Facilities Planning
& Management
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Record of Decision
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Frautschi Center
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Project # A-22-007_9950-2218

In compliance with the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA), Wis. Stats. §1.11, and in accordance with procedures of implementation adopted by the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents (Resolution 2508), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared by the consulting firm Ayres Associates on behalf of the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) and Universities of Wisconsin (UW). This Record of Decision (ROD) constitutes a legal finding of compliance with the WEPA process and provides notification that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is acceptable.

Project Scope and Goals

The proposed Frautschi Center, spanning approximately 11,500 gross square feet (GSF), will be located within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve on the UW-Madison campus. Its primary objective is to create a dedicated space for experiential, hands-on learning while expanding the research, teaching, and outreach capabilities of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. This center will be housed in a facility that incorporates resilient and sustainable green building design elements.

Key features of the proposed Frautschi Center include:

- Lakeshore Nature Preserve Staff Work Areas and Land Care Management Space: These functional areas will support the day-to-day operations of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve.
- Public-Facing Facilities: Designed to align with the University's mission, these facilities will include a 50-person multipurpose room and space for interpretive displays.
- Restrooms: Conveniently accessible from both inside and outside the building.
- Carbon-Neutral Building: The center will reflect the core values of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the University, emphasizing sustainability.
- Passive Approach: Operable windows and carefully designed daylighting strategies reduce the need for artificial lighting and mechanical ventilation.
- Renewable Energy: Geothermal heating/cooling and solar panels utilize renewable energy sources to produce 105% of the energy demand of the building.
- Stormwater Management: All stormwater will be treated and managed on site. The project will use rainwater to flush toilets and provide a green roof to reduce the amount of runoff.

- Consideration for Ancestral Land: Acknowledging the significance of the Ho-Chunk Nation's ancestral home.

The project also involves relocating a portion of University Bay Drive and shifting the parking lot approximately 130 feet north. The new road pavement will maintain a similar distance from the Class of 1918 Marsh as the existing parking lot. Additionally, existing bioswales will be reconfigured to accommodate the building.

The project budget is $16,800,000. Construction is anticipated to begin in October 2025 with substantial completion in December 2026 and occupancy in January 2027.

Alternatives

A no action alternative was considered for this EIS. This alternative does not meet UW-Madison's programmatic needs that were first identified in the 2006 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan, which introduced the concept of a "Preserve Station" as a gathering place for students, faculty, staff, and visitors at the base of Picnic Point, and further supported in the 2015 Campus Master Plan and 2023 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan Update with an identified site outside the historic stone entry walls to Picnic Point and near the existing parking facilities. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve would continue to operate inefficiently from six dispersed locations over the campus and lack a centralized location to attract, welcome, and educate visitors to a major natural highlight of UW-Madison. Moreover, the current sharp curve alignment of University Bay Drive would remain unchanged, presenting a hazard for travelers and Lakeshore Nature Preserve visitors.

The design team studied multiple configurations to organize the required site components. Four alternatives for the new Frautschi Center building placement were considered in the Advanced Plan, and the current proposal (i.e., Option 3) was selected to minimize impacts involving archaeological sites, floodplain encroachment, wetlands, existing utilities, limiting site disturbance, safe access for visitors, accommodating future increases in visitation, and opportunities to restore authentic native landscapes. The unsatisfactory alternatives were not carried forward for further consideration during the EIS process because of the negative impacts that were apparent during early planning. The alternatives considered for the new Frautschi Center included the following:

<u>Site Option #1: Inside the Wall</u>

The first site option presented for public input was the open, grassy plain located just inside the east portion of the existing historic stone wall. Currently, pedestrians typically access the trail to Picnic Point at the controlled entry located at the south end of the stone wall. Site #1 is adjacent to a known archaeological site. This alternative was not carried forward for design due to 1) the degree of intrusion into the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, 2) potential impacts to a mapped archaeological site, 3) potential limitations on building floor plate size, 4) limited options for future expansion, and 5) reduced visibility of the building.

