



COMMITTEE DRAFT: 8.7.17

# ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER VISION & IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

*Alliant Energy Center Comprehensive Master Plan Oversight Committee*



**Alliant  
Energy  
Center**

VANDEWALLE &  
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***The Master Plan Oversight Committee also would like to acknowledge and thank the many, many stakeholders, residents, and businesses who took the time to provide their thoughts and aspirations for the Alliant Energy Center. This Vision would not have been possible without you.***

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# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

**The Alliant Energy Center (AEC) is a valuable cultural, social, and economic asset to Dane County and the Greater Madison community.**

It is a destination where our local communities gather for events; a place where our residents share knowledge and experiences; and it is a magnet that attracts visitors from around the United States and the globe to the benefit of all of us who live and work in this area.

While the AEC currently serves as an iconic event destination and is situated as a gateway to the Madison community, it also represents an area of untapped opportunity. In 2016, the Dane County Board made a strategic decision to follow a very deliberative process for developing a comprehensive master plan that will deliver the highest and best use of this asset while reflecting the priorities and values of the many stakeholders who will help play a role in designing and utilizing the AEC.

The committee charged with driving this effort, the AEC Comprehensive Master Plan Oversight Committee (Oversight Committee), embarked on a four-phase, multi-year effort to develop a strategic vision and market-driven, financially sustainable design and plan for the entire Alliant Energy Center campus.

**Phase 1:** Market, Financial, Facility & Impact Analysis (Completed April 2017)

**Phase 2:** Visioning Process (spring-fall 2017)

**Phase 3:** Master Planning Process (2018)

**Phase 4:** Long-Term Implementation (2019 and beyond)

This report represents the culmination of Phase 2 and is intended to guide all future planning and other implementation activities over the next 15-20 years. The goal of this phase is to set a course for strategically directing future investments in the facilities to increase the tax base and economic/event activity in a manner that best reflects the region's economic, social, environmental, and equity priorities.



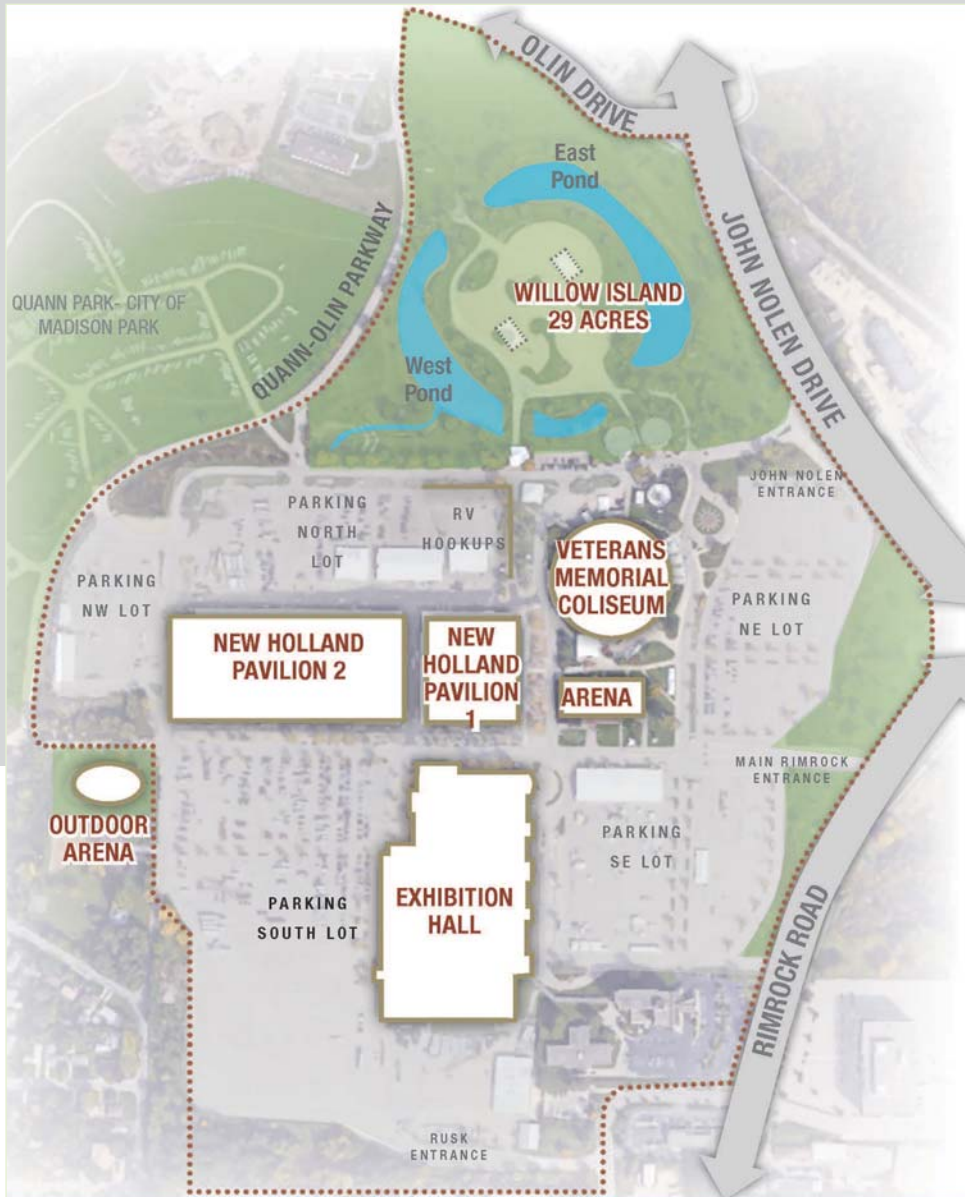
## About the Alliant Energy Center Campus

Altogether, the AEC includes a 164-acre campus consisting of six primary facilities:

- **Veterans Memorial Coliseum** holds more than 10,000 visitors and is utilized for sporting events, large concerts, and entertainment productions.
- **Exhibition Hall** is the premier facility for conventions, meetings, banquets, and much more, consisting of 255,000 square feet of space.
- **Willow Island** is a 29-acre outdoor venue surrounded by two ponds and is used for outdoor festivals, concerts, and other outdoor events.
- **The New Holland Pavilions**, totaling 290,000 square feet, make Alliant Energy Center an industry leader in agricultural shows. These multi-use buildings also can be used for exhibition space, trade shows, and more.
- **The Arena**, 22,000-square feet of exhibition space, suits a multitude of smaller events including trade shows, staged performances, and consumer events.
- **AEC Parking** has over 5,700 surface parking stalls that also double as outdoor exhibition and event space.

In addition to the above, the AEC occasionally makes use of the adjoining Quann Park. However, this is a City of Madison park facility and is not formally part of the 164-acre campus.





