



NEOSHO SPACE MUSEUM • NEOSHO, MISSOURI

Business Feasibility Study

Attendance, pricing, earned revenue, operating support, capital, funding strategy, marketing and implementation, two options evaluated: museum only, and museum with planetarium.

29,000MUSEUM-ONLY BASE
ATTENDANCE**\$932K**MUSEUM-ONLY ANNUAL
SUPPORT GAP**41,000**WITH-PLANETARIUM BASE
ATTENDANCE**\$882K**WITH-PLANETARIUM ANNUAL
SUPPORT GAP

BOTTOM-LINE FINDING

The project is financially feasible as a mixed-revenue, mission-driven institution with durable public and private support, the model on which the nation's science centers run. At the adopted pricing (\$14 adult / \$8 student museum, \$22 combo), museum-only base economics produce about **\$478,000 in earned revenue against \$1.41 million of annual cost, including the NABIFI lease and the sponsor's adopted staffing plan**; adding a planetarium raises earned revenue to about \$928,000 against about \$1.81 million (51.3% earned coverage, the sector norm) while *lowering* the annual support requirement. The funding landscape around that support line is the real story: an incoming ~\$40M collection to anchor a capital campaign, a quantified \$2.5M annual economic-impact case for the local mechanism, verified 2026 federal and state funding channels, and a permanent New Markets Tax Credit. The funding disciplines in this study are how the yes succeeds; the 28 August 2026 decision brief carries the recommendation: proceed.

MUSEUM ONLY + PLANETARIUM OPTIONS

VERIFIED 2026 EVIDENCE BASE

Contents

SECTION	TOPIC	WHAT IT ANSWERS
01	Executive business conclusion	Can the board fund this institution?
02	Business model and decision frame	Who pays, for what, and why
03	Market and attendance assumptions	The demand the model rests on
04	Pricing and customer architecture	\$8/\$6 tested, \$14/\$8 adopted; the break-even question
05	Earned-revenue model	What operations can honestly earn
06	Operating cost and staffing	The true annual bill
6A	The adopted staffing plan	Headcount, payroll, phasing, the lease window
07	Capital feasibility and scope sensitivity	What it costs to build, 2026 prices
08	Planetarium business case	The dome's honest arithmetic
09	Funding, fundraising and liquidity strategy	Subsidies vs donations; the capital stack
9A	Economic impact: what the museum gives back	\$2.49M/yr of visitor spending; the CID payer-benefit case
10	Marketing and sales plan	Budget, channels and 2026 costs
11	Scenario and sensitivity analysis	What survives the low case
12	Governance, controls and KPI dashboard	How the board stays in control
13	Implementation roadmap and gates	Phases, timing, go/no-go tests
14	Risk register and recommendation	The final word
15	Assumptions and source register	Every number's provenance, with live links
16	Evidence status matrix	Verified vs adopted vs gated, one page

THE EVIDENCE BASE AT A GLANCE

This study rests on current, verified evidence: **(1)** the announced relocation of the Space Museum & Grissom Center collection (~\$40M, unappraised), the capital campaign now has an anchor asset and a founding story; **(2)** a 2026-verified funding map: IMLS Museums for America (FY2027 cycle, deadline 13 November 2026), NASA STEM funding restored at \$143M, USDA Community Facilities loans for which Neosho's population qualifies, and a permanent New Markets Tax Credit (tract and CDE participation to be confirmed); **(3)** the confirmed 13,500 gsf building (\$9.90M capital base); **(4)** verified MoDOT signage fees and 2025 traffic counts; **(5)** 2026 advertising channel costs; **(6)** the adopted revised pricing structure, the sponsor's adopted staffing plan as the personnel baseline, and the NABIFI lease terms (two years donated, then \$15,000/month, with the landlord carrying property taxes, building insurance and general maintenance) in the operating base; and **(7)** AAM's November 2025 sector survey, which hardens every funding gate in Section 9.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Read the executive conclusion first, then test the assumptions most likely to change the decision: school commitments, realized ticket yield, operating support, capital scope and the planetarium gates. The companion Museum Feasibility Study carries market, program, collection and facility analysis; the two share one evidence base.

01 Executive business conclusion

Conclusion. The business case supports proceeding. Both options operate as nonprofit/public-benefit institutions on the sector's proven mixed-revenue model; neither is commercially self-sustaining from tickets alone, and neither needs to be: science-center members nationally earn about half their budgets and raise the rest by design. The business question is therefore not "will ticket sales pay for the museum?" It is: **can the board reliably assemble earned revenue, annual public/private support, reserves and disciplined cost control at the required scale?** The evidence assembled below (five named support layers, an enactable local mechanism with a quantified payer case, and a with-dome earned coverage of 51.3% that sits at the sector norm) says yes, it can. Two questions the group will ask are answered up front: there is no break-even admission price inside realistic regional willingness to pay (Section 4.3), and no standing government subsidy pays museum operating costs; the gap is closed by a designed mix of local public mechanisms and private giving (Sections 4.4 and 9). The relocating collection improves the answer; it anchors the campaign, shortens the credibility argument with funders, and brings a proven founding team, but it does not change the arithmetic below.



Figure 1. Base-case annual operating model. Required support includes annual giving, sponsorship, public appropriations, unrestricted grants, endowment draw or equivalent sources.

METRIC	MUSEUM ONLY	MUSEUM + PLANETARIUM	INCREMENT
Stabilized attendance	29,000	41,000	+12,000
Earned revenue	\$477,700	\$928,150	+\$450,450
Operating expense (incl. lease from Year 3, adopted staffing)	\$1,410,000	\$1,810,000	+\$400,000
Required annual support	\$932,300	\$881,850	-\$50,450
Earned-revenue coverage	33.9%	51.3%	+17.4 points
Planning capital range (2026 basis)	\$10.0–\$24.0M	\$16.5–\$33.5M	+\$6.5–\$9.5M

BOARD DECISION: PROCEED

Proceed on the disciplines that make capital projects succeed: secure capital without burdening operations, hold at least 12 months of opening liquidity, and document three years of annual operating support before construction. Treat the planetarium as a fully funded strategic enhancement, one whose repriced capital pathway (written proposal pending) makes "fully funded" a near-term milestone rather than a distant one.

02 Business model and decision frame

The appropriate model is a mission-driven attraction with five reinforcing earned-revenue engines, admissions, planetarium add-on, programs/camps, memberships, and rentals/retail, paired with annual giving, sponsorship, grants, public support and, once liquidity is solved, an endowment or board-designated reserve.

CUSTOMER / FUNDER	PRIMARY VALUE	REVENUE MECHANISM	SALES MOTION
Schools	Standards-aligned field trip and lab	\$6-7 underwritten group rate; \$4 dome group add-on	Direct district/teacher sales and annual rebooking
Families / residents	Accessible regional experience	\$14 adult / \$8 student; combos, bundles/membership	Geo-targeted acquisition + CRM retention
Colleges	Research, events, data and workforce	\$8 student tickets (valid ID), contracts, co-produced programs	Faculty and administration partnerships; Crowder MOU
Tourists	Distinctive two-hour itinerary stop	General admission, bundle, retail	Hotel/CVB/operator packages; Route 66 centennial itineraries
Corporations	Workforce, community and hospitality	Sponsorship, rentals, employee access	Named-account development (Jack Henry, La-Z-Boy-class employers)
Donors / public partners	Education, preservation and regional identity	Annual gifts, grants, appropriations, endowment	Campaign and stewardship anchored by the Grissom collection

ASTC respondents average roughly half of revenue from earned sources (51% in the 2024 survey), with the rest from public and private support; admission is a minority of earned revenue even there. The adopted Neosho adult price now sits at that \$14–15 median, yet this model still carries a below-average earned share in early years by design, and the AAM's 2025 finding that a third of museums lost government grants means the support half of the model must be diversified from day one [S5, S6, S7].

