



Legislation Text

File #: 15-4798, Version: 1

**Discovery Place Science Facilities Master Plan**

**Action:**

- A. Approve an allocation of \$950,000 to Discovery Place to fund a Facilities Master Plan, and**
  
- B. Adopt a budget ordinance appropriating \$950,000 from the Cultural Facilities Operating (Tourism II) Fund for the Discovery Place Facilities Master Plan**

**Staff Resource(s):**

Catherine Horne, Discovery Place  
Randy Harrington, Management & Financial Services

**Explanation**

- Discovery Place consists of four museums: Discovery Place Science, Discovery Place Nature, and two Discovery Place Kids.
- On January 9, 2017, the City Council received a Dinner Briefing on the Discovery Place Science Facilities Master Plan.
- Discovery Place Science opened in 1981 and is located on North Tryon Street. The City owns the facility.
- Previous capital investments by the City totaling \$35.8 million for upgrades, renovations and other infrastructure improvements to Discovery Place include:
  - \$3.5 million in FY2016 for technology-related upgrades to lab content and exhibit space;
  - \$31.6 million in FY2007 for facility renovations and new exhibits;
  - \$540,000 in FY2000 for the Dining Room Expansion;
  - \$88,795 in FY2000 for Phase II lighting improvements; and
  - \$40,000 in FY1999 for Phase I lighting improvements.
- Last year approximately 500,000 people visited Discovery Place Science.
- Discovery Place plays a vital role in growing Charlotte’s workforce and preparing its students for jobs of the future in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).
- Discovery Place priorities include expanding exhibition and program space for a growing audience of citizens and visitors, creating public engagement with and community access to science, preparing students and educators for the growing STEM economy, and introducing the new wonders of science and innovation.
- To determine how best to maximize its Discovery Place Science facility on Tryon Street to meet these priorities and serve the needs of a growing and changing community, Discovery Place proposes to conduct a facilities master planning process that will identify facility needs and plan for

the future of Discovery Place Science as an integral component of the North Tryon Vision Plan.

- The Discovery Place Science Facilities Master Plan will accomplish the following:
  - Analyze the visitor experience and business model to ensure the continued financial health of Discovery Place Science;
  - Engage the community and stakeholders, including City Council, in the planning and study;
  - Forecast how citizens use science museums to determine needs relating to facilities, content, and programs; and
  - Develop a vision for reimagining Discovery Place Science with a facility plan, budget and timeline.
- The Facilities Master Plan will be completed in approximately 18-24 months.
- Any recommended improvements to Discovery Place facilities will come to the City Council for consideration following completion of the Facilities Master Plan.
- While specific facility investment costs are not known at this time, the types of potential infrastructure improvements could include:
  - Redesigned facade and public amenities on Tryon Street, including but not limited to lobbies, access to parking deck, and public spaces
  - Improved functionality of building interior
  - Expanded facility to meet growing visitation and expectations of audiences for museum experiences, meetings, offices, and events
  - Longer term plan for second block of Discovery Place Science
  - Feasibility of commercial development over/on top of a portion of the property
  - Outdoor experiences and reimagined futures for two theaters
- The source of funding for the Discovery Place Science Facilities Master Plan will be the Cultural Facilities Operating (Tourism II) Fund, which is supported by revenues equivalent to 4% Vehicle Rental Car Tax revenues. Eligible uses of these funds include City-owned cultural and arts facilities, including Levine Center for the Arts Campus, Discovery Place, and other tourism assets.

### **Charlotte Business INclusion**

The action is only to approve the appropriation of funds and therefore no subcontracting goals are required at this time. MWSBE subcontracting goals will be established during subsequent contract approval phases.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding: Cultural Facilities Operating (Tourism II) Fund

### **Attachment**

Discovery Place Master Plan Dinner Briefing Presentation on January 9, 2017  
Budget Ordinance