



**SUNY Albany  
Capital Project Plan  
State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)**

**DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT  
FOR  
DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FEBRUARY 12, 2009**

**INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to New York State Environmental Conservation Law Article 8, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA); and Part 617 of Chapter 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, and the adoption of a positive declaration by the University at Albany, State University of New York (UAlbany), UAlbany intends to prepare a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for the “Capital Project Plan.” In accordance with SEQRA, the DGEIS is required to address specific adverse environmental impacts which can reasonably be anticipated. This document defines the potentially significant environmental impacts to be addressed in the DGEIS, as well as the extent and quality of information necessary to address these issues.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The Project is defined as UAlbany’s “Capital Project Plan.” The components of the Capital Project Plan are the following:

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Approximate Construction Start</b>
1. Student Housing Project	Construction of new student housing facilities with approximately 500 apartment-style beds	January 2011
2. Campus Center Addition	Construction of student activity and surge space of approximately 75,000 square feet (SF) under roof	Spring 2011
3. Business School Building	Construct new 90,000 SF academic facility	March 2011
4. Relocate Data Center	Relocate campus data center to another site on campus	Spring 2011
5. Multi-Use Athletic Facility	Construct a new multi-use athletic facility.	Spring 2011
6. Purple Path Continuation	Construction of the Purple Path to encircle and incorporate pedestrian and bicycle paths around	Summer 2011

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	the perimeter of the Uptown Campus	
7. Renovate Building 25 (former Student Health Building)	Renovate building to provide surge space for temporary occupancy during construction on Academic Podium	Summer 2011
8. Northern Landscape Improvement Project – Phase 2	Perform activities consistent with Landscape Master Plan	Spring 2011
9. Southern Landscape Improvement Project	Perform activities consistent with Landscape Master Plan	Spring 2010
10. State Quad Parking Lot Expansion	Add approximately 250 spaces to west side of State Quad parking Lot	May 2010
11. Surge Building	Construction of academic building of approximately 150,000 SF to facilitate Podium renovations	Spring 2013
12. Construct Parking Structure	Construct a parking structure	After 2014
13. Construct Addition to Grounds Building	Add approximately 10,000 SF addition for vehicle operations, small engine and metal shops	March 2010
14. Construct Combined Heat & Power Plant	Construct a cogeneration system to provide electrical power, heating and cooling to meet University needs	2013
15. Entry Improvements	Improve entrance aesthetics and safety at Washington and Western Avenues	2010
16. Bus Rapid Transit	Based on recommendations in the Harriman – UAlbany Linkage Study, locate Bus Rapid Transit stations on campus	2013
17. Podium West Building	Develop a mixed use building adjacent to west side of podium	2017
18. Bicycle-Pedestrian Path	Develop a network of paths, improving connections between each quad, the podium, and the Purple Path	2011
19. Athletic Master Plan	Continue site improvements with improvements to track and field facilities	Spring 2011
20. Renewal of Main Fountain Area and Tower	Repair corrosion to interior and exterior of water tower, repair mechanical systems in water tower and fountains and revitalize fountain area for potential multi-season use	Spring 2011

These 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 make a DGEIS

appropriate in this instance. The following are more detailed descriptions for those projects for which descriptions are currently available.

### **1. Student Housing Project**

UAlbany offers a variety of on-campus living experiences. These include:

**Living Centers** (Description from: <http://www.albany.edu/housing/living/quads/>): There are four residential Quadrangles (Quads) on the uptown campus, each housing roughly 1,200 students. Each quad is comprised of 8 three-story residence halls with a 22 floor tower. The quads are located at the four corners of the Academic Podium providing a convenient access to the Academic Podium, the libraries, campus center, and the University's athletic facilities.

Each of the 4 traditional quads offers a variety of living options from suite style with internal baths to traditional, corridor style rooms with community baths. The majority of bedrooms are designed as doubles. However, there are a small percentage of rooms that are designed as singles and triples. Depending upon the number of bedrooms in the living space, there is typically a minimum occupancy of 2 (1 bedroom) to maximum occupancy of 6 persons (3 bedrooms).

The Quads are self-contained, equipped with study lounges, game and movie rooms, fitness centers, and cafeterias. Every room is furnished with a bed, mattress, desk and chair, dresser, closet, and lamp (either floor style or wall mounted).

