



Astrodome redevelopment could generate \$1.5 billion in economic impact, create thousands of jobs

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By Chandler France – Reporter, Houston Business Journal – July 2, 2025

A modified proposal to renovate the Astrodome into a new arena and mixed-use development could generate \$1.5 billion in economic impact, a new analysis shows.

A redevelopment of the Astrodome could generate create \$1.5 billion in economic impact for the Houston region over 30 years.

That's according to a study from Houston-based real estate development firm LeVass Ventures and the Astrodome Conservancy, the nonprofit championing the landmark. The redevelopment would also generate \$237 million in net fiscal benefits to the city of Houston, Harris County and the Metropolitan

Transit Authority of Harris County and create 3,750 permanent jobs, the analysis shows.

The analysis was released in conjunction with a new plan for the Astrodome's redevelopment, updating the "Vision: Astrodome" redevelopment concept the Astrodome Conservancy released in November 2024. The design, created by San Francisco-based architecture firm Gensler, includes repurposing the Astrodome into an arena and mixed-use development, including a hotel and retail, restaurant and office space.

The Astrodome Conservancy released the vision as Harris County, the Houston Texans and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo negotiate new leases and master plan for the future of NRG Park. Deferred and ongoing maintenance at NRG Park is estimated to cost \$1.9 billion, and NRG Stadium renovations could cost another \$2 billion. Stakeholders are also planning to build a new NRG Arena.

The Astrodome Conservancy is not a party to the negotiations.

"The takeaway from this is that of all these competing studies and proposals for NRG Park, the most compelling and economically viable opportunity for the county — which owns the asset — is to reutilize and create a revenue stream in the Astrodome," Astrodome Conservancy Executive Director Beth Wiedower Jackson told the Houston Business Journal.

The new analysis adjusts both the costs and plans for the Astrodome's redevelopment. The Astrodome Conservancy initially pegged the cost at \$1 billion, but that has since been adjusted to \$840 million.

Additionally, the new plan would increase the number of seats in the arena and square footage for retail and restaurants but decrease the office space and number of hotel rooms. The modified vision includes plans for a 300-room hotel, 150,000 square feet of office space, a 12,000-seat arena and 170,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space.

The redevelopment plans also include 1,500 parking spaces, a livestock-holding

area in the parking decks and space for a data farm.

Redeveloping the Astrodome into a mixed-use sports and entertainment venue would align with the current trends in the industry, said Ryan LeVasseur, LeVass Ventures' founder and managing principal. That redevelopment would turn not only the Astrodome but also the entirety of NRG Park into a destination year round, LeVasseur said.

"It's a very forward-looking approach to think about how future generations can use the Astrodome and how we can preserve the structure but do it in a way that's relevant to future generations," LeVasseur told the HBJ.

Who would pay for the Astrodome redevelopment

The project would be funded via a public-private partnership. Approximately \$270 million of public investment would be needed for the events arena, while about \$570 million of private money would be needed for the commercial development. Up to 45% of those costs could be reimbursed through state and federal historic tax credits.

The use of historic tax credits for major sports venues is not without precedent. The \$1.15 billion renovation of Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle utilized the credits for construction. Locally, the developers of Post Houston took advantage of the credits to redevelop the former post office building.

The historic tax credits are the proposed Astrodome project's "secret sauce," Wiedower Jackson said. Having access to those reimbursements makes the redevelopment more attractive for Harris County as well as for private developers, said LeVasseur. Redeveloping the Astrodome into a mixed-use arena would also save the county hundreds of millions of dollars from not needing to demolish the structure and build a new arena.

Previous efforts to redevelop the Astrodome have failed. In 2013, Harris County voters rejected a \$217 million bond proposal that would have funded a plan to redevelop the venue. Commissioners Court approved a \$105 million

proposal in 2018, but the plan was discarded when former Harris County Judge Ed Emmitt lost his reelection bid to Lina Hidalgo.

“(This project) can leverage public ownership and do it in a way that is of greater benefit to the lives of those in Harris County — and do it in a way that makes economic and fiscal sense,” LeVasseur said. “It’s a nonstarter if we were to say the county has to go out for a referendum to vote on hundreds of millions of dollars of public investment. We saw what happened when that happened in the past.”

The Astrodome Conservancy has met with five private developers and a number of potential commercial tenants interested in the redevelopment effort so far, Wiedower Jackson said. The nonprofit and Harris County will “make a call on this in the next six to eight months,” she added. The project could begin within the next 12 months.

Meanwhile, Harris County Sports and Convention Corp., NRG Park’s landlord, is conducting a study to explore future possibilities for the Astrodome. The study will analyze the costs associated with restoring the venue to basic operational functionality — but not a full redevelopment — and with demolishing the structure.

The Astrodome Conservancy’s concept does not have the support of RodeoHouston nor the HCSCC. The Texans did not comment on the vision when it was released last fall. The Astrodome Conservancy argues that preserving the structure and restoring it as a mixed-use venue is the right thing to do, according to the presentation.

“We can reutilize this asset, save this landmark, make it accessible and make it a contributing component of NRG Park,” Wiedower Jackson said. “You need to have a compelling argument against that other than ‘We don’t want it there.’”

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