<u>Site Option #2 West Wall</u>

Site Option #2 is located just inside the Lakeshore Nature Preserve to the west of the existing stone wall. The site would require selective land management removal of non-native, low-quality trees along the edge of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. This alternative was not carried forward for design due to 1) potential impact to unmapped archaeological sites, 2) challenging topography, 3) reduced solar access, 4) reduced public visibility, 5) degree of intrusion into the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, 6) increased walking distance to the entry point, and 7) potential bike/pedestrian/vehicle conflicts due to road relocation.

Site Option #3 Reinforcing the Threshold

Site Option #3 is located directly south of the historic stone wall and within the roadway of University Bay Drive and partially within the existing bioswale. This site would require relocating both the drive and the bioswale. Site Option #3 was selected for detailed design of the new Frautschi Center. This EIS considers the environmental impact of the chosen alternative.

Site Option #4 The West End

Site Option #4 is located to the west of the existing Lot 130 parking lot. This site compromises a number of program goals; however, it also occupies one of the most disturbed areas. This alternative was not carried forward for design due to 1) requirement for visitor to cross University Bay Drive, 2) distance from the Lakeshore Nature Preserve entry point, 3) lack of relationship with the historic Picnic Point Gates stone wall, 4) lack of general integration with the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, 5) less convenient land management access to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, and 6) noise from relatively close proximity to University Bay Drive.

Other Site Locations

Although floodplain, wetland and historic fill impacts could potentially be avoided by selecting an alternative site within or adjacent to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, such as an existing parking lot, alternative site locations would not meet the need to be located near the center of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve or in proximity to Picnic Point, one of the most visited components of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. Similarly, alternative locations would lack connectivity to key trails and paths, including the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path, and would not meet the need to improve the alignment of University Bay Drive.

Summary of WEPA Process

The chronology of the EIS process for the project is as follows:

a) Universities of Wisconsin (UW) determined that the proposed action was a Type I action and required preparation of an EIS.

b) Under the direction of the UW-Madison WEPA Coordinator, the following actions were taken as set forth in Regent Resolution 2508, *Implementation of the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act within the UW System* and by the *Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act*, Section 1.11, Wis. Stats.

c) On April 24, 2024, a Class 1 notice of a scoping meeting was published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and a scoping letter was sent to potentially interested parties. The scoping letter was also posted on the Consultant's project website for review and comment.

d) On May 8, 2024, a scoping meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams and telephone to publicly communicate the EIS process and the project scope, and to obtain public comments to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Eight individuals attended the meeting. One written comment was received from a representative of the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. The comment expressed support for the project, including potentially increased safety from reconfiguring the sharp curve of the roadway. The comment also expressed concern for the protection of the Class of 1918 Marsh during construction. Two autoreply email messages were received but did not contain any comments regarding the proposed project. A copy of the Teams attendance report and PowerPoint presentation

were included in the DEIS report. Written comments and a Teams video recording and transcript of the meeting are maintained in the project file at UW-Madison.

e) On July 20, 2024, a Class 1 notice of availability of the DEIS and notice of the public meeting was published in the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

f) On July 20, 2024, the DEIS was released and distributed to appropriate parties. The DEIS was made available for review at the UW-Madison College Library and the Central Madison Public Library and was also posted on the Consultant's project website for review and comment.

g) On November 20, 2024, a Class 1 notice of availability of a revised DEIS and updated notice of public meeting was published in the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

h) On November 20, 2024, the revised DEIS was released and distributed to appropriate parties. The DEIS was made available for review at the UW-Madison College Library and the Central Madison Public Library and was also posted on the Consultant's project website for review and comment.

i) On December 4, 2024, a public meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams and telephone with 18 individuals in attendance. During the DEIS public meeting, one commenter inquired about the rationale for selecting Option 3 as the preferred alternative over Option 4, which would place the building adjacent to the Class of 1918 Marsh. The commenter also questioned whether Option 3 would result in greater visitor engagement. More information about the Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan was also requested. Written comments were submitted via email by two individuals submitting joint feedback. These commenters expressed concern regarding the potential wetland impacts and zoning changes associated with the project and encouraged consideration of an alternative that would avoid such impacts. A copy of the Teams attendance report and PowerPoint presentation were included in the FEIS report. Written comments, and a Teams video recording and transcript of the meeting are maintained in the project file at UW-Madison.