03 Market and attendance assumptions

The 21-county catchment counts 1,527,138 people (Vintage 2025); the primary K-12 base is ~208,400 public-school students plus ~30,300 private and an estimated 15,000–17,500 homeschooled. The model excludes Tulsa County and does not rely on Branson, Route 66 or highway-sign conversion in the base [S1–S4]. Full market analysis, comparables and triangulation live in the companion study; the numbers the financial model consumes are:

OPTION	LOW	BASE	HIGH	BASE CAPTURE OF 21-CO. POP.	BOARD USE
Museum only	17,800	29,000	36,000	1.9%	Budget to base; survive low
Museum + planetarium	27,000	41,000	43,000	2.7%	Do not borrow against high

The school case is the most controllable. Base museum attendance assumes 8,500 K-12 visits, 4.1% of the catchment's public-school students (5.3% in the dome case at 11,000). Those rates are attainable only with active group sales, curriculum quality, reliable bus logistics and annual rebooking, and they should be pre-sold through letters of intent before fixed costs are committed.

04 Pricing and customer architecture

The adopted structure prices the museum at the regional mid-band and the U.S. sector median, preserving accessibility at the student tier while funding promotional headroom. Its central assumption, that attendance holds near the base at these prices, is exactly what the validation survey's \$12/\$14/\$16 bracket tests. The model's blended realized museum yield is **\$9.80** per visit (70% of the posted adult price), built from the admission mix: 40% adult at \$14, 30% student at \$8, 15% senior/military at \$12, 10% free/comp, and 5% member visits at \$0 so that membership revenue is never counted twice.

4.1 · THE REGIONAL PRICE LADDER: VERIFIED 2026

INSTITUTION	ADULT	STUDENT / CHILD	SIGNAL FOR NEOSHO
Adopted Neosho Space Museum baseline	\$14.00	\$8.00	Mid-band position; combo \$22 adult / \$16 student / \$20 senior-military
Space Museum & Grissom Center (current home of the collection)	\$15.00	\$10.00	The collection's current home already charges \$15; \$14 is consistent [S8]
Tulsa Air & Space Museum	\$11.00 (\$20 combo)	\$8.00	Museum/planetarium priced separately [S9]
Discovery Center of Springfield	\$17.00	\$12.00	Regional families already pay above Neosho's adopted price [S10]
Amazeum, Bentonville	\$17.00	\$17.00	NWA market bears premium family pricing [S11]
Stafford Air & Space, Weatherford OK	\$14.00	\$8.00	Small-town space museum at exactly \$14 [S12]
Cosmosphere, Hutchinson KS	\$18.25 (\$32.50 pass)	\$15.00	Dome and planetarium as add-ons [S13]
ASTC U.S. median (2024)	\$14–15	n/a	Adopted adult price sits at the U.S. median [S5]

4.2 · PRODUCT ARCHITECTURE

PRODUCT	RECOMMENDED POSTED PRICE	MODELLED REALIZED YIELD	REASON
Museum adult	\$14	In \$9.80 blended	Adopted 8 August 2026
Museum student (K-12 + college w/ ID)	\$8	In \$9.80 blended	Consider holding pre-booked school groups at \$6-7 via underwriting
Museum senior / military	\$12	In \$9.80 blended	Assumed adult – \$2; single-attraction price still an open item
Planetarium single ticket	\$12 adult / \$10 student	Reference	Combo is the expected purchase
Combo (museum + planetarium)	\$22 / \$16 / \$20	\$8.00 increment, all tiers	Adult / student / senior-military
Member visits	\$0 at the door	\$0 admission yield	Membership revenue is counted once, in other earned revenue
Family membership	\$85–\$120	In membership revenue	Repeat and CRM strategy; test benefits

PRICING HEADROOM: THE QUIET FINDING

Every verified comparable, including the collection's own current home, charged more than the original \$8/\$6 proposal. This study flagged that gap, and the sponsor responded: the 8 August structure on the next page moves the adult price to the sector median, converting the headroom finding from a recommendation into the adopted baseline. The disciplines survive the revision: measure yield by segment (posted price, discount, comp, membership allocation, group price, dome add-on, net cash) from day one; and treat the family unit, two adults, two children, as the real unit of choice. Each \$1 of realized adult yield is worth roughly \$12,000–\$18,000 a year at base attendance.

4.2A · THE REVISED PRICING STRUCTURE, ADOPTED AS THIS STUDY'S BASELINE

Responding to this study's initial finding that \$8/\$6 pricing sat at the low end of the regional market, the sponsor proposed this structure, circulated it to the project group including the collection's founding principals, and adopted it as the working baseline. Every number in this edition is computed on it. It replaces the flat \$5 planetarium add-on with true two-attraction ticketing.

TIER	SPACE MUSEUM	PLANETARIUM	COMBO (BOTH)
Adult	\$14	\$12	\$22
Student (K-12 and college/university with valid ID)	\$8	\$10	\$16
Senior / military	Open item	Open item	\$20 (\$2 off adult combo)

WHAT THE REVISION DOES TO THE MODEL

With member visits correctly carried at \$0, the blended museum yield is **\$9.80** per visit, 70% of the posted adult price. At the 29,000-visit base that produces \$284,200 of admissions and \$477,700 of total earned revenue. In the combined program the combo's \$8.00 increment across every tier produces \$229,600 of dome revenue at 70% uptake, and the dome's total earned increment (\$450,450) now approximately covers its \$400,000 operating increment at base attendance, a structural change from the old add-on model. The structure also funds the sponsor's intended promotional headroom: free days, library passes and seasonal discounts can come out of the rack rate without repricing.

The cautions are the mirror image. A \$14 adult ticket moves Neosho from the cheapest position in the four-state set to the middle-upper band (Stafford \$14, Discovery Center and Amazeum \$17, Cosmosphere \$18.25), so the validation survey must now bracket **\$12 / \$14 / \$16** rather than \$8-12, and the demand-response assumption stops being theoretical. The \$8 student rate, up from \$6, directly affects the 8,500-visit school pipeline this plan depends on; the group should consider holding pre-booked school groups at \$6-7 through sponsor underwriting even if the walk-up student price is \$8. Elasticity, not arithmetic, is now the open question, and it is testable.

PARAMETERS THE GROUP STILL NEEDS TO SET

Senior/military prices for single attractions; whether a student or senior planetarium-only ticket exists at the door or only as a combo; group/school rate and chaperone policy; the combo-uptake assumption (this study uses 70%); a promotions allowance (suggested 5-8% of gross admissions); membership prices rebased against the new gate prices (family membership should roughly equal three combo visits); and the demand-response assumption to apply until the survey reports. The companion Feasibility Explorer website and driver workbook accept every one of these as a live input.

STATUS

This edition is fully rebased on the adopted structure, with two further corrections from independent audit: member visits now carry \$0 admission yield so membership revenue is counted exactly once, and the planetarium capital benchmark uses the University of Alaska Fairbanks as-built total of \$9.5 million rather than the outdated \$5.6M estimate. Remaining open items above stay flagged until Rachel and Earl confirm them.

4.3 · IS THERE A BREAK-EVEN ADMISSION PRICE?

Short answer: **no realistic one exists**, and the arithmetic is worth seeing plainly because it settles a question every board member will ask.

BREAK-EVEN TEST	MUSEUM ONLY	MUSEUM + PLANETARIUM
Operating expense (steady state, incl. lease, adopted staffing)	\$1,410,000	\$1,810,000
Earned revenue excluding museum admissions	\$193,500	\$526,350
Amount admissions must cover	\$1,216,500	\$1,283,650
Base attendance	29,000	41,000
Required blended yield per visit	\$41.95	\$31.31
Implied posted adult price (blended = 70% of posted)	~\$60	~\$45

A \$45–60 posted adult ticket is two and a half to three times the region's most expensive science attraction (Cosmosphere, \$18.25); attendance would not hold anywhere near base while prices tripled, so the break-even price recedes as the crowd it depends on walks away. The failure repeats from the other direction: at adopted prices each visit contributes about \$11.30 against roughly \$1,260,000 of steady-state cost not covered by programs, memberships and rentals, so **break-even attendance is about 111,500 visits a year, nearly four times the base case** and beyond any plausible capture of this region.

