

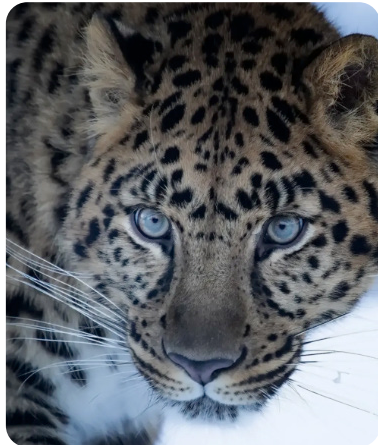


PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed Big Cats and African Animal Exhibit will feature newly designed habitats for lions, leopards, servals, and other African species. These immersive environments will honor Como’s long tradition of offering unforgettable, up-close experiences, including the beloved “nose-to-nose” views guests have enjoyed for generations.

At the heart of the project is a commitment to world-class animal care. The new habitats will prioritize animal welfare and wellness through thoughtfully designed living spaces that support natural behaviors and species-specific needs. The exhibit will incorporate dedicated areas for operant conditioning training, natural enrichment, off-exhibit holding, and modern veterinary care facilities—ensuring the highest standards of health, safety, and well-being for every resident.

Together, these improvements will create an engaging, accessible, and sustainable exhibit that strengthens Como’s mission and deepens the connection between people and wildlife for generations to come.



PROJECT TIMELINE: JULY 2026-SPRING 2029

- July 2026 – April 2027: Construction documents created
- May 2027 – June 2027: Project bidding window
- July 2027 – January 2029: Construction
- Spring 2029 – Plant stabilization, animal acclimations, and public opening

AN ESSENTIAL CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ASSET

- One of Minnesota’s most visited cultural attractions
- 1.9 million visitors in 2024
 - 63% Twin Cities Metro Area
 - 22% Greater Minnesota
 - 15% Out of State
- 7,954 school children in 306 education programs from across the state
- Nearly half of visitors are families with household incomes under \$50,000
- Como generates \$200,000 million in annual economic impact and, thousands of jobs



Funding Requested: \$25 million
\$3.4 million committed by Como Friends

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Big Cat Habitat is a critical priority. Bridge deterioration forced closures in July 2022, limiting access, and without reinvestment, Como may need to close the habitat—nearly one-sixth of the Zoo’s exhibits—and decommission the collection. The facility also faces ADA challenges and outdated HVAC systems requiring modernization for sustainability.