

# Hands on Children's Museum Financing

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City Council  
June 17, 2025



# Project Background

- Original PFD Formed in 2003
  - .033% State Sales Tax Diversion
    - HOCM and RAC chosen as projects to fund
  - 25-Year Timeframe (2003-2028)
- Museum Opened 2012
- Mix of PFD Funding/Private Fundraising – Debt Service
  - \$9 million in PFD Revenues – Paid Debt Service on Phase 1
  - \$9 Million in Fundraising
  - PFD Revenues – Through 2028
  - Bond Repayment 2029



# Project Background

- PFD Extended 15 years in 2017 Legislative Session
  - 2043
- Extended again in 2025 Legislative Session – 15 Years
  - 2058





# Hands On Children's Museum Expansion Planning



Patty Belmonte, CEO





# Building On Our Strengths

- 13 Years in Permanent Home
- Destination Museum – National & International visitors
- 315,000 Visitors - More visitors per s/f than any of the nation's children's museums
- Commitment to Access – 130,000 served
- Consistent “Best Of” Award-Winner



As  
Seen on  
Blippi!







# Enriching Quality of Life in Olympia Bringing Visitors to the Downtown!







# Drawing Out of Town Visitors & Creating Special Family Memories

*"Early learning play at its best! Such a wonderful experience! The exhibits are well thought out and stunning. We went 3 times during our trip."— Paris*

★★★★★ *"Hands down, this is the best Hands On Children's Museum in Washington! **Seattle, WA***

*"A chance for kids to explore, learn and make memories together...keeping this affordable is so important."*

**EBT Family Olympia**

***Madison Elementary students*** had a blast on their recent field trip. Our young engineers got creative by designing their very own art bots. The result? A whirlwind of colorful fun and hands-on learning!

