



Office of the County Executive

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Manitowoc County Courthouse 2022 Dome & Facility Improvements Study Frequently Asked Questions

- Can you describe this project briefly?
 - This project is three projects in one.
 - Dome Repair & Restoration
 - Window Replacements
 - HVAC System Replacement
 - All are necessary
 - Timeframe from project approval to completion: 3 Years

- What is this project all about?
 - This project is the 3rd phase of a building envelope renovation plan put into effect after a Historic Structures Report was commissioned in 2004.
 - The 1st phase replaced the low slope roof, the copper balustrade level of the dome, the three sets of exteriors stairs, and the addition of an accessible ramp to the east entrance.
 - The 2nd Phase repaired and replaced failing mortar (tuck-pointing) on the entire 4-story stone façade of the building
 - This last phase is the renovation of the clearstory level and exterior dome cladding, renovation of the interior dome, replacement of the 120 exterior windows of the building, and the replacement of the 50+ year old HVAC components and controls.
 - A detailed listing of the Scope of Work and its associated costs can be found in the 2022 Strang Architects Study on the County's website:
 - [StrangArchitectsDomeFacilitiesStudy.pdf \(manitowocountywi.gov\)](#)

- **Why was Strang Architects picked to perform the study?**
 - Strang was chosen as their Senior Preservation Architect was the architect on our 2010 project that was Phase 1 of our Building Envelope Restoration projects. His work on that project was exemplary, he is well aware of the condition of the Manitowoc County Courthouse, and he is renowned for his work on historic structures.

- **What was the cost for the Strang Architects Study?**
 - \$39,900 and the funding was included in the 2022 Budget.

- **Why did this Project come up now?**
 - This is the final phase of the 3-Phase project and has been planned for some time. The repairs and renovations need to happen in the near-term, and now is the time before there are unexpected failures.

- **What if we do nothing?**
 - While we are not in a dire situation to start this project, the existing conditions demand attention sooner rather than later and now is the appropriate time, before we have any major issues. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it will not be less expensive to do the work 5 years from now.

- **Why is this renovation/repair project so expensive?**
 - This is a monumental building and this will be a monumental project that is expected to take two or more years to complete. The pool of qualified contractors who are capable of this work is small. The cost estimates in the 2022 Strang Architects Study were based on worst-case scenarios of what may be found once the existing cladding is removed. The rationale to budget sufficient funds is sound; prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

- **Do we have to replace the windows and HVAC equipment as part of this project?**
 - The existing windows are 45+ years old, no longer energy-efficient, and are starting to fail. They are an integral piece of the building envelope. The HVAC system, both the mechanical equipment and the control system for it is at least 50 years old and is in need of replacement. We contemplate completing all the projects during the same construction timeframe, but bidding them out separately to allow local contractors the opportunity to bid on these elements of the project.

- **What percentage of the \$25 to \$30 million budget is assigned to each part of this project? (Dome Repair, Windows Replacement, HVAC Replacement)**
 - In general, the project budget can be assigned this way:
 - Dome: 80%
 - Windows: 10%
 - HVAC: 10%

- **Why do you want to do the window replacements and HVAC projects at the same time as the dome repairs; can't it be put off?**
 - The 45+ year old windows are part of the building envelope and are starting to fail. The HVAC system is 50 years old, fairly inefficient due to its age and older-technology control system, and in need of replacement. Bundling these projects and completing them at the same time will limit the upheaval of construction for people visiting the courthouse as well as our employees into one timeframe. From a financial standpoint, the sooner we make these energy efficiency upgrades, the sooner we'll realize the energy savings and lower our costs. From a practical standpoint, systems this old are at the end of their life-cycle and must be replaced and this is an opportune time to do it.

- **Why did you go back to the original window design?**
 - The original windows were made to fit the masonry openings. When they replaced the HVAC systems in the 1970's they lowered the suspended ceilings in the offices to add ductwork, and put in metal panels to cover the space that would have been open above those suspended ceilings. With vast improvements in glazing materials we can open up the windows to full height again and achieve great energy efficiency while allowing more natural light into the office spaces. Some of the suspended ceilings will need to be raised immediately in front of the windows to create a "light well". This method is already being used in several areas with good success. The building façade will return to normal and the occupants in the offices that get greater light will benefit, all while maintaining great energy efficiency.

- **Can't you just fix the copper and dome instead of replacing it?**
 - The existing copper cladding is 116 years old and at the end of its service life. In many cases, there is nothing left to solder to, or to make a water-tight repair. The steel super-structure behind the copper cladded clearstory and stainless steel dome need some repairs, but the extent is unknown at this time so we are planning for the worst-case scenario of extensive corrosion and the need for major repairs.

- **I heard they want to replace the stainless steel dome with glass. Why is that?**
 - The original dome was glass, and replacing it with a modern durable polycarbonate glass would restore the dome to its original appearance. It is anticipated the cost to replace with glass or copper is about the same, and we will also be looking into replacing the old stainless steel panels with new stainless steel. We will examine these (3) options in the bidding process.

- **How long will the dome repairs last?**
 - At least 100 years, if not longer.

- **I heard the roof has leaked from the day it was built, is that right?**
 - To some extent it is, though those leaks were confined to the exterior of the copper-clad low-slope roof and not the dome itself. Historical records detail leaks on the copper-clad low-slope roof that have been addressed over the years. In 1972 (50 years ago) the original copper-clad low-slope roof was replaced with an EDPM “rubber” roof and that ended the leaks. The low-slope roof was re-roofed in 2010 as part of Phase 2 of our Building Envelope Renovation Plan and should not need re-roofing again until approximately 2040.

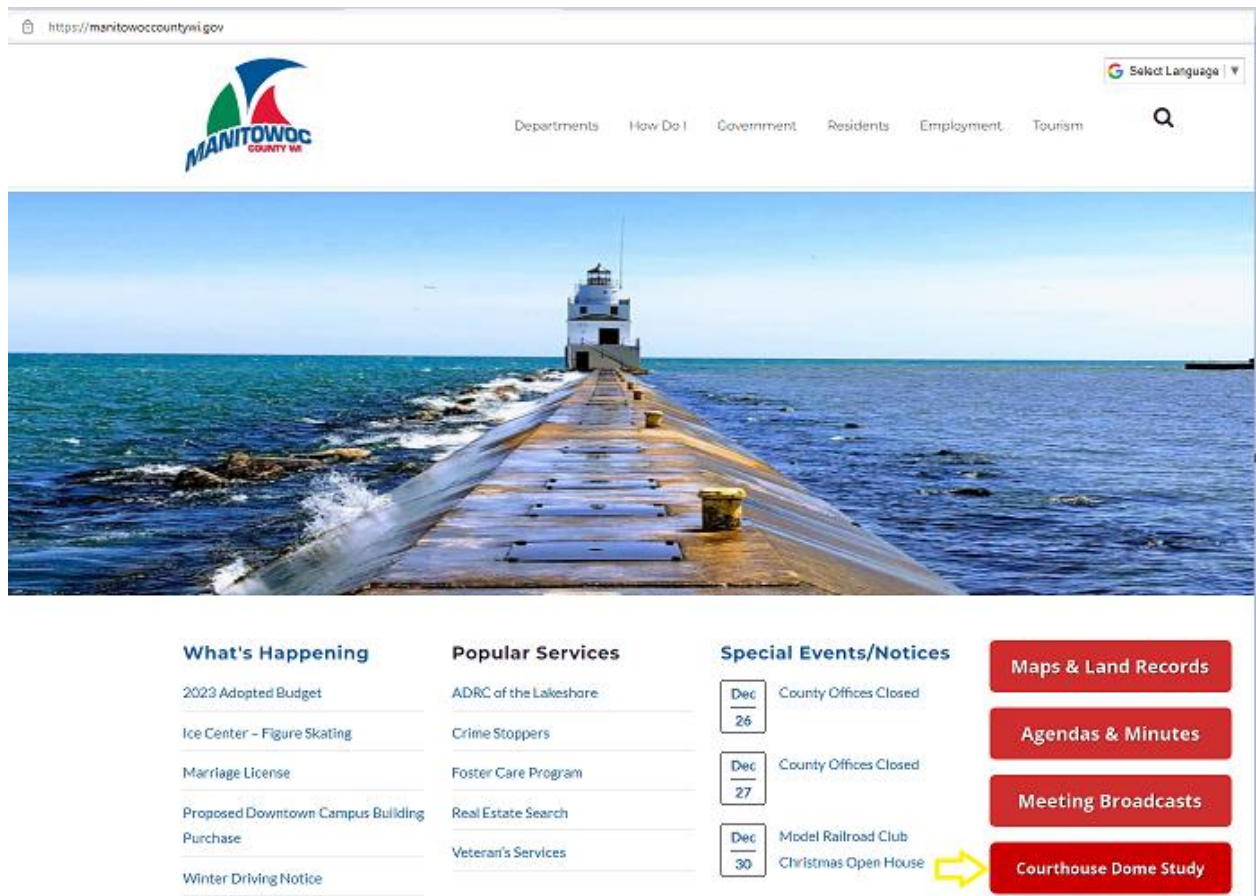
- **Why don’t you just cut the dome off the courthouse and be done with it?**
 - The dome is a part of the overall steel super-structure of the building and integral to the building’s structural integrity.

- **Wouldn’t it be less expensive to build a new courthouse?**
 - In the past several decades Manitowoc County has effectively built a “new Courthouse” under the roof of the existing structure!

 - The current courthouse is 59,000 sq. ft. and houses much more than the just the courtrooms, with the following courts and office suites making up the 59,000 sq. ft..
 - (3) Branch Circuit Courts with a 4th Branch being added in August 2023
 - All the support offices, Judge’s chambers, and jury rooms for all (4) Branch Circuit Courts
 - The B-15 Intake Hearing Room and waiting rooms
 - County Elected Official Office Suites
 - County Clerk
 - Clerk of Courts
 - Treasurer
 - District Attorney
 - Victim/Witness Holding Room
 - Reg. of Deeds

- **County Department Office Suites**
 - Child Support Agency
 - Corporation Counsel
 - Reg. in Probate
 - Family Court Commissioners
 - Drug Court
 - County Executive
 - A conservative sq. ft. cost estimate for a courthouse building would be \$500/sq. ft. for a total cost of \$29,500,000
 - There would also be land acquisition fees, architectural design and engineering fees, and site improvement fees that could easily run into the \$3-\$5 million dollar range. There would then be demolition costs for the existing building and site restoration costs that could easily be in the \$2 million range.
 - Total Cost for a new Courthouse could easily top \$37,000,000
 - Lastly, there would be the cost in lost history and civic identity, which you cannot put a price on.
- **If this project happens, where will the money come from?**
 - At this time we are considering a one-time property tax increase of approximately 3.5 - 4.5% of the County portion of a taxpayer's property tax bill. This would pay for the building over a 20-25 year period and equitably put the burden not just on one generation of taxpayers, but on future generations that would have use of the courthouse.
- **Are there grants available for this type of project?**
 - There may be and we are investigating all opportunities. However, to be conservative we cannot rely on them and need to plan for having to fully-fund this project.

- I ask my neighbors about this project and they say they don't know anything about it. How do I or my neighbors learn more about this project?
 - We have been fully transparent about this project from the outset.
 - All meetings regarding this project have been advertised, open public meetings
 - All documents regarding the project are posted on the Manitowoc County Website with the link on the home page:
 - www.manitowocountywi.gov



Courthouse Dome Repair & Restoration, Windows Replacement, and HVAC Upgrade Projects

Potential Timeline

February 2023 through January 2024 - County Board Action

- Ad Hoc Courthouse Dome Advisory Committee convenes and makes recommendation to Public Works Committee on Scope of Work and Funding
- Public Works Committee convenes and makes recommendation to the County Board on Scope of Work and Funding
- July 18, 2023 - County Board convenes and takes action (Resolution 2023/2024-20) to pursue the entire project and fund it through the issuance of bonds. Motion passes on a vote of 16 ayes and 9 noes.
- December 19, 2023 – County Board votes to adopt Resolution 2-23/2024-51 Initial Resolution Authorizing General Obligation Courthouse Improvement Bonds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$7,500,000. Motion fails on a vote of 13 ayes and 11 noes (19 ayes required to pass the resolution).
- *A Funding Resolution for the Windows Replacement & HVAC Upgrade Project (only) is on the January 16, 2024 County Board agenda*

Fall 2023 to January 2024

- For the Windows Replacement & HVAC Upgrade Project – staff to negotiate a fee with a local A/E firm familiar with our building/building systems
 - Legacy Architects of Sheboygan awarded the project
 - Contract to be executed upon project funding by the County Board
- For the Dome Repair & Renovation Project - A Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Architectural/Engineering (A/E) Firms was issued
 - RFP's are received and scored
 - Highest scored A/E firms are interviewed on 12/20/2023
 - An A/E firm is chosen by the staff review panel
 - Contract to be executed upon project funding by the County Board

January 2024 through December 2025

- **PHASE ONE**
 - March 19, 2024 - County Board Approves \$4.1 Million Bonding for Windows Replacement and HVAC Systems Upgrade project
 - May 2024 - Windows & HVAC Projects are designed and let for bids
 - June 2024 - Bid(s) are accepted and work begins in the summer of 2024
 - Window and HVAC Projects are completed between the summers of 2024 and 2025.
- **PHASE TWO**
 - ***Dates To Be Announced***
 - Dome projects – On hold until the County Board funds the Architectural/Engineering (A/E) work – Estimated cost for A/E services is \$1.75 million.
 - Once funded, investigative research into existing conditions commences and the project is designed and engineered.
- **PHASE THREE**
 - ***Dates To Be Announced***
 - Dome Project is let for bids and bids are received
 - County Board must decide to fund (or not fund) the Dome project.
 - If the Dome project is funded, base bid and alternates are reviewed.
 - Alternates are chosen based on discussion/debate/ available budget
 - Low bid (and any alternates) by a qualified contractor is accepted and they are awarded the work
 - Dome(s) project are constructed – Construction Timeframe expected to last 18 months



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Manitowoc County Courthouse Capital Outlay 2003 - 2024

| YEAR | Capital Outlay Amount | Major/Milestone Projects |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| 2003 | \$54,225 | |
| 2004 | \$61,000 | |
| 2005 | \$54,000 | |
| 2006 | \$41,500 | |
| 2007 | \$8,500 | |
| 2008 | \$82,400 | |
| 2009 | \$3,135,065 | *Low-slope roof replacement *Copper balustrade replacement *Exterior stairs replacements and ADA ramp installation |
| 2010 | \$29,000 | |
| 2011 | \$51,700 | |
| 2012 | \$39,000 | |
| 2013 | \$38,000 | |
| 2014 | \$263,849 | Exterior Stone Façade Tuckpointing - complete building |
| 2015 | \$26,200 | |
| 2016 | \$291,500 | Intake Courtroom (B15) Remodel project |
| 2017 | \$94,500 | |
| 2018 | \$57,500 | |
| 2019 | \$74,500 | |
| 2020 | \$48,400 | |
| 2021 | \$229,000 | Elevator Controls & Car Modernization |
| 2022 | \$782,561 | ADA Restrooms Remodeling - all floors |
| 2023 | \$1,806,500 | Branch IV Courtroom, Child Support Agency, and Reg. in Probate construction project |
| 2024 | \$4,134,500 | *Windows Replacement & HVAC Systems Upgrade Project *Sewer Lateral Lining *Main Air Handling Unit - Outside Air Dampers Replacement |
| TOTAL | \$11,403,406 | |

Updated April 15, 2024
www.manitowoccounty.org

