

NEOSHO SPACE MUSEUM

What Drives the Financials, and What We Recommend Doing

This brief distills the Business Feasibility Study and the companion Excel driver model into one answer: which levers actually move the numbers, in order, and what the group should do about each. The **Recommendation to Proceed** decision brief of 28 August 2026 carries the project's affirmative recommendation (**yes, proceed**), and every lever below exists to make that yes succeed. Base case throughout (rebased 13 August 2026): museum-only, 29,000 stabilized visits at the adopted pricing (\$14 adult / \$8 student, \$22 combo), \$477,700 earned revenue, \$1,410,000 steady-state operating cost including the NABIFI lease (\$180,000/yr after two forgiven years) and the sponsor's adopted staffing plan, and a \$932,300 annual support line. With the planetarium: \$928,150 earned against \$1,810,000, an \$881,850 line and 51.3% earned coverage, the sector norm.

CAMPUS MEASURED, 28 AUGUST 2026: THE CAPITAL ASK FALLS BY \$6.9M

The campus is measured: a **main building of 13,500 gross square feet and a second building of 2,200**, 15,700 in all, with no further wing available and a planetarium possible only as an exterior addition carrying a 40-foot dome of roughly 100 seats. The second building becomes the collections annex, releasing the main building to a gallery programme of **4,700 net square feet**, 94 percent of the 5,000 net-square-foot target the sponsor's museum planner sets and 1.65 times what the collection occupies in Bonne Terre today. **Capital falls from \$16.84M to \$9.90M museum-only, and from \$24.84M to \$17.90M with the planetarium**, with the annex fit-out and storage equipment priced inside those totals. Nothing below changes: the drivers on this page are operating drivers, and the attendance bases of 29,000 and 41,000, the pricing, the staffing plan and the support line are all unchanged.

THE DRIVERS, RANKED BY DOLLARS MOVED

#	DRIVER	DOLLAR IMPACT ON THE LINE	WHY IT RANKS HERE
1	Attendance volume	~\$11,300 per 1,000 visits	The model's foundation, now worth more per visit at adopted pricing. Independent residents are the largest segment (12,500 base visits); K-12 field trips (8,500) are the most controllable, because schools can be pre-sold with letters of intent before a dollar of construction, into the 65-mile catchment Neosho's own festival history has already proven.
2	Ticket yield and demand response	~\$47,000 per 10% of attendance	Pricing was moved to the sector median on 8 August (\$14/\$8, \$22 combo), lifting blended yield from \$6.30 to \$9.80. The open question is now elasticity: the survey's \$12/\$14/\$16 bracket measures whether attendance holds, and each 10% lost costs about \$47,000.
3	Personnel cost	~\$73,000 per 10% swing; lease adds fixed \$180,000 from Year 3	At \$730,000 (the adopted staffing plan, lean case) it is more than half the operating budget, and the plan's mid and full build-outs (~\$1.34M / ~\$2.13M burdened) exceed what base revenue supports. Staging hires against actual demand is the main cost control that does not damage the product.
4	The planetarium decision	+\$400,000 cost vs +\$450,000 earned	At adopted combo pricing the dome funds its own operating increment at base attendance, and <i>lowers</i> the annual support requirement. It proceeds the moment its own capital is committed, on a pathway current vendor guidance has materially repriced downward (written proposal pending) against the \$6.5–9.5M benchmark carried in the model (UAF as-built \$9.5M).
5	Local public funding mechanism	\$150,000–\$300,000 per year	A CID sales tax, hotel-motel allocation or city/county appropriation is the only recurring government money available, and one enacted mechanism outweighs any pricing move. A CID has already been floated publicly, and the tourism council's impact model now gives it a quantified payer case (Addendum A).
6	School program scale	~\$66,000 if K-12 doubles	Doubling school visits from 8,500 to 17,000 stays under 9% of the region's public-school students; the constraint is sales effort and bus logistics, not market size.
7	Memberships	~\$65,000 if the program doubles	Also the leading indicator of repeat visitation; renewal above 60% is the health metric.

THE ONE-PARAGRAPH TAKEAWAY

Attendance and demand response dominate the earned side; personnel and the new lease dominate the cost side; the dome and the local funding mechanism dominate the structure. Nothing on this list makes the museum self-funding, and nothing has to: the sector's institutions run on designed support, and the job of these levers is to shrink a \$932,000 steady-state line toward the size the community demonstrably can carry: roughly \$610,000–\$710,000 of private money a year once the CID arrives, in exchange for the \$2.0M+ of annual local business revenue the tourism council's model attributes to the museum. Every recommendation on the next page exists to do exactly that.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS, IN PRIORITY ORDER

#	RECOMMENDATION	LINE EFFECT	DETAIL AND TIMING
1	Validate demand at the adopted prices	Protects ~\$47,000 per 10% at risk	Pricing is set (\$14/\$8 museum, \$22/\$16/\$20 combos); the survey's \$12/\$14/\$16 bracket now tests whether attendance holds, and measures upside headroom. Protect school access by holding pre-booked groups at \$6-7 through sponsor underwriting even with the \$8 walk-up student price.
2	Pre-sell the school base	Secures ~\$66,000 of base revenue	Signed district letters of intent covering at least 8,500 K-12 visits before fixed costs are committed. Rebooking windows each spring; a sponsored bus fund removes the classic objection.
3	Enact the local funding mechanism	-\$150,000 to -\$300,000	Begin the CID / hotel-motel conversation with the city and county now, in parallel with the launch phase. This single act converts the funding question from heroic to routine, and the payer case is now quantified: roughly \$9 of district-side business revenue per assessed dollar at the with-dome base (Addendum A).
4	Stage staffing to the low case	Protects ~\$80,000 of downside	Open at the adopted plan's lean case (~13 heads, \$730K) sized to 17,800-visit demand; expand on evidence. Two-deep coverage only for safety-critical and revenue-critical roles at opening.
5	Portable dome now, fixed dome when funded	Avoids premature +\$95,000/yr	A \$30-50K inflatable dome, run as paid school outreach from year one, builds the booking network and produces the real attachment data the fixed-dome decision deserves. A Seiler custom system (\$50-275K, vendor-quoted August 2026) is the mid step if a suitable room exists. The fixed dome proceeds when fully funded: full incremental capital, three years of support, 11,000 K-12 visits evidenced. The repriced capital pathway (written proposal pending) brings those conditions within reach rather than deferring them.
6	Protect rotation and marketing	Defends drivers 1 and 7	The 3,000 sf rotating zone and the \$80,000 marketing budget (more in the launch year) are attendance machinery, not overhead. They are the last lines to cut, not the first.
7	Execute the collection agreement first	Anchors the entire campaign	Title, loan terms, transport, insurance and the Grissom association, documented before schematic design. Every funder conversation gets easier the day this is signed.

WHAT THE LEVERS LOOK LIKE COMBINED

POSTURE	ANNUAL LINE	GOVERNMENT SHARE (IF #3 ENACTED)	PRIVATE FUNDRAISING REQUIRED
Adopted pricing, no local mechanism	\$932,300	\$0-150,000 (grants only)	~\$780,000-932,000
Recommended (adopted pricing + CID enacted)	\$932,300	~\$225,000 + grants	~\$610,000-710,000
Stretch (CID + planetarium at base demand)	~\$881,850	~\$225,000 + grants	~\$560,000-660,000

The recommended posture cuts the private fundraising requirement by roughly a quarter without touching school access, staffing quality or the collection budget, and the timing matters: the CID needs to arrive before the donated-lease window closes at the end of Year 2. The stretch case shows the dome, at adopted combo pricing and validated demand, actually **reducing** what donors must raise, the strongest single argument for closing its capital early on the repriced pathway.

TEST IT YOURSELF

Every number in this brief is live in the companion workbook (Neosho_Space_Museum_Driver_Model_LLM_Squared.xlsx). Change any blue cell on the Drivers tab; the Model, Levers and Scenarios tabs recalculate instantly. The Levers tab reproduces this brief's price ladder, attendance curve, dome attachment and cost-control grids, and the Economic Impact tab computes Addendum A's figures at any attendance.

ADDENDUM A · ECONOMIC IMPACT

What the museum gives back: \$2.49M a year

Newton County Tourism Council economic impact model (Pete Hall), revised August 2026 · incorporated 23 August 2026

\$2,486,365TOTAL ANNUAL ECONOMIC
IMPACT (AS STATED)**\$2,277,741**LOCAL BUSINESS REVENUE
(NET OF TAX)**\$208,623**

TAX RECEIPTS (ALL LEVELS)

45,768ANNUAL VISITS (MODEL
BASIS)

The Newton County Tourism Council's independent visitor-spending model estimates the museum's annual economic footprint at **\$2,486,365** (\$54.33 per visit) on its own attendance 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 mi at 1.5%, 71–120 mi at 0.35%, schools at 2.0%, tourists already in market at 25%).

This revision of the workbook adds two museum-gate categories, gift shop (\$72,494) and planetarium (\$86,873), raising the stated total from the previously quoted \$2.33M. Roughly **76% of local business revenue still 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

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 WITH LOCAL SHARE \$112,389 (53.9%)

LEVEL	AMOUNT	SHARE
State of Missouri	\$96,235	46.1%
City of Neosho	\$68,332	32.8%
Newton County	\$37,013	17.7%
Lodging tax	\$7,043	3.4%
Local subtotal (city + county + lodging)	\$112,389	53.9%

GOVERNING RULE FOR QUOTING

Quote the figures as stated with the 45,768-visit basis named, or rescaled to a published base, never a hybrid. Rescaled (museum-only view excludes planetarium spending): ~\$1,520,392 at the 29,000 base / ~\$2,227,341 at 41,000 (tax ~\$127,716 / ~\$186,889; local tax ~\$68,875 / ~\$100,680).

Reconciliation, the civic argument, and what remains open

Reconciliation status. Six of the seven reconciliation questions raised when this model first appeared are now resolved on the face of the workbook: it uses its own independent attendance basis; a conservative day-trip spend profile (~6% overnight); locals are included but contribute only a small share of impact; the tax split is explicit; the run is operating-only (no construction impact); and no documentary or heritage-tourism demand is included. The revision also clarifies the model case: a planetarium revenue 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 model's author: whether category spends embed IMPLAN multipliers or are direct spending only. The workbook computes direct spending, so if multipliers were intended upstream, the figures above are a **conservative floor**. Corroboration: the workbook's gate revenue works out to \$14.00 per admission and \$10.00 per planetarium visit, within range of this study's \$9.80 blended realized yield once member and school discounting is applied.

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, which this model now quantifies: **\$2,277,741 of business revenue lands annually on the same blocks that would pay the assessment**, roughly \$6–10 of district-side revenue per assessed dollar across the model's attendance bases.

THE MODEL AT THREE ATTENDANCE BASES

ANNUAL FIGURE	AS STATED (45,768, W/ DOME)	MUSEUM-ONLY BASE (29,000)*	DOME 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 (all levels)	\$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	\$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. These figures are computed live in the companion driver model (Economic Impact tab) and by the calculator at neoshospacemuseum.com, at any attendance.

Comparison to the prior quotation. The figures previously circulated verbally and in the 19 August incorporation (\$2.33M total / \$2.13M business revenue / \$196K tax) came from the pre-revision workbook, which had no gift shop or planetarium lines. The seven original spending categories are unchanged to the dollar; only the two added categories account for the difference. Documents quoting the earlier totals should be read as quoting the museum-only spending view of the same model.

HOW TO USE THIS NUMBER

This is an economic-impact estimate of visitor spending, not museum revenue: none of it funds the operating line, and it must never be presented as offsetting the support requirement. Its proper use is the civic case: CID and hotel-motel conversations, county and city appropriations, and funder narratives about community return. Keep one attendance basis per audience, and cite the source workbook (Space Museum Economic Impact Report.xlsx, Newton County Tourism Council, rev. August 2026).