

Wescott Dome FAQs

1. When will I be able to use the dome?

- The walking path is open to the public during the Dome's regular hours (subject to change), which will initially be from 6am-8pm, M-F. "Open Dome" hours for everyone to use the field will also be scheduled, with the exact dates and times TBD. Outside of these times a group or organization must rent the field from the Schools, and you can contact Dan Ball at (507) 460-1928 or dan.ball@austin.k12.mn.us for more information. The Dome will be taken down sometime in April, depending on the weather. It will then be re-inflated again in the fall.

2. How does the Dome benefit me (a parent, community member, etc.)?

- The Dome addresses several community needs identified in the 2013 survey commissioned by the Vision 2020 Community Recreation Center committee, including:
 - indoor recreational space
 - covered field for multi-sport usage (especially soccer)
 - indoor walking space
 - community gathering space
- Local sports teams will less often need to travel to Rochester or other cities for indoor practice facilities, which means more time at home and gas money in your pocket
- Dome will attract out-of-town teams looking to use the space, possible playoff games, tournaments, and other events that will bring visitors to town - this supports local retailers and the tourism and hospitality industries

3. What benefits does the school get from owning the Dome?

- Turf has lower maintenance costs than a grass field
- Income from rental fees
- Athletes no longer need to be bussed to early spring "home" games at alternate locations due to poor field conditions at Wescott
- Additional space for athletes, physical education students, and community will relieve pressure on other indoor facilities

4. Who is paying for the Dome?

- The Hormel Foundation and Austin Public Schools funded the purchase and construction of the Dome, and the Schools will manage it going forward.

5. How much did it cost?

- The Foundation gave \$2.7 million and the Schools contributed \$2.5 million out of their general reserve funds. Those funds are primarily provided by the state and are not connected to the general operating budget. No borrowing or tax increases were required to complete this project, and ongoing maintenance costs will be offset by rental fees and other savings realized by the Schools.

6. What's next?

- The Vision 2020 Community Recreation Center committee continues to make progress on "Phase 2" of its efforts, which will be a new rec center building. Planning and negotiations are ongoing with our many partners (City of Austin, YMCA, Riverland) and we hope to have more news to share in the coming months. You can contact Vision 2020 at greg@vision2020austin.com if you have questions.