j) On June 16, 2025, a Class 1 notice was published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* announcing the availability of the FEIS document and the public hearing.

k) On June 16, 2025, the FEIS document was released and distributed to appropriate parties. The FEIS document was made available for review at the UW-Madison College Library and the Central Madison Public Library and was also posted on the Consultant's project website for review and comment.

l) On July 16, 2025, a public hearing was held remotely via Microsoft Teams and telephone with 30 individuals in attendance. Two verbal comments were received: one expressing appreciation for the FEIS report and one asking if paths would be closed during construction. Documentation of the public hearing, including an affidavit of publication for Class 1 legal notice, Teams attendance report, PowerPoint presentation, and Teams transcript are maintained in the project file at UW-Madison.

m) On July 16, 2025, after a minimum 30-day public comment period and following the public hearing, the FEIS public comment period was closed. No written comments regarding the project were received during the FEIS public comment period. Two autoreply email messages were received but did not contain any comments regarding the proposed project.

n) The UW-Madison has reviewed and considered both the DEIS and the FEIS documents.

Significant Issues Raised

Several comments received during public comment periods or involvement meetings were supportive of the project. Concerns raised included protection of the Class of 1918 Marsh during construction, continued operation of pedestrian paths during construction, rezoning of land designated for conservancy, and general wetland impacts associated with the project. Protection of the Class of 1918 Marsh has been addressed in the project design by maintaining the existing separation between the existing Lot 130 and the marsh and using best management practices for erosion control and stormwater pollution prevention. Continued operation of pedestrian paths has also been addressed with staging the project such that closures are not necessary. Wetland conservation was addressed during project planning by incorporating approximately 11,000 square feet of stormwater management features (e.g. bioswale) that will support wetland vegetation. Additional professional study was also undertaken and demonstrated that much of the impacted wetland was artificially created by past projects and is therefore eligible exempted from state permitting requirements. However, rezoning of the property remains necessary for the project to be constructed.

Adverse and Beneficial Impacts

Physical Environment

Climate and Air Quality

Short-term emissions of particulate matter and combustion byproducts (i.e., sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide) will be generated from non-stationary diesel-powered construction equipment such as excavators and trucks. However, these emissions do not require special permitting to protect air quality or the environment, and water may be used to suppress dust generated by construction equipment.

A photovoltaic array will be provided to showcase sustainable practices and offset all of the proposed building's electricity usage. The new facility will also utilize stormwater reuse best management practices, green roofs to reduce runoff, use of recycled/upcycled building materials, daylighting to reduce electrical needs, and passive ventilation with operable windows throughout. The building will also use geothermal heating/cooling.

UW-Madison adheres to Board of Regents policy RPD 19-15 to incorporate Sustainable Design Principles into building projects. This project will exceed those requirements as it pursues Living Building Challenge (LBC) Petal certification by Living Future (formerly the International Living Future Institute). Design team consultation with the LBC Manager has indicated that this project has a potential pathway to Petal certification, and would be the first Petal certified building in Wisconsin. Additionally, the design will meet the requirements of Wisconsin Executive Order 63, which states that new State buildings are to be designed to use 10 percent less energy than commercial code (2015 International Energy Conservation Code).

