

# May 2025



COMO PARK  
ZOO & CONSERVATORY

COMO

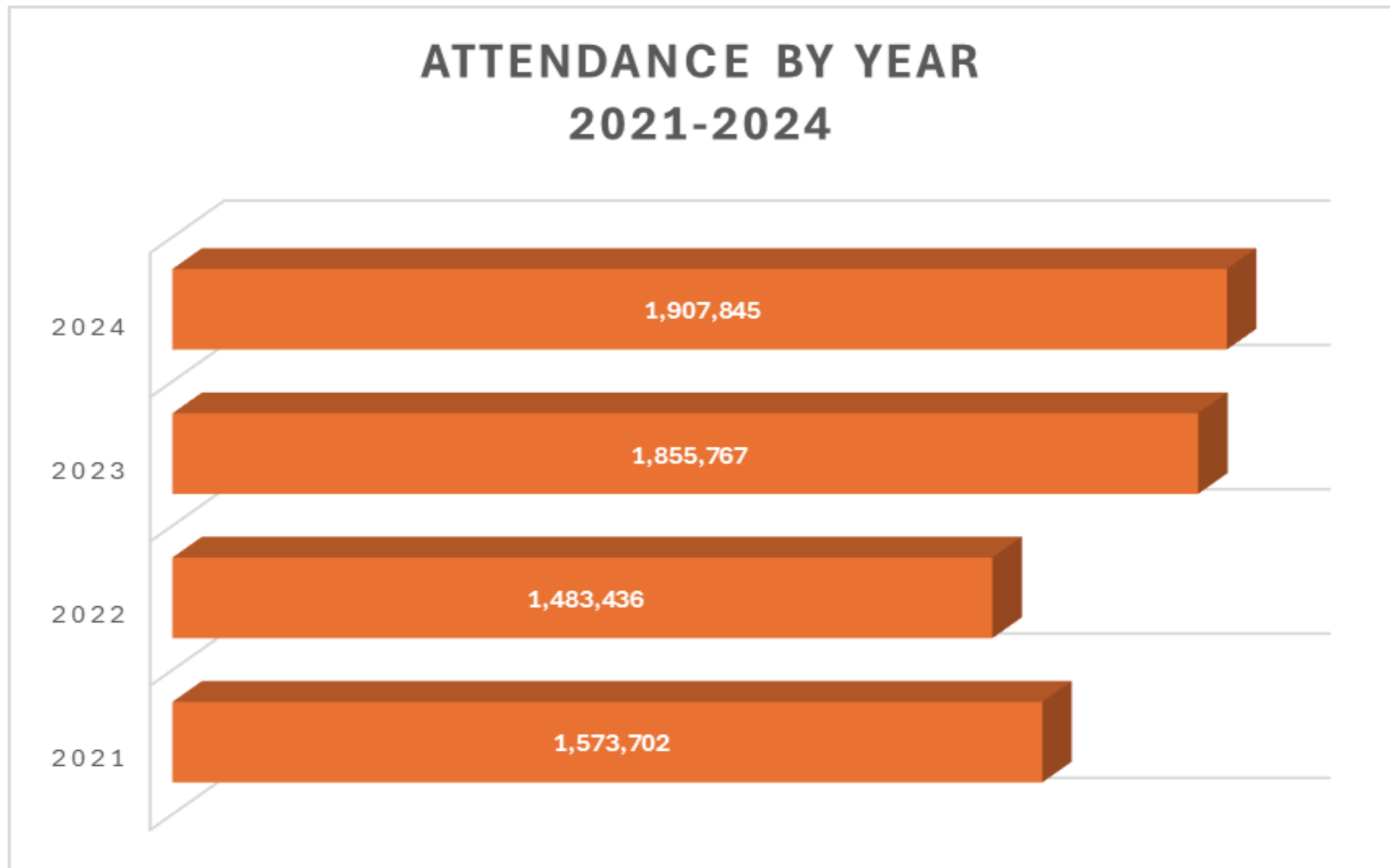
# A Treasure in Minnesota's Backyard

**Most visited  
cultural  
attraction in  
Minnesota –  
1.9 million  
annual visitors**



COMO

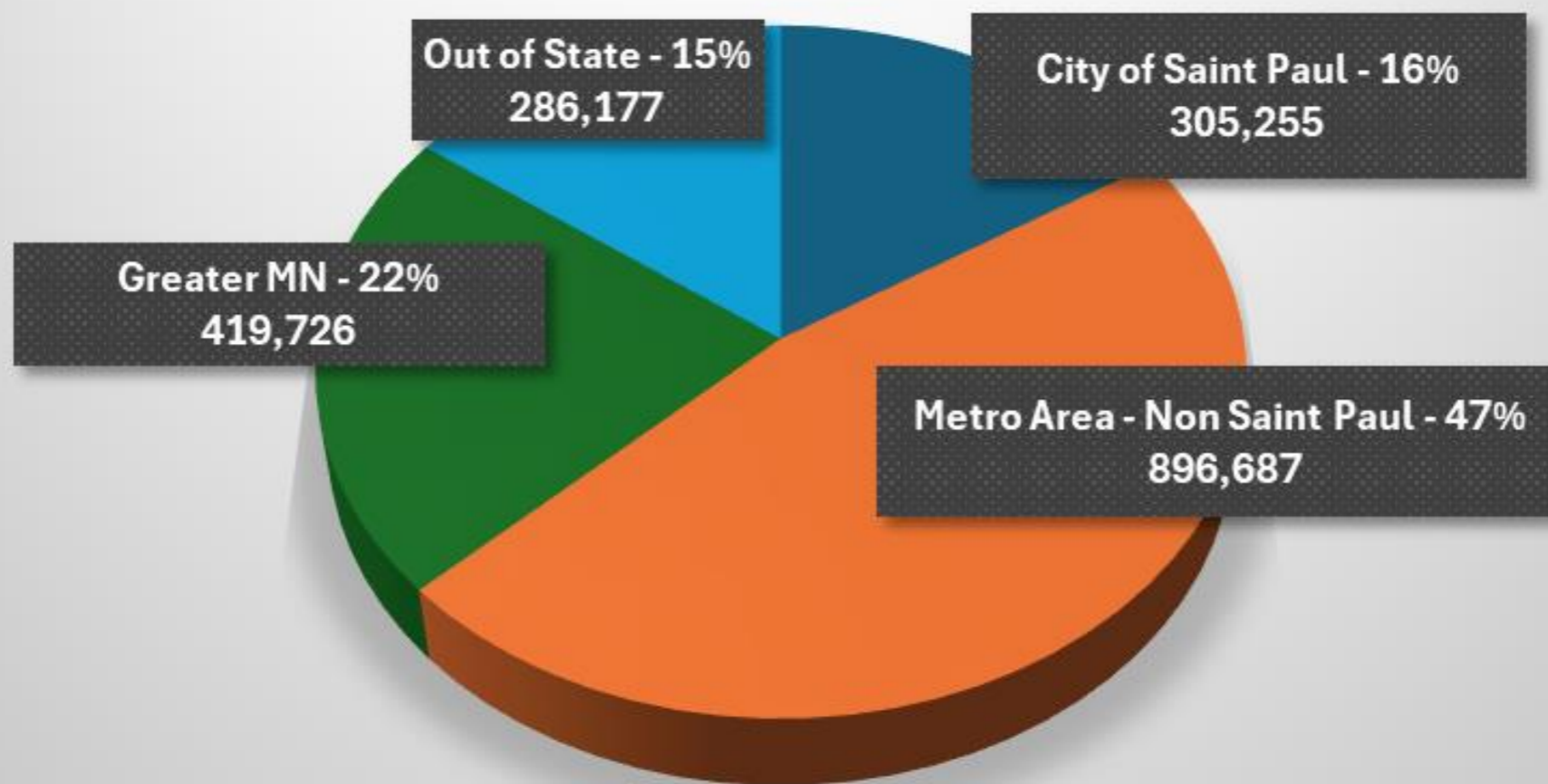
# Visitors



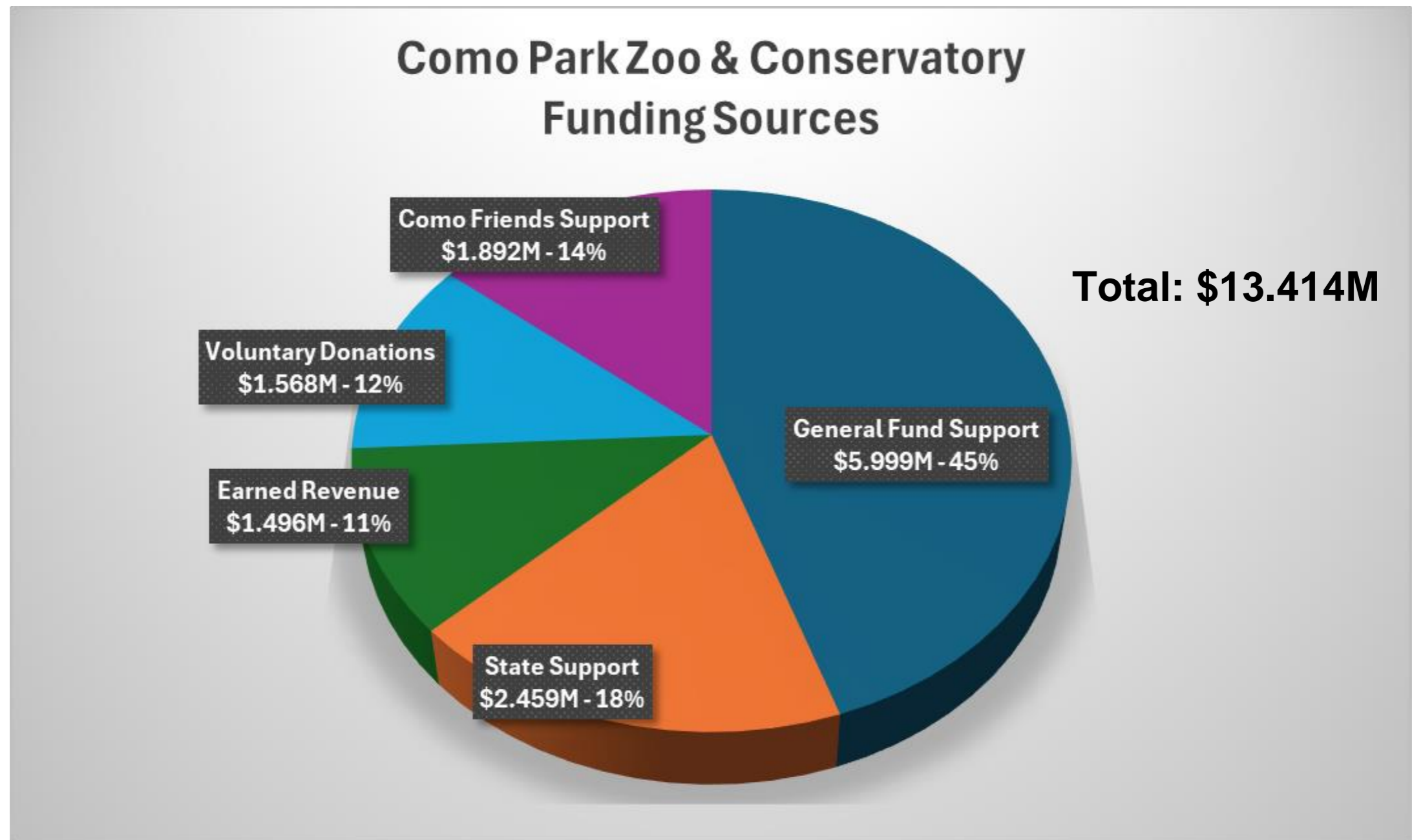
***\*2024 saw top-5 all time attendance***

