

TYPE OF DOCUMENT:

Final Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement

NAME OF THE ACTION:

University at Albany, SUNY - Capital Project Plan

LOCATION OF THE ACTION:

University at Albany, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

In 2010, the University at Albany, SUNY (UAlbany) completed the planning process for its five year Capital Project Plan. The Capital Project Plan previously consisted of the projects listed in Table 1; the projects are in various stages in their respective schedules from concept to implementation (usually construction).

Table 1. *Capital Project List*

Project Name	Project Description	Project Status
Student Housing Project	Construction of new student housing facilities with approximately 500 apartment-style beds	Complete
Campus Center Master Plan	Construction of student activity and surge space of approximately 50,000 square feet (sq ft) under roof	Under construction; completion: Fall 2016
Construct New Business School Building	Construct new 90,000 sq ft academic facility	Complete
Relocate Data Center	Relocate campus Data Center to another site on campus	Complete
Implement Various Athletics Improvements	Phased series of improvements to athletics facilities, to include a new multi-use athletic facility (possibly a phased project).	Complete
Purple Path Continuation	Construction of the Purple Path to encircle and incorporate pedestrian and bicycle paths around the perimeter of the Uptown Campus	Ongoing; 50% Complete
Northern Landscape Improvement Project	Perform activities consistent with Landscape Master Plan	Ongoing; 25% Complete
State Quad Parking Lot Expansion	Add approximately 250 spaces to west side of State Quad parking lot	Complete
Multi-Discipline Science Surge Building	Construction of academic building of approximately 150,000 sq ft to facilitate Podium renovations	Revised Project Plan
Service Building Renovation	Add approximately 24,000 sq ft addition for vehicle operations, small engine and metal shops	Complete
Entry Improvements	Improve entrance aesthetics and safety at Washington and Western Avenues	80% Complete
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	Based on recommendations in the Harriman – UAlbany Linkage Study, locate Bus Rapid Transit stations on campus	Project Completion 2018
Bicycle-Pedestrian Path	Develop a network of paths, improving connections between each quad, the Podium, and the Purple Path	Ongoing

The projects were defined as those for which a funding source was established or known, or for which it was considered reasonable that implementation would be initiated within the five year planning horizon. As part of

the development of the Capital Project Plan, the potential environmental implications of the Plan were evaluated pursuant to New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) Article 8, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA); and Part 617 of Chapter 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR). UAlbany prepared a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) (2009), Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) (2010), and Findings Statement (2010) for the Capital Project Plan. These documents are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety and are available on the University’s web site at: <http://www.albany.edu/facilities/dgeis/uptown.html>.

Since that time, two modifications have occurred to the Capital Project Plan. The modifications consist of the following:

- A new science building will be constructed as previously included in the Capital Project Plan (Project No. 9). To be known as the Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex, or ETEC, it is larger (contains 69,000 gross square feet (gsf) more) than the previously described Multi-Discipline Science Surge Building. Due to the size differential, with different programming (although still largely a science building), there are potential impacts to parking and traffic that did not apply to the previous building.
- A new storage facility (to be numbered as “Project No. 14”) of just under 115,000 gsf will be constructed.

As noted in the DGEIS, the University has undergone a major transformation since it joined the SUNY system in 1962. The University has exceeded a student population of 18,000 for the first time in the 2008-2009 academic year, growing from 29 students at its inception in 1844, to 1,424 students in 1932, and 13,200 students in 1970. The University’s academic and support infrastructure has grown over time to meet the needs of the students and its overall mission as an educational and internationally recognized public research institution. Today, UAlbany consists of three campuses offering students and researchers exceptional opportunities to advance themselves and their chosen fields.

As for the SEQRA process completed for the Capital Project Plan and embodied in the documents noted above, the modifications to the Capital Project Plan and, therefore, this document, addresses only UAlbany’s Uptown campus, that is, the campus area bounded by Fuller Road to the west, Washington Avenue to the north, the Harriman State Office Campus to the east, and Western Avenue to the south. Note that the nanotechnology facilities located across Fuller Road to the west of the Uptown Campus are now part of the SUNY Polytechnic Institute. The Uptown Campus was constructed between 1961 and 1971 on the former grounds of the Albany Country Club. Classes were held on the Academic Podium for the first time in 1966.

The UAlbany Uptown Campus has continued to evolve since its construction more than 40 years ago. Indeed, over 60 percent of the University’s facilities are over 40 years old and suffer from both a deferred maintenance backlog and an inability to provide sufficient modern and efficient spaces for the myriad instructional, research, and student support functions necessary for the continued vitality of a world-class institution of higher education.

1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE (PUBLIC NEED AND BENEFIT)

The DGEIS (2010) defined and established the public need and benefit of the Capital Project Plan. The above modifications to the Capital Project Plan (Project Nos. 9 and 14) are consistent with the public need and benefit as described in the DGEIS:

- Renovate, restore and update academic facilities to meet the needs of current instructional practices (as noted preceding, see Project Nos. 9 and 14)
- Enhance facilities with the installation of 21st century technology and support facilities (as noted preceding, see Project Nos. 9 and 14)
- Upgrade campus infrastructure to meet academic and research needs (as noted preceding, see Project No. 9)
- Complete projects that will improve the quality of life on campus for students, faculty and staff, assisting with recruitment, retention, and excellence (as noted preceding, see Project Nos. 9 and 14).

As was noted in the DGEIS, where design and construction are required, these modifications to the Capital Project Plan will be conducted consistent with the “Report of the SUNY Energy Strategic Planning Task Force, Recommendations for a University Energy Policy” (March 2007) to “Design and construct new buildings or

rehabilitate existing buildings using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver criteria and life-cycle-cost analysis. Energy systems will be designed to maximize efficiency over the life cycle.” UAlbany also has its own “High Performance Building Guidelines Minimum Energy and Sustainability Goals “ (<http://www.albany.edu/facilities/energy/documents/UA-MinEESustainabilityGoals.pdf>) and other “Energy Related campus Policies and Procedures” (<http://www.albany.edu/facilities/energy/policies.html>) that meet or exceed state requirements. The University’s goal is LEED Gold as noted in the High Performance Building Guidelines.

In addition, plans will be developed within the context of applicable state Executive Orders (EO) relating to sustainability and energy:

- EO No. 4, “Establishing a State Green Procurement and Agency Sustainability Program” (as renewed By Governor Cuomo in January 2011).
- EO No. 111, "Directing State Agencies, State Authorities, and Other Affected Entities to be More Energy Efficient and Environmentally Aware" (as renewed By Governor Cuomo in January 2011).
- EO No. 142, “Directing State Agencies, and Authorities to Diversify Fuel and Heating Oil Supplies Through the Use of Biofuels in State Vehicles and Buildings”(as renewed By Governor Cuomo in January 2011).
- EO No. 24, “Establishing a Goal to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Eighty Percent by the Year 2050 and Preparing a Climate Action Plan.”
- EO No. 88, “Directing State Agencies and Authorities to Improve the Energy Efficiency of State Buildings.”

These Executive Orders, and the State Green Building Construction Act enacted in 2008, provide direction and goals for increased energy efficiency throughout state government.

1.3 ALTERNATIVES

A range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed components of the Capital Project Plan were evaluated and are presented in Section 2 of the DGEIS that was made available for public review on December 9, 2009. These alternatives are considered reasonable in the context of the objectives and capabilities of the University. Consideration also was given to the environmental effects, reliability and cost effectiveness of these alternatives. The range of alternatives evaluated includes the “no action” alternative, as well as alternatives that address sites (locations), sizes, designs, and construction methods and materials.

1.4 DOCUMENT PURPOSE

Pursuant to New York State Environmental Conservation Law Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act or SEQRA); and Part 617 of Chapter 6 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR Part 617), an environmental review must be completed for projects that could result in a significant adverse environmental impact so that these impacts can be identified and mitigated.

In 6 NYCRR Part 617.10 (a), the SEQR regulations state that “Generic EISs may be broader, and more general than site or project-specific EISs and should discuss the logic and rationale for the choices advanced. They may also include an assessment of specific impacts if such details are available. They may be based on conceptual information in some cases.” The elements of the Capital Project Plan are in various stages of planning, with details for some projects considerably less mature than others. Locations and project parameters may not as yet have been selected and/or may be incomplete. These are among the factors that made a GEIS appropriate in this instance in that it constituted:

- “...a number of separate actions in a given geographic area which, if considered singly, may have minor impacts, but if considered together may have significant impacts...” (6 NYCRR Part 617(a)(1)), and
- “...an entire program or plan having wide application...” (6 NYCRR Part 617(a)(4)).”

Components of the SEQR process are summarized below as they have applied to this action, that is, the modification of the Capital Project Plan with respect to these two projects.

Coordinated Review. Coordinated review is the process by which involved agencies¹ cooperate in one integrated environmental review. Coordinated review has two major elements: establishing a lead agency (among involved agencies) and identifying the interests and concerns of involved agencies so that they may be considered by the lead agency in the determination of significance and scoping the content of the DSGEIS.

Lead Agency Coordination. It is the responsibility of the agency undertaking the action to initiate the SEQR process. On September 4, 2012, the University initiated the process for this supplemental review with a letter forwarded to potentially involved and interested agencies indicating the University's intent to assume Lead Agency status, and to provide for a coordinated SEQR review. Based on the absence of objections after a 30 day response period, University declared itself Lead Agency.

As partial fulfillment of its obligation to inform the public pursuant to SEQR, the University established a web site and three hard copy repositories for the project and project documentation. The web site is located at: <http://www.albany.edu/facilities/dgeis/>. The hard copy repositories are located at: Service Building 'A', Office of Facilities Management Reception Area, Room 212, located on UAlbany's Uptown Campus, and at Hawley Hall, Dewey Graduate Library Circulation Desk, located at 135 Western Avenue on UAlbany's Downtown Campus and the Guilderland Public Library.

A copy of the Lead Agency Letter and the list of potential involved agencies to which it was sent can be found on the University's web site for the Capital Project Plan.

Notice of Determination of Significance/Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Scoping. A determination of significance is the critical step in the SEQRA process in which the Lead Agency decides whether an environmental impact statement must be prepared for an action. The two key characteristics in determining significance are "magnitude" (*i.e.*, severity) and "importance" (*i.e.*, in relation to its setting) of impacts.

Scoping is a process that identifies potential environmental impacts of an action or actions which should be addressed in a DGEIS. The purpose of scoping is to narrow issues to be addressed in the DGEIS to facilitate the preparation of a concise, accurate and complete DGEIS that is adequate for public review. The scoping process is intended to:

- create consensus among involved agencies
- provide additional opportunities for public participation by seeking input from the public regarding the content of the DGEIS
- minimize the inclusion and review of unnecessary issues.

The Lead Agency letter noted above as prepared by the University at indicated its intent to prepare a Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement to assess potential significant environmental impacts from the two projects that are the focus of this action. The notice also included a description of the proposed projects affected as of that date:

- The size of Project No. 2, Campus Center Master Plan, in the preceding table, to increase from 50,000 sq ft to 80,000 sq ft.
- A new storage facility approximately 125,000 gross square feet (gsf) to be constructed.
- A new science building to be constructed, or to be combined with Project No. 9, Multi-Discipline Science Surge Building, in one building.
- A new parking garage to be constructed.

In the interim, the first and last project in the list above were deleted from this action, with the storage building and science building remaining as the subject of the SEQRA supplemental review, and the size of Project No. 9 reduced from 125,000 gsf to 115,000 gsf.

¹ "Involved Agency" means an agency that has jurisdiction by law to fund, approve or directly undertake an action.

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. On behalf of the University, O'Brien & Gere prepared a DSGEIS to evaluate potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Capital Project Plan. The DSGEIS was accepted by the University as complete on December 12, 2014 and made available to potentially involved agencies for review and comment through January 12, 2015. No public hearing is scheduled for the following reasons:

- 1) The DSGEIS addresses one project that was evaluated pursuant to SEQRA as part of a GEIS process. That project has increased in size: it was previously described as a Multi-Discipline Science Surge Building, but is now planned as the Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC). However, following an evaluation of the potential impacts of the increase in size, and other factors as described in the DSGEIS, it has been determined that significant environmental impacts will not occur.
- 2) A new project, a Storage Building, has been proposed to the Capital Project Plan that was not initially included and, therefore, was not evaluated pursuant to SEQRA as part of the GEIS process. Following an evaluation of the potential impacts of the project, the Storage Building, as described in the DSGEIS, it has been determined that significant environmental impacts will not occur.

Final Environmental Impact Statement. Pursuant to the requirements of SEQRA, this document, in conjunction with the DSGEIS (December 2014) (incorporated herein by reference), constitutes the FSGEIS. The FSGEIS was accepted by the University at Albany, SUNY as complete on January 30, 2015.

Findings. The FSGEIS will be used by the involved agencies (including the University) to make written findings of fact regarding the environmental effects of the proposed action. In their respective findings, if they choose to prepare such, involved agencies weigh and balance the relevant environmental impacts along with social, economic, and other essential considerations to provide a rationale for making a final decision on the proposed action. "Findings" will be based on information presented in the FSGEIS. Implementation of the action will not proceed until written findings are filed and applicable permits and approvals obtained.

Public Access. As noted, notices and other documentation relevant to this project, including those related to SEQRA procedures and filings, have been made available on the University's web site at the following address: <http://www.albany.edu/facilities/dgeis/>. Also, these materials have and will be available at hard copy repositories located at: Service Building 'A', Office of Facilities Management Reception Area, Room 212, located on UAlbany's Uptown Campus; at Hawley Hall, Dewey Graduate Library Circulation Desk, located at 135 Western Avenue on UAlbany's Downtown Campus; and at the Guilderland Public Library.

2. RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY

2.1 CONTENTS

This section presents comments received from involved agencies during the 30 day review period that they were provided for the DSGEIS. Only one comment was received from potentially involved or interested agencies during that period. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) noted a Resource Evaluation prepared by SHPO dated May 31, 2001. The Resource Evaluation notes that "The New York State University Campus at Albany (a.k.a., SUNYA, SUNY Albany) meets the National Register of Historic Places criteria for exceptional significance (National Register Criteria Consideration G) in the areas of Architecture and Education. The significance of this resource is being evaluated at the local level, although a more thorough investigation of the importance of the complex would most certainly yield significance at the State and possibly the National level." SHPO's comment was that this status was not mentioned in the SDGEIS.

In response, the University acknowledges that the Uptown Campus has been officially determined by SHPO to meet the National Register of Historic Places criteria for exceptional significance (National Register Criteria Consideration G) in the areas of Architecture and Education. The Campus Heritage Preservation Plan and APAAC provide the on campus guidelines and oversight, respectively, for preserving the architectural heritage of the Uptown Campus. In fact, these guidelines, which are administered by the Office of Campus Planning, were explicitly referenced in the DGEIS (the DGEIS was included in the SDGEIS by reference), and were *or will be* adhered to in the evaluation of these projects (that is, all of the projects of the Capital project Plan, including the two that were the subject of the SDGEIS). Lastly, the projects were *or will be* presented and reviewed by APAAC (<http://www.albany.edu/facilities/campusplanning/documents/UAlbanyCampusHeritagePreservationPlan.pdf>)

Therefore, an explicit written omission or acknowledgement of this status in the SDGEIS in no way affected the required due diligence in the planning and design of the ETEC building.

3. SEQR THRESHOLDS FOR FURTHER EVALUATION

3.1 SUMMARY

In accordance with SEQR (6 NYCRR Part 617.10(c)):

“Generic EISs and their findings should set forth specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for any subsequent SEQR compliance. This may include thresholds and criteria for supplemental EISs to reflect specific significant impacts, such as site specific impacts, that were not adequately addressed or analyzed in the generic EIS.”

There are two components of this FSGEIS that collectively constitute thresholds above which supplemental environmental review may be necessary. Exceeding these thresholds may require that the Lead Agency perform a supplemental environmental review. The supplemental environmental review will be documented using a SEQR environmental assessment form (EAF) or other appropriate mechanism, and include other SEQR processes, such as public notification and/or issuance of a negative declaration, as may be appropriate to the situation and the issue. The supplemental review may include the preparation of a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS).

These two components of the FGEIS that define the threshold limits of this generic SEQR process consist of:

- (1) Table 2 of this FGEIS, below, titled “Baseline Project Parameters,” which was included in the DSGEIS. This table contains a range of project characteristics for the two projects that were the subject of the DSGEIS.

Table 2. Baseline Project Parameters

Project	Footprint/ New Impermeable Surfaces	Bldg. Height	Number of Occupants (occupants not new to campus/ new to campus)	Heating/ Chilling/ Power	Potable Water Needs	Wastewater Generation	Other Items
9 Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC)	208,875*	68 ft	2,841 (max.) 1,015 (ave.)/ 397	Heating: 74 gpm HTHW Chilling: 600 tons Power: 2500/3125 KVA	45,456 gpd (max.) 16,240 gpd (ave.) 6,352 gpd (new pop.)	42,615 gpd (max.) 15,225 gpd (ave.) 5,995 gpd (new)	219,000 gsf net of 39 new parking spaces
14 Storage Building	Subject to design options	Two story	50/No new occupants to campus	Heating: 6.0 MMBtu Cooling: 300 tons	1,000 gpd	1,000 gpd	115,000 gsf
*Results in a net gain of 23,221 sq ft of impervious surface from present, but does not account for potential green roof on top of ETEC.							

- (2) Appendix A of this document titled “Mitigation Recommendations and Potential Thresholds for Further Evaluation” provides recommendations for mitigation for the two projects that were the subject of the DSGEIS, as well as cumulative impacts identified in the DSGEIS. The table that constitutes Appendix A is organized as follows:

- Column 1 (Project Number) identifies the individual project elements of the Capital Project Plan by number, utilizing the same numbering system and order as in the DGEIS, FGEIS, DSGEIS and elsewhere in this FSGEIS.
- Column 2 (Project) identifies the individual project elements of the Capital Project Plan using the same project title as in the DSGEIS and elsewhere in this FSGEIS.
- Column 3 (Resource Impact Topic) identifies the environmental or socioeconomic resource evaluated, with resources sequenced in the same order as Section 3 of the DSGEIS.
- Column 4 (Impacts) identifies the potential impact(s) associated to this resource associated with the implementation of this project element.
- Column 5 (Mitigation/Recommendations) identifies recommended mitigation measures associated with the implementation of the project component. Recommendations are not considered mitigation to be implemented until they are authorized by permit and/or approval by the reviewing agency with authority to approve implementation.
- Column 6 (SEQR Threshold for Further Evaluation) refers to situations or limitations under which a supplemental environmental review, and/or a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) may be required.

The thresholds and parameters noted in Table 2, above, and Appendix A of this FSGEIS, if materially exceeded, or if exceeded and resulting in significant adverse environmental impacts, will trigger a supplemental environmental review pursuant to SEQR.

3.2 KEY ISSUES FOR FUTURE EVALUATION

The FSGEIS (including the DSGEIS incorporated by reference) identifies both short term construction-related activities and long term operational activities associated with the project elements of the Capital Project Plan. Implementation of these project elements, with the incorporation of the recommended mitigation measures noted herein, will avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Compliance with relevant regulations, incorporation of design features, and the anticipated acquisition of permits and approvals from involved agencies also have been considered.

As envisioned by SEQR, this supplemental generic environmental impact statement (SGEIS) (consisting of the DSGEIS and this FSGEIS), is not expected to resolve all site-specific issues for the two projects that have been the subject of this process. The SGEIS process pursuant to SEQR in this instance has been effective in that the process has not identified issues of significant impact related to either of the two projects.

3.3 SUPPLEMENTAL REVIEW

With respect to the need for a supplemental environmental review:

- The University will review and evaluate the plan and design for the two projects that have been the subject of this SGEIS process as they are developed. This review and evaluation will include the use of a SEQR environmental assessment form (EAF), or the equivalent documentation that has been prepared specifically for use in conjunction with the Capital Project Plan, to determine and document if there is a significant change in the project from that described in the previous DGEIS and FGEIS, or the DSGEIS and FSGEIS for this SEQR process, or if a project change modification will result in a significant environmental impact from that described in the previous DGEIS and FGEIS, or the DSGEIS and FSGEIS for this SEQR process. If there are no significant changes or impacts pursuant to SEQR, the University will document and retain its evaluation and decision.
- If the project plan and design differs significantly from the description or thresholds noted herein for the two projects that have been the subject of the current SEQR process, or if a project change modification will result in a significant environmental impact from that described in the DSGEIS and FSGEIS for this SEQR process, the University will evaluate the specific issues and scope for the supplemental environmental review. The level and need for additional SEQR compliance will be based on the results of such review. The review will be documented using an EAF or the equivalent documentation that has been prepared specifically for use in conjunction with the Capital Project Plan.