DEMAND SCENARIO AT ADOPTED PRICING	VISITS	ANNUAL SUPPORT REQUIRED	READING
Adopted pricing, demand holds	29,000 visits	\$932,300	The baseline; survey must validate
Adopted pricing, ~10% demand	26,100 visits	~\$980,000	Each 10% of attendance lost costs ~\$47K of earned revenue
Adopted pricing, ~20% demand	23,200 visits	~\$1,028,000	Approaches the published low case; staffing plan must flex
Old \$8/\$6 pricing (superseded)	29,000 visits	~\$1,045,000	With lease and member fix applied, the old pricing is strictly worse at equal demand

WHAT THIS MEANS

Pricing has done what pricing can do: the adopted structure sits at the sector median, and earned revenue covers 33.9% of steady-state cost (51.3% with the dome). Pricing cannot close the gap; the open sensitivity is demand response, which only the survey can measure. The economics remain those of a library, not a cinema: the support gap is a designed, permanent revenue line. (Under a fully proportional convention, in which all earned revenue scales with attendance, break-even is about 85,600 visits; the model and the website label both conventions.)

4.4 · WHO FILLS THE GAP: GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES OR DONATIONS?

Both, by design; donations are structurally required, and there is **no standing federal or Missouri program that pays museum operating bills year after year**. Read as a portfolio: government carries a sixth to a third of the gap only if local mechanisms are enacted (the CID now underway is the most valuable piece); philanthropy covers the remaining \$300–650K a year:

GAP-FUNDING LAYER	REALISTIC ANNUAL RANGE	REALITY CHECK
Local public mechanisms: hotel-motel tax allocation, CID sales tax, city/county appropriation	\$150K–\$300K	The only recurring government money available; requires local action, and a CID has already been floated publicly [S28]
Federal and state program grants (IMLS, NASA, MAC, MHC)	\$25K–\$150K	Episodic; \$0 in bad years; program-restricted and volatile [S22–S24]
Corporate sponsorship and underwriting	\$100K–\$175K	Bus funds, naming, program sponsorship; Jack Henry and La-Z-Boy-class anchors [S28]
Annual giving, events and individual donors	\$150K–\$275K	Must exist in every scenario; anchored by the collection story
Endowment draw (later years)	\$0 → \$100K+	Only after capital and liquidity are solved; full-gap endowment needs ~\$20.7M
Total to assemble (targets, not pledges)	\$932,300	\$881,850 with the planetarium (steady-state)

05 Earned-revenue model

Earned revenue by engine, base cases at adopted pricing

Annual dollars at stabilized base attendance

■ Museum only (\$478K) ■ Museum + planetarium (\$928K)

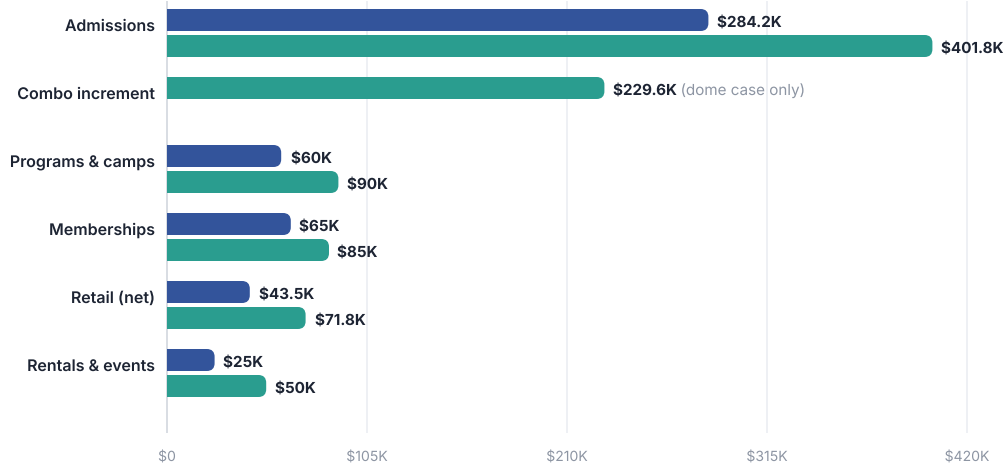


Figure 2. Earned revenue by engine at adopted pricing. Admissions = visits × \$9.80 blended yield. Combo increment = 41,000 × 70% uptake × \$8.00. Retail = \$1.50–\$1.75 net per visit. Programs and rentals are net contributions.

EARNED SOURCE	MUSEUM BASE	PLANETARIUM BASE	CALCULATION / ASSUMPTION
Museum admissions	\$284,200	\$401,800	Visits × \$9.80 blended yield
Combo increment	\$0	\$229,600	41,000 × 70% uptake × \$8.00 increment
Retail net contribution	\$43,500	\$71,750	\$1.50 / \$1.75 per visit after cost of goods
Programs and camps	\$60,000	\$90,000	Net annual revenue; staffing included in opex
Memberships	\$65,000	\$85,000	Requires launch conversion and renewal
Rentals and special events	\$25,000	\$50,000	Net contribution, not gross billings
TOTAL EARNED	\$477,700	\$928,150	33.9% / 51.3% of steady-state operating cost

Sponsorship and unrestricted grants are excluded from earned revenue and counted toward required annual support. This avoids describing philanthropic revenue as customer demand and keeps the operating gap visible.

06 Operating cost and staffing

EXPENSE LINE	MUSEUM BASE	PLANETARIUM BASE	PLANNING LOGIC
Personnel + payroll burden	\$730,000	\$910,000	The sponsor's adopted staffing plan, lean case: 12 full-time + part-time (~13 FTE), ~\$597K salaries + ~22% burden; ~16 FTE with dome. Section 6A
Occupancy / utilities / janitorial	\$140,000	\$190,000	Larger volume, HVAC and dome hours
Insurance / security / safety	\$50,000	\$60,000	High-value collection, public operation and events
Exhibits / collections care	\$75,000	\$75,000	Rotation, conservation, mounts and supplies
Marketing / sales	\$80,000	\$110,000	School sales, launch, tourism and retention
IT / ticketing / systems	\$35,000	\$40,000	CRM, POS, network and licenses
Program / retail direct cost	\$35,000	\$55,000	Supplies and cost of goods
Administration / professional	\$45,000	\$55,000	Audit, legal, HR and development
General operating reserve	\$40,000	\$60,000	Annual renewal and volatility
Dome content / maintenance / refresh reserve	\$0	\$75,000	Show licensing (\$5–15K), service, and ~\$35–50K/yr toward the 10–15-year system refresh [S14, S15]
Building lease (NABIFI)	\$180,000	\$180,000	Actual terms under negotiation: two years donated, then \$15,000/month; NABIFI also carries property taxes, building insurance and general maintenance. Years 1–2 operate at ~\$1.20M / ~\$1.60M
TOTAL (steady state, Year 3+)	\$1,410,000	\$1,810,000	Class 4 operating allowance

THE BUDGET IS VALIDATED BY THE REGION'S OWN MUSEUMS

Tulsa Air & Space, 19,000 exhibit square feet with a 110-seat planetarium, the closest structural analogue, runs on roughly \$1.0–1.3M a year, and its 2023 near-closure showed what happens when that budget is not underwritten. Discovery Center of Springfield operates 60,000 sf on ~\$2.6M. At the adopted staffing plan Neosho runs \$1.4–1.8M: above Tulsa's scale because it carries a deliberately deeper professional bench, and well below Springfield's. That bench must be funded, not hoped for [S16].

The budget should be recast after site due diligence, insurance quotes, benefit decisions, content licenses and staffing schedules. Until then, the central test is not whether each line is exact; it is whether the board can support a roughly **\$1.4–\$1.8 million annual institution before debt service**, permanently, and whether the CID or equivalent local mechanism arrives before the donated-lease window closes at the end of Year 2. A volunteer-heavy payroll of \$90–100K has been discussed with the founding organization; this study keeps professional staffing in the base and treats the lean model as a scenario, because collections care, education quality and six-day operations at 29,000 visits are not volunteer-scale workloads. Salary benchmarks should anticipate competition: national average planetarium-director compensation exceeds \$90K, and two-deep coverage is required for every safety-critical and revenue-critical role [S15].

6A · THE ADOPTED STAFFING PLAN, AND WHAT IT COSTS

The sponsor group supplied the staffing plan below (Employee and Payroll schedule, August 2026), adopted here as the personnel baseline at its lean case. A second, market-rate schedule received 13 August prices a similar bench at roughly \$460–710K burdened, depending on city-covered maintenance and volunteer docents; the \$730,000 baseline sits at the conservative top of that consolidated band, so the model holds [S38, S41]. The pay levels are locally sound: the Joplin metro mean wage is \$50,650, a quarter below the national average, so these ranges recruit competitively rather than under market [S39].

ROLE	HEADCOUNT	PAY RANGE	LEAN CASE (ANNUAL)	NOTE
Executive Director	1	\$80–135K	\$80,000	Hire at range entry; review against results at Year 2
Curator	1–3	\$60K	\$60,000	One at opening; the collection justifies more only with attendance
Collections Manager	1	\$70K	\$70,000	Non-negotiable for a ~\$40M collection
Museum Educator	1–2	\$40–60K	\$40,000	Second hire keyed to the school pipeline
Archivist	1	\$70K	\$70,000	Documentation of the relocated collection
Human Resources	1	\$80K	\$80,000	Unusual at 13 staff; see the flags below
Museum Preparator	1–3	\$50K	\$50,000	Mounts, installation, rotation
Fundraising	0–2	\$45–75K	\$0	Zero at opening; see the flags below
Marketing	0–2	\$40–65K	\$0	Launch marketing contracted from the \$80K budget line
Visitor Services / Admissions	1–5	\$28–40K	\$28,000	Plus part-time and volunteer coverage
Maintenance / Housekeeping	1–3	\$35–50K	\$35,000	NABIFI carries general building repair in Years 1–2
Security	0–5	\$30–45K	\$0	Design, insurance and alarm decisions set this; revisit with insurer
Gift Shop	3	\$28K	\$84,000	See the flags below
Salaries, lean case	12 + PT		\$597,000	12 full-time as specified; part-time coverage brings ~13 FTE
Payroll taxes and benefits (~22%)			\$133,000	FICA, UI, workers comp, modest benefits
PERSONNEL BASELINE (museum-only)			\$730,000	+\$180,000 dome operations staff = \$910,000 combined

BUILD-OUT BEYOND THE LEAN CASE

STAGE	HEADS	BURDENED PAYROLL
Lean (adopted baseline)	~13	\$730,000
Mid build-out	~22	~\$1,340,000
Full schedule	~32	~\$2,130,000

Mid requires roughly double the base earned revenue; the full schedule exceeds the entire museum-only budget. Tie hires beyond lean to attendance and revenue evidence.

THE LEASE WINDOW, STAFFED

PERIOD	MUSEUM ONLY	WITH DOME
Years 1–2 (lease donated; NABIFI carries taxes, insurance, maintenance)	~\$1,200,000	~\$1,600,000
Year 3 onward (steady state, \$180K lease in)	\$1,410,000	\$1,810,000
Support gap at steady state	\$932,300	\$881,850

The 12-month opening-liquidity gate implies ~\$1.22M at opening; the capital plan carries a combined \$1.00M pre-opening/working-capital line, so the campaign should name the ~\$0.25M difference as an explicit liquidity backstop.

THREE FLAGS THE BOARD SHOULD RESOLVE, NOT INHERIT

(1) Fundraising: the payroll schedule carries no development staff; the market-rate schedule adds a grant writer/funding specialist at \$64K. Adopt that role in Year 1; against a \$932K support requirement it funds itself. **(2) Three gift-shop staff (\$84K) against ~\$44K of net retail** makes the shop a loss leader; the market-rate schedule's manager-plus-hourly-clerk shape is better until sales justify more. **(3) A dedicated HR manager at 13 employees** is generous (the market-rate schedule questions its own \$100K HR figure); a PEO or the administration line covers HR until roughly 25 staff.

07 Capital feasibility and scope sensitivity

Class 4 capital planning ranges: 2026 basis

Excludes acquisition, major site work, financing and extraordinary hidden conditions · diamond = modeled base

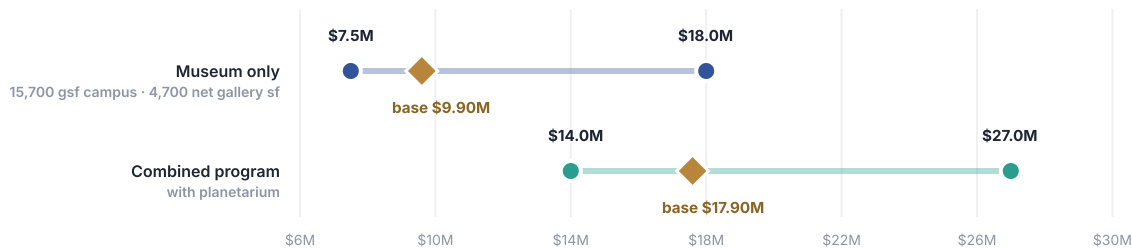


Figure 3. Early Class 4 planning ranges at 2026 prices. A qualified architect, exhibit designer and cost estimator must replace these ranges before a campaign target or construction decision.

MUSEUM-ONLY BASE BUILD-UP	AMOUNT	BASIS (2026 BENCHMARKS)
Main building renovation	\$2.70M	13,500 gross sf × \$200/sf, the confirmed main building; assumes a sound donated/low-cost shell; museum-grade construction runs \$500–1,200/sf if the shell disappoints [S17]
Exhibit design / fabrication	\$2.35M	4,700 net gallery sf × \$500/sf. The rate is raised from \$350 this edition: a compact gallery suite carries higher fabrication density per foot, and \$500 sits inside current benchmarks of \$200–350 interpretive, \$350–550 hands-on, \$500–1,000+ high-interactive science [S18]
Second building, collections annex fit-out	\$0.55M	2,200 gross sf × \$250/sf. Climate control, security envelope, fire protection and loading approach for a collections store (Museum Study 7.1)
Collections storage equipment	\$0.25M	High-density mobile shelving, cabinets, mounts and pallet racking. Sized so 1,700 net sf holds what 2,626 net sf of static shelving holds in Bonne Terre
Collection relocation, FF&E and core IT	\$0.60M	Artifact-grade transport, mounts, cases and systems for the Bonne Terre collection
Soft costs	\$0.97M	15% of hard costs (design 12–25% of exhibit budget is the sector norm) [S18]
Contingency	\$1.48M	20% of hard + soft (sector guidance; add ~4%/yr escalation to opening) [S18]
Pre-opening / working capital	\$1.00M	Hiring, training, launch and liquidity
MODELED BASE	\$9.90M	Within the \$7.5–17M planning range (\$17.90M with the planetarium)
Liquidity backstop (12-month gate at adopted staffing)	\$0.25M	Raises opening cash to ~\$1.22M, meeting the 12-month gate
CAMPAIGN REQUIREMENT INCL. GATE	\$10.15M	\$18.15M with the planetarium
Land and building acquisition	excluded	The campus is leased, not purchased. Acquisition, major site, structural and environmental work, and financing costs remain outside these figures

Scope sensitivities. The gross-versus-net swing that dominated earlier editions is resolved, and it resolved downward. The measured 13,500-gross-square-foot main building and its 4,700-net-square-foot gallery program cut the modeled base from \$16.84M to \$9.90M and the combined program from \$24.84M to \$17.90M, roughly \$6.9M in each case. Three swings remain. **(1) Shell condition:** if the donated shell disappoints and museum-grade construction is required, renovation alone can rise from \$2.70M toward \$6.75M. **(2) Exhibit intensity:** the exhibit line is now carried at \$500/sf; a fully interactive treatment at \$800/sf would add roughly \$1.5M, and the artifact-rich relocated collection is the natural hedge, because object-led galleries cost less per foot than interactive-dense ones [S18]. **(3) The second building:** carried at \$250 per gross square foot plus \$250,000 of storage equipment. A collections store is the one space where under-specifying the environmental envelope is unrecoverable; estimate it properly and early. The planetarium increment is benchmarked to the University of Alaska Fairbanks' as-built 2026 addition, **\$9.5M total project cost** for a 65-seat, 36-foot dome. Neosho's is larger, 40 feet and about 100 seats (Section 8). The earlier \$5.6M figure was the pre-bid estimate. The screening range is \$6.5–9.5M, base \$8.0M. The NABIFI lease's tenant-improvement terms cover the museum shell, not the dome [S14].