*CURRENT FACILITIES ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER CAMPUS*

## Economic Impact

In 2016, the 164-acre Alliant Energy Center Campus:

- Hosted over 400 events
- Welcomed over 800,000 attendees
- Generated 177,000 room nights
- Spurred \$76 M in spending
- Earned revenues in excess of expenses

▷ ECONOMIC IMPACT

▷ GATHERING

▷ SHARING KNOWLEDGE

▷ ATTRACTING VISITORS



## Community Role

The AEC campus serves as the region's premier, multi-venue expo, convention, and event destination, providing the regional community with a place to **Gather, Share, and Attract Visitors**. Some examples include:

- **Gather for major events**
  - Bratfest
  - Dane County Fair
  - Concerts and Sporting Events
  - Beer & Cheese Fest
  - Circus
- **Share and gain knowledge**
  - Garden Expo
  - Deer & Turkey Expo
  - Canoecopia
  - Model Railroad Show
  - Quilt Expo
  - Fishing Expo
  - Car Shows
  - Kids Expo
- **Attract visitors from around the country and world**
  - World Dairy Expo
  - Midwest Horse Fair
  - CrossFit Games





## Past Studies

Over the last 10 years, several plans and studies have been undertaken for the AEC Campus, including:

- 2006 Feasibility Analysis of Exposition Hall and Conference Center Facilities (Convention, Sports & Leisure International)
- 2007 Master Plan (Strang/LMN Architects)
- 2011 Master Plan Update (LMN Architects)
- 2012 Executive Task Force Report (ad-hoc community members)
- 2013 AEC Work Group Report (Leadership Synergies, LLC)
- 2015 Coliseum Market and Financial Assessment Report (Markin Consulting)
- 2015 AEC Parcel Site Constraints Analysis (County Land and Water Resources Department)
- 2015 AEC Strategic Feasibility Study (Hammes Company)
- 2017 AEC Market, Financial, Facility Impact Analysis (Hunden Strategic Partners)

The last report (the Hunden Study) was done at the direction of the Oversight Committee to identify the AEC's current economic impact and potential improvements to AEC facilities and their associated costs and impacts. The report did not make recommendations, but rather provided the Oversight Committee and community with several possible options to consider for making improvements to core AEC facilities (such as the Coliseum and Expo Center) as well as other improvements that could be added to the campus and surrounding area (such as restaurants and additional hotels) to create a more interesting and attractive destination for local residents as well as out of town visitors.

In preparing this Vision and Implementation Framework, the Oversight Committee has taken in account all of the past studies in addition to input provided by the stakeholders and the community gained through outreach efforts conducted as part of the Visioning Phase.

## Stakeholder Communication and Engagement

Community and stakeholder outreach was a key component of the Visioning Phase. Because the Hunden Study included interviews with all major event organizers over the last year, those groups were not directly engaged in this Phase, but their input was used in crafting this document and its recommendations.

Communication mechanisms included the following:

- **Project website** – A detailed project website (<https://aecstudy.countyofdane.com>) was created and updated throughout the process to include all documents and presentations provided to the Oversight Committee as well as summaries of all public engagement meetings in addition to all previous plans and studies.
- **Brat Fest information booth** – A project information booth was staffed by volunteers over three nights at Brat Fest in late May.
- **Press releases** – Press releases were put out at the initiation of the Vision Phase, prior to Brat Fest, and at the release of a draft of this document.
- **Interested parties email list** – A master list of self-identified interested parties was developed and used to disseminate project updates and meeting notices.
- **Local leadership email list** – A master list of local chief elected officials throughout Dane County and other community leaders was developed and used to disseminate project updates.
- **Public committee meetings** – All seven of the Oversight Committee meetings held during the Vision Phase were publicly noticed and provided opportunities for public comment.

All meetings were conducted by Vandewalle & Associates and some included members of the Oversight Committee. Stakeholder and public engagement events included the following:

- **Potential Redevelopment Site Owners (May/June)** – Individual discussions were held with two property owners to discuss their plans for their property and thoughts on the future of the AEC campus.
- **Neighboring Business Roundtable (June)** – Invitees included nine businesses in direct proximity to the AEC with a focus on those with direct business relationships with the AEC, such as hotels. Six individuals representing five organizations attended a facilitated discussion concerning current and future concerns and opportunities for the AEC and their own operations.
- **Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau (June)** – Project status presentations and brief discussions were held with the GMCVB Board of Directors and Community Relations Committee.
- **Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce Leadership and Public Policy Committees (August)** – A meeting with this group is scheduled for August following the release of an initial draft of the document.

- **County Executive and Madison Mayor (July)** – Individual meetings were held with County Executive Joe Parisi and Mayor Paul Soglin and their key staff to share the status of the project and obtain their thoughts on the future of the AEC.
- **South Metropolitan Planning Council Leadership (July)** – Discussions were held about the format and accommodations for the upcoming neighborhood meetings and current and future concerns and opportunities for the AEC.
- **Neighborhood Meetings (July)** – Two identical meetings were held with a total of 26 residents in the neighborhoods adjoining the AEC. The meeting format included a brief presentation on the project followed by small group discussions of area connections/buffering, creating a destination district around the AEC, and equity and access. Each participant also filled out a survey. Notices of the meeting were distributed through established neighborhood association and community organization networks. A summary of results can be found at [aecstudy@countyofdane.com/Documents-and-Presentations](mailto:aecstudy@countyofdane.com/Documents-and-Presentations).
- **Polco** – Five survey questions were posted on Dane County's Polco page and also imbedded within the project website. The County contracts with Polco to gather public input on various issues to help inform decision making by the Board. As of August 1, 2017, more than 300 individuals had taken the survey. Survey results can be found at [aecstudy@countyofdane.com/Documents-and-Presentations](mailto:aecstudy@countyofdane.com/Documents-and-Presentations).

## Common Themes

From the previous studies, discussions by the Oversight Committee, and stakeholder and community input, six common themes consistently emerged:

1. **Continually reinvest in and enhance major AEC facilities** – All of the studies confirmed the vitally important role the AEC plays in attracting visitors to Madison, and the associated economic impacts, as well as being a primary venue for a wide range of community events. With few exceptions, there was wide-spread support for retaining the AEC as the premier convening and event destination in the region and, consistent with that, continuing to reinvest in the facilities to meet market and community needs and expectations. Along with that, though, there was a clear recognition that the primary facility improvement needs probably exceed what Dane County taxpayers alone can likely afford.
2. **Create an integrated walkable district** – Nearly every study and community discussion reiterated that the AEC campus feels cut off from its surroundings and that the area around the AEC is grossly underdeveloped given its location within Madison and the region. Strong support was voiced repeatedly for the creation of an integrated, walkable district built around the AEC, lakefront, and the John Nolen gateway to downtown and the UW campus that would include a mix of uses serving visitors and residents alike.

3. **Value inclusion and affordability** – While the private development within the walkable district is expected to draw heavily on AEC visitors, area residents have needs of their own that also should be addressed. These include incorporating family-friendly and affordable goods and services as well as providing a range of walkable job opportunities. Further, as one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the region, area residents would like to see public, private, and non-profit facilities and improvements that reflect and are welcoming to different cultures.
4. **Provide stronger connections** – Contributing to the AEC’s perceived sense of isolation is the lack of connections to and through the campus for pedestrian, bicyclists, and vehicles. Making the campus more permeable was a near-universal desire of both facilities professionals and the general community. Of equal importance to both also is the need to better connect the campus to the downtown through improved transit and other modes.
5. **Improve stormwater runoff quantity and quality** – While the extent of paved surfaces on the AEC campus is inherent in a facility of this type, there is a heightened awareness of the need to control both the quantity and quality of runoff, particularly given the campus’s location adjacent to Wingra Creek and its proximity to Lake Monona. Concerns about discharges directly into adjoining neighborhoods also were frequently mentioned by area residents.
6. **Enhance area parks and public open spaces** – Within direct proximity to the AEC campus are more than 200 acres of public parks and open space, mostly to the north and east. While these include well-used facilities like the Goodman Pool, Quann Park tennis courts and community gardens, and Olin-Turville boat ramp, most of the area is generally unimproved even though its size and location could support a wide array of facilities and functions both in concert with and separate from activities at the AEC. Area residents have requested a number of potential enhancements, while other stakeholders consistently identified the need to capitalize on this significantly underutilized resource by leveraging its unique central location and extensive waterfront.

# FRAMING THE OPPORTUNITY



## The Time to Plan is Now

*Now is the time to set a course for optimizing the economic and community impacts of the AEC and adjacent public and private lands.*

- **The region's economy and convening needs are rapidly evolving.** Community and visitor experience expectations, as well as market opportunities, are rapidly changing due to technology and consumer preferences. The AEC campus and facilities are aging and in need of upgrades and expansion to meet the evolving needs of major users and the community.
- **Investment is needed to remain competitive and financially sustainable.** Recent studies and analyses provide evidence that our competition is making the investments to meet future market needs. We cannot expect that the significant economic and community benefits generated by the AEC will continue without making the improvements needed to stay market competitive.
- **Without a solid vision for the future and a plan to get there we will not optimize the potential.** We cannot afford to make incremental improvements and changes without a comprehensive vision. Investments, large and small, need to be carefully evaluated in terms of their return on investment, economic impacts, and relationships to existing and future facilities and operations, which can be accomplished only with a solid vision and detailed plan.

- **Improvements to the AEC should be a catalyst for revitalizing the entire area.** The AEC is a major community asset, and its activity, uses, and appearance should have a significant impact on the value, use, and investment opportunity of the surrounding private properties as well as increasing opportunities for surrounding communities. Developers, end users, and investors will optimize that potential when a compelling vision for the AEC campus and surrounding area are codified in approved plans. Without them, adjacent lands will continue to develop in ways that do not optimize the tax base and market opportunities or meet the community's expectations and needs.

## Make No Small Plans – Seizing the Big Opportunity

### *Leverage the AEC and other community assets to transform the Nolen gateway and increase access to economic opportunity for the surrounding community*

The AEC is situated in the middle of the Nolen Drive corridor – the city's most beautiful and dramatic entrance, sitting on Lake Monona and comprised of more than 400 acres of public land. With the AEC, beautiful lakefront parks, and Wingra creek as the anchors, this area could be to Madison and Dane County what Millennium Park, McCormick Place, and Grant Park are to Chicago. A cohesive and seamlessly integrated system of public and private uses that draws visitors and offers all residents a major urban waterfront destination for daily use and recharge requires thoughtful planning and a well-coordinated and sustained commitment to implementation. Accordingly, a dynamic and realistic vision for the AEC campus is a critical first step to realizing the potential of this area and ensuring that the AEC will catalyze significant tax base growth, a variety of employment opportunities and enhanced economic activity.



*A recent analysis of the redevelopment potential of the AEC and nearby properties suggests that the area could yield between \$300-450M in new tax base.*

DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

## Today's Convention Centers

### Defying Convention: 7 Ways Convention Centers are Changing to Stay Relevant

— *Andre Doyle, Successful Meetings, June 2014*

- Making Flexibility a Priority
- Centers are an Extension of the Destination
- Art and Creativity Move Front and Center
- Public Areas for Public Discourse
- Convention Centers must be Healthy and Stimulating
- Conference Centers Anchor Neighborhood Development
- Rising Demand for Altruistic Activities

### Can a Convention Center Remake a City? — *Senior Editor Barbara Palmer, "The Inside-Out Convention Center," PCMA Convene, July 2015*

- Centers are increasingly being designed to include important features that cater to groups' wellness and their desire for connectivity and flexibility in the way they use the space. In addition, these buildings are no longer walled-off to the larger community, but are part of the fabric of the cities they inhabit, engaging local residents and delegates alike.
- We know visitors enjoy the same experiences locals enjoy. We also recognize that people coming to conventions, exhibitions, and all manner of events will be here for a limited time and one of the best things we can offer them is the ability to capture the authentic flavor of the city during their visit.

### Convention Centers Reimagined

"We try to create a civic presence and bring in hints of authentic local culture; we try to blend what the city is and what the city wants to be." — *Michael Lockwood*

"Millennials don't see the convention center as the place where the event is happening. They look at the whole city as the venue." — *Bob Priest-Heck, President and COO of Freeman*

"Bookings will be higher for convention centers that can offer an authentic experience of their cities." — *Lawrence Speck, Lead Architect for the Austin Convention Center*

# VISION FOR THE ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER CAMPUS

## Critical to Success

*A vital next step in the master planning process is to define a clear and future-focused vision that:*

- **Inspires, empowers, and aligns various constituents**
- **Is grounded in the place and core values of the community**
- **Helps set priorities and guides planning**
- **Guides decision making for years to come**

*The AEC vision was developed by synthesizing the work of the committee, recent studies, and public and stakeholder engagement activities.*

*A Vision is more than a vision statement. The Vision Chapter of this document outlines the AEC's regional role and purpose, its future market focus, and the core vision foundations that will guide the master planning process and implementation efforts in the future.*



# VISION



## Vision Statement

*The Alliant Energy Center is a key regional asset that serves as a dynamic convening campus providing an exceptional and authentic experience for the community and visitors alike. The seamlessly integrated campus serves as a catalyst for a vibrant destination district driving tax base growth and increased access to economic opportunity for area residents.*

## VISION FOUNDATIONS

*The Vision Foundations provide the core elements upon which the Master Plan and long-term implementation efforts will be built. These foundations provide the big picture guideposts to enhance the AEC and surrounding area to meet the evolving needs of the visitor, convening industry, and the growing regional community.*

**Agriculture & Livestock, Health & Food, and Tech Expos and Trade Shows**

**Fitness, Sports, and Wellness Expos and Competitions**

**Regional Gathering Place for Festivals, Events, and Consumer Shows**

### AEC Primary Role and Market Focus

The AEC campus will continue to serve as the region's premier, multi-venue expo, convention, and event destination, providing the regional community with a place to:

- **GATHER** for major events
- **SHARE** and gain Knowledge
- **ATTRACT** visitors from around the country and world

### Impact and Return on Investment

**The AEC has significant economic and community impact**, and as a goal will continue to operate with revenues exceeding expenses. Community and financial return on investment will be a crucial decision criterion for making improvements to meet the diversifying needs of the convening industry and growing regional community. Developing public-private partnerships will be critical for funding large-scale improvements.



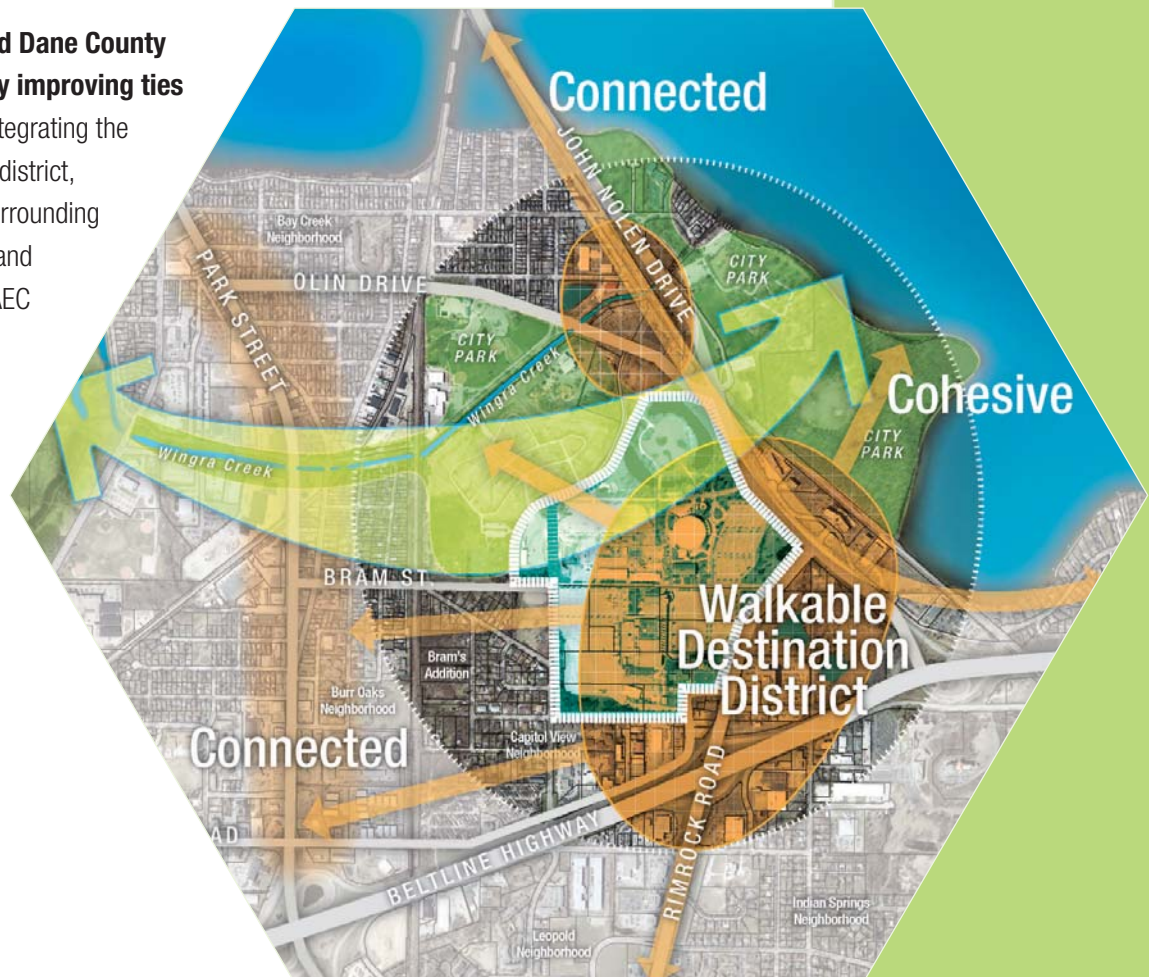
## Walkable Destination District

**The Campus will integrate additional hotels, food, beverage, retail and entertainment establishments, a range of employment opportunities, and new housing** on or around the AEC campus. Together these will build a critical mass of activity that will benefit visitors and the community.



## Connected and Cohesive

**The AEC campus area and Dane County community will benefit by improving ties** between on-site facilities, integrating the campus into a recognizable district, strengthening linkages to surrounding neighborhood destinations, and seamlessly connecting the AEC to the Lake and Downtown.





## Transit and Multi-Modal Oriented

**As a major regional destination and auto gateway to the downtown,** facilitate enhanced transit service and emerging transportation technologies to serve a growing employment district, and improve transit connections to the downtown for visitors and area residents.



## Equity and Access

**The campus will be welcoming and a valued asset to our county's diverse communities and cultures** through an approachable design character, improving access through the campus district connecting the Park Street Corridor Neighborhoods to the lakefront, incorporating improved transit connections and being a catalyst for increased economic viability and employment opportunities.



## Sustainability

**The AEC will prioritize sustainability objectives** including managing stormwater for lake quality by showcasing the area watersheds' model technologies and practices throughout the improved campus, facilitating alternative transportation improvements and services for district employees, residents and visitors, and integrating on-site renewable energy production.

## An Authentic Madison Region and Wisconsin Experience

The AEC campus experience will embrace the authentic flavor of the region, weaving in the lakes, the natural landscape, local food, and bike culture of the region.

- **The AEC can showcase the State of Wisconsin's agricultural diversity** and can provide locally produced food offerings for events.
- **Enhancing the City of Lakes presence through strong connections to the lakefront**, a lakes theme and integration of lakeside experiences.
- **AEC grounds become a bike trailhead** making riding downtown, enjoying the Capitol City Trail or Lake Loop a must-do AEC visitor experience.



# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

*Implementing the Vision requires addressing several interrelated issues. These Strategic Initiatives will create an achievable comprehensive plan for making significant improvements to the AEC campus, growing market share, maintaining financial sustainability, meeting community goals in a meaningful and pragmatic manner, and providing greater access to opportunity.*



## VISION

*The Alliant Energy Center is a key regional asset that serves as a dynamic convening campus providing an exceptional and authentic experience for the community and visitors alike. The seamlessly integrated campus serves as a catalyst for a vibrant destination district driving tax base growth and increased access to economic opportunity for area residents.*

### 1. AEC Campus Master Plan

*Translate the Vision into a dynamic, long-range physical plan to guide investments over the next 15-20 years*

### 2. Multijurisdictional Destination District Redevelopment Plan

*Utilize a public-private approach to plan for a lively district that enriches the AEC visitor experience and serves as a destination for area residents and the region*

### 3. Funding and Governance

*Develop a robust funding strategy for campus improvements and ensure consistent governance and oversight of improvements and operations*

### 4. Operations/Business Plan

*Maximize operational efficiencies while adapting to ever-changing customer and community needs*

### 5. Market Strategy/Branding

*Develop a strong brand and comprehensive market strategy consistent with the primary market focus areas*

### 6. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

*Maintain continuous communications and engagement with the public and stakeholders to ensure improvements and operations reflect community needs and goals*

The components of these Initiatives are outlined below, followed in the next section with the initial action steps for implementing them.

# 1. AEC CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

*Translate the Vision into a dynamic, long-range physical plan to guide investments over the next 15-20 years*

A primary purpose of the Vision is to establish objectives for the development of a physical plan for the AEC campus that details needed improvements and a logical phasing plan for them. Accordingly, the County already has budgeted the funds needed to prepare a plan. As part of this work, the Oversight Committee needs to evaluate and prioritize the various major facility improvements that have been identified to date through past studies and by stakeholders and the public.

## a. Identify Initial Improvement Priorities

*Evaluate return on investment, community and economic impacts from discrete improvements to establish initial priorities to be addressed in the Campus Master Plan*

Previous campus master plans and facility plans, the 2015 Hammes Strategic Feasibility Study, the 2017 Market, Financial, Facility and Impact Analysis prepared by Hunden Strategic Partners (the Hunden Study), and input from stakeholders and the public in the summer of 2017 have identified a wide range of potential facility improvements. The Hunden Study also projected the economic impacts likely to be generated from several of the improvements – such as new job creation, new hotel nights, increased attendance, increased tax receipts, and new operating costs and revenues for each AEC facility, though, the Hunden economic impact projections were based on the totality of numerous improvements. For example, the proposed improvements to the Expo Hall identified by Hunden included two expansions to the exposition floor area, additional meeting rooms and offices, a large ballroom, and a parking deck at a total cost of more than \$120 million. Not included were impact projections from each of these discrete components, and the same is true with the proposed improvements and impacts for the other major facilities (Coliseum, Pavilions, and Willow Island).

Given the significant costs involved with most of the proposed major facility improvements, the Oversight Committee would be well-served to better understand the potential impacts from a more incremental approach to making subsequent enhancements in order to better determine the return on investment from each of them and to compare the returns and impacts between improvements.

*Specific objectives for this analysis and prioritization include:*

- **Determine return on investment, community and economic impacts** from making incremental improvements to facilities (for example, constructing just the ballroom without the other Expo Hall improvements)
- **Determine the basic level of improvements necessary** for the Coliseum to be market-competitive for additional concerts, family shows, and similar events
- **Compare the returns on investment and economic impacts** of the identified significant improvements to the major facilities



- **Determine the most efficient sequencing of improvements** based on returns, impacts, usability, constructibility, and operations
- **Evaluate general funding opportunities** for the different types of improvements
- **Select initial priority improvements** to the major facilities for inclusion in the Campus Master Plan

## b. Prepare a Campus Master Plan

***Craft a compelling and feasible Campus Master Plan that addresses and balances all of the Vision Components and provides a clear roadmap for improvements to the campus and facilities over the next 15-20 years***

The long-range Campus Master Plan is the chief implementation Initiative where most of the Vision Components will be realized. There is strong recognition and support from the community for enhancement and modernization of AEC facilities, but the cost to taxpayers is of equal concern. Given the interrelated nature of many of the Components, the master planning process will likely involve the development of several alternatives that place different levels of emphasis and priorities on each Component. Accordingly, active stakeholder and public engagement in the process will be critical to ensuring the ultimate balance between the Components is reflective of community goals and values.

While the boundary of the planning area is the current 164-acre AEC campus, there is an overwhelming public desire for the Master Plan to include strategies and methods for improving connections and relationships with surrounding properties and neighborhoods. As discussed in Initiative #2, the AEC needs to become a catalyst and anchor for an integrated and identifiable Destination District to achieve the highest and best use of the campus and surrounding properties, maintain the market and financial viability of the AEC, and meet community goals. This includes determining the location, type, and intensity of private development that should take place on the AEC campus. Accordingly, the process will need to look outward as much as inward in order to determine an ideal layout of campus facilities and improvements.

Finally, in addition to depicting an end-state image of the AEC in 15-20 years, it is vitally important that the Master Plan include a detailed and efficient phasing schedule for making incremental improvements over time. The schedule needs to be carefully coordinated with the funding strategy developed in Initiative #3 and allow subsequent improvements to leverage previous improvements for maximizing returns and impacts while minimizing the removal or significant reconstruction of previous enhancements.

**Objectives for the Master Plan components include the following:**

- **Steering Committee**
  - Create a diverse Campus Master Plan sub-committee including members with expertise in areas such as architecture, facilities planning, construction, real estate, and/or finance



in addition to representatives from the Oversight Committee, citizens, and community leaders

- **Campus Image and Experience**

- Create a unique visual image and environment representative of the region's core assets including lakes, agriculture, and bikes
- Create an image consistent with the three core market focus areas

- **Campus Layout and Internal Relationships**

- Knit the entire campus together as a singular whole
- Locate major facility improvements
- Reduce hardscape where possible and add greenspace
- Create a walkable and bikable campus
- Showcase leading-edge on-site and watershed-wide stormwater management technologies and practices and integrate renewable energy systems
- Incorporate on-site passive and active recreation facilities for the benefit of adjoining neighborhoods and campus visitors
- Evaluate the potential for temporary uses like food trucks to serve visitors and area residents
- Maximize operational efficiencies of all core facilities
- Identify areas appropriate for private development and their proposed land uses and development intensities
- Create an open and welcoming campus for neighboring residents and employees

- **External Connections and Relationship to Surrounding Properties**

- Create a more permeable campus with the surrounding district and neighborhoods
- Identify primary access points and through connections
- Seamlessly integrate with surrounding area and anchor the Destination District
- Mitigate impacts on adjoining neighborhoods through appropriate buffering
- Incorporate alternative transportation modes to and from the campus, particularly bikes and transit

- **Implementation**

- Prepare cost estimates
- Determine values and market strategy for parcels available for private development
- Align identified priority improvements emerging from the process with the funding strategy developed in the Funding and Governance Initiative
- Prepare a detailed and logical phasing plan

## 2. MULTIJURISDICTIONAL DESTINATION DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

*Utilize a public-private approach to plan for a cohesive district that enriches the AEC visitor experience and serves as a walkable destination for area residents and the region*

The location of the AEC between two Beltline interchanges, at the foot of the Nolen gateway to the downtown and UW campus, proximity to Lake Monona, and huge swath of public parkland should make this area one of the most active and valuable districts in the County. Unfortunately, a patchwork of governmental jurisdictions covering the area has led to a disjointed development pattern. As a result, a public-private partnership approach should be used to bring the jurisdictions together to create a unified plan for the area and establish an integrated strategy that fairly and logically divides implementation and funding responsibilities among all partners.



KEY PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



DISTRICT COMPARISON TO DOWNTOWN

### a. Funding and Project Management/Oversight

*Develop a public-private partnership to fund and guide development of the District Plan*

The area around the AEC includes portions of three different local government jurisdictions (City of Madison, Town of Madison, and City of Fitchburg) in addition to the County's ownership and control of the AEC campus. By prior agreement, Madison and Fitchburg will annex remaining portions of the Town of Madison in 2022. However, there is an immediate need to stay ahead of likely redevelopment proposals and to create a plan for realizing the area's full potential. Utilizing a public-private approach will take the burden off any one entity for both the Plan and its implementation.

*Objective for establishing the partnership include:*

- **Identify and coalesce public and private partners**
- **Develop an equitable funding formula for preparing the plan**
- **Identify a lead organization**
- **Create a steering committee of public and private stakeholders**

## b. Prepare Plan

### ***Create a dynamic plan for a walkable Destination District anchored by the AEC and lakefront for the benefit of area residents and visitors***

With Madison's rapid recovery from the Great Recession and increasing tourism and demand for hotels, the area around the AEC is truly at a crossroads. Several of the surrounding buildings and uses are nearing the end of their useful life, and real estate market forces are already driving property turnover, which will only increase. Accordingly, it is an optimal time for a well-coordinated, long-range plan to create a unified and cohesive district that will strengthen the AEC's market viability and realize the full potential of this critically important area of the region's urban core.

In today's highly-competitive convening/event facility marketplace, providing an authentic, place-based experience is becoming just as important as the quality of the meeting/event facilities themselves. This aligns perfectly with the community's strong desire to more fully integrate the AEC into the surrounding area that would serve the needs of visitors and residents alike. While the Campus Master Plan will identify improvements that can make the AEC more reflective of the cultural and natural assets of the greater Madison region, a true destination can be achieved only if the character and uses in the surrounding area also see commensurate changes and improvements. Further, the AEC campus has the potential to include additional private development (the Clarion Hotel is on AEC property leased from the County), but the optimal type of development and value of these parcels is best realized through a coordinated planning effort with the surrounding area to reduce uncertainty and attract investors/developers.

#### ***Objectives for the plan include:***

- **Develop a vision centered on seamlessly integrating the AEC, adjacent parklands, lakefront, and major redevelopment sites into an identifiable/recognized "Destination District"**
- **Build from key District assets including:**
  - Lake Monona/lakefront parks
  - Wingra Creek
  - AEC campus
  - Bike Trail
  - Beltline access
  - Gateway to downtown and UW Campus
- **Identify a mix of land uses**, including development intensities, that are mutually supporting and complementary to the core functions of the AEC campus and area assets
- **Identify uses that are affordable, family-friendly, and welcoming** to visitors and area residents

- **Buffer impacts to adjoining neighborhoods** while increasing access to new economic opportunities including jobs and affordable goods and services
- **Identify key redevelopment sites** and prepare private development projections
- **Recommend urban design standards and placemaking concepts** for the District to create a unified appearance
- **Identify opportunities to reflect the history and culture of South Madison** through design and public and private facilities
- **Prepare a multi-modal transportation vision and recommendations** to support the Destination District and facilitate alternative modes
- **Prepare an overall concept plan for City of Madison- and Dane County-owned parks and open space** to be a strong unifying element for the district while also addressing the needs of area residents
- **Identify major improvement(s) to connect** neighborhoods, the AEC, mixed-use and commercial areas, public park lands, the lakefront, and downtown
- **Identify a safe pedestrian connection** over/under John Nolen Drive
- **Prepare cost estimates** for all major public improvements
- **Utilize a meaningful public and stakeholder participation process** including direct outreach to adjoining neighborhoods
- **Coordinate closely with AEC Campus Master Plan Process** in Initiative #1.b.

### c. Implementation Strategy

*Prepare a well-coordinated implementation strategy that clearly identifies responsibilities among the partners and includes a fair and realistic funding strategy*

Given the number of local governments involved, a well-thought out strategy will be required that fairly and logically assigns implementation action and funding responsibilities and provides for an ongoing mechanism to coordinate implementation efforts over the long term.

*Implementation objectives include:*

- **Sequence implementation actions for maximum impact**
- **Clearly identify implementation responsibilities**
- **Develop a method for ongoing coordination across implementation partners**
- **Develop a fair and realistic funding strategy**

### 3. FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

*Develop a robust funding strategy for major facility improvements and ensure consistent governance and oversight of improvements and operations*

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of implementing the Vision and the Campus Master Plan to be developed under Initiative #1 is securing funding sources for major facility improvements. The Hunden Study identified more than \$240 million in potential public improvements, which is clearly well-beyond the capabilities of the AEC or the County capital budget to fund. As a result, an incremental approach to improvements and a robust funding strategy including numerous sources will be required. Further, steady and consistent guidance and oversight will be needed to keep the Vision alive and drive multiple capital projects over the next decade and beyond.



#### a. Evaluate Potential Funding Sources

*Following the example set by the New Holland Pavilions, identify and evaluate a broad range of potential funding sources*

A realistic funding strategy for major facility improvements will require a creative and flexible approach to developing partnerships and involving a host of potential public and private partners. Fortunately, the AEC has a successful track record in doing just that with the New Holland Pavilions serving as a great example. Although the AEC is a County-owned and operated facility, its economic impacts are felt throughout the region and state to the benefit of several public and private entities. These entities will also see increased benefits from the improvements so seeking their support with the costs is not unreasonable.

**Objectives in developing a funding strategy include:**

- **Create a diverse Funding and Governance sub-committee** including members with expertise in areas such as architecture, facilities planning, construction, real estate, and/or government finance in addition to representatives from the Oversight Committee, citizens, and community leaders
- **Identify and examine all options**, including the following:
  - AEC's capacity to support long-term debt from projected operating revenues
  - County's capacity to support long-term debt from its capital budget levy
  - Feasibility of creating a tax increment district and the district's ability to help fund TIF-eligible expenditures on/ related to the AEC campus

#### New Holland Pavilions

As part of the 2011 AEC Master Plan Update, many of the large livestock shows that use AEC indicated a need for a large indoor exhibition space for animals. The resulting proposal for what are now known as the New Holland Pavilions was put together with significant input from these users and others who helped plan a flexible space and determine a budget. Private partners agreed to provide 25% of the total cost, and the AEC determined that an additional 25% could be funded out of its annual operating budget. These pledges were then leveraged to secure 12% from the County capital budget and 38% from the state.

##### Private Funding

World Dairy Expo	\$3,000,000
New Holland	\$1,500,000
Midwest Horse Fair	\$1,000,000
Centerplate	\$600,000

##### Public Funding

State of Wisconsin	\$9,000,000
Alliant Energy Center	\$6,167,500
Dane County	\$2,589,366

**Total** **\$23,856,866**

- Extent and value of property on the AEC campus that can be made available for private development through sale or lease
- Potential to increase existing hotel/motel taxes
- Potential to create a semi-autonomous authority (similar to the Wisconsin Center District in Milwaukee) that would levy additional lodging, food and beverage, and car rental taxes
- State grants/appropriations
- Participation by Centerplate and other AEC contractors and vendors
- Participation from major users
- Potential for additional naming rights and corporate sponsorships
- **Seek out expertise and conduct research** as required to fully evaluate the potential of the more complex funding options
- **Reach out to potential funding partners** to determine their levels of interest
- **Align potential funding sources** with initial priority projects identified under in the Campus Master Plan
- **Align potential funding** with the sequence of improvements recommended in the Campus Master Plan

## b. Determine Optimal Long-Term Governance

### ***Establish a governance structure to oversee long-term implementation of the Campus Master Plan and ensure the AEC continues to meet operating, financial, and community impact goals***

Currently, the AEC is a County department, but with a directive to generate revenues equal to or greater than its expenses (which it has done the last two years). An Alliant Energy Center Advisory Commission was established by the County Board in 1995 to make recommendations on strategies for unifying and strengthening physical and program components of all buildings, activities, and services at the Center. However, over the last several years the Commission has met infrequently with various ad-hoc committees taking on long-range planning responsibilities and with general operations falling under the oversight of the County Executive and County Board. Given that significant capital projects will be undertaken over the next 15-20 years and beyond, the AEC will require steady leadership and oversight to ensure the Vision and Campus Master Plan continue to be consistent driving forces for decision making and that projects are properly executed. Further, some of the funding sources may require a change in governance, such as the creation of a semi-independent authority.

### ***Objectives for effective long-term governance of the AEC include:***

- **Provide consistent direction on improvements and core functions** of the AEC campus in accordance with the Vision and Campus Master Plan

- **Implement a stable, long-term funding strategy**
- **Ensure AEC operations continue to meet financial goals**
- **Advocate for the AEC** to local and state government officials and the public
- **Ensure the AEC continues to meet community needs and desires**

## 4. OPERATIONS/BUSINESS PLAN

*Maximize operational efficiencies while adapting to ever-changing customer and community needs*

Once a Campus Master Plan and long-term funding and governance structure are in place, the development of a detailed business plan is the next major step to ensuring operations continue to remain in the black. That said, it is essential that ongoing maintenance and lesser, yet critical, improvements continue to take place while long-range facility plans are being developed (such as the recently renovated bathrooms in the Coliseum).

### a. Prepare Short-Term Capital Improvement Plan

*Ensure basic facility maintenance needs and improvements are addressed over the course of the long-range master planning process*

The comprehensive and deliberative master planning process the Oversight Committee has established for itself is already in its second year and will continue for at least another two-to-three years. During this time, all of the AEC facilities are expected to continue operating and generating surplus revenues. Accordingly, basic maintenance and improvements needs must be addressed and properly budgeted for. Where the potential exists that such improvements may be lost to future, significant changes, then opportunities to reuse materials should be evaluated. However, that alone should not prevent the AEC from making necessary enhancements to keep the facilities functional and to meet the minimum requirements of users and guests.

*Short-term capital improvement planning objectives include:*

- **Evaluate all facilities for basic capital improvement needs** over the next five years
- **Prepare five-year operating revenue projections** to determine the extent of potential funds available to meet basic improvement needs
- **Prepare and maintain a five-year capital improvement plan** with annual amendments/updates

## b. Prepare Long-term Operations/Business Plan

***Follow facility improvements planning with a long-range business plan that helps to ensure operations continue to be efficient and responsive to market demands***

Following the completion of the previous Initiatives, a long-range business plan should be prepared for carrying out proposed improvements, achieving operational efficiencies, bolstering market share, and meeting financial goals. The AEC already is operated much like an enterprise fund (generating revenues sufficient to cover its expenses), and a detailed business plan will help ensure the Center continues to meet its financial targets while also adapting to the changing needs of its event organizers and attendees.

***Objectives for the long-term business plan include:***

- **Determine operational changes necessitated by the facility improvements** identified in the Campus Master Plan and their related costs and revenues
- **Identify potential new sources of revenue**
- **Evaluate trends** in the convening and event markets to anticipate new/increased needs of organizers and attendees and the potential expenses and revenues involved in meeting those needs
- **Prepare a detailed business plan** and update regularly

## 5. MARKET STRATEGY/BRANDING

***Develop a strong brand and comprehensive market strategy consistent with the primary market focus areas***

Following the completion of the previous four Initiatives, a marketing and branding strategy should be developed that aligns with the identified core market areas and capitalizes on and promotes the various facility improvements specified in the Campus Master Plan, as they come on line. The AEC's current arrangement with SMG to help attract additional events to the Coliseum is an excellent public-private approach to marketing that should be continued. Further, the branding of the Center should be revisited to better reflect the core assets of the region.

***Market strategy and branding objectives include:***

- **Evaluate additional public-private approaches** to marketing
- **Develop a long-term market strategy** that aligns with the identified core market focus areas
- **Refine the brand to better align with area assets** and reinvigorated AEC campus facilities and visitor experience



## 6. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

*Maintain ongoing and coordinated communications and engagement with the public and stakeholders to ensure improvements and operations continue to reflect community needs and goals*

The AEC is a public facility that will at least partially rely on public funding of one type or another to maintain and enhance its facilities. Accordingly, it is vital that the value and benefits of the Center continue to be communicated to the public and that future changes be reflective of community needs and goals. All of the preceding Initiatives will require stakeholder and community outreach of one form or another, so a coordinated plan for maintaining consistent and ongoing communications and engagement is essential to minimizing confusion and “meeting fatigue” among the public. Further, ongoing operations also have impacts on adjoining neighborhoods that sometimes create problems and conflicts which could be reduced through more formal mechanisms to anticipate, communicate, and mitigate such impacts as well as to respond to complaints and concerns.

***Coordinated communications and engagement objectives include:***

- In concert with the sub-committees established for the Campus Master Plan, Destination District Plan, and Funding and Governance Initiatives, **prepare a master stakeholder and public communications and engagement strategy** to achieve efficiencies for both the committees and public
- **Maintain a robust, user-friendly website** providing access to all project documents and presentations and to obtain public feedback
- **Appoint an AEC staff member** as a liaison to the adjoining neighborhoods and establish a mechanism for regular communications of operations and events that may impact them and to receive and respond to questions and complaints
- **Hold an annual meeting with the adjoining neighborhoods** to discuss issues and concerns identified over the preceding year and plans for the coming year that may impact the neighborhoods

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTION STEPS

***Implementation of the Vision will require a sustained effort over the next decade and beyond, but the next two years are critical to continuing the planning process. This section provides a suggested structure to manage the significant amount of work to be done in the short-term and the initial action steps needed to keep the project moving forward as desired by the Oversight Committee.***

### Implementation Structure

Ideally, the first three Initiatives (Campus Master Plan, Destination District Plan, and Funding & Governance) should all advance on parallel courses given their interrelated nature. However, this is more work than the Oversight Committee alone can handle. Further, additional voices and expertise need to be included in each of these. Accordingly, two subcommittees are proposed to address AEC-specific Initiatives in addition to an independent committee for the District Plan.



The Campus Master Plan and Funding & Governance subcommittees each would have members from the Oversight Committee in addition to issue experts and other community members. Each subcommittee would guide their specific work efforts, with the Oversight Committee providing overall direction as well as decision-making on bringing the two efforts together in terms of prioritizing major facility improvements consistent with identified sources. In addition, the Oversight Committee would work with the two subcommittees to develop an integrated stakeholder and public communications and engagement plan to avoid confusion and duplication.

The Oversight Committee also would have at least one member on the Destination District Plan steering committee and would help to disseminate information across all of these efforts.

### Action Steps

The following Initial Action Steps are focused on the remainder of this year and 2018. This section of the document is intended to be revisited semi-annually by the Oversight Committee and amended at least once each year to include the following year's efforts.

# AEC Initial Action Steps

Initiative	Action Steps	Timing	Lead	Partners
<b>1. AEC Campus Master Plan</b>				
	a. Identify Initial Improvement Priorities			
	Work with Hunden on ROI and impacts from incremental improvements & types of Coliseum improvements to be market-competitive	October/November 2017	Oversight Committee	
	Compare ROI and impacts of improvements; determine optimal sequencing of improvements; ID potential funding sources	November/December 2017	Oversight Committee	
	Select initial priority improvements for inclusion in Campus Master Plan	January 2018	Oversight Committee	
	b. Prepare a Campus Master Plan			
	Draft and approve RFP	October/November 2017	Oversight Committee	
	Create a Master Plan Subcommittee	November 2017	Oversight Committee	
	Select a consultant	December-January 2017/18	Master Plan Subcommittee	
	Prepare a public engagement plan	February 2018	Master Plan Subcommittee/ Consultant	Oversight Committee
	Conduct site analysis	March-May 2018	Master Plan Consultant	
	Prepare alternatives	June-August 2018	Master Plan Consultant	
	Conduct public outreach	September 2018	Master Plan Consultant	Oversight Committee
	Prepare draft plan	September-November 2018	Master Plan Consultant	
	Prepare cost estimates	September-November 2018	Master Plan Consultant	
	Prepare phasing plan	September-November 2018	Master Plan Subcommittee/ Consultant	Oversight Committee and Funding & Governance Subcommittee
Adopt Plan	November-December 2018	Master Plan Subcommittee	Oversight Committee	
<b>2. Multijurisdictional Destination District Redevelopment Plan</b>				
	a. Cement Partnerships for Funding and Project Management/Oversight			
	Identify and coalesce public and private partners and funding formula	August-September 2017	Oversight Committee	
	Execute intergovernmental agreements	October-November 2017	Participating Local Governments	
	Create a steering committee of public and private stakeholders	December 2017	Participating Partners	
	b. Prepare District Redevelopment Plan			
	Select a consultant	December-January 2017/18	Steering Committee	
	Prepare a public engagement plan	February 2018	Steering Committee/ Consultant	Oversight Committee
	Conduct area analysis	March-May 2018	Consultant	
	Prepare parks concept plan	June-August 2018	Consultant	
	Prepare multi-modal transportation plan	June-August 2018	Consultant	

Initiative	Action Steps	Timing	Lead	Partners	
	Prepare District draft plan	June-August 2018	Consultant		
	Conduct public outreach	September 2018	Consultant	Oversight Committee	
	Finalize Plan	September-November 2018			
	Prepare cost estimates	September-November 2018	Consultant		
	Adopt Plan	November-December 2018	Steering Committee	Participating local governments	
	<b>c. Prepare Implementation Strategy</b>				
	Sequence implementation actions for maximum impact	September-November 2018	Steering Committee/ Consultant		
	Develop a fair and realistic funding strategy	September-November 2018	Steering Committee/ Consultant		
	Develop method for ongoing coordination across partners	September-November 2018	Steering Committee/ Consultant	Oversight Committee	
	<b>3. Funding and Governance</b>				
	<b>a. Evaluate Potential Funding Sources</b>				
	Create a Funding & Governance Subcommittee	November 2017	Oversight Committee		
	Evaluate potential funding sources aligned with priority projects	December-April 2017/18	Funding & Governance Subcommittee		
	Conduct potential partner outreach	May-August 2018	Funding & Governance Subcommittee		
	Align funding with Master Plan	September-November	Funding & Governance Subcommittee	Oversight Committee/ Master Plan Subcommittee	
	Pursue selected funding priorities	2019-2020	Funding & Governance Subcommittee	Oversight Committee	
<b>4. Operations/Business Plan</b>					
	<b>a. Prepare Short-term Capital Improvement Plan</b>				
	Evaluate 5-year facility needs	January-April 2018	AEC Staff		
	Prepare 5-year CIP	May-July 2018	AEC Staff	Oversight Committee	
	Adopt as part of County CIP budget	October-November 2018	County Board		
	<b>b. Prepare Long-term Operations/Business Plan</b>				
	Work to commence upon completion of Campus Master Plan	2019	AEC Staff	Oversight Committee	
<b>5. Market Strategy/Branding</b>					
	Work to commence upon completion of Campus Master Plan	2019-2020	AEC Staff/ Oversight Committee	GMCVB	
<b>6. Public Engagement</b>					
	Prepare master public communications and engagement plan	January-March 2018	Oversight Committee	Master Plan Subcommittee and Funding & Governance Subcommittee	