Surface and Subsurface Conditions

The site preparation for the Frautschi Center includes the relocation of a section of University Bay Drive, the existing bioswale, existing service maintenance drive, and Lot 130. Subsurface work

includes the building foundation, underground utilities (i.e., geothermal wells, water, sanitary sewer, telecom, and electric), bioswale installation, and tree planting. Utility installation will entail trenching for a water main within the primary building site and directional boring along the south side and unchanged portion of the existing University Bay Drive right-of-way to connect to an existing water supply south of the Lake Mendota Drive intersection. Electric utility installation will follow this corridor further west to Lot 131 where it will connect to an existing electric line. Fiberoptic installation for telecom will be direct-buried 30 inches below grade following this corridor along the east side of University Bay Drive to the intersection with Colgate Road, where it will enter an existing duct bank continuing to 1675 Observatory Drive. The existing stone wall (i.e., Picnic Point Gates AHI site) will be protected during demolition and construction. To the greatest extent possible, materials removed during demolition should be recycled or reused as part of UW-Madison's commitment to sustainable development practices.

Water Resources

Stormwater and Surface Water

Significant adverse impacts to stormwater and surface water are not anticipated based on the proposed stormwater management features for the Frautschi center. The first half inch of runoff will be routed to bioretention or other green infrastructure best management practices, including removal of oil and grease from the parking lot. All the stormwater management practices proposed on this site classify as green infrastructure. The first objective of the stormwater management design required for the Frautschi Center is to maintain the capacity of the existing bioswale that runs through the proposed site. This bioswale, along with the raising of University Bay Drive, helps to reduce flooding in this area.

The bioswale will be rerouted south of the Frautschi Center through the parking lot, which is also an area of existing wetland. An additional bioswale and stormwater management area are proposed east of the parking lot. The discharge for the bioswale in University Bay will be maintained to reduce disturbance to the shoreline of the Bay and Lake Mendota. The bioswale will provide reduction of suspended solids, oil and grease removal, runoff rate reduction, and infiltration. Although the use of pervious pavement was initially proposed for the project, it was subsequently determined infeasible due to a relatively high water table (i.e., approximately three feet below ground surface) and winter maintenance practices. The proposed green roof for the Frautschi Center reduces the rate and quantity of stormwater leaving the roof top via evapotranspiration, cools the runoff, and filters the water through the soil medium. It also reduces heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) needs and extends the life of the roof membrane reducing overall maintenance costs.

In the short term, grading and construction activities have the potential to dramatically increase erosion and runoff of suspended solids due to the removal of plants and impervious surfaces and exposure of underlying soils to construction equipment. However, significant impacts are not anticipated, as an erosion control plan will be implemented in compliance with a construction storm water permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) per Ch. NR 216, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Best management practices to control erosion include installing silt fencing or dikes, track pads, erosion mats on sloped surfaces, and sewer inlet protection.

Wetlands

The proposed project will adversely impact up to 22,740 square feet of wetlands. However, the majority of these wetland areas have been exempted from WDNR permitting requirements because they were artificially created by previous projects. Disturbance of non-exempt wetland regulated by

the WDNR is approximately 5,903 square feet and requires a General Wetland Permit from the WDNR. A federal permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may also be necessary if wetlands proposed to be filled or disturbed are determined to be under federal jurisdiction during the joint permitting process with WDNR.

The project design team aims to mitigate the impact of filling wetlands by constructing new stormwater management features that will support wetland vegetation and function as replacements. Over 11,000 square feet of new bioswale is proposed to be landscaped with 56 species of grasses, sedges, rushes, and forbs.

Groundwater and Drinking Water

The proposed project is not anticipated to have a significant effect on groundwater, as water for drinking and fire suppression is obtained from a municipal supply system. Drinking water for building occupants will be supplied by the City of Madison system and is not anticipated to overburden the supply. The fire suppression system also uses the municipal water supply.

Floodplains

The project will adversely impact and be impacted by floodplains. The site building will be constructed outside of 100-year floodplain with finished floor elevation at 857 ft msl, above the base flood elevation of 853 ft msl, to minimize the chance of flood impacts to the building but will be within the 500-year floodplain. The elevation of the realigned University Bay Drive will be partially below the base flood elevation at the east side of the project, with proposed road elevation ranging from less than 853 ft msl at the east side to more than 856 ft msl at the west side, although these elevations are limited by the need to match the existing grades of the road at the project limits. Stormwater management features incorporated into the design, such as the use of green roofs and bioswales as described above, are anticipated to facilitate flood mitigation by detaining stormwater.

Noise

There will be short-term noise impacts generated by construction equipment during the construction period, including demolishing existing structures, tree removal, and clearing and grubbing. Hearing protection will be required for construction workers who may experience noise exposure above the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) thresholds to mitigate this temporary adverse impact. There may be some localized long-term noise increase from changes in traffic patterns and access as the proposed Frautschi Center building will cause an increase in student and visitor usage at the project site; however, this increase should be consistent with current noise levels in a park setting.

Lighting

Current detailed construction estimates for the project include the use of 3000K, 180-degree cutoff exterior lighting approved by DarkSky International, and adhering to the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus standards. Given the use of this technology and the relatively small size of the facility, light pollution is not anticipated to be significant.

Environmental and Chemical Hazards

Based on the limited site investigation of the proposed project site, contaminated fill material poses a human health risk warranting management of contaminated materials during site development and a

WDNR grant of exemption to Ch. NR 506.085, Wisconsin Administrative Code, is required to develop the site. The following recommendations were provided in the May 2025 Limited Site Investigation Report:

- Minor layers of inert fill materials (cinders, slag, and broken glass) were found in soil borings SB-1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 13, at a depth ranging from approximately 1 to 8 feet below ground surface. Therefore, we recommend submitting this report along with the WDNR Form 4400-226: Development at Historic Fill Site or Licensed Landfill Exemption Application, requesting an exemption to develop a historic fill site.

- Potential direct contact risk to construction workers and potentially mixing impacted fill material with clean soil necessitates implementation of a Materials Management Plan during the construction phase of the project.

- A clean fill cap, at least 12 inches in thickness, depending on WDNR approval, should be placed over areas where impacted fill was left in place. The means and methods of clean fill placement should be included in the design specifications.

- Additionally, WDNR guidance (WDNR PUB-RR-685) recommends that no enclosed structures be constructed in areas where methane gas concentrations in soil exceed 1.75% total methane (i.e., 25% of the lower explosive limit [LEL] for methane). The soil borings where methane was observed are approximately 200 feet (SB-3), and 160 feet (SB-6) southwest and south of the proposed building location. Therefore, no further action is necessary.

This adverse impact may be appropriately mitigated through coordination with the WDNR under the historic fill site exemption process. At the time of the FEIS Report, an exemption application is pending. However, exemption conditions are anticipated to require implementation of a Materials Management Plan for construction and a clean fill cap to prevent direct contact with contaminated historic fill materials.

Storage of hazardous materials in the new garage and workshop includes: an herbicide work area with racks/cabinets for sprayer equipment, including a sink and exhaust hood; flammables storage in fireproof cabinet for drip torches, gasoline, etc.; and a fuel can storage area within the cold bay. It is assumed that the design will include secondary containment for chemical storage areas to minimize the risk of release to the environment.

Parking and Transportation

Traffic patterns will have some short-term impacts as a result of the project. There will likely be temporary slowdowns resulting from contractor vehicle and machinery movement at the project site during construction but bus routing and pedestrian circulation will remain in some capacity through this area for the duration of the project. Overall, traffic patterns and flow will change as a result of the construction of the project. Realignment of University Bay Drive provides safer pedestrian crossings and entry to parking located on the Lakeshore Nature Preserve side of road.

Utilities

Installation of new utility lines will result in construction impacts that may impact student, faculty, and staff access to the parking lot, pedestrian walkways, lakeshore trail, and University Bay Drive. Additionally, interconnection to existing utilities may result in a temporary interruption of services.

Other potential impacts may include the disruption of sidewalk use and lane or road closures. These disruptions, however, would be short term and any areas disturbed through these activities will be restored upon completion.