08 Planetarium business case: pros, cons and break-even reality

BUSINESS ADVANTAGE	BUSINESS DISADVANTAGE
Adds roughly 12,000 base annual visits and the region's only museum-grade dome, nearest competitors 95+ miles away	Adds roughly \$400,000 annual operating cost
The \$8 combo increment produces about \$229,600 of base dome revenue	Revenue depends on 70% uptake holding at the higher combo prices
Strengthens memberships, rentals, sponsors and evening programs	Requires specialist staffing and two-deep technical coverage
Low-cost content changes relative to exhibit rebuilds; perpetual show licenses ~\$7K at this seat tier [S15]	Content licenses, support and hardware replacement recur; refresh every 10–15 years at \$250–500K [S14]
School scheduling and bus-group throughput anchor	Showtimes create queues and unused off-peak capacity
Potential naming gift and visible campaign asset, Love's paid \$3.5M for OKC dome naming [S19]	Donors may fund equipment but not lifetime operations

Base capacity. At 70 seats, five shows per day and 300 days, annual seat capacity is 105,000. Base demand of 28,700 dome users equals 27% average load and ~19 people per show. That is operationally comfortable, and why the dome is sized for a bus group, not peak-event fantasies.

Incremental break-even, restated at adopted pricing. The dome's full earned increment, combo revenue plus the additional visitors' admissions, retail and program spending, is about \$450,450 at base, against a \$400,000 operating increment: **at base attendance the dome now approximately funds itself, reducing the total gap by about \$50,000.** That is a structural improvement over the old add-on model, and it is exactly why discipline matters more now, not less: the result depends on 12,000 incremental visitors and 70% combo uptake that no survey has yet validated, the low case still produces the worst subsidy outcome in the study (\$1,098,800), and UAF's real-world dome operating budget (~\$879K/yr for a standalone operation) shows how quickly dome costs grow when programming ambitions do. The gates stay. Vendor engagement is underway: Seiler/ZEISS quoted the projection system at \$0.9–2.5M (custom systems from \$50–275K) within the \$6.5–9.5M envelope, with a site visit to two candidate buildings by end of October [S40]. The committee's direction is to incorporate the dome; the gates finance it honestly.

PLANETARIUM REVENUE REALITY

At adopted pricing the dome's earned increment (~\$450,000) approximately covers its operating increment (~\$400,000) at base attendance, but its case still rests on unvalidated demand plus mission reach, differentiation and uniqueness within 60 miles, and its capital cost is now benchmarked at \$6.5–9.5M, not \$4.5–6.5M. A ~\$30–50K portable dome run as paid school outreach from year one remains the cheap way to build the dome's booking network, and its demand evidence, before pouring concrete [S15].

09 Funding, fundraising and liquidity strategy

Capital gifts and operating gifts are different products. The campaign must explicitly fund opening liquidity, first exhibitions, pre-opening staff, technology reserves and early operating support, not only bricks and equipment. At a 4.5% spending rate, permanently covering the full \$932,300 museum-only gap would imply a ~\$20.7M endowment (\$19.6M for the dome case); the practical model therefore mixes annual giving, sponsors, public support and endowment income.

FUNDING LAYER	RECOMMENDED RULE	PURPOSE
Capital commitments	≥70% committed before construction; all sources identified before opening	Avoids an unfinished or value-engineered institution
Working capital	At least 12 months of operating cash need	Protects ramp-up and attendance volatility
Three-year support	Written unrestricted/public commitments	Covers the known support gap during stabilization
Technology reserve	Annual restricted/designated contribution	Dome, AV, interactives, ticketing and network refresh
Exhibit renewal reserve	Annual budgeted contribution	Rotating zone and current-mission content
Endowment / quasi-endowment	Use only after liquidity and capital are solved	Long-term support; board-approved draw policy

9.1 · THE 2026 FUNDING MAP: VERIFIED, WITH VOLATILITY FLAGS

SOURCE	2026 STATUS & FIT	REALISTIC ROLE
USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities	Neosho (pop. ~14,100) qualifies under the ≤20,000 threshold; museums explicitly eligible; direct loans to 40 years at 4.50–4.75% (2026 rates); grant share 15–75% depending on population and median household income; service-area determination required [S20]	The realistic large-dollar debt tool , but only against secured support, never against high-case attendance
New Markets Tax Credit	Made permanent in 2025; record \$10B allocation round; nonprofit community facilities qualify, Neosho census-tract eligibility must be verified [S21]	7–15% of capital via investor equity if the tract qualifies
IMLS	Survived 2025 dismantling attempt; now in the FY2027 cycle (Museums for America \$5K–350K, 1:1 match, deadline 13 Nov 2026, NOFO pending; Inspire! for Small Museums); the \$291.8M figure is secondary-source; politically volatile, plan, don't bank [S22]	Program and exhibit grants post-opening (needs 120 public days/yr + professional staff)
NASA STEM Engagement	FY26 conference restored full \$143M (Next Gen STEM \$13.5M); TEAM II tiers (\$400K–900K) exist; solicitations are forecasts until formally released (EONS); Community Anchor designation is the realistic first rung [S23]	Education program funding; credibility signal for the campaign
NEH / Missouri Humanities · Missouri Arts Council	FY26 appropriated but NEH under-disbursing; MHC mini/major grants \$5K/\$15K; MAC annual grants to \$40K (requires 1 year of operating history) [S24]	Spacetown oral-history and interpretive content funding
Missouri tourism co-op (MMG)	50% marketing reimbursement, certified DMOs only; partner through a Newton County DMO entity; state tourism budget under pressure [S25]	Halves the out-of-state marketing bill
State earmarks	Tightening sharply: FY27 carried \$304M in earmarks amid vetoes and a shrinking surplus [S26]	Pursue with legislator champion; assign low probability
Regional foundations	Sunderland (KC, construction-focused; \$5M lead gift to Springfield Art Museum; Cosmosphere donor); Helen S. Boylan (Carthage; funds capital, quarterly deadlines); Community Foundation of the Ozarks (2026–27 rounds open); Windgate. Walton Family Foundation's Home Region 2030 excludes SW Missouri , do not count it [S27]	Anchor + mid-tier capital gifts; Sunderland is the priority cultivation
Corporate + local	Jack Henry (Monett, 35 mi), La-Z-Boy Midwest (Neosho's major employer), regional banks/utilities; city hotel-motel tax fund; CID/TIF/TDD/NID statutory tools; downtown historic district enables historic tax credits [S28]	Sponsorships, bus-fund underwriting, naming inventory; a CID was already floated publicly for this project
Congressionally directed spending	The Cosmosphere's current renovation stacks a Senate earmark + state grant + Sunderland, the proven space-museum pattern [S29]	Worth a delegation ask once validation is done

THE CAMPAIGN MATH, STATED PLAINLY

A \$9.90M museum-only base (or \$17.90M combined) is a materially thinner campaign than earlier editions required, and the same identified sources now over-cover it: \$2–3.5M regional foundations and corporate; \$1.5–3M individual/family campaign anchored by the collection story; \$1.5–3M USDA CF loan sized to secured support; \$1–2.5M NMTC equity (if tract-eligible); \$0.5–1.5M local mechanisms (hotel-motel, CID, historic credits); \$0.5–1M federal/state program grants across the build. The building confirmation removed roughly \$7.2M from the ask without removing a single square foot of gallery the collection needs. Every layer has a 2026-verified pathway, and none of it assembles itself without the validation-phase documents. Comparable proof: Springfield Art Museum (\$30M city + foundations), Amazeum (\$25M campaign launched 2025), Cosmosphere (federal + state + foundation stack) [S27, S29, S30].

- **Name the annual gap.** Board members and donors should see the support requirement every year, not discover it after construction.
- **Avoid operating debt.** Debt service competes directly with collections, education, maintenance and renewal.
- **Tie gifts to outcomes.** Underwrite buses, rural access, veterans, teacher training, rotating exhibitions and dome programs.
- **Diversify.** No single donor, public source or sponsor should control the institution's ability to open, the AAM's 2025 survey shows what happens when cancelled grants have no replacement [S7].

