- Use four Guiding Principles to drive programming and the business plan:

<b>Sustainability.</b>	Sustaining plant ecosystems, sustaining historic and iconic architecture and parkland, sustaining excellence in programming, service, education, governance, and operations.
<b>Meaning.</b>	The meaning of horticultural gardens as an urban oasis. The meaning of history and place, and Milwaukee County's long investment in horticulture and Wisconsin's central role in the entire conservation and plant stewardship movement throughout the world. The meaning of involved plant stewardship. The cultural meaning of plant ecosystems.
<b>Engagement.</b>	A place for everyone, all ages, all seasons, all interests, all abilities. Healing engagement, youth engagement, community engagement. Engaging the many cultures of Milwaukee. Engaging all who come around the value of stewarding natural resources.
<b>Partnership.</b>	Partners in community, in education, health and wellbeing. Partnership as a way of working efficiently and effectively in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century public sphere. Public and private partnership to ensure the Park for its next 50 years.

## Key Elements



This plan calls for the historic rehabilitation of the current Domes.



The plan calls for maintaining the valued plant collection housed in the Domes and animating the programming of the Domes to make these relevant to today's Milwaukee community.



It calls for a new entrance and retail area without taking away views of the current historic façade.



The plan calls for adaptive reuse of non-historic elements of the complex of greenhouses/work areas attached to the rear of the Domes.



It calls for transformation of the unused boathouse at the lagoon into a state-of-the-art event/wedding/catering center, with an in-door/outdoor wedding ceremony area/garden.



The plan includes reinstallation of gardens throughout the Park, re-envisioned with sustainable gardens, including a Children's and Family Garden and an area devoted to Urban Ag and Health.



It calls for establishment of a new building that will make possible lifelong learning engagement and education programs including apprentice, workforce development and degree programs in horticulture, horticultural therapy, and culinary arts as well as to support community services in horticulture, health and wellness. This new building will also support applied horticultural and medical research.



The plan maintains the Green Bay Packers practice field, operated by Journey House, and the tots play area as important neighborhood assets. It adds additional pathways for better walking and bicycling in the park including better connectivity to Three Bridges Park and the Hank Aaron Trail. There will be new public access to different areas in the Park.



It calls for a new water recirculation plan that ensures a sparkling clean lagoon, re-envisions a water garden as was once at the front of the Domes, and connects the two to a clean water stewardship system including underground cisterns, water reuse for the gardens inside the Domes, and to provide all water for the Park while mitigating storm water run-off.

## The Domes

The plan envisions the three Domes preserved as historic treasures fully recognizing their historic importance as midcentury conservatories.

But just because the Domes are historic doesn't mean they will be static.

Instead, each of the Domes will be programmed with rotating exhibits – similar to the way that Milwaukee's art museum and Milwaukee Public Museum bring in touring and rotating exhibits.

These may be up for six months or even a year.

These rotating exhibits will capture and reflect the Dome's and Park's mission of serving as the *intersection of plants, people and culture*. Plants and places define who we are, and through them the Domes will bring their worlds to Milwaukee residents and visitors.

***The Deserts of the World Dome.*** From the Sahara of Africa to the Sonoran of Arizona, from the Gobi of China to the Chihuahuan Desert of Mexico, the Kalahari of South Africa to the Big Sandy of Australia, deserts tell the age-old cultural stories of people and plants in often unforgiving climates.

Every desert has its own great stories and great exhibition opportunities. The Deserts of the World Dome will feature changing exhibits that share these cultures of place and plants.

Each will bring connections to K-12 curriculum and to lifelong learning.

The Deserts of the World Dome will be transformed into a bit of Mexico for a while, as home to the Domes' already well known *Dies de los Muertos* celebration.

In the evenings, the Deserts of the World Dome may be transformed into a taqueria with live

music and dancing. Or, in another month, it may become an oasis from the Arabian Peninsula.

***The Tropics of the World Dome.*** Tropical and sub-tropical climates and their plants span the globe from Costa Rica to Madagascar, from the Caribbean to the Amazon, from Brazil to Bora Bora, from Cuba to the Congo.

The Tropics of the World Dome will tell of these places and the inter-relationship between climates, plants, people, and culture, each bringing K-12 curriculum and lifelong learning as well as rich learning opportunities on plant-focused cultures.

The Dome will host popular exhibits and create its own: The Flowers of Costa Rica, or the Rainforests of Cuba, complete with Cuban food and live music.

Each return visit will be a visit to another place, perhaps a tropical cultural immersion enjoyed on a cold winter afternoon or over a relaxing dinner of Caribbean food.

***Our World Dome.*** Milwaukee's world is that of the temperate zones of the world, with plant species representative of all temperate zones. Just as with tropics of the world and deserts of the world, there are many culturally diverse stories to be interpreted through the flowers and plants indigenous to our ecology.

Equally important, there is inspiring work to be done that can be accomplished right here at the Park's "Our World" Dome to help sustain and green the urban environment.

This dome – formerly the "Show" Dome - will still feature favorite changing exhibits such as an annual holiday show. But it will also incorporate new changing and sustained exhibits as well as applied research on our urban ecology.

This Dome will become an important part of the new **Wisconsin Center for Urban Ecology** that will grow within Mitchell Park, where there will be

opportunities to learn about backyard gardening, sustainable plants, good water stewardship, and how to protect endangered Wisconsin flowers and plants that if unprotected could vanish from our urban landscape within the next fifty years.

This will be the home of one of the new important partnerships for the Park, the **Milwaukee Master Gardeners Program** operated through the partnership of the University of Wisconsin Extension.

## The Park

The Mitchell Park experience historically incorporated outdoor gardens. Re-envisioned, these outdoor garden beds are an important part of connecting the world of flowers to the casual visitor and the surrounding neighborhood. The master plan replaces these gardens and adds to them.

Rather than annuals requiring extensive water and fertilizers, the new beds will be planted with sustainable gardens that can serve as a stewardship model for every backyard gardener.



Sustainable garden example, Missouri Botanical Gardens

Historically, the Mitchell Park experience also incorporated water, both as a water garden, and through the active use of a sizable lagoon. These water features will be restored and reinterpreted as a part of a Park wide sustainable water stewardship program.

A sparkling clean lagoon will be linked to the water garden and to the water collection system

under the Domes and greenhouses as a demonstration of best practices in water stewardship.

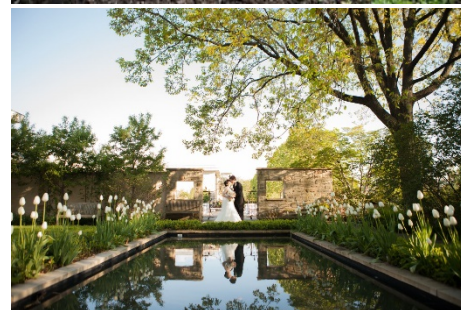
The new **Children's and Family Garden** will be a Pre-school to Grade 6 addition to Mitchell Park, including a tree canopy house, plenty of areas for digging and planting, and an area for family and student learning. There will be indoor-outdoor food service within the enclosed garden, so that families can come and spend hours engaged in flower fun and learning.

The new **Bride's Garden** will add to the wedding settings inside the Domes with a spectacular new outdoor wedding and reception site that will also be suitable for parties and other special events.

The existing small **amphitheater** will be improved, with casual grass seating for up to 500, and a small stage that will accommodate Milwaukee ensembles offering music, dance, and theatre. The amphitheater will also serve as a beautiful new location for weddings and private events.



Children's Garden, Brooklyn Botanical Park



Wedding Garden, Cleveland Botanical Park



## The Mitchell Park Learning, Wellness and Horticultural Campus

The master plan includes important new park areas developed with partners, each designed for family-friendly learning and hands-on engagement as well as for research and advanced study, while leaving plenty of green and garden space open for more passive enjoyment of nature.

An additional 20,000 square feet of work space will be added in existing and new structures to house, the **Mitchell Park Learning, Wellness, and Horticultural Campus**. Within these and the surrounding campus gardens there will be discrete operating “centers” for primary and supporting partners.



Applied urban horticultural research greenhouse, North Carolina State University

### The Learning, Wellness and Horticultural Campus

This plan includes eight discrete classrooms/learning labs for K-12 and adult learning, a culinary arts/healthy food demonstration kitchen; a seminar room that can also be used for health/wellness programs, research space, and a wellness clinic area as well as offices and amenities.

There will be new Indoor and outdoor gardens highlighting important plant species that could face extinction in the next 50 years as well as a range of sustainable gardens in “*Milwaukee’s Backyard*” – a series of example gardens focused on sustainability and stewardship best practices. It will also lead to the “*Urban Ag*” gardens that will support both the health and horticultural aspects of the Campus.

These gardens and buildings will also be home to some of the Park’s new partnership programs ranging from summer youth and teen day camps and after school garden apprentice programs to its new signature “*Streets of Milwaukee*” community garden program, where neighborhoods work together to create beautiful gardens they can enjoy together, beautifying their streetscape and coming together as gardeners.

The goal of the learning campus and its centers is to extend the Dome’s new focus on how plants, our climate, people and culture intersect and how we can become better environmental stewards in urban Milwaukee.

Each of these will help visitors take home new ideas to incorporate into their homes, gardens, diet and lifestyle. There will be indoor and outdoor demonstration kitchens for learning new plant-based recipes and testing local garden to table fare.

**The Center for Health and Urban Agriculture** is an envisioned potential joint venture between the Park and its partner, the Medical College of Wisconsin.



It will offer plant-and-grow gardens that help demonstrate the health benefits of gardening and a neighborhood wellness center.

It will also contain post-doctoral research lab focused on how healthy diet and exercise can prevent urban diseases.

This Center will be open to the public as a place to learn and even a place to pick up fresh produce.

It will also be a place of learning for teens and adults who can go on to become certified and gain degrees that lead to quality jobs, from horticultural certification health care to culinary arts.

This section of the Center is envisioned as a partnership between the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Park as well as other nonprofit organizations that have excelled in green job training.

An apprenticeship program will give teens a chance to learn horticulture as well as learn marketing and sales as they operate their own garden floral and vegetable market.

The **Wisconsin Center for Urban Ecology**, offering programs in the current Show Dome, will also have a free and accessible area in the Mitchell

Park Gardens area and an additional teaching and applied research space.

Both Centers will also use the existing greenhouse complex to further year-round, hands-on learning and research.

The **Mitchell Park Center for Water Stewardship** will occupy and expand upon the space currently used by a small boat storage building alongside the lagoon.

Through an envisioned potential partnership with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), the Park lagoon will be cleaned, and a water recirculation plan will be implemented that will eventually lead through the park to Menomonee River.

In doing this, Mitchell Park will be the first park anywhere in the world to achieve the Platinum level of the Alliance for Water Stewardship Certification and will serve as a demonstration site for Milwaukee's Water Council. **The Mitchell Park Water Stewardship Center** will be a learning and demonstration site for wise water stewardship in home gardening.

## Restaurant, Catering, Culinary Training

There is a secret dome at the Domes. Constructed at the same time as the three highly visible Domes, a smaller fourth Dome sits behind the three and looks out over the Menomonee River and the downtown Milwaukee skyline.

In the type of partnership demonstrated as successful in other Milwaukee County Parks, this historic park building will be restored following Department of the Interior guidelines and will be repurposed into a wonderfully friendly garden to table restaurant with fare that will reflect the changing exhibits and the constant favorites of the Milwaukee ecology.

**“Milwaukee’s Garden”** will become the home restaurant for the Park’s *culinary training program* that may be operated by a local training provider such as MATC in partnership with the restaurant itself. Apprentice chefs will work in the kitchen and catering operations, perfecting their farm to table cuisine.

It will become the center of the Park’s catering services and its operation of outdoor dining spaces and food trucks, and the hub of its expanded weddings and special events program.

In addition, the current boat house will be transformed into the new **Domes Pavilion**, a beautiful new wedding and events venue overlooking what will become a clear and beautifully landscaped lagoon. The Bride’s Garden wedding area will be nearby and linked with a new drive – actually, a recreation of the drive that used to exist in the park - connecting the garden to the newly redone 7,500 square foot Pavilion. It will include a dining/event space, bride and groom dressing areas, catering kitchen, and an outdoor veranda.



Potential future restaurant dome

## The Domes Support Services: New Quality Jobs, Workforce Development, Community Support

To support this vision, Mitchell Park & its Domes will become a quality jobs provider and workforce development trainer.

Developing changing exhibits in large horticultural Domes requires more than plants. It requires the creation and construction of what can best be described as theatrical sets representing a streetscape in Brazil or a desert diner along Route 66.

Mitchell Park and its Domes will establish an **exhibit planning and construction hub** to be located in one of the working buildings behind the Domes. This large-scale hub of activity will provide new jobs and may potentially be linked to job training and apprenticeship opportunities. This may also serve many of Milwaukee's theatre companies by providing services and space for set construction.



Potential future Domes Services hub

Also, part of Domes Services, a large new indoor-outdoor “garden and gift, market and table” store will be located in a new entrance building to the Domes featuring Mitchell Park produce and plants, a range of local ethnic foods, and a floral and flowering plant studio that will also provide the floral services for Mitchell Park events and weddings.

Developed to be part of the Park's enterprise and workforce development services, it will contribute to the job training and employment opportunities the Park will foster and become its own destination for neighborhood and Milwaukee shopping.

The cadre of highly trained horticultural experts the Park will create together with its partners who lead the Wisconsin Center for Urban Horticulture and the Center for Health and Urban Ag will also become a part of the enterprise support base for the Park and Domes, offering fee-for-service assistance to gardeners throughout the Milwaukee County area, designing sustainable gardens, solving water stewardship problems, and helping create backyard and neighborhood garden-to-table plans.

## Multi-Year Jobs Creation, Community Engagement

This plan estimates that at full operations (2026-27), Mitchell Park and its Domes will make possible more than 300 new, quality jobs on site and in the surrounding neighborhood.

Hundreds more will be engaged in apprenticeship and certification learning programs that will lead to quality jobs elsewhere.

In this, Mitchell Park and its Domes will be a community hub and an economic engine, a center for its neighborhood and an example for Milwaukee County and beyond.

Year round, in cold weather and warm, the Park will be active: K-12 school groups visiting the Domes, the outdoor gardens, and using the learning space at the Center for Urban Horticulture.



The Center for Urban Health and Ag will be providing neighborhood health services while doing advanced research.



Inside the Wisconsin Center for Urban Horticulture lifetime learners will be taking culinary arts classes and degree-seeking students will be enrolled in horticultural courses.



At the Wisconsin Center for Urban Horticulture Dome, students and applied researchers will be at work focusing on our urban gardens.

On any given weekend the Domes will be home to live music and dancing, while Milwaukee's Garden Restaurant and the Park's other food venues will be serving up a wide range of garden-to-table fare.

This is the reinvention of the historic Domes and Mitchell Park into what will once again become a model. This time it will be a model of a sustainable, urban botanical park - a place that demonstrates excellence and stewardship while showcasing history through its Domes. It will be a model in community learning and in providing workforce development and new sustainable jobs. It will be the place to go, repeatedly, year-round, for a dynamic and ever-changing experience.

It will demonstrate Milwaukee's best, once again for the world to see.

## Reaching the Vision: A New Capital and Operating Model

Just as the plan for Milwaukee's new urban botanical park is fresh and new, so too is the plan to make it financially possible. As the old saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention.

The County's \$400 million infrastructure backlog severely limits the level of public dollars – if any – that can be expended in redevelopment of the Domes and Mitchell Park. This plan was developed from that premise.

- The challenge: how to move forward given this as the starting point?

The result is a strategy that utilizes different types of funds for different elements of the historic Domes structure and for the other buildings within the park. During this study, it became evident that in using this strategy, Mitchell Park can become an important economic development contributor to the Clarke Square neighborhood and beyond.

The revitalized Mitchell Park and its Domes will not rely on Milwaukee County taxpayers to be solely responsible for the capitalization and operation of this world class park and the experiences and services it will provide to Milwaukeeans and visitors.

This park will be developed through a new type of public-private partnership financing and funding mix that includes federal and state Historic Tax Credits (HTCs), New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs), Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing (PACE) and Opportunity Zone investment. (OZ)

This plan envisions the County working together with lead and supporting partners to secure private sector contributions.

Tax Credits and Opportunity Zone investment can be a realistic, sizable part of the capitalization plan by focusing on key elements that this redevelopment project organically relies upon:

### **The Historic Domes**

By celebrating and rehabilitating the historic Domes, the project can benefit from a combination of state and federal historic tax credits to provide early capital toward the rehabilitation of the Domes buildings.

This requires some operational complexities that can be overcome – other museums, nonprofits, and civic projects throughout the country have provided valuable models for this plan.

Simply put: it would cost far more to tear down these historic domes and build new than to rehabilitate them. Important historical elements will be preserved for future generations, while applying today's technology to address long-standing structural issues.

### **The Partnership Model**

A complex but highly workable and proven operating mechanism is to use the joint capacity of partners and Milwaukee County to provide the programs and services while keeping the bottom line in the black.

Mitchell Park's location within one of Milwaukee Opportunity Zones – Clarke Square – can make possible both New Market Tax Credit investment and Opportunity Zone investment. Both

investment streams focus on training, workforce skill development, and providing good paying jobs.

This meshes completely with the plan for Mitchell Park and its Domes to be an urban horticultural center that provides multi-faceted learning opportunities, community service, and quality jobs.

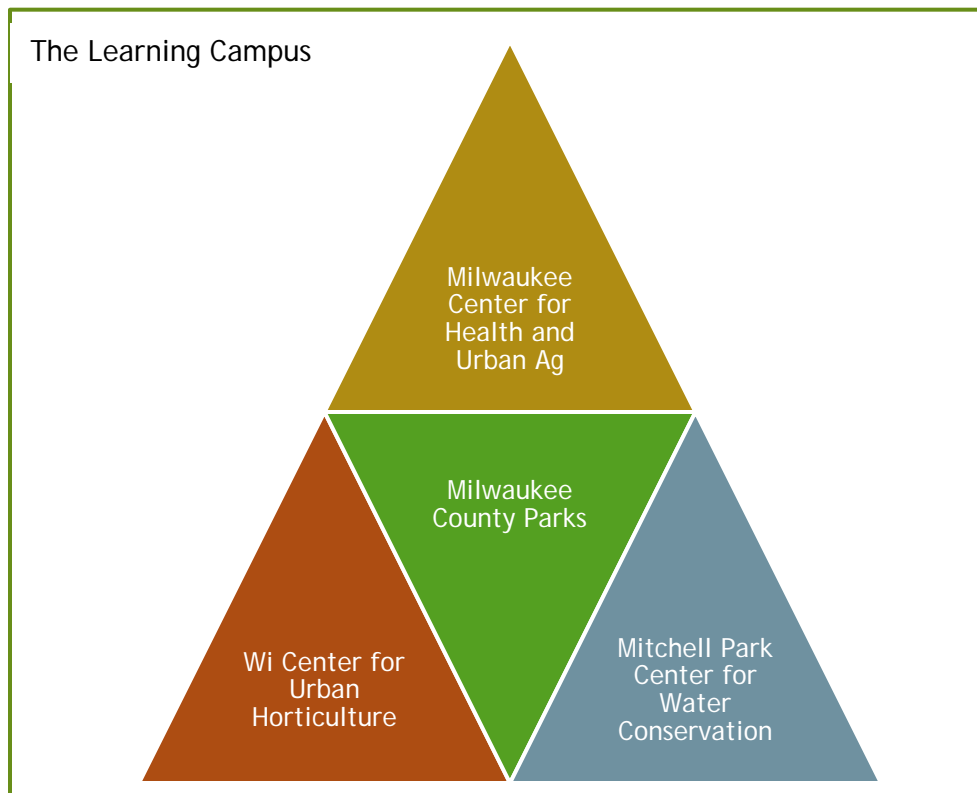
Partnerships will help make this possible. Milwaukee County Parks lacks the resources or experience to provide the depth of services envisioned for Mitchell Park. Besides, many Milwaukee County and Wisconsin organizations have experience in each of the services areas envisioned and sought for the Park.

This urban botanical campus will act in much the same way as a research park or technology

campus: there will be major partners that come together along with many other partners that are able to use the Park to perfect their own programs and services.

Each of the Park's Campus centers will be shaped by and between lead partners who will individually and collaboratively make possible the investment of New Market Tax Credits and Opportunity Zone investment.

They will also work individually and collaboratively to bring private sector donors and investors to the table. Each lead will provide new jobs, new job skills training, and new economic development in the Clarke Square neighborhood.



Located within the Domes and the Park, each of the Centers will function as homes to both “lead” and “supporting” partners, both nonprofit and for-profit. For example, Milwaukee County, through its operation of the Domes, is currently and will continue to be home to a for-profit catering company. In addition, through the new Wisconsin Center for Urban Horticulture, there will be public learning opportunities and associate degree programs in culinary arts, focusing on garden to table skills.

Likewise, by programming the historic Domes with constantly changing exhibits, Milwaukee County will best organize and operate this function through a subsidiary within the Domes. This will focus on the creation and implementation of these exhibits, with an eye to touring them throughout the Country and producing important touring exhibit rental revenue. This is likely to be done through an enterprise unit of the Domes rather than by the Parks Department.

That same enterprise unit will contain the expanded restaurant and catering operations linked to the restaurant and the creating of additional wedding and event venues in the park and new, expanded retail opportunities.

These types of flexible, partnership-based approaches to fully programming the park will be structured in the first year of the plan. They will be mission-aligned and focused on providing the education, community services, and operating revenue that together will sustain the Park as a new model.

Each will have publicly accessible space as well as dedicated space for their work. There will be a joint agreement between them concerning operations and programming responsibilities, annual fund development and marketing.

Learning Centers,  
Missouri Botanical  
Park, St. Louis





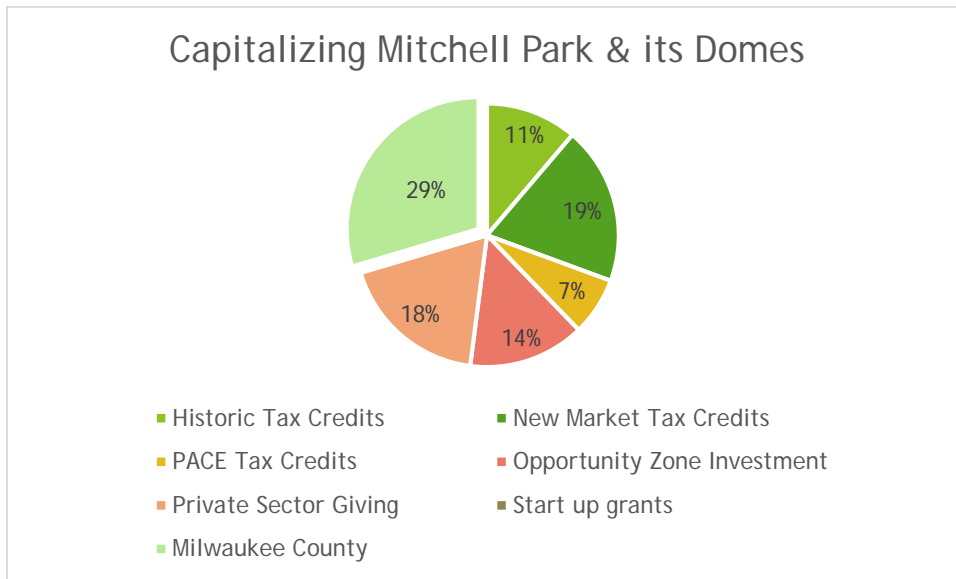
This strategy - bringing together a group of partners and utilizing a range of operating agreements - is admittedly challenging. The first year of the plan will need to be devoted to building the partnerships, working agreements, and related revenue streams for capital and operations.

In many ways, it would be far easier to contemplate rehabilitation of the Domes and Mitchell Park purely as a task of Milwaukee County and Milwaukee County Parks. This would require that Milwaukee County provide 100% capital funding through bonds and a 100% program and operating budget through Parks annual budgets.

That scenario does not work in today's economy. That's why most major urban botanical parks and conservatories have developed this type of public-private capital and operating strategy.

## The Capital Budget

The total estimated capitalization cost for this plan is \$59 Million<sup>4</sup>. The plan uses an innovative mix of tax credits and investment as well as private and public sector funds. By using this mix and if there is bond support the cost to Milwaukee County taxpayers is only twenty-nine cents of every dollar invested in the Domes and Park.



County or other new dollars are needed to match HTC to make possible the full redevelopment of the historic Domes. All other areas and facilities in the Park, including new construction, can be funded and financed through other sources. Many of these elements can be phased and are expected to be developed once funds have been raised over a ten-year period.

There are various options in getting everything done. For example, by working with partners as is called for in this plan, it may be possible for Milwaukee County to secure additional private sector resources toward the Domes. Major naming gifts are applicable. These strategies will need to be examined and tested in depth in the coming months. It is also possible that some of the new outdoor gardens and buildings other than the Domes may be funded before the Domes rehabilitation. These are all moving parts.

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<sup>4</sup> This does not include endowment but does include ramp-up capital for new exhibits, programming, services and operations.

### Capital Expense Pro Forma

Expense Item	Pro Forma Estimate
Domes rehabilitation	\$30,000,000
New buildings, additions, spaces	\$ 12,500,000
Landscape/Gardens and installation	\$ 3,500,000
Professional fees	\$ 6,000,000
Temporary facilities and moving costs	\$ 900,000
Exhibits build out/indoors and out	\$ 3,000,000
Infrastructure and green Park Conservation	\$ 2,500,000
FF&E	\$ 600,000
Soft costs	\$ 900,000
Ramp up Operations, Domes and Park	\$ 2,000,000
Owner's Contingency	\$ 1,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$58,900,000<sup>5</sup></b>

### Capital Revenue Pro Forma

Item	Pro Forma Estimate
HTC	\$ 6,500,000
NMTC	\$11,000,000
OZ Investment	\$ 8,000,000
PACE	\$ 4,000,000
Private Sector Capital Campaign	\$14,500,000
Start up Grants	\$ 1,000,000
County/Other	\$17,900,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$58,900,000</b>

It is important to note that there will be many variations on the above revenue plan. The process of “twinning” tax credits and OZ investment is complex. Often – as may be the case with the Domes and Mitchell Park – numerous entities at both the state and national level may come together to invest in the mix of Historic and New Market tax credits. During the planning process the consultants spoke with Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and national investors including the National Trust Community Investment Corporation, the country's largest HTC investor, which is currently engaged in support of two other projects in Milwaukee. All expressed interest and a high degree of confidence that this multi-faceted approach is viable but note that it will require work to bring together. Some to-be-determined level of short-term loan financing will also likely be necessary. For example, Historic Tax Credits are only released when the building is placed in service, requiring the project to have up-front financing for the construction/rehabilitation phase.

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<sup>5</sup> This does not include reinstalling the tennis courts or a soccer field. It only addresses the Domes and gardens.

Both HTC and a portion of NMTC can be used toward construction. With NMTC, each project invested in allows 39% of the investment to be equity realized through the tax credit, just as with Historic Tax Credits, while the rest is a loan to be repaid within seven years. Working with the concept of an \$11 million infusion of NMTC, this means that \$4.29<sup>6</sup> million of it would be working capital directly into the rehabilitation of the Domes and other park buildings, while \$6.7<sup>7</sup> million would be a below-market loan to be repaid over seven years. The financial plan for annual operations supports this.

PACE loans can be paid off over as long as 20 years, though the Park will save money by paying it off in less time.

For Opportunity Zone investment, the typical project varies. For simplicity, here we are assuming it essentially comes to the Park as a below market loan payable in ten years.

The above capital budget hypothesizes a total of \$17.9 million in County funding/financing over ten years. If this is not viable, a fallback position of seeking additional NMTC in a second phase, perhaps in 2024-5 may be doable. However, this places increased pressure on paying this down on top of the first NMTC and may not prove feasible.

## Naming Opportunities

There are numerous naming opportunities for private sector major gifts. These include:

- The Conservatory building
- Each Dome
- Greenhouse learning area
- Children's and Family Garden
- Bride's Garden
- Urban Ag Garden
- The Campus Centers Building
- Each Center within the Building
- Elements of the Centers building: i.e. demonstration kitchen, classrooms, labs

The capital campaign giving pyramid for this appears very doable. The scale of the buildings and the appeal they and the programming they will feature suggest that despite other concurrent campaigns of significant size on-going in Milwaukee, this one has feasibility. This campaign also

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<sup>6</sup> As with HTC, NMTC are usually sold at a discount so the actual realized may be less.

<sup>7</sup> There are two approaches in NMTC and OZ investment: one is for the type of support noted here, which is essentially part capital investment/balance loan over ten years; the second is for pure social investment, in which there is no loan repayment. While social investment using these approaches is growing in popularity, the most common approach is the loan. While it would be vastly preferable for social investment and no need for loan repayment, this plan has taken the clear-eyed perspective of repayment over ten years from the start date of NMTC and OZ investment.

reaches a national pool of donors and foundations that would not likely be approached by other significant Milwaukee campaigns.

The following table shows the size and number of gifts required:

Gift Range	No. Gifts required	No. Prospects required	Subtotal	Cumulative total	Cumulative percentage
1,050,000.00	1	4	1,050,000.00	1,050,000.00	10%
525,000.00	2	8	1,050,000.00	2,100,000.00	20%
210,000.00	5	20	1,050,000.00	3,150,000.00	30%
105,000.00	10	40	1,050,000.00	4,200,000.00	40%
53,000.00	20	80	1,060,000.00	5,260,000.00	50%
27,000.00	40	160	1,080,000.00	6,340,000.00	60%
16,000.00	60	240	960,000.00	7,300,000.00	70%
11,000.00	100	400	1,100,000.00	8,400,000.00	80%
5,300.00	125	500	662,500.00	9,062,500.00	86%
Under 5,300.00	542	2169	1,437,500.00	10,500,000.00	100%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>3620</b>		<b>10,500,000.00</b>	

Source: Blackbaud

As with most capital campaigns, success in securing the first 30% of the gifts from major donors will telegraph that the balance of the campaign will be successful.

## The Governance and Leadership Model Required for this Capital Approach

Given the challenges of the partnership approach and of shaping a capital strategy that utilizes tax credits and other investments together with major private sector gifts, effective high-level leadership and governance is essential.

This plan proposes the establishment of a new high visibility, high capacity nonprofit, the Mitchell Park & Domes Conservancy, and of moving to a partnership relationship with Milwaukee County that has similar financial operating approaches to some of those employed by Milwaukee County with the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

Following in the footsteps of successful horticultural park conservancies throughout the USA the Mitchell Park & Domes Conservancy will be at the forefront of Mitchell Park's historic and ecological conservation,

restoration, capital improvements and operations. As a 501(c)3 organization, it will operate through a formal agreement with Milwaukee County Parks to restore and improve Mitchell Park and its Domes Conservatory.

It is anticipated that a *transition leadership committee* will be started early in this plan, representing Milwaukee County in identifying outstanding individuals to serve on the initial board. The eventual board will be a minimum of 15 individuals to as many as 30, including significant representation from the County, County Parks, Partners, Community/Neighborhood leaders, and identified civic leaders.

### *Vision*

Mitchell Park & Domes Conservancy will lead in the creation and operation of a public-private partnership to provide venues and services in Mitchell Park. It will create and manage subsidiary entities that will make possible the capitalization and programming of the Domes and Mitchell Park.

### *Mission*

In partnership with Milwaukee County Parks, the Conservancy will raise capital and operating funds, manage operations and oversee supporting entities, and ensure fiscal sustainability. This will necessarily be at the level required to ensure the sustainability, relevance, and vibrancy as Milwaukee's urban horticultural park and conservatory for the next 50 years.

### *Priorities*

In keeping with the role of conservancies for public horticultural parks and the role required of any leadership entity seeking Historic and New Market Tax Credits, the Mitchell Park & Domes Conservancy will:

1. Safeguard Mitchell Park and Domes as public resources in Milwaukee County through careful governance and leadership.
2. Act as the management interface for the capital redevelopment of the Park and its buildings, including the Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zone Investment. Undertake and oversee implementation of the master-plan for the Park and its venues.
3. Be responsible for private sector philanthropy for capital redevelopment, improvements and new structures; for major operating funds; and for endowment and reserve funds. Its initial capital campaign commitment is \$14.5 million toward the MILWAUKEE's DOMES campaign.
4. With civic process and leadership, develop sustainable subsidiary entities that ensure Mitchell Park and the Domes long term designation as public, accessible assets and that contribute directly to the success and vibrancy of Mitchell Park & its Domes, including: the Domes Services Corporation, which provides exhibit design and fabrication, events and food service sub-leases and operations, retail, floral design and other services; and the Mitchell Park Partnerships LLC, which maintains long-term shared equity investment partnerships to further the Park's mission and that of its mission-aligned partners, in areas of conservation, health, education and community economic development.
5. Launch and manage the Park's Partners Program, developing and formalizing the partnerships that will become the Mitchell Park Partnerships LLC, formalizing their roles and educational programs,

the financial relationship, and linking underwriters and sponsors to the Park and its Partners' important work in urban horticultural and water conservation.