# Loved by All

**Attendance Breakdown**  
**1,907,845**



# 2025 Operating Budget



# Como General Fund

- \$5.99M - 41.53 FTE
- GF Support \$4.42M
- GF Utilities - \$1.13M
- GF Trades Support - \$447,509

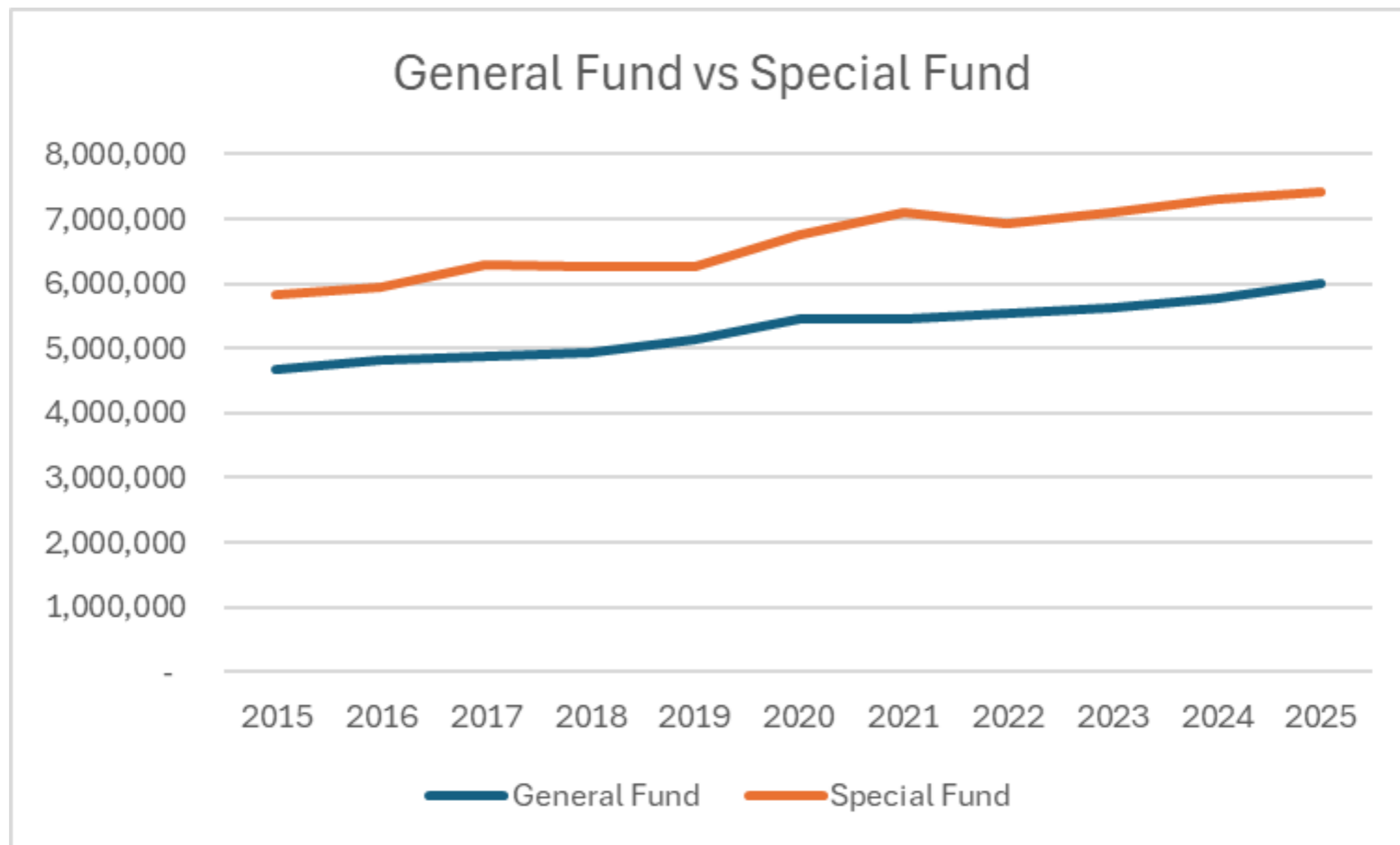


# Como Special Funds

- \$7.424M -67.4 FTE
- Voluntary Donations
- Earned Revenue
- Como Friends Grants
- State Support



# Historical Funding



# FREE Admission

- Voluntary Donations – \$1.545 Million
- Cost to operate – \$7.03 per visitor

*Similar MN cultural attractions range from \$14.50-\$52.00*



# Earned Revenue Sources

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**Food & Amusement  
Commissions: \$677,629**

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**Rentals: \$278,401**

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**Education: \$172,466**

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**Giraffe Feeding Station:  
\$64,542**

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**Special Events, Carousel,  
Photo Permits, Plant Sales,  
Lockers, ATM: \$120,557**



# Economic Engine



- \$200 Million in economic impact to the State of Minnesota
- Generates 2,093 jobs

# Inspiring Our Youth

- Over 425,000 students have been touched through programs and field trips
- Hands on learning and experience inspires the next generation to care about our natural world



# Music in Nature



- **Groovin' In The Garden**
- **Music Under The Glass**



# Public Engagement Programs

- Sensory Friendly Mornings
- Little Explorers
- ASL Interpreter Programming
- Senior Strolls
- S.A.F.E. Stations
- Como In The Community
- Como C.A.R.E.S. Stations & Videos



COMO

# Private/public partnership

## Como Friends Mission:

*We inspire community generosity in support of the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory so it thrives for generations to come.*



*como friends*  
TOGETHER WE GROW

COMO

# Como Friends Annual Contributions

**2024: \$2,219,907**

- Historic Operating Gift: \$264,000
- Project Grants: \$1,107,164
- Asset Preservation Grants: \$500,000

## Endowment

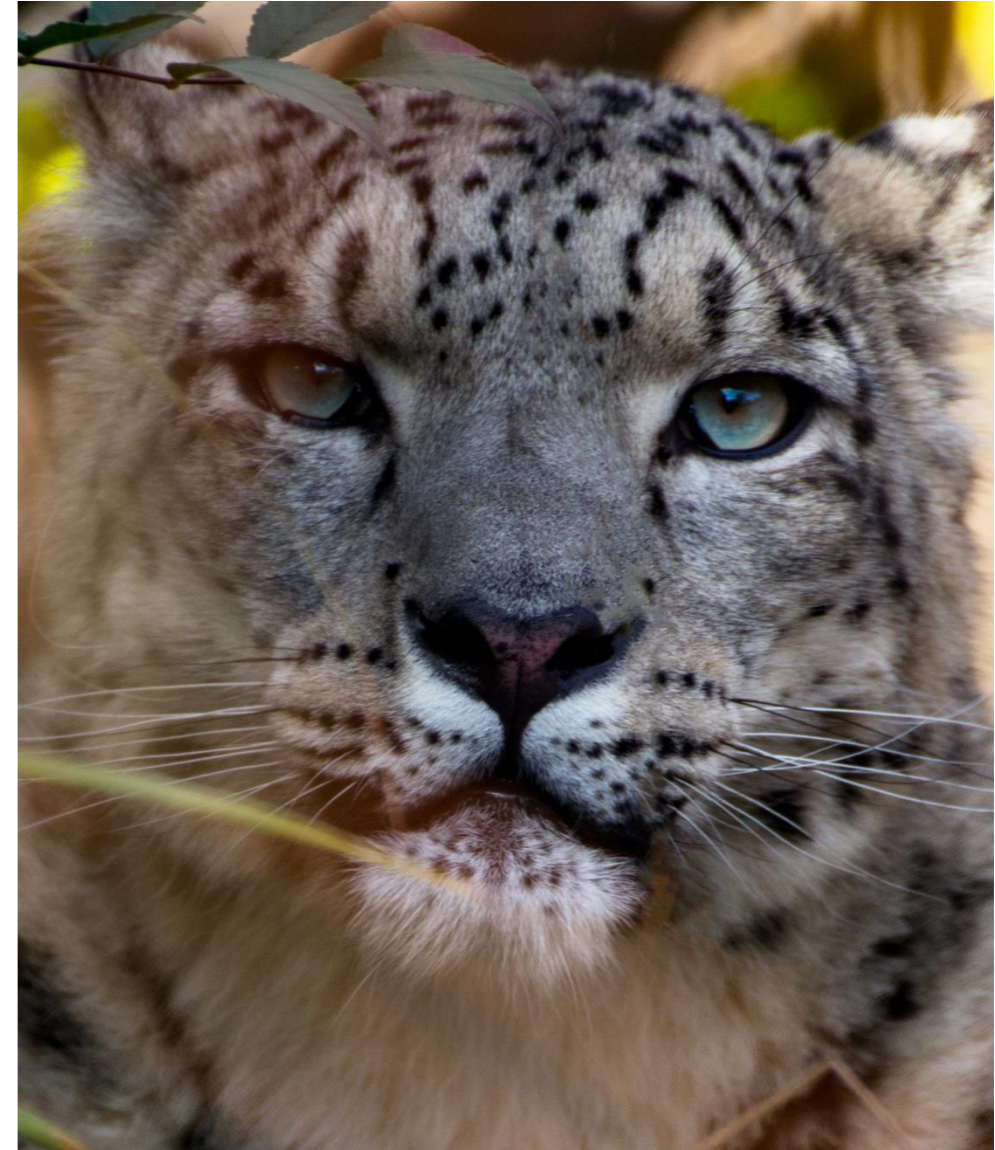
MMC Endowment for Hort: \$292,243

Japanese Garden Endowment: \$56,500



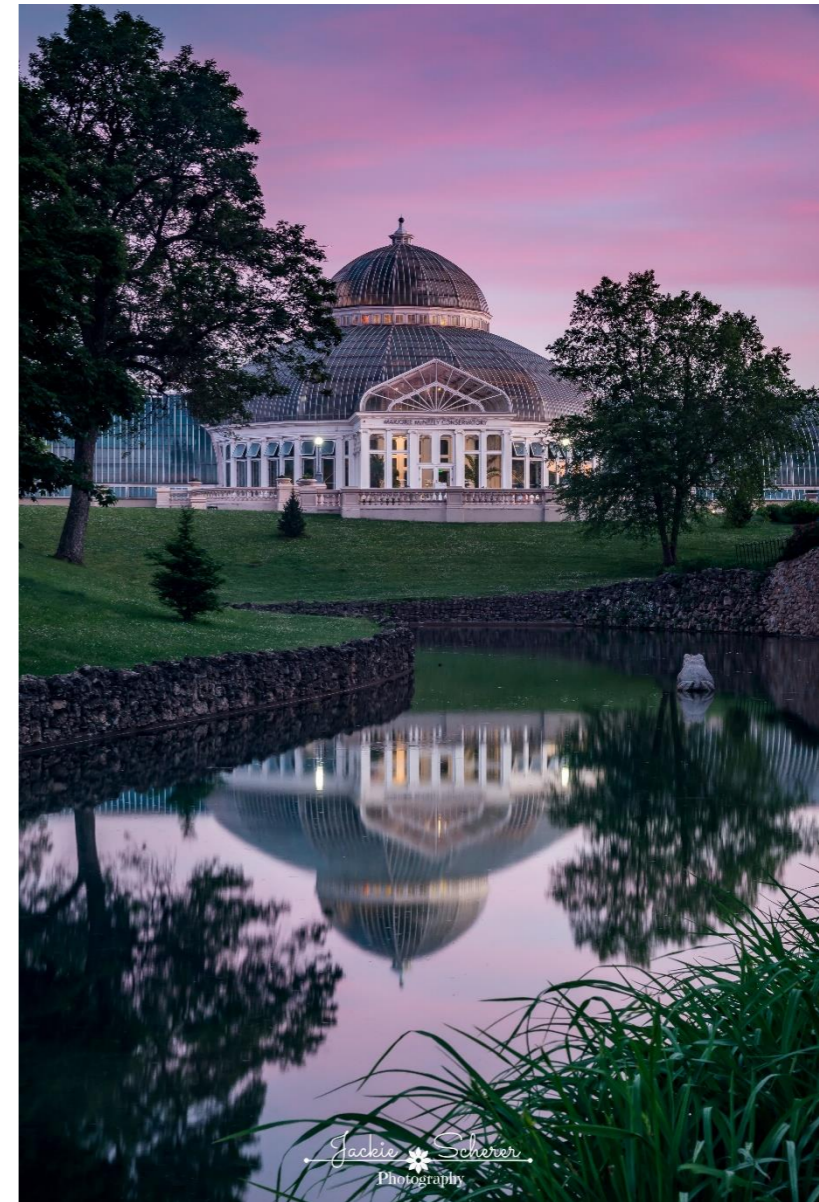
# Como Friends Capital Campaign

- Current: \$500,000 (2024 Asset Preservation Grants)
- Como Harbor - \$4.39M
- The Ordway Gardens & Polar Bear Odyssey - \$8.45M
- Visitor Center - \$7.61M



# State Support

- DNR/Lottery: \$255,000
- Metro Parks O&M: \$407,489
- *Arts & Cultural Heritage  
Legacy Fund FY25: \$1,680,000*
- *Parks & Trails Legacy  
Funds/Shuttle FY 25: \$117,500*



# Asset Preservation - State Bonding

- Current – Request Big Cats \$20M
- 2023 \$1M for Asset Preservation and Energy Efficient Capital Maintenance
- 2018 Como Harbor \$15M
- 2014 Como Transportation: \$5.4M
- 2010 Gorilla Forest \$11M
- 2006 Polar Bear Odyssey \$9.6M



# Economic Engine



- \$200 Million in economic impact to the State of Minnesota
- Generates 2,093 jobs

# Big Cats

- \$25.6M project
  - \$20M State Request
  - \$2.46M Como Friends
  - \$3.14M Other/Fed



# Paid Parking Feasibility Study

Goal: understand what impacts there would be on other earned revenue centers like voluntary donations, food sales, gift shop, amusement rides, fundraising, etc.

Findings: Intent to donate falls from 84% to 69% after a mention of parking fee and the average amount of per visit spending decreases by 20%

- If parking operations stay within the zoo system, CPCZ's city-aligned operations stand to gain about \$3.6 million **in net income** over the baseline in five years, but Friends stands to lose about \$1.3 million, and Lancer would stand to lose \$4.7 million in **gross revenues**.
- On a pure **gross revenue basis**, the combined CPCZ partner organizations would earn about \$1.2 million less over the baseline scenario.
- If parking were implemented but revenues) and expenses **did not stay within the zoo system**, CPCZ's 5-year net income would fall to **(\$661,500)**

# Recent Changes

- Energy Updates – Geothermal/Electric Conversion Phase 1  
(Primates, Zoo Admin & Polar Bear)
  - *Will help advance the City of Saint Paul's goal of achieving carbon neutrality for city operations by 2030 and citywide by 2050, while also helping to reduce operating costs.*
- Credit Card donation kiosks and advance online donation options

# THANK YOU



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