Biological Environment

Significant adverse biological impacts are not anticipated for the project site. A disturbance within an approximately 0.16-acre wooded area on the site's north side may be considered a minor adverse effect on the biological environment. This equates to 0.05% of the 300-acre Lakeshore Nature Preserve. However, during construction, every effort will be made to protect and preserve healthy and non-invasive trees. The proposed project includes planting of 36 individual ornamental or shade trees for the general site and 22 individual ornamental or shade trees around the building, in addition to numerous woody shrubs and herbaceous pants. Tree species include downy serviceberry, Kentucky coffeetree, quaking aspen, swamp white oak, northern pin oak, chinkapin oak, American linden, pagoda dogwood, and Eastern hop hornbeam.

Similarly, wetlands also provide valuable habitats for plant and animal species, and approximately 22,740 square feet of natural and artificial wetland within the project area may be impacted. However, the project design includes constructing new stormwater management features that will support wetland vegetation and function as wetlands. Over 11,000 square feet of new bioswale is proposed to be landscaped with 56 species of grasses, sedges, rushes, and forbs. Additionally, a UW-Madison class has been tasked with turtle observation during the spring of 2025 to determine an appropriate location within the project area to facilitate safe turtle crossings.

A WDNR Endangered Resource Review determined that the project is anticipated to have no significant impact on endangered or threatened species, as only minor actions (i.e., use of erosion control that limits runoff impacts and deters entrapment, designated restrictions of when certain construction activities can occur during the year to limit habitat disturbance and ensuring construction equipment disturbances and operation to not disrupt habitat during active periods) are required to comply with state or federal endangered species laws during construction. The particular species and actions required for compliance are confidential under state law and thus cannot be published in this report. No take permits are necessary for any endangered species. The required compliance actions will be incorporated into the project plans and specifications prior to construction. Lakeshore Nature Preserve staff and the project team will coordinate protective measures with an ongoing biodiversity assessment project and discuss additional protective measures as necessary.

Social and Cultural Environment

<u>Recreation and Green Space</u>

This project will positively impact campus recreation and green space overall. The new facility is designed to enhance the Lakeshore Nature Preserve's usability, accessibility, and recreational potential. Key benefits include:

- Enhanced Accessibility and Use: The new building, while occupying some existing green space, is designed to maximize and improve access to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, encouraging greater use and enjoyment of the area.

- Improved Infrastructure: Surface parking lots, trail access points, and walkways will be redesigned to better accommodate recreational activities. This includes the introduction of improved entrances and landscaped features around the building's perimeter.

- Bicycle-Friendly Design: The project will include more adequate bicycle parking, encouraging visitors to store their bicycles safely while they explore the site's amenities.

- Viewing Decks: New viewing decks will provide enhanced access to the larger green space and recreation areas, offering scenic views of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, lake, and surrounding landscape.

The project will create better walkways and entrances, facilitating easier access to the Lakeshore Nature Preserve's trails and natural features. Thoughtfully designed landscaping around the building will enhance the aesthetic appeal and natural integration of the facility within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. The new facility will offer a variety of spaces for community activities, educational programs, and recreational use, ensuring that the Lakeshore Nature Preserve serves a wide range of interests and needs. By incorporating these elements, the new outreach and welcome center will not only preserve but also enhance the green space and recreational opportunities available to the campus community and visitors.

Cultural Environment

The project site holds historical and cultural significance, and the new facility will serve as a platform to increase awareness and appreciation of this important heritage. By honoring the site's Indigenous history as part of ancestral Ho-Chunk Nation land. The proposed site design suggests space for working with Ho-Chunk Nation to showcase indigenous plant uses. The Ho-Chunk Nation was consulted during early project design and has offered support for the proposed project.

The proposed facility will positively impact the campus's cultural environment by offering a variety of gathering spaces, amenities, and facilities for both the university and the community. The facility will provide versatile indoor and outdoor spaces for community events, meetings, and social gatherings, fostering a sense of community and engagement. Designed to support learning and research, the building will offer state-of-the-art facilities for educational programs and scholarly activities, promoting academic excellence and intellectual growth. The project will enhance recreational opportunities with improved access to nature trails, bicycle parking, and scenic viewing decks, encouraging outdoor activities and healthy lifestyles. By integrating these elements, the new facility will create a dynamic and inclusive space that honors the site's cultural heritage while providing valuable resources for education, research, and recreation. This holistic approach ensures that the project will enrich the campus and community for generations to come.