6. Launch and manage Domes Services Corp, an entrepreneurial start up revenue center for the Park.
7. Advocate to County leadership and the private sector for the Park, its mission, and its larger role as a demonstration and community headquarters and leader in urban horticulture and conservation.
8. Support the annual programming and operations of the park through targeted grants and annual campaign support, providing grants funding support to make possible the scale of operations that would not be possible through tax-based support alone.

In addition, and over time, the Conservancy may grow to support similar mission-aligned programs in other Milwaukee County Parks.

## Leadership and Governance

Prior to the Conservancy formation, there will be a transition leadership committee that will recommend a strong board. As it is launched, the Conservancy will be governed by a 15 to 30-member board that reflects high level civic leadership, extensive community perspective and expertise to guide the organization as a major fund development entity.

To ensure public input, the Conservancy will establish an Advisory Council representative of its partners, the surrounding neighborhood, horticultural experts and others who can assist it in establishing annual priorities and carrying out its mission. In transition, the Conservancy will utilize an existing Parks 501(c)3 as its fiscal agent.

The phase in staff may be contract or staff or both. These will be primarily focused on major fund development, equity investment oversight, capital improvements planning and implementation, and management of subsidiary entities.

### *Relationship with Other Park Entities*

The Conservancy will support the operations of the independent Friends of the Domes, providing fiscal oversight and (TBD) staff leadership for the Friends as an arms-length and grass roots annual support and volunteer organization. The Conservancy will accept gifts of \$250 and above, while the Friends will support grass-roots giving of under \$250. In keeping with best practices, for every gift the Conservancy receives, it will purchase a Friends membership for the donor, so that every donor is also a Friend.

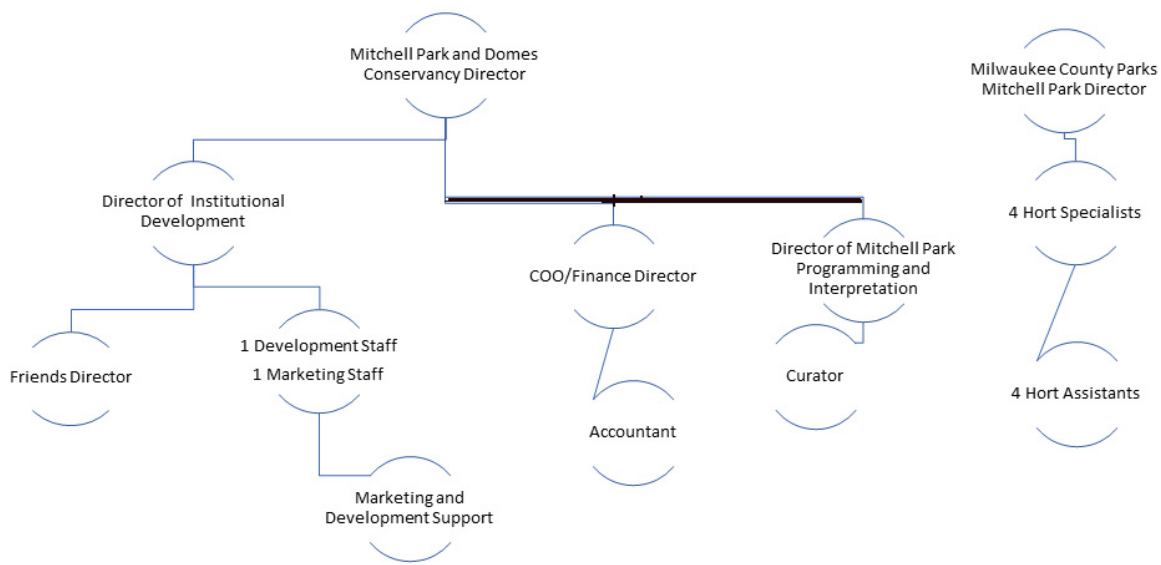
## Staffing and Operations

There are several important premises within the plan:

- 1) Education and community services will be offered through the Park's partners, not by the Park Department. The Conservancy will work closely with these partners to ensure a full range of lifelong learning opportunities are offered.
- 2) The partners will care for the new gardens introduced into Mitchell Park.
- 3) There will be an on-site volunteer Master Gardener program that will work inside and outside the Domes, supporting the work of the Park Department professional staff of horticulturalists.
- 4) The changed concept for the Our World Dome, away from constantly changing shows of flowering annuals in favor of longer-term exhibits based on sustainable plants, requires less greenhouse use by staff and opens new spaces for partners to provide programming.
- 5) The Domes enterprise elements – retail, food service and events, exhibit design and touring – will come together as a subsidiary unit responsible for generating significant operating revenue. They will be professionally operated and managed. The enterprise elements are required as part of the management structure to receive Historic Tax Credits.
- 6) A strong Conservancy non-profit will be charged with the responsibility for all the Domes and Park operations except for the professional horticulturalists whose exclusive care of the valued plant collection within the Domes will remain.

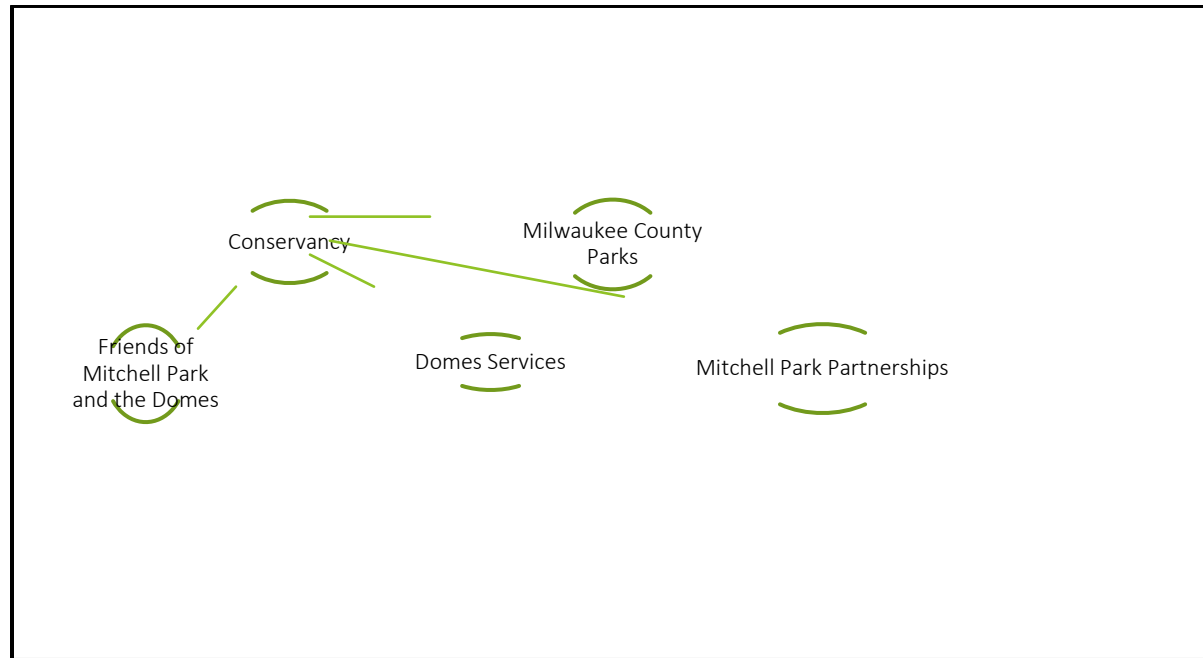
These premises lead to a new staffing and operational structure that will be implemented by the Conservancy. While it will be phased in by necessity and added to gradually as the Domes and Park are redeveloped, it will look as follows when completely operational:





There will likely be two subsidiary entities supporting both the Milwaukee County Park staff and the Conservancy, based on the requirements of HTC, NMTC, and OZ investment. The Mitchell Park Partnerships subsidiary represents the programming and educational partnerships within the Park, likely including the major and supporting partners. The Domes Services subsidiary represents the enterprise elements of the park and Domes, including rentals, catering/restaurants, exhibit fabrication, marketing and touring, retail and other revenue generating services including specially programmed events. They will focus on education, community services, workforce training, and quality jobs creation while also providing essential services that would otherwise need to be developed by the Conservancy, as per earlier in this report. The Friends, while not a subsidiary, will also provide revenue to the Park and Conservancy through membership flow-through and other fundraising they may do. It is recommended that the Friends organization change its name to Friends of Mitchell Park and the Domes, to better reflect the new membership approach that will be used.

## Potential structure with subsidiary entities



## The Friends of the Domes

Part of the consultant team’s charge from Milwaukee County was to review not only governance requirements for moving forward, but to also review revenue streams. In doing this, it was necessary to review the current and potential revenue that is the purview of the Friends of the Domes (the “Friends”).

Over time and as the Milwaukee County Parks have faced staff reduction, the Friends of the Domes have taken on more than the typical “friends” role of promoting membership, leading advocacy, and providing volunteers. As a result, there is intermingling between what they do with what is done by the County. According to the Friends Articles of Incorporation, its purpose is “to carry on educational, cultural, recreational or scientific programs or activities for the benefit and support of the Domes located in Mitchell Park, Milwaukee County and maintained by Milwaukee County, or to engage in any other lawful activity within the purpose for which this corporation is organized under Chapter 181 Wisconsin Law.”

This essentially puts them in the role of supplementing the staff at the Domes in addition to the responsibilities of a typical friends’ group. From the Friends of the Domes website: “Friends of the Domes, responsible for this website, are people who donate time and effort by managing events, the gift shop, education, and other fundraising efforts to ensure that Milwaukee always has a world class horticultural conservatory.” A true conservancy model would be focused more heavily on revenue generation rather than the significant overlap that exists between the Friends and County staff.

One of the most significant differences between the Friends and other horticultural conservatories and as compared to standard museum practice, Friends membership revenue is held and utilized by the Friends for the elements of supporting the Domes and providing direct educational services rather than paid to the Park as funds raised for Park operations.

As a benchmark for the industry, Friends groups typically provide 60% of funds raised to support the capital and operating costs of the park which they were formed to support. In the case of the Friends of the Domes, in 2016 23% of gross revenue went to support “Domes enhancements”, 41% went to support for “educational programs”, and 18% went to the operation of the gift shop. This results in 82% of the funds raised in 2016 going back into direct support for the Domes while also sustaining operations for the Friends.

Given the immense capital and operating costs of the Domes, the Friends would need to raise significant funds to match the buildings’ needs, which seems unrealistic.

Furthermore, this report recommends an expanded vision for the Domes that includes adding programming as well as program partnerships to a significant portion of Mitchell Park. The current Friends group is oriented towards the Domes and not the entirety of Mitchell Park. Going forward, a conservancy that support the vision in this report should provide support for the Park as a whole – not just the Domes - and should clearly focus on the primary roles of advocacy, membership development and volunteers to assist at the Park.

## The Operating Pro Forma

The operating pro forma is based on numerous points as addressed through this plan:

- Rehabilitation of the Domes and redevelopment of other buildings and the park as a whole will occur over a three-year period 2021-2023, with the entire Park and Domes in full operations in 2024.
- The year 2020 will be a ramp up year focused on the establishment of the Conservancy, significant fund development, arrangement of the various tax credits and opportunity investment, completion of architectural and engineering plans, and full development of the partnership entity as well as the subsidiary. Staff will be gradually phased in as is appropriate.
- Construction will begin in fiscal 2021.
- By year five, the Park's combined operations will begin generating revenue to repay the combination of New Market Tax Credits, PACE Tax Credit, and Opportunity Zone investment. These annual repayments may potentially include repayment of short-term loans for construction<sup>8</sup> if these are needed to make the rehabilitation possible.
- Assuming a 2021 investment of NMTC and OZ investment, the Park has until 2021 to pay off the combined investment and interest. NMTC allow interest-only payments until the seven-year period loan period is up, allowing the Park to "save" up for the principal payment, earning interest along the way to balance out the loan interest payments. The loan may be refinanced at the end of the seven-year period, offering a safety net if ramp up of full operations takes more time or if the projected new revenue streams are less than anticipated. Assuming the NMTC is loaned in 2021, the Park has until 2028 to repay the principal loan balance of approximately \$6.7 million due on the \$11 million investment. This operating pro forma shows that this payment can be made in 2028. The OZ loan and interest, meanwhile, would need to be repaid by 2031. The pro forma shows that this is also viable.
- There are two fallback positions if there is no potential for public funding. 1) A second round of NMTC financing perhaps starting in 2024 or 2025. However, this increases pressure on the Park and Domes to repay yet more financing. 2) An increased private sector capital campaign. Given the competition from other major capital campaigns in Milwaukee County and beyond, this seems unlikely within the time period.

A significant concern is the revenue-centric structure of this operating pro forma, as required by NMTC and OZ investment loan paydown. To repay an estimated \$14.85 million within ten years of receipt of the initial funding requires excess revenue over cost that is extremely aggressive. Management will need to focus on this at all times.

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<sup>8</sup> HTC only becomes available as capital into the project when the buildings are placed into service. Some type of short-term loan may be needed, and/or the loan portion of New Market Tax Credits may be drawn upon for this along with capital campaign contributions.

			Temp WI Center Urban Hort in show dome, Arid Dome closed for Rehab. Greenhouses placed in use for WI Cen Urban Hort and Medical College. Pavilion Redone for Zillis. Wedding Garden in. Domes Services opens. Major partnerships open.	New Arid Dome Opens, Rainforest closed for rehab. New retail and entrance building open. Restaurant open. Water Plan complete	Rainforest and Desert both open, WI Cent. Urban Hort closed for rehab Children's Garden opens. Food trucks area opens. Center for Urban Ag fully open. Utilities heat/cooling plan in place lowering costs.	All Domes and Gardens Open. Water recir. Complete lowering utilities	Regular rotation of special exhibits starts. Full event programming.									
	Revenue	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031			
	Admissions	\$ 950,000.00	\$ 900,000.00	\$ 1,200,000.00	\$ 1,350,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,600,000.00	\$ 1,600,000.00	\$ 1,650,000.00	\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00			
	Catering and Restaurant, other rentals	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 280,000.00	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 340,000.00	\$ 360,000.00	\$ 365,000.00	\$ 365,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 380,000.00	\$ 390,000.00	\$ 400,000.00			
	Retail Net	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 230,000.00	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 320,000.00	\$ 335,000.00	\$ 340,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 355,000.00	\$ 360,000.00			
	Touring Exhibit Fabrication	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 135,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 200,000.00			
	Mitchell Park Partnerships rent and commission on programs															
	WI Center Urban Hort		\$ 75,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 135,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 180,000.00			
	Health and Urban Ag															
	Other Partners															
	NMTC/OZ Ramp up non capital costs/staff and operations		\$ 500,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00											
	Program Grants	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,750,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 1,900,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,250,000.00	\$ 2,250,000.00			
	Membership net	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 270,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 335,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 365,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 380,000.00	\$ 380,000.00	\$ 400,000.00			
	TOTAL W/O PARK	\$ 2,060,000.00	\$ 2,925,130.00	\$ 3,385,000.00	\$ 3,715,000.00	\$ 4,210,000.00	\$ 4,655,000.00	\$ 4,760,000.00	\$ 4,950,000.00	\$ 5,130,000.00	\$ 5,165,000.00	\$ 5,545,000.00	\$ 5,590,000.00			
	PARKS	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00			
	TOTAL ALL	\$ 2,460,000.00	\$ 3,325,130.00	\$ 3,735,000.00	\$ 4,015,000.00	\$ 4,510,000.00	\$ 4,905,000.00	\$ 5,010,000.00	\$ 5,200,000.00	\$ 5,380,000.00	\$ 5,415,000.00	\$ 5,795,000.00	\$ 5,840,000.00			
	Expense	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031			
	Conservancy Staff		\$ 500,000.00	\$ 700,000.00	\$ 850,000.00	\$ 900,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,150,000.00	\$ 1,150,000.00	\$ 1,200,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00			
	Domes Services	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 225,000.00			
	Marketing/support															
	MPPartnerships		\$ 45,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00			
	Cost of Milw. Park staff	\$ 485,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00			
	Utilities	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 265,000.00	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00			
	Plants and botanical cost	\$ 520,000.00	\$ 600,000.00	\$ 620,000.00	\$ 700,000.00	\$ 650,000.00	\$ 600,000.00	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 400,000.00			
	Ramp up expenses: fees, contracts, services	\$ 800,000.00	\$ 800,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 600,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 400,000.00	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 100,000.00			
	Operating costs, programs and services	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 275,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 370,000.00		10-year reserves and loan repay	
	operating reserves	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00							\$ 400,000.00	Operating reserve total
	Loan repay	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,350,000.00	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,100,000.00	\$ 2,400,000.00	\$ 2,500,000.00		\$ 14,850,000.00	Loan repay total
	TOTAL	\$ 2,330,000.00	\$ 3,150,000.00	\$ 3,595,000.00	\$ 3,900,000.00	\$ 4,505,000.00	\$ 4,860,000.00	\$ 4,900,000.00	\$ 5,130,000.00	\$ 5,310,000.00	\$ 5,410,000.00	\$ 5,735,000.00	\$ 5,735,000.00			
	Cash flows and variance allowance	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 975,000.00		Cash flows may become part of operating reserve or targeted to interest

## Mitchell Park and Domes as a Separate Operating Entity

Supporting the structural and budget recommendations, this plan recommends that Mitchell Park & Domes become its own operating entity, the relationship to Milwaukee County structured similarly to the Milwaukee Public Museum.

In this, the level of responsibility in annual funding to the Park (personnel and maintenance) is reduced, per the above pro forma, from the current level of net \$485,000 annually down to \$250,000 annually, while the operations of the Domes and Park grows to reimburse Parks \$250,000 of the total \$500,000 in Park staff envisioned in the plan.

Essentially, through innovation and partnerships, the annual operating cost for Mitchell Park and Domes, to Milwaukee County taxpayers, can through this plan go down to \$250,000 a year.

## Next Steps

This plan envisions the balance of 2020 and into the first months of 2021 as transition and planning time.

Tasks include:

Establish a high-level civic leadership committee to move the plan toward implementation.

Establish the legal structures that support the receipt of tax credits and OZ investment.

Establish the legal structure and governance oversight for the proposed Conservancy.

Develop and establish the structure for Mitchell Park Partnerships and define what each party brings to the Partnerships and receives from the Partnerships.

Develop a financial and operating plan for the Partnerships that supports the multi-year vision and budget.

Develop and establish the structure for Domes Services and define what is included, the legal relationship of the entities, and the operating and financial plan.

Apply for and gain transition grants from national sources that may include the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Kresge Foundation, Argosy Foundation, and others.

Fund and complete the architectural, engineering, and landscape architectural plans for the Park.

Secure commitment for and advance the water stewardship water recirculation plan for the Park.

Ensure that the Domes become listed on the National Historic Register.

Put together the package of HTC, NMTC, OZ investment, and PACE as well as any other funding/financing mechanisms to begin Phase 1 construction in 2021.

Hire initial staff for the Conservancy.

Conduct a full capital campaign study. Launch campaign with leadership gifts.





## END NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The Role of Public Gardens in Sustainable Community Development, by Dr. Meghan Z. Gough and Dr. John Accordino, for the American Public Gardens Association.

<sup>ii</sup> Shaping the City with Horticulture: Parks and Plazas, by Shannon Leahy, for The Dirt. 5/29/2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Jobs and Equity in the Urban Forest, a Report by EcoTrust and Policy Link, February 2017.