**University Apartments:** Apartment style living is available on either Freedom or Empire Commons.

**Empire Commons** - Empire, the University's newest apartment complex, housing 1200 students, opened its doors in the fall of 2002. Located on Perimeter Road West, the complex contains recreational facilities including basketball and volleyball courts, a fitness center, game room, and a variety of meeting rooms for educational & social purposes in the community center. Students can opt for either ten or twelve-month contracts and can choose the option to "Squat" or sign up for consecutive years in the same apartment. The basic configuration of an apartment consists of four bedrooms and two full baths.

(Excerpted from <http://www.albany.edu/housing/living/quads/commons/empire.html>, 10/1/08)

**Freedom Apartments** - Tucked away in a nice wooded setting, off Tricentennial Drive near CESTM, Freedom Apartments was opened in the mid 1980s. Apartment occupancy ranges from 2 to 5 students. Freedom is home to the New York Giants for their annual summer pre-season training camp. It is serviced by the University shuttle, which provides easy access to the campus. Apartments are fully furnished. Kitchens are equipped with a full size refrigerator, ample cabinet space, an oven and range. The University has potential plans to repurpose Freedom Apartments, so these 396 beds may be lost at some time in the future.

(Excerpted from <http://www.albany.edu/housing/living/quads/commons/freedom.html>, 10/1/08)

**Living/Learning Communities:** Living/Learning communities are new for the academic year 2008-2009 and are not available for freshmen. They are opportunities for students who are interested in a given topic or theme to take certain courses together and to live together in a campus residence hall. Theme houses are opportunities for students who are interested in a given topic or theme that live together in a campus residence hall. Each living/learning program focuses on a specific theme and offers courses and experiences throughout the year that relate to this

theme. In addition to living together in residence, students have the opportunity to work directly with faculty who has a special interest in the topical area. These include (excerpted from <http://www.albany.edu/housing/living/learning/>, 10/1/08):

**Anime House:** In this living/learning community, students must register for the course AWSS 361, “Gender and Nation in World Cinema: Anime.” The course is designed to promote in-depth exploration of Anime, including but not limited to: history of the genre works by noted animators, and the relation of Japanese history and contemporary culture to Anime.

**China House:** Students participating in this program will have an opportunity to combine practical usage of the Chinese language with increasing sophistication in the disciplines associated with the academic study of China.

**Francophone:** This living learning community will be composed of students who will speak French at all times in the residence hall. This group will study and examine areas of the world outside of France where the French language is spoken.

**Japan House:** The goal of the Japan House is to encourage students pursuing Japanese language studies to practice and improve their language skills by using the language in a residential environment.

**Student Leadership and Healthy Lifestyle:** Located on the State Quad in Tappan Hall. The Student Leadership and Healthy Lifestyle is a theme house initiated by students who are interested in living with other students who share their interests in participating in both on campus and off campus programs that do not revolve around substance use. Healthy Lifestyle environment is defined as an area where all residents and their guests (including those of legal drinking age) agree to keep the room free at all times from substances that have the potential to damage their health or the community. Students must participate in two community service projects per semester.

**Women’s Leadership Project:** Located on the Dutch Quad in Bleecker Hall, the Women’s Leadership project is a theme house exclusively for women. It is designed to bring women together who wish to participate in community service both on and off campus, learn about women’s issues and women’s history, develop leadership skills through activism, mentoring, and the opportunity to network through programming and mentoring.

**The Wellness Co-op:** Located on the Colonial Quad, the Wellness Co-op is an opportunity to live together as a group of students who have the opportunity to use the Colonial Quad Wellness Center outside of normal operating hours and facilitate programs regarding health and wellness.

UAlbany is pursuing construction of a new apartment-style housing complex on the Uptown campus. The architect for the proposed new living center complex reviewed a number of potential locations and configurations for this proposed facility. The contemplated new living center will be an approximately five hundred bed facility potentially configured as two, five-story buildings with four and six bedroom apartments. They may be designed and constructed as a UAlbany project, or may be outsourced to a private developer. The location presently being considered is 11.5 undeveloped acres in the southeast corner of campus, east of Indian Lake, the Perimeter Road, and of the University Police Department on Justice Drive. To date, this location has been used on a limited basis, for the deposition of yard waste. To the east is a residential

neighborhood. Alternative locations are in the southern portion of the Dutch Gold Parking Lot on the southwest corner of campus, likely necessitating a replacement parking project for over 600 spaces that may be displaced, and in the southern portion of the State Gold Lot in the northeast corner of campus, again likely necessitating a replacement parking project for over 500 spaces.