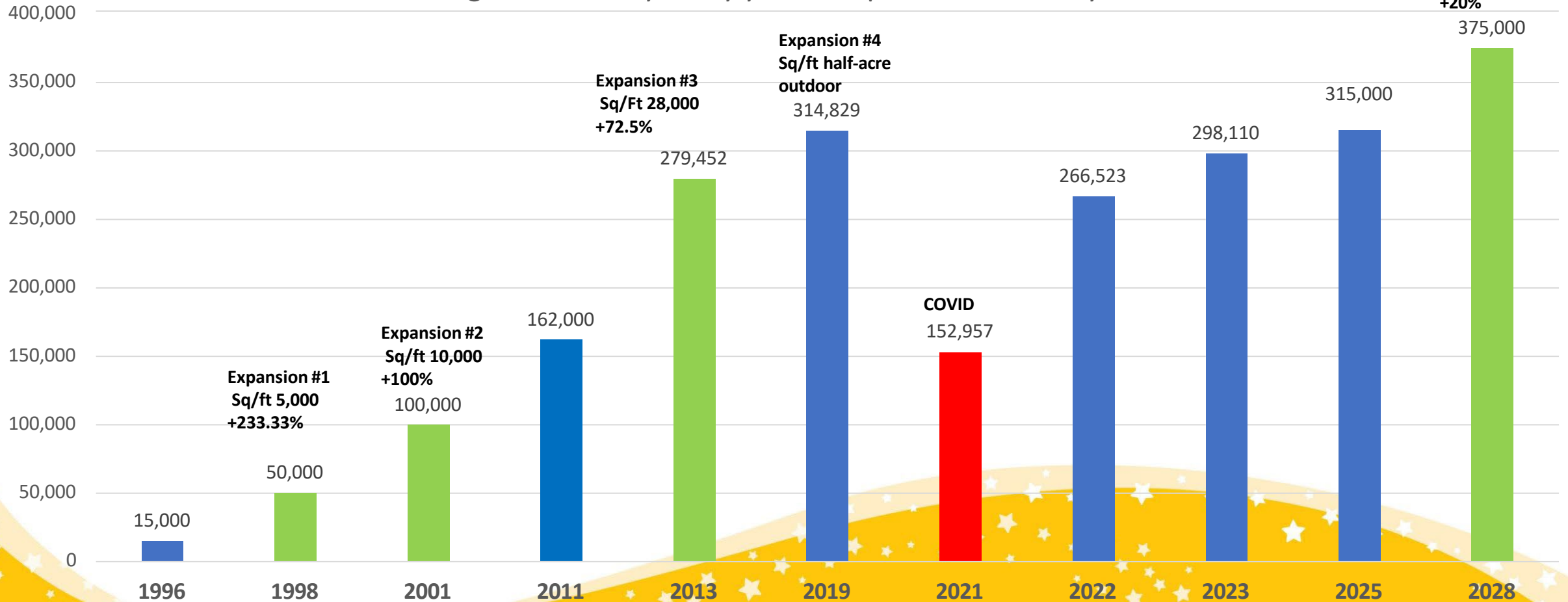




# Doing Your Homework Documenting Growth Over Time

Green = Expansion Years

The Museum has grown steadily every year except the Pandemic years 2020-2021





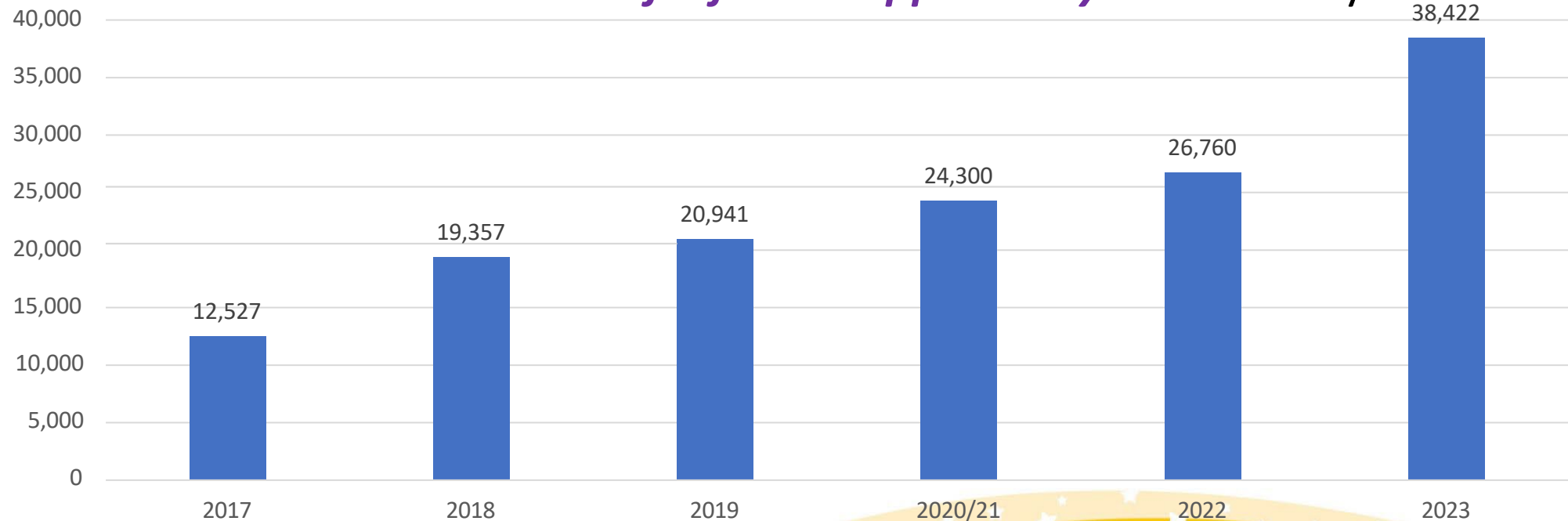


# A Museum For All

## 30 Free & Reduced Programs

### Largest Program - EBT Family Access

*"This was an amazing first-time experience and I am so thankful for the opportunity."* EBT Family



**Value of EBT Admissions \$164,137 in 2017 growing to \$644,068 in 2023!**



# Museum Expansion Triggers

## What Will Growth Solve?

## What Unique Opportunities Exist?

- Visitor Experience – Can be Too Crowded!
- Not Enough restrooms
- Inefficient space - No room for staff/materials/equipment
- Constant Room flipping
- Program Needs
- New Exhibit Dreams
- Availability of Time Sensitive Funding –  
Public Facilities District Funds







# Mid-size Museum with King-size Attendance Doing What We Can with What We Have

## Space Saving Strategies

- Extended hours 9-5 (7-days a week)
- Expanded events to multiple days
- Sold timed tickets
- Promoted after hours parties and field trips





