Downtown Campus
Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping Session

January 29, 2014
Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Proposed Projects
3. What is a GEIS
4. Overview of Topic Areas
5. Next Steps
6. Questions / Comments
WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
PROPOSED PROJECTS

- Renovation of Schuyler School
- Renovation/Expansion of Page Hall
- Construction of Hawley Addition
- Construction of Thurlow Parking Structure
PROPOSED PROJECTS

UAlbany Downtown Capital Plan
Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Proposed Projects
January 2014

- Schuyler School Renovation
- Page Hall Renovation and Expansion
- Hawley Library Addition
- Thurlow Parking Structure Construction
RENOVATION OF SCHUYLER SCHOOL

- Former Albany High School building
- Highly suitable for academic functions such as departmental offices and classrooms
- Auditorium space
RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF PAGE HALL

- Historic building housing an 830 seat auditorium on the upper levels and a gymnasium at the basement level

- Will maximize existing specialized spaces at Page Hall as high quality places for performances, lectures, and events
CONSTRUCTION OF HAWLEY ADDITION

- Construction of an addition at the northeast corner of the campus
- Will accommodate facilities for student support and academic functions. The program includes food service, a fitness center, relocation of the Dewey Graduate Library, and an information commons.
- Space will include a paved zone with tables that may be used for outdoor seating and lounge space in good weather
CONSTRUCTION OF THURLOW PARKING STRUCTURE

- Construction of a parking structure
- Parking will replace lost capacity at the Hawley and Schuyler lot
- Provide additional capacity for expanded facilities at the UAlbany Downtown Campus
WHAT IS A GEIS?

- New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)
  - Consideration of environmental factors in planning and development
  - Intent to balance social, economic and environmental factors of a proposed project
- A GEIS is a tool to evaluate and balance potential impacts

(6 NYCRR Part 617) / www.dec.ny.gov
WHAT IS A GEIS?

- GEIS is a broad, general approach to evaluating impacts: (not necessarily site specific)
  - A number of separate actions in a geographic area considered singly may have minor impacts, but together may have significant impacts
  - A sequence of actions contemplated by a single agency or individual
  - An entire program or plan having wide application
GENERAL STEPS IN A GEIS

* Follow SEQR Regulations in Part 617 for a EIS

1. Determine Lead Agency
2. Identify and notify Involved / Interested Agencies
3. Public Scoping – public input on factors and topics to be evaluated
4. Prepare Draft GEIS for Lead Agency Acceptance
5. Draft GEIS for Public Review
6. Public Comment / Optional Public Hearing
7. Prepare Final GEIS
8. Lead Agency Findings
SCOPING DOCUMENT

1. Outline of topics to be evaluated in the GEIS
2. Incorporates public comment on topic areas
TOPIC AREAS TO BE EVALUATED

1. Land
2. Water Resources
3. Drainage
4. Air
5. Climate Change
6. Plants, Animals and Habitats
7. Aesthetic Resources
8. Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resources
9. Open Space and Recreation
10. Transportation, Traffic, and Parking
11. Energy
12. Noise and Odors
13. Public Health and Safety
14. Community Character, Aesthetics and Land Use
15. Construction
16. Sustainability
Impacts on soils, geology, and topography

**Soils**
- Excavation, grading and restoration
- Landscaping
- Disturbance of contaminated subsurface areas, if any.
- Erosion potential of existing soils, loss of topsoil
- Impairment of rainfall infiltration to ground water
- Impacts on stability of existing buildings

**Geology**
- Subsidence effects
- Seismic or vibration risk

**Topography**
- Changes in slope or elevation
- Increase in runoff potential (changes to land cover)
- Alterations of drainage patterns
WATER RESOURCES

Impacts on surface waters or ground water

**Surface Waters**
- Affects to flow rate, periodicity or volume
- Affects to water quality
- Modification of the existence, duration or intensity of flooding
- Withdrawal

**Ground Waters**
- Ground water quality
- Withdrawal demand
- Recharge capacity
- Sole source aquifer status
- Proximity to water supply well fields

**Additional Impacts**
- Accessibility
- Modification or impairment of use
- Modification of evaporation rate
- New or modified discharges to surface waters
- Affects to water supplies
- Modification or impairment of use
- Modification of hydrologic system
- New or modified discharge to ground waters
- Disturbance or existing contaminated ground waters
DRAINAGE

Impacts on stormwater, erosion, drainage, inundation or flooding

• Changes in slope or elevation during or after project implementation
• Increase in stormwater runoff potential
• Alterations of drainage patterns
• Erosion potential of existing soils
• Loss of topsoil
• Modification or impairment of rainfall infiltration to ground water
• Increase in flooding potential
Impacts on air emissions and air quality

- Emissions and dust from construction vehicles and operations
- Modifications of transportation patterns and other activities
- Nature, concentration, mass and frequency of potential stationary source emissions
- Nature, concentration, mass and frequency of potential mobile source emissions
- Air quality modifications
- National Ambient Air Quality Standards
- New York State Ambient Air Quality Standards
- Consistency with New York State SIP
- Nature of sensitive receptors
- Exposure of, and impacts to, sensitive receptors
- Temporary construction/demolition impacts for noise, dust and vibration
CLIMATE CHANGE
Impacts on greenhouse gas emissions

- Use of construction machinery
- Modifications of transportation patterns and other activities
- Increased fossil fuel energy use or changes to use
- Modification of the nature of combustion sources
- Modification of woodlands
- Modifications of modes, intensity or nature of transportation
- Supply chain issues: use and availability of materials
- Landscaping/greenfields opportunities
- Building design considerations
- Consistency with American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) Guidelines
- Consistency with climate change policies
- Consistency with campus sustainability planning
PLANTS, ANIMALS AND HABITATS

Impacts on plants, animals and habitats

**Wildlife**
- Temporary or permanent displacement or harassment of wildlife
- Interference with migratory patterns
- Interference with wintering, foraging, breeding or nursery habitats
- Habitats of rare, threatened endangered species, or species of special concern
- Introduction of invasive species
- Degradation of amount or quality of habitat
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Modification or loss of habitat

**Vegetation**
- Loss or elimination of woodlands, forest or other habitat
- Introduction of invasive species
- Degradation of amount or quality of habitat
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Habitats of rare, threatened endangered species, or species of special concern
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AESTHETIC RESOURCES

Impacts on aesthetic resources, such as lighting, visual resources or views and noise

**Light**
- Introduction of new or modified sources
- New lighting patterns
- Daytime or nighttime views
- Surrounding communities

**Visual**
- Introduction of new or modified sources
- New lighting patterns
- Daytime or nighttime views
- Surrounding communities
Impacts on cultural, historical and archaeological resources

- Historical resources (a historic building, district, site, structure, or object)
- Archaeological sensitive areas and archaeological resources
- Resources listed on New York or federal Registers of Historic Places
- National Historic Landmarks
- Properties of religious or Native American significance
- Resources significant in architecture, engineering or science, or local culture
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Impacts on undeveloped areas and recreational opportunities

- Changes in land use
- Changes to physical elements and layout of a site
- Changes in recreational opportunities
- Large forests, patches of woodland, and farm fields, village greens, public parks, state lands, wetlands, and rivers and river corridors.
- Hunting, fishing, and hiking, as well as, but not limited to hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, photography, and recreational vehicle use.
IMPACTS ON TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

Impacts on transportation, traffic and parking

- Changes in traffic volume
- Changes in traffic flow patterns
- Modifications in level of service
- Public transportation options and opportunities
- Safety issues
- Pedestrian opportunities
- Parking
- Temporary construction-related closures and detours for traffic (autos and trucks) and public transit.
Impacts on sources of energy and energy use

- Amount of energy used
- Nature of energy source
- Constraints on energy availability
Impacts on noise and odors

**Noise**
- Changes in mobile source noise
- New stationary source noises
- Changes in stationary source noises

**Odors**
- Construction Vehicles
- Operating conditions related to the proposed land use activity
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Impacts on community services

- Fire safety
- Police services
- Medical and healthcare facilities and services
- Emergency services
- Schools
- Community infrastructure
COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND LAND USE

Impacts on nature and intensity of land uses, and consistency of uses with existing plans and policies

- Consistency with land use plans
- Consistency/Incompatibility with community character and public expectations for the site
- Displacement of a land use
- Alteration of a land use
- Impairment or restriction of surrounding land uses
- Modification of land use density
- Socioeconomic impacts, (employment, economics, demographics, housing)
- Jurisdictional modifications
- Changes in development density
- Modifications in intensity of use
- Restrictions on use opportunities or future uses
- Recreational opportunities
- Loss or modification of open space
- Environmental justice – presence of populations of concern
- Demolition and construction will require temporary staging areas
- Construction-related closures and detours for pedestrians.
CONSTRUCTION

Temporary impacts during construction

- Temporary changes, conditions and disturbances during construction
- Demolition and construction requiring temporary development of staging areas
- Temporary construction-related closures and detours for pedestrians
SUSTAINABILITY

Impacts on the potential for long-term maintenance of well being

• Designed in concert with existing environmental and sustainability plans and initiatives

• Working with University at Albany Office of Sustainability
1. Public Comment Period
   - 30 days for public to comment on scoping document
   - [www.albany.edu/facilities/dgeis/downtown](http://www.albany.edu/facilities/dgeis/downtown)
   - Send written comments to:
     Errol Millington
     Director, Office of Campus Planning
     University at Albany
     Service Building A
     1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
     emillington@albany.edu
2. Future opportunities for public input
   - Draft GEIS will be made available (TBD)
     - UAlbany website
     - Uptown Campus, Office of Facilities Mgmt.
     - Downtown Campus, Dewey Library
     - Albany Public Library
   - Future Public Hearing (TBD)
QUESTIONS / COMMENTS