The potential location in the southeast corner of campus would not displace existing parking, while it would include additional, new parking spaces for residents in a portion of the campus that has relatively low traffic volumes at the present time.

The residential facility, regardless of location, would connect to selected existing utility services; drinking water and, potentially, sanitary sewer capacity would be provided by the City of Albany municipal system. It may be necessary to improve pedestrian options from that area of campus into the campus center to serve the student residents. Construction start for the contemplated project could be as early as January 2011.

## **2. Campus Center Addition**

The Campus Center is the community center of the University at Albany, serving students, faculty, professional staff, alumni, and guests. Traditionally considered the "hearthstone" or "living room" of the campus, the Campus Center provides services and conveniences that community members need in their daily life. It seeks to create an environment for getting to know and understand others through formal and informal interactions. It houses the Campus Center Facilities & Operations staff which coordinates and manages the eight meeting rooms and the ballroom that comprises the conference portion of the building. During the academic year, the Campus Center's meeting rooms host over 9,000 persons per month for meetings and functions within the building's confines. Six community contact tables are available within the Campus Center lobby, with eight additional tables (weather permitting) in the Campus Center Fountain area, for University groups and organizations to foster interaction with the greater community. These tables offer information, ticket sales, craft items, and other vending (when sponsored by campus organizations. (Excerpted from <http://www.albany.edu/campuscenter/CC/index.html>, 10/1/08)

In addition, the Campus Center houses a number of resource offices including the Student Service Center (Financial Aid, Student Accounts, and Registrar) offices, the Student Association offices, the Disability Resource Center; a bank branch; the University Book Store, and a number of food service options.

The Campus Center has been described as undersized for a University of this size and student population. The proposed project would construct an addition to the present Campus Center building for student activities and surge space totaling approximately 75,000 square feet. The addition may be directly to the west of the Garden and across Center Drive West from the Education Building and/or it may be constructed, in part, as a second deck on top of the existing Campus Center extension. It could conceivably increase the footprint of the present Campus Center building by up to 40,000 square feet. The cost for this addition at this time is estimated at \$31 million with construction scheduled to start in spring 2011.

## **3. Business School Building**

The School of Business at the University at Albany consists of five academic departments: accounting and law; finance; information technology and management; marketing; and

management. It is presently located in a building on the northwest corner of the Academic Podium adjacent to the Arts and Science Building and the Social Sciences Building.

This project involves the construction of a new 90,000 square foot building to be located at the site of the present Visitors' Parking Lot P1, between Collins Circle and the Academic Podium. Preliminary concept plans suggest that the building will be three stories above grade and one below grade. The height of the building will be limited by the height of the Podium, so that the buildings present a consistent height profile.

The building may include:

- Lower Level: classrooms, tunnel connection to the Podium, sunken garden courtyard
- First Floor: classrooms, computer labs, café, breakout team rooms, conference room(s)
- Second Floor: undergraduate and graduate studies, career services, Dean's offices
- Third Floor: faculty offices, lounge.

The budget estimate for the project at this time is approximately \$54 million with an approximate construction start of March 2011.

#### **4. Relocate Data Center**

The University's main Data Center is located below grade on the north side of the Academic Podium between the Fine Arts Building and the Arts and Sciences Building. The Data Center manages and stores all of the University's electronic information. It was built 40 years ago and equipment (server racks, etc.) growth projections indicate that it will be filled to physical capacity within a five year window. However, because of structural limitations, the existing specialized power and cooling capacities required for such a facility are expected to be exceeded within two years. These limitations place constraints on the computing capacity that will be available for operations and research at the University. Additionally, there are a number of server rooms across campus that place a strain on facilities but cannot be consolidated in the present Data Center due to such limitations.