Housing

The project provides additional amenities for students, faculty, staff, and visitors using the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. The project will not affect the number or availability of housing units, ensuring that the existing housing infrastructure remains intact. Residents and community members will have the opportunity to utilize the new facility, enjoying its amenities, gathering spaces, and recreational features without any negative impact on housing.

By providing a valuable resource and enhancing the surrounding environment, this project will contribute to the well-being and quality of life for campus residents and the broader community.

Neighborhood Compatibility and Site Aesthetics

The use and activities at the site will increase, offering more educational and research opportunities that align with the University and Lakeshore Nature Preserve. The site will be updated to better integrate the infrastructure by improving the flow and modernizing the design, enhancing its overall aesthetics.

The site is being designed with both aesthetics and nature in mind. To seamlessly integrate with the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the surrounding environment, the facility and grounds will be designed to blend naturally into their surroundings. The building will include a green roof to promote sustainability and natural integration. The natural components of the building and its design will mimic and align with the surrounding Lakeshore Nature Preserve, ensuring a cohesive look and feel. The project is committed to being "net positive energy" and "net zero carbon," reflecting a dedication to environmental responsibility. By providing a valuable resource, mimicking the surrounding environment, this project will fit into natural amenities and provide an updated natural and sustainable space for campus residents and the broader community.

The Lakeshore Nature Preserve currently holds a “Conservancy” (CN) zoning designation in the City of Madison and establishing the Frautschi Center will require a portion of the existing parcel to be rezoned to “Parks and Recreation” (PR) through the City of Madison Common Council.

Archaeological/Historical Environment

On February 25, 2025, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with a determination that the proposed project will have no effect on historic properties eligible for, or included on, the National Register of Historic Places, and consultation requirements under Wisconsin Statute 44.40 have been fulfilled. Therefore, no adverse effects to historical or archaeological sites are anticipated.

Per the SHPO review email, if plans change or cultural materials or human remains are found during the project, all work is to be halted and the SHPO will be contacted.

Economic Environment

Employment

No direct employment is anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The proposed building will consolidate staff and volunteers who are currently dispersed across the campus, creating a more conducive environment for collaboration and success. By housing staff in a single location, the facility will enhance communication and efficiency, allowing individuals to work together regularly and have access to shared equipment and resources, and maximize efficiency.

In the short term, the project's construction will boost local employment and economic activity. Increased expenditures on materials, fuels, lodging, and meals will positively impact the local economy during this phase. A study of the impact of construction on the Wisconsin economy by The University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business (2022) indicates that every $1 million spent within the construction industry supports approximately 12 jobs on average over the year across the state economy. Accordingly, an estimated construction budget of $11,505,000 is anticipated to support 138 jobs.

Income and Spending

The anticipated total project cost, including construction, soft costs, contingency, and escalation, is estimated at $16,500,000, funded entirely through gifts and grants. In the short term, the project will stimulate the local economy by increasing employment and expenditures related to construction. This includes spending on materials, fuels, lodging, and meals, which will benefit the community during the construction phase. A study of the impact of construction on the Wisconsin economy by The University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business (2022) indicates that every $1 spent within the construction industry produces an overall economic impact of approximately $1.84. Accordingly, an estimated construction budget of $11,505,000 is anticipated to produce $21,169,200 in economic impact.

Operation of the Frautschi Center is not anticipated to generate revenue and will require continued support from UW-Madison for facility operation and maintenance costs.

Conclusion

After review of the hearing record and the FEIS, UW-Madison has determined that this proposed action has fulfilled the spirit and intent of the *Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act*. It is the decision of the campus to proceed with Site Option 3 as planned, pending receipt of any additional approvals or permits for construction.

Aaron Williams, PLA, ASLA
UW-Madison WEPA Coordinator

7/18/25