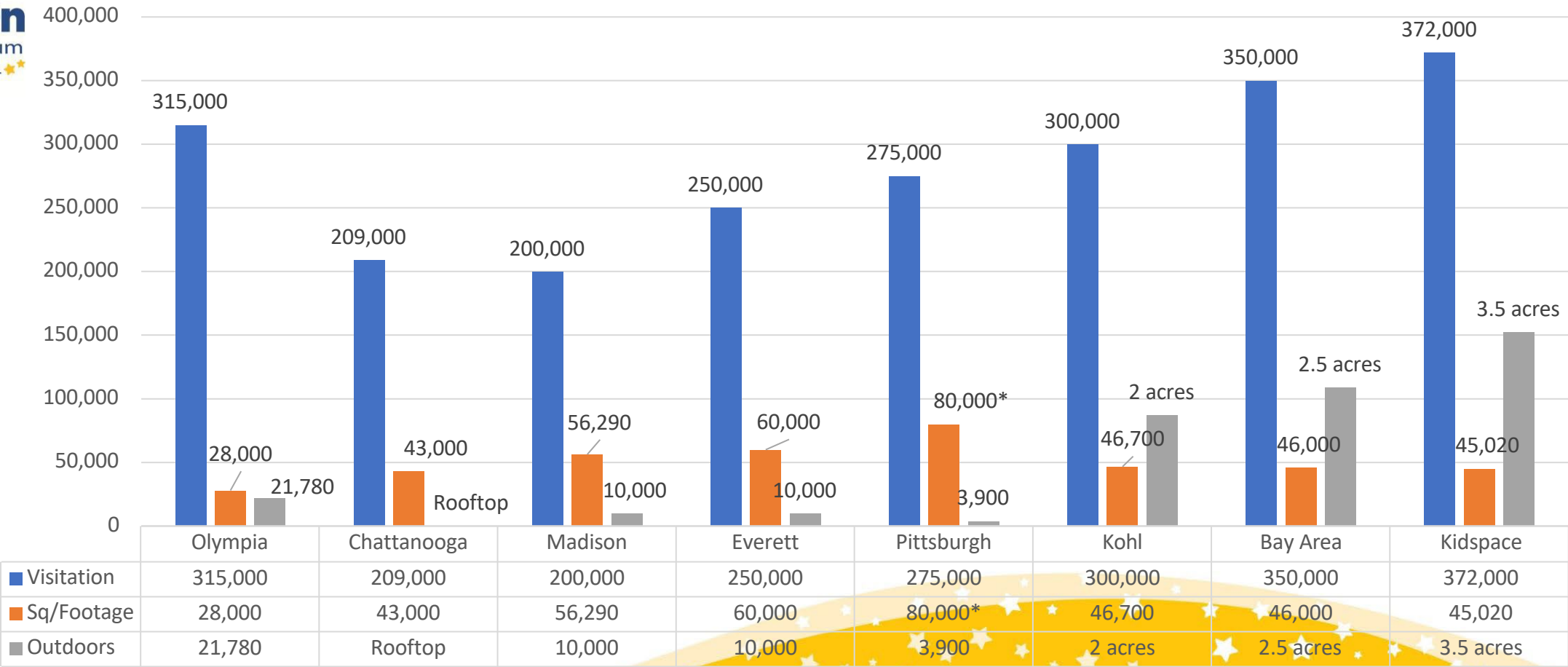
# Lower Tolerance for Crowds in Post Pandemic World