A new Data Center is contemplated of about 35,000 square feet in floor space on an approximately 20,000 square foot building footprint. Of this floor space, 8,000 square feet will be the data center, primarily server operations, 5,000 square feet will provide mechanical services required for cooling and providing emergency power to the server room, and 22,000 sq ft will be office and support space. Given the sophisticated power and cooling requirements of a Data Center, this project presents some special opportunities for energy-efficient design and operation. This project will offer an opportunity to consolidate some operations from around the campus, and improve the cost and operational efficiency as compared to the present. Potential sites under consideration include re-programming Service Building C (SBC) and/or construction of a new building addition in the SBC parking lot, or the renovation of Building 25 and expansion into the Building 25 parking lot. The cost/benefit of a stand-alone building will also be analyzed and considered.

The estimated cost of relocating the Data Center is approximately \$30 million. It will be a sophisticated facility to design due to its power and cooling needs. Construction is anticipated to start in spring 2011.

### **5. Multi-Use Athletic Facility**

University Field at UAlbany was constructed in 1969 and is the home of UAlbany football, with bleacher seating for 5,000 and hillside lawn seating for 5,000 at capacity (<http://www.albany.edu/sports/facilities-out.htm>). The playing surface is grass, and is surrounded by an all weather 400 meter track. Associated with University Field are adjacent athletic facilities including 12 lighted tennis courts, and fields for football, soccer, softball, baseball, lacrosse, field hockey and other intramural and recreational uses. The UAlbany Great Danes play football in the Division I Football Championship Subdivision (formerly known as Division I-AA) as an associate member in the Northeast Conference (NEC).

The National Football League's New York Giants use University Field and its associated facilities as its official practice location during the league's preseason. The players and staff are housed in on-campus living centers during the summer months. This arrangement provides a recreational interest for the community, and enhances the overall reputation of UAlbany.

In 2004, UAlbany commissioned a "UAlbany Athletics and Recreation Master Plan to evaluate and consider the changing goals, status and needs of the University's athletic programs. The report noted that "...the existing and future needs of the University cannot be adequately met in the University's existing Physical Education (PE) building, Recreation and Convocation Center (RACC), stadium, and several natural turf fields as they are now configured" (Sasaki 2004). Further, it was concluded that in the future, "The present shortfall in adequate space can only worsen as the University attempts to meet its projected enrollment growth and program improvements at the Division I level over the next 10 years" (Sasaki 2004). This is seen as especially true with respect to University Field, which may not be considered adequate under criteria for Division I football; this could hamper the University's status in Division I, as well as negatively influence the competitive recruiting process for student-athletes as well as the general student body.

The 2004 Athletics Master Plan encompassed the anticipated full slate of potential needs of the campus, and proposed a phased approach to implementation of its recommendations, consistent with planning logistics, capital funding, construction schedules, and reasonable timetables to further the planning and design of the elements of the plan. A new multi-use athletic facility was part of this plan with elements that would tentatively include:

- initial seating capacity for approximately 10,000 spectators
- potential expansion of seating capacity to approximately 24,000
- uses to include football, soccer, and perhaps lacrosse events
- potential for other uses ranging from local and regional sporting events to convocations and concerts
- improvements to include a student-athlete academic support center, press and coach platform, private suites, a reception and conference room, and improvements in restroom and concession facilities from those at present.

A site screening effort identified a location for the new multi-use athletic facility; the process included work sessions on campus. The location selected is immediately east of the SEFCU Arena and Physical Education Buildings, with a relocation of one practice field.

The estimated construction cost is approximately \$46.5 million. The estimated total project cost is \$65 million. Capital funding has not been secured for this project, but it is a high capital project priority for the University. Estimated construction start could be as early as spring 2011.

## **6. Purple Path Continuation**

The “Purple Path” is a planned multi-use loop around the inner perimeter of the campus ring road of approximately five kilometers (3.2 miles). As contemplated, it would offer an opportunity for the campus community to have a dedicated corridor for non-motorized uses such as jogging, biking and walking. The paved surfaces would be maintained year-round, offering longer distance exercise options for those who wish to use it. The concept for the path includes both paved and non-paved surfaces in parallel, where possible, with non-paved surfaces remaining unplowed in the winter and available for cross country skiing or snowshoeing.