9A Economic impact: what the museum gives back

The Newton County Tourism Council's independent visitor-spending model (Pete Hall, revised August 2026) estimates the museum's annual economic footprint at **\$2,486,365** (\$54.33 per visit) on its own basis of **45,768 annual visits**, a five-segment capture of a 2.98M gross drive market (0–30 mi at 6.5%, 31–70 at 1.5%, 71–120 at 0.35%, schools at 2.0%, tourists already in market at 25%). The revision adds two museum-gate categories, gift shop (\$72,494) and planetarium (\$86,873), raising the stated total from the previously quoted \$2.33M; the seven original spending categories are unchanged to the dollar. Roughly **76% of local business revenue lands outside the museum's own gate**, on the fuel, meal, lodging, retail and attraction operators of Neosho and Newton County.

LOCAL BUSINESS REVENUE BY SEGMENT (NET OF TAX)

SEGMENT	REVENUE	SHARE
Primary (0–30 mi)	\$193,542	8%
Secondary (31–70 mi)	\$481,344	21%
Tertiary (71–120 mi)	\$372,381	16%
School groups	\$161,945	7%
Tourists in market	\$1,068,529	47%
Total (net of tax)	\$2,277,741	100%

IMPACT BY SPENDING CATEGORY (INCL. TAX)

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Fuel	\$439,292
Admissions	\$439,279
Meals/Food	\$395,648
Lodging	\$390,365
Shopping	\$362,928
Attractions	\$188,871
Entertainment	\$110,614
Planetarium	\$86,873
Gift Shop	\$72,494

TAX RECEIPTS \$208,623, LOCAL SHARE \$112,389 (53.9%) · THE MODEL AT THREE ATTENDANCE BASES

	AS STATED (45,768, WITH DOME)	MUSEUM-ONLY BASE (29,000)*	DOMES BASE (41,000)
Total economic impact	\$2,486,365	~\$1,520,392	~\$2,227,341
Local business revenue	\$2,277,741	~\$1,392,676	~\$2,040,451
Tax receipts (as stated: state \$96,235 / city \$68,332 / county \$37,013 / lodging \$7,043)	\$208,623	~\$127,716	~\$186,889
Local tax (city + county + lodging)	\$112,389	~\$68,875	~\$100,680
Local tax per \$1 of a \$225K CID ask	\$0.50	\$0.31	\$0.45

*The museum-only column excludes the workbook's planetarium spending category (\$52.43/visit vs \$54.33), so each option is priced on its own physical scope. The live calculator on this site computes these figures at any attendance.

Reconciliation: six of seven checklist questions are resolved on the face of the workbook (independent attendance basis; conservative ~6%-overnight day-trip spend profile; locals a small share of impact; explicit tax split; operating-only; no documentary or heritage-tourism demand). The planetarium line now appears explicitly (\$10.00 per participating visit alongside admissions at a flat \$14.00), so the run describes the with-planetarium case. One question remains with the author: whether category spends embed IMPLAN multipliers or are direct spending only; the workbook computes direct spending, so if multipliers were intended the figures are a conservative floor.

Consequence for the CID argument: at a \$225,000 annual community improvement district ask, the project returns about \$0.50 of city-county-lodging tax per \$1 as stated (\$0.31 at the 29,000 museum-only base; \$0.45 at 41,000). The tax ratio alone cannot carry the CID case at the published bases; lead instead with the payer-benefit argument this model now quantifies: **\$2,277,741 of business revenue lands annually on the same blocks that would pay the assessment.**

HOW TO USE THIS NUMBER, AND HOW NOT TO

This is an economic-impact estimate of visitor spending, **not museum revenue**: none of it funds the operating gap, and it must never be presented as offsetting the support requirement. Quote it as stated with the 45,768-visit basis named, or rescaled to a published base, never a hybrid. Source: Space Museum Economic Impact Report.xlsx, Newton County Tourism Council, rev. August 2026.

10 Marketing and sales plan

The business plan should fund a two-year launch rather than a ribbon-cutting burst. The steady-state allowance in the operating budget is **\$80,000 museum-only or \$110,000 with a planetarium**, deliberately above both the sector's actual behavior (museums spend 2–3% of operating budgets on marketing, which here would be only \$20–31K) and the IMPACTS finding that organizations reaching their market potential invest 10–15% of *earned revenue* in audience acquisition (\$38–56K at base), because a new museum must buy awareness it does not yet have. The opening year adds a further \$10–20K overlay funded from pre-opening capital, roughly \$90K/\$130K in total that first year, heaviest in the six months before opening [S31].

WORKSTREAM	BUDGET SHARE	PRIMARY KPI	90-DAY ACTION
School / group sales	30%	Booked students; rebooking	Build educator CRM; teacher preview; district calls
Digital acquisition	25%	Cost per paid visit	Geo/search campaigns with ticket attribution
Outdoor / wayfinding	15%	Recall and source-coded visits	MoDOT logo/TODS applications; billboard tests; arrival audit
Tourism partnerships	10%	Partner-referred visits	Hotel/CVB/operator packages and referral codes; Route 66 centennial itineraries
PR / launch / events	10%	Earned reach and conversion	Collection-arrival stories; Grissom anniversary calendar; Fall Festival pop-up
Retention / membership	10%	Repeat, renewal, email conversion	Membership presale and automated journeys

10.1 · WHAT CHANNELS ACTUALLY COST: 2026 BENCHMARKS

CHANNEL	2026 COST BENCHMARK	USE
Paid search (Google)	Travel CPC \$2.14 · Arts CPC \$1.63	Capture active trip-planning demand; ~\$27–45 per lead sector-wide [S32]
Meta (Facebook/Instagram)	CPM \$11.54 · Arts CPC \$0.82	Family reach in Joplin–NWA–Springfield geo-fence [S32]
Connected TV	\$20–40 CPM	Launch-window awareness in the three metro corridors [S32]
Joplin-market bulletins (I-44/I-49)	\$2,500–4,500 / 4 weeks	Two to three boards, launch year only; measure recall [S33]
MoDOT logo signs (I-49 at US-60)	\$1,000/yr per direction	Permanent wayfinding, cheapest durable medium the museum will ever buy [S34]
TODS directional signs	Quoted by Missouri Logos	Museum clears the 2,000-visitor eligibility floor immediately [S34]

Event-weekend data shows Neosho can attract large citywide crowds, the Fall Festival brings ~18,000 to the square, but device counts are not museum admissions. Use festivals for pop-up programming, timed offers and attribution tests rather than embedding a fixed conversion in the forecast [S35]. The Branson opportunity is worked the same way: packages, referral codes, and measured conversion from a 10M-visitor market that draws two-thirds of its guests from within 300 miles, never an assumed percentage [S36].

11 Scenario and sensitivity analysis

Stabilized annual attendance scenarios

Annual onsite visits · planetarium users are not double-counted · dollar rows are steady-state (Year 3+, lease included)

■ Museum only ■ Museum + planetarium

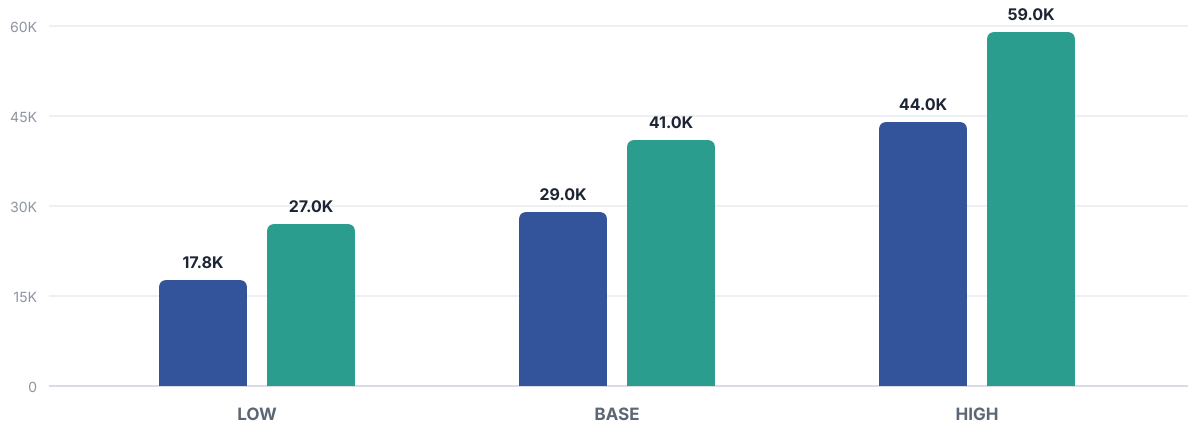


Figure 4. Attendance scenarios feeding the sensitivity table. All segments, assumptions and formulas are available in the companion workbook.

SCENARIO	ATTENDANCE	EARNED REVENUE	OPERATING EXPENSE	ANNUAL SUPPORT	INTERPRETATION
Museum low	17,800	\$293,200	\$1,330,000	\$1,036,800	Survival case; scale variable labor/programs
Museum base	29,000	\$477,700	\$1,410,000	\$932,300	Planning case
Museum high	36,000	\$593,000	\$1,466,000	\$873,000	Capacity ceiling; do not borrow against it
Planetarium low	27,000	\$611,200	\$1,710,000	\$1,098,800	Weakest subsidy result, fixed dome costs
Planetarium base	41,000	\$928,150	\$1,810,000	\$881,850	Planning case
Planetarium high	43,000	\$973,400	\$1,828,000	\$854,600	Capacity ceiling with the dome addition

The key sensitivity is not ticket price alone. Attendance mix, realized yield, school-group volume, staffing scale, utilities, annual giving and the technology reserve all matter. The planetarium low case is particularly revealing: adding fixed complexity before demand matures can push the annual support requirement to nearly \$1.1 million, and every scenario now carries the \$180,000 lease from Year 3, which is why the CID timeline matters as much as any pricing decision. Pricing has been moved; demand response is now the cheapest thing to measure and the costliest thing to guess. Each 10% of attendance lost to the higher prices costs roughly \$47,000 of earned revenue at the museum-only base.

FINANCIAL STRESS TEST

Before construction, the board should approve a response plan for the low case: hiring stages, days/hours, program calendar, rotating-exhibit spend, marketing floor, cash-reserve trigger and fundraising escalation. Do not make the low case survivable by cutting collections care, safety, preventive maintenance or essential accessibility.

12 Governance, controls and KPI dashboard

KPI	BOARD CADENCE	DECISION USE
Visits by segment / ZIP / source	Monthly	Demand, geography and channel quality
Paid yield and comp rate	Monthly	Pricing integrity and access-program control
School pipeline and rebooking	Monthly in season	Base attendance predictability
Earned revenue / operating cost	Monthly	Coverage and corrective action
Unrestricted cash days	Monthly	Liquidity and risk trigger
Annual support secured / needed	Monthly	Fundraising exposure
Membership renewal / repeat visits	Quarterly	Novelty decay and retention
Dome load, yield and downtime	Weekly/monthly	Schedule, maintenance and product economics
Capital commitments / forecast at completion	Monthly during build	Scope and contingency control
Safety, collections and accessibility incidents	Immediate + quarterly	Public trust and operational quality

Governance should separate campaign success from operational readiness. The board needs finance, museum, education, development, legal, facilities/construction, marketing, technology and community representation, plus continuity seats for the founding organization. Management should have explicit authority limits for contracts, discounts, acquisitions, loans, capital changes and restricted funds.

13 Implementation roadmap and gates

PHASE	INDICATIVE TIMING	WORK	GATE TO ADVANCE
0. Validation	12–16 weeks	Relocation agreement executed; survey; school LOIs; collection audit; site test-fit; ROM costs; campaign test	Evidence supports base; low case survivable; agreement signed
1. Concept + governance	3–5 months	Entity, mission, board, policies, concept design, operating plan	Approved program and funding strategy
2. Campaign + schematic	6–12 months	Lead gifts, USDA/NMTC/public sources, design, exhibit concept, approvals	≥70% capital committed
3. Design + procurement	8–12 months	Construction documents, bid, exhibit/AV procurement	Forecast within funding + contingency
4. Build + pre-open	12–18 months	Construction, fabrication, collection transport, hiring, training, sales, testing	All sources identified; 12 months liquidity
5. Stabilize	24 months	Measure, tune price/hours/staff/programs	Year-2 base economics and quality targets

If the planetarium cannot clear its gates in Phase 2, preserve the prepared location and utilities, open the museum-only concept, run the portable-dome outreach program to build the school network, collect real audience data for 18–24 months, and then make a Phase 2 dome decision with better evidence. The relocation timeline announced in May 2026, one to two years, aligns naturally with Phases 0–2; the collection should move once, into a conditioned, secure building, not twice.

14 Risk register and recommendation

BUSINESS RISK	EXPOSURE	CONTROL
Capital campaign funds a building, not operations	High	Three-year unrestricted commitments and opening liquidity gate
Relocation terms shift costs to the new entity (transport, conservation, insurance)	Medium-High	Term sheet with cost allocation before campaign launch; dedicated counsel
Admission price too low for yield	Medium	Price/conjoint test; bundles; underwriting instead of blanket discounts, headroom to \$10–12 is evidenced
School demand slower than hiring	High	Signed pipeline; stage staff and calendar
Dome fixed cost arrives before demand	High	Phase/gate structure; lease/service options; fully funded reserve; portable-dome bridge
Site surprises consume exhibit/renewal funds	High	Due diligence; independent estimate; ≥20% contingency
Donor concentration	Medium	Gift policy, diversified public/private base and board accountability
Federal grant volatility (IMLS/NEH/NASA)	Medium	Treat as upside, never as budgeted revenue; diversify per Section 9
Novelty decline	Medium	Rotating zone, program cadence, CRM and renewal metrics
Optimistic signage/tourism assumptions	Medium	Excluded from base; track attribution

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The business is feasible as a supported nonprofit/public-benefit museum, the model on which the nation's science centers run, and the strongest version of this project is now on the table: the authentic collection secured, the campaign anchored by it, the museum concept validated in a funded launch phase, and a planetarium-ready design with a live, repriced capital pathway. Proceed: advance the launch phase now, execute the relocation agreement as workstream one, and bring the dome in the moment its capital, lifecycle reserve, operating support, school commitments and additive space are secured. Under no scenario should high-case attendance or unapproved highway/tourist lift support debt, a discipline that protects the yes, not a doubt about it.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION FOR THE BOARD

Yes, build it: sign the collection, fund the launch phase, enact the district, fund the gap on paper before funding the building in brick, and let the dome arrive the moment its funding does.

15 Assumptions and source register

MODEL INPUT	MUSEUM ONLY	MUSEUM + PLANETARIUM
Stabilized annual attendance (assumes survey validates demand at adopted prices)	29,000 base (17,800–36,000)	41,000 base (27,000–43,000)
Blended museum yield (member visits at \$0)	\$9.80	\$9.80
Combo uptake / increment	N/A	70% / \$8.00
Retail net contribution	\$1.50 / visit	\$1.75 / visit
Operating expense (steady state incl. \$180K NABIFI lease; years 1–2 donated with landlord-carried costs)	\$1.41M	\$1.81M
Operating days	300 (six-day schedule)	300
Capital range (2026 basis)	\$7.5–17M · base \$9.90M	\$14–26M · base \$17.90M
Capital exclusions	Acquisition, major site/structural/environmental work, financing costs	
Collection	Relocation proceeds on announced terms; ~\$40M valuation treated as unappraised; transport/insurance in capital base	
Tourism / signage lift	Excluded from base, measured as upside via attribution	
Tax / debt structure	No operating debt recommended; USDA CF debt only against secured support	

15 Source register

Citations in square brackets refer to this register. Retrieved 6–13 August 2026 unless noted. Sponsor statements are treated as assumptions until independently documented.

1. **[S1]** U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2025 county/city estimates (CO-EST2025; SUB-EST2025) · census.gov
2. **[S2]** Census ACS 2024 5-year, table B14003, 21 catchment counties · data.census.gov
3. **[S3]** Homeschool: SLU PRIME (MO ~61K); Arkansas DESE 2023–24 report (32,767); JHU Homeschool Hub (OK, KS)
4. **[S4]** NWARPC 2050 projections (Feb 2026); Talk Business & Politics (Apr 2026) · nwarp.c.org
5. **[S5]** ASTC, 2024 Annual Statistics Summary Report (2025); 2023 report (2024) · astc.org
6. **[S6]** AAM, "EO Impacts and the Next Era of Museum Funding, Earned Income" (June 2025)
7. **[S7]** AAM, 2025 Annual National Snapshot of U.S. Museums (Nov 2025) · aam-us.org
8. **[S8]** Space Museum & Grissom Center, Bonne Terre, admission and hours · space-mo.org; KOAM relocation announcement (May 2026)
9. **[S9]** Tulsa Air & Space Museum, TravelOK pricing · tulsamuseum.org
10. **[S10]** Discovery Center of Springfield, visit pages
11. **[S11]** Scott Family Amazeum, visit/membership; "Amazement by the Numbers" (2025)
12. **[S12]** Stafford Air & Space Museum, TravelOK · staffordmuseum.org
13. **[S13]** Cosmosphere, tickets and group pricing · cosmo.org
14. **[S14]** U. Alaska Fairbanks planetarium: Feb 2026 construction-in-progress report (\$9.5M total; \$6.652M construction; \$1.001M FF&E) and Alaska Public Media opening coverage (~\$879K/yr operating) · alaskapublic.org; refresh comps: Bellevue \$450K, Toledo \$320K, Wyoming ~\$250K
15. **[S15]** Clark Planetarium Productions license price list; Digitalis portable-dome pricing; OMSI outreach rates; Salary.com planetarium-director benchmark
16. **[S16]** IRS Form 990 via ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer · propublica.org; Tulsa Air & Space (FY2023 \$1.28M rev); Discovery Center of Springfield (\$2.63M); Cosmosphere (\$5.4M); Space Museum Bonne Terre (\$68K)
17. **[S17]** Pivot Construction, museum construction 2025 (\$500–1,200/sf); Museum Planning LLC cost guidance
18. **[S18]** kubik maltbie fabrication FAQ (2026 \$/sf tiers); Skyhouse Studio estimating guide (design 12–20%, 20% contingency, 4%/yr escalation)
19. **[S19]** Science Museum Oklahoma, Love's Planetarium (\$8M; \$3.5M naming gift; Sept 2024)
20. **[S20]** USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant (2026 rates 4.50–4.75%; museums eligible; grant share 15/35/55/75% by population and median income, service-area determination required) · rd.usda.gov
21. **[S21]** CDFI Fund, New Markets Tax Credit: program permanent (2025); \$10B 2024–25 allocation; tract eligibility and CDE participation are gates · cdfifund.gov
22. **[S22]** IMLS, Museums for America: FY2027 cycle, \$5K–350K awards, 1:1 nonfederal match, deadline 13 Nov 2026, FY2027 NOFO pending at publication; the \$291.8M budget figure is a secondary-source claim · imls.gov
23. **[S23]** NASA STEM Engagement: FY26 conference restored \$143M; TEAM II tiers (\$400K–900K) exist, but solicitations are forecasts until formally released (EONS) · nas.a.gov
24. **[S24]** Federation of State Humanities Councils; Virginia Humanities federal funding update (July 2026); Missouri Humanities grants; Missouri Arts Council funding guidelines
25. **[S25]** Missouri Division of Tourism, FY26 Marketing Matching Grant guidelines; News-Tribune on proposed tourism budget cut (Apr 2026)
26. **[S26]** Missouri Independent, "Earmarked spending slows..." (May 2026)
27. **[S27]** Sunderland Foundation (\$5M Springfield Art Museum lead gift); Helen S. Boylan Foundation guidelines; Community Foundation of the Ozarks 2026–27 rounds; Walton Family Foundation Home Region Strategy 2030 (May 2026)
28. **[S28]** Jack Henry "Give Back at Jack"; La-Z-Boy corporate giving; City of Neosho hotel-motel tax program; MoDOT CID/NID/TIF/TDD overview; Neosho historic district designation
29. **[S29]** collectSPACE / KSN, Cosmosphere renovation funding stack (Moran appropriation + Kansas SPRINT + Sunderland)
30. **[S30]** Springfield Art Museum \$30M city funding; Talk Business, Amazeum \$25M campaign (Jan 2025)
31. **[S31]** IMPACTS / Colleen Dilenschneider, audience-acquisition investment research; Remuseum marketing report (Nov 2025)
32. **[S32]** WordStream Google Ads benchmarks 2026; Digital Applied Meta benchmarks 2026; AdWave CTV CPM (Q4 2025)
33. **[S33]** BLUELINE Media, Joplin MO billboard rates; Lamar Joplin
34. **[S34]** Missouri Interstate Logos participation fees; 7 CSR 10-17 (logo, TODS, traffic-generator criteria); MoDOT 2025 AADT (I-49 at US-60: 21,167)
35. **[S35]** Newstalk KZRG, 57th Neosho Fall Festival (~18,000)
36. **[S36]** H2R Market Research, Branson CVB 2023 year-end report (10.29M; 67.7% within 300 mi); Branson Tri-Lakes News (2024 receipts)
37. **[S37]** Project sponsor: proposed prices, hours, exhibit area, catchment, Bonne Terre attendance. Correspondence received 6 August 2026
38. **[S38]** Project sponsor: Employee and Payroll schedule (adopted staffing plan) and NABIFI lease terms (\$15,000/month; two years forgiven; landlord carries property taxes, insurance, general maintenance). Correspondence received August 2026
39. **[S39]** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OEWS, Joplin MO MSA: mean annual wage all occupations \$50,650 vs U.S. \$65,470 (May 2023 tables)
40. **[S40]** Seiler Instrument / ZEISS planetarium correspondence (K. Yager, received 13 August 2026): ZKP-4 optical \$0.9–1.6M; VELVET digital \$0.95–2.5M; hybrid \$1.5–2.5M; Seiler custom \$50–275K; cove lighting \$28–75K; audio \$25–250K; site visit to two candidate buildings by end of October 2026
41. **[S41]** Project sponsor: market-rate staff recommendations and salary schedule. Received 13 August 2026

16 Evidence status: verified, adopted, gated

One page, three honesty levels. Everything in this package is one of the following, and nothing in the second or third category should be quoted as settled fact.

VERIFIED AGAINST PRIMARY SOURCES

ITEM	BASIS
21-county demographics: 1,527,138 people; 208,420 public + 30,256 private/home-school students	Census Vintage 2025; ACS 2024 B14003 [S1–S3]
NWA growth: Benton + Washington counties +74% by 2050	NWARPC 2050 projections [S4]
UAF planetarium as-built \$9.5M; ~\$879K/yr operating	UAF Feb 2026 report; Alaska Public Media [S14]
Regional admission prices; sector medians; comparable attendance	Operator sites; ASTC / AAM [S5–S13]
Joplin-area wages (\$50,650 mean, ~25% below U.S.)	BLS OEWS [S39]
Funding program terms: USDA CF rates/eligibility rules, NMTC permanence, IMLS FY2027 cycle, NASA TEAM II tiers	Agency pages [S20–S23]; program award ≠ project entitlement

ADOPTED PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS (SPONSOR AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS, NOT FACTS)

ITEM	WHERE SET
Pricing \$14/\$8/\$12, combos \$22/\$16/\$20; mix 40/30/15/10/5; 70% combo uptake	Adopted 8 Aug 2026; survey brackets \$12/\$14/\$16 [S37]
Staffing plan lean case (\$730K burdened; \$910K with dome)	Sponsor schedules, reconciled in Section 6A [S38, S41]
Attendance 29,000 / 41,000 base with low–high ranges	Segment build-up, Section 3
Operating budget \$1.41M / \$1.81M; capital unit costs and ranges	Sections 6–7, Class 4 planning basis
Annual support stack (\$650K illustrative target)	Section 9; targets, not pledges

GATED: MUST BE VALIDATED BEFORE CONSTRUCTION COMMITS

GATE	EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Collection title, provenance, NASA loan status, ~\$40M valuation	Executed agreement; object-level inventory; independent appraisal
NABIFI lease and building fit (program vs ~15,000 gsf implied)	Signed lease; architectural test-fit; systems due diligence
School demand (8,500–11,000 K-12 visits)	Signed district letters of intent
Demand at adopted prices	600-household survey at \$12/\$14/\$16
Planetarium cost and configuration	Seiler/ZEISS site visit (by end of Oct 2026) plus two competing ROMs [S40]
Public mechanism and pledges (CID; \$650K stack becomes secured)	Enacted ordinance; written multi-year commitments
USDA award terms; NMTC tract and CDE participation	Agency eligibility determinations; CDE letters