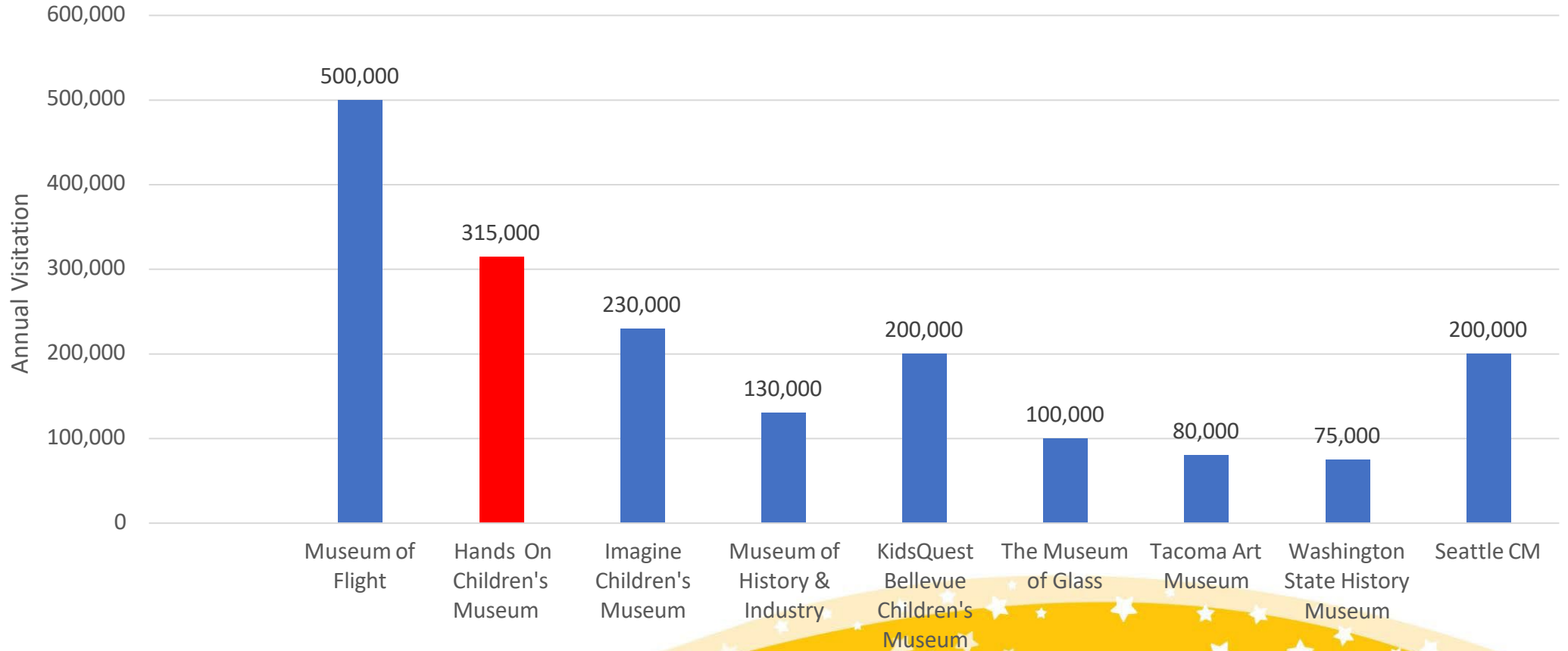


# Hands On has less sq/footage than any children's museum serving 300,000+



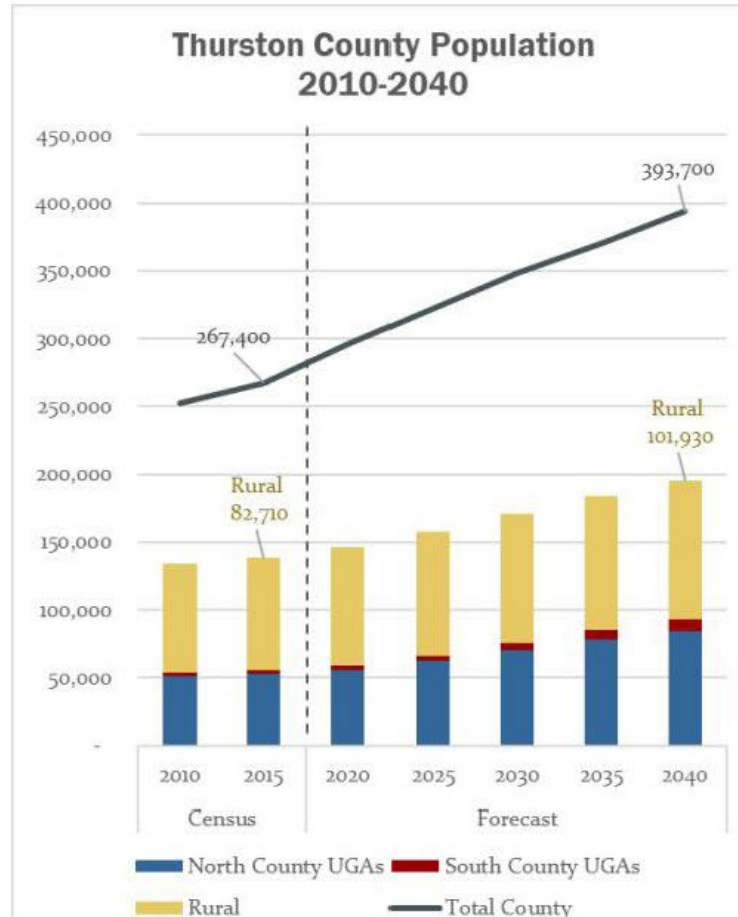


# A Regional Leader for Attracting High Visitation





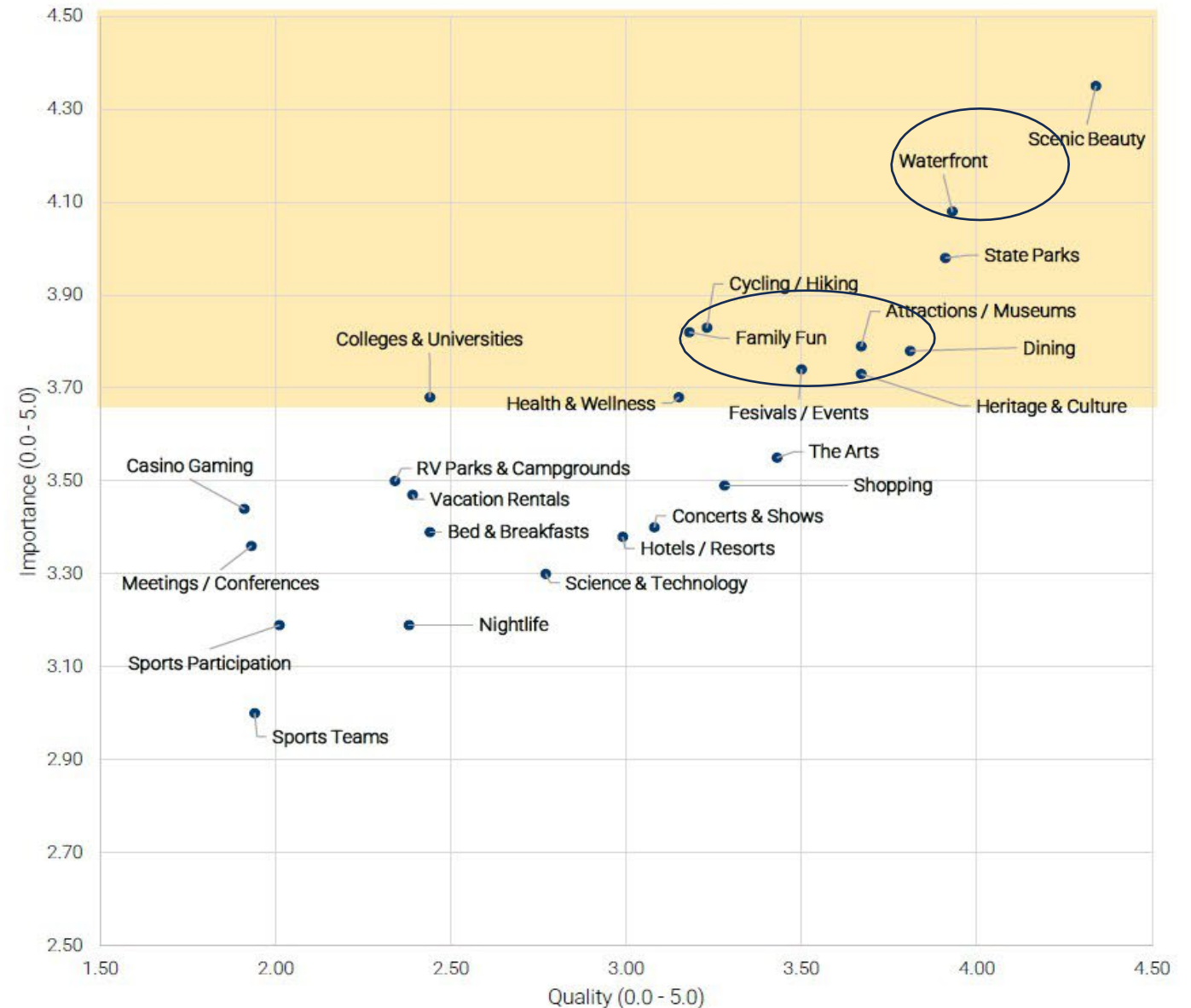
# Growth: Thurston County Comp Plan Update 2018



Thurston County  
Over 300,000 &  
growing

# VISITORS KEY DRIVERS

1. Scenic Beauty
2. Waterfront
3. State Parks
4. Cycling / Hiking
5. Family Fun
6. Attractions / Museums
7. Dining
8. Festivals / Events
9. Heritage & Culture
10. Colleges & Universities







# Comparing Size, Visitation & Operating Budget for a “Right Sized” Children’s Museum

	Olympia	Chattanooga	Everett	Kohl	Bay Area	Pasadena	Denver	Magic House
Sq Footage	28,000+	42,000	42,000	46,700	46,000+	45,000+	47,000+	55,000
Visitation	315,000	250,000	250,000	300,000	350,000	378,000	500,000	560,000
Operating Budget	\$5,200,000	\$3,600,000	\$5,275,000	\$5,100,000	\$7,500	\$6,300,000	\$9.600,000	\$9,000,000
New HOCM	70,000 sq/ft							

**More than doubling is too ambitious!**

# Minimum Expansion Needs



- Double exhibit square footage (from 12 to 24,000)
- Improve Visitor Entrance Experience Lobby/Café
- Add restrooms (family)
- Move preschool classrooms to gain space, improve operations, increase safety
- Add traveling exhibit gallery to keep our quality programming edge
- Space for children's culinary classroom
- Expand parking
- Improve shop safety and general storage





The site plan for the East Bay Public Plaza is bounded by Jefferson St to the west, Marine Dr. to the north, and the Lott Clean Water Alliance to the south. The plan includes a large parking area (52,450 SF) with 130 spots and 5 ADA spaces. A bioretention area (4,930 SF) is located along Jefferson St. The building footprint (8,550 SF) includes an arrival plaza (35% planting, 65% hardscape), a flex exhibit & event space (5,020 SF), a sensory discovery garden (4,440 SF), interactive exhibits (A) (1,705 SF), interactive exhibits (B) (3,315 SF), a traveling exhibit/event space, a shop, MEP, restrooms, a kitchen, a cafe (1,000 SF), a bus waiting area, a ticketing lobby, and a store. A 40' x 40' tent (135 PRL) is also shown. The plan also indicates a shoreline setback and a 100-year flood line.

Feature	Area / Capacity
Parking	52,450 SF (130 spots, 5 ADA)
Bioretention	4,930 SF
Storage	1,350 SF
Arrival Plaza	8,550 SF (35% planting, 65% hardscape)
Flex Exhibit & Event Space	5,020 SF
Sensory Discovery Garden	4,440 SF
Interactive Exhibits (A)	1,705 SF
Interactive Exhibits (B)	3,315 SF
Traveling Exhibit/Event	-
Shop	-
MEP	-
Restroom	-
Kitchen	-
Cafe	1,000 SF
Bus Waiting	-
Ticketing Lobby	-
Store	-
Exhibit to Remain	-
Flex Exhibit	800 SF

- Expanded Parking
- Bus loading
- Flex Event Space
- Traveling Exhibit Gallery
- Kids Culinary Institute
- Additional Preschool & Day Camp Classrooms
- STEAM "Tween lab"

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# Design Feasibility Study Confirms Concept for Expansion

New Building 20 - 30,000sq/ft  
1-acre of outdoor learning

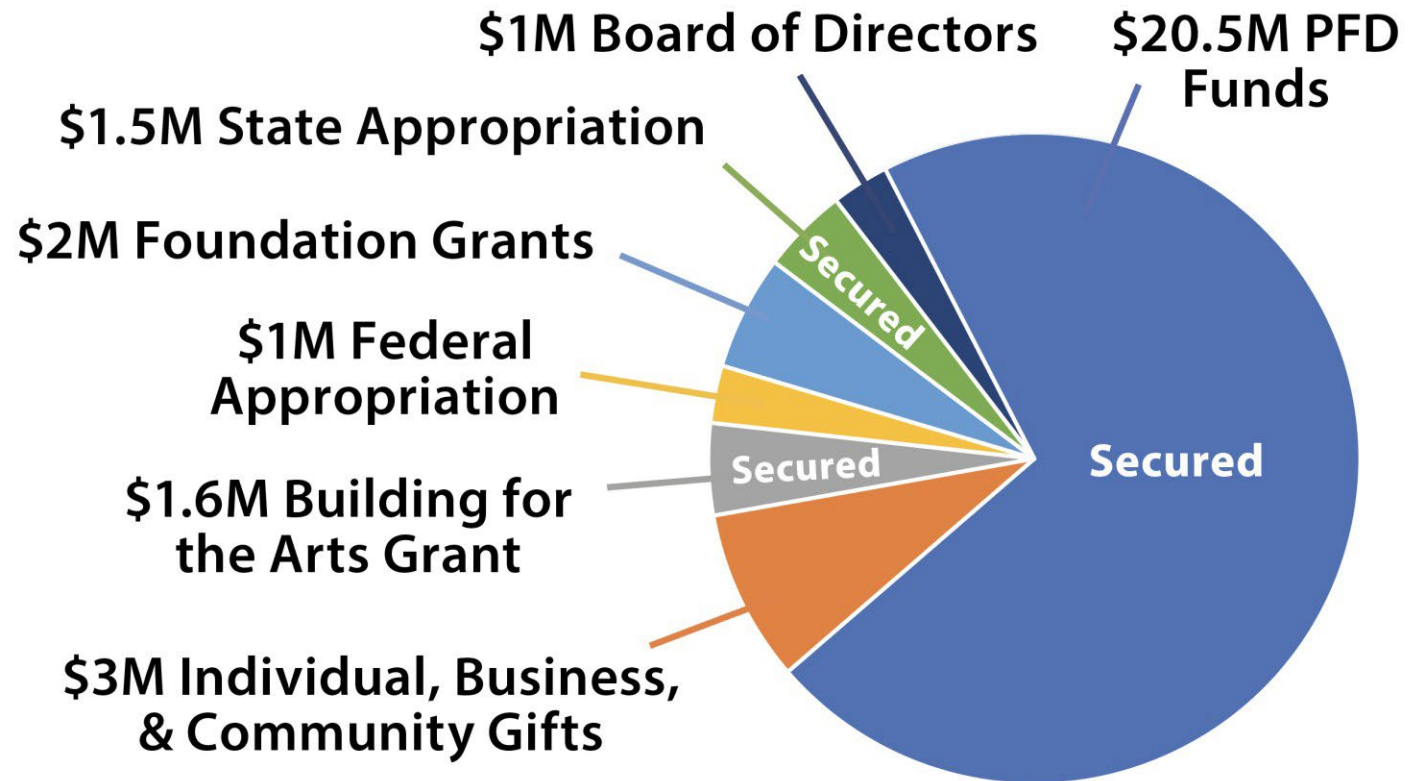






# Funding Feasibility

## Funding Sources for \$30.6M Campaign





## Celebrating What's Possible! Project Takes Advantage of a One-Time Opportunity

- To Secure Adjacent Property
- To Maximize PFD Revenue
- To Plan for Phased Growth





# A Phased Project Can be a Good Option!

**Outdoor Discovery Center 2012**



**Outdoor Discovery Center 2019**



# Preserving Spaces that Drive Revenue

## Travelling Exhibit Space, Events Center





## Growing Our Community Treasure

- Early learning, arts and science for all
- Enhances quality of life for area residents
- Contributes economic vitality through tourism
- National Green Museum – Returns land for public benefit
- No direct cost to City; PFD funds are restricted to this project



# Bond Details

- \$20.5M/30 Years - \$1.5M Payment
  - Revenue Rate Assumption
    - 2% First 4 Years
    - 4% Remaining 26 Years
    - Average Previous 4.1%
- Always surplus in HOCCM Account
  - HOCCM Fund never drop below \$360K
  - HOCCM Will Carry \$1.7M as Security Fund
  - \$10M Fund Balance at End of Bond
    - Assumes No Usage





# Next Steps

- Bond Ordinances to the Council – Early July
- PFD Board Approval - August
- Rating Agency Presentation – August
- Bond Sale/Proceeds – September