At present, the campus has no continuous walkways around the campus; the existing system of paths consists of varying surfaces, some paved, some unpaved. The intent for the Purple Path is to promote a low environmental impact, walkable campus environment.

The first section of the Purple Path was constructed in 2007. It runs one-third of a mile long, stretching from the corner of the baseball field to the entrance of the SEFCU Arena parking lot. It consists of a two-lane trail -- a nine-foot-wide blacktop-paved path for walkers and a six-foot-wide path with crushed stone for runners -- with a grassy area between the two. The Path includes bench seating and enhanced lighting.

Continuation of the planning and design process for the remainder of the Purple Path is anticipated to potentially restart in the summer of 2009. Construction of this project could start in summer 2011.

## **7. Renovate Building 25**

In 2008, the University’s Student Health Center and Counseling Center relocated from being housed, on-campus, in Building 25, to a new state-of-the-art medical building at 400 Patroon Creek (across Washington Avenue opposite the Harriman State Campus). This location is across the street from the University, approximately one mile east of the Washington Avenue entrance.

Building 25 is located in the western portion of the campus and, with the relocation of the Health Center services, the building is under consideration for renovation and alternate use(s). The University is studying potential uses in the context of overall campus space and program needs. The building (and the site) is a candidate for the relocation of the Data Center. In the near term, however, minor renovations will progress to meet urgent campus office and surge space needs related to functions displaced from other portions of the campus. Should the Data Center option not be deemed viable, the building, instead, will be renovated to alter room sizes and functions, transforming the former health center to perhaps office space; asbestos will be removed so that other renovation activities can take place. The cost for this project has not yet been determined. Construction could begin in summer 2011.

## **8. Northern Landscape Improvement Project – Phase 2**

In 2005 UAlbany prepared a Landscape Master Plan for selected portions of the campus. Landscaping is a key component to the visual aesthetic of the Uptown Campus design. Governor Nelson Rockefeller selected Edward Durell Stone to design a campus that concentrated buildings

in the center of the campus, leaving cars and parkland around the perimeter. Since the initial construction of the UAlbany campus, many of the plantings around the Academic Podium have been altered, are in poor health or dying, and/or are no longer the original species. Moreover, buildings and infrastructure added over the years (walkways, parking lots, etc.) have also impacted the vegetative landscaping. For example, seasonal visual effects of diverse plantings have not been fully considered in the existing landscaping.

The objective of this project is to continue the evaluation and upgrade of landscaping consistent with the historic nature of the Academic Podium with construction work to commence as early as spring 2011.

### **9. Southern Landscape Improvement Project**

Similar to the landscape planning and implementation for the northern portion of the campus, the objective of this project is to design an integrated landscaping concept for the remainder of campus. It will incorporate consideration of traffic and pedestrian pathways, and the Purple Path on the same proposed schedule as Northern Landscape Improvements (see Item 6, preceding).

### **10. State Quad Parking Lot Expansion**

This project would provide space for an approximately 200 to 350 vehicles, depending on need based on planning evaluations, in an area due west of the existing State Quad Parking area in a site that is presently lawn space. The purpose of this new parking expansion is to replace parking lost due to a number of planned projects. Specifically, the construction of the new Business School Building will lead to the immediate displacement of 126 visitors' parking spots and could potentially dislocate another 100 specialty spaces between the Podium and the new Business School site due to construction staging and contemplated green space enhancements. It is anticipated that construction for this project will begin in May 2010, in advance of the planned 2011 construction start for the Business School building.

### **11. Surge Building**

Given the urgent need for gut renovations of the buildings on the Academic Podium, particularly the science buildings, a science surge building has been contemplated for construction at an undetermined location, perhaps on the east side of the Podium. Conceptually, it could contain approximately 150,000 square feet of floor space, although specific configurations have not as yet been explored. The specifics of this project are speculative at this time, but the need for such surge space remains a high priority for future capital plan funding. Construction could begin as soon as spring 2013.

### **12. Construct Parking Structure**

As described in several other project initiatives, there are compelling reasons for removing vehicles from the central campus. Part of the solution may involve relocating cars to a structured parking on the periphery of the Podium within easy access to the main entrance to campus. This would reinforce the goals stated in both Edward Durrell Stone's campus master plan and the 2005 Landscape Master Plan to reduce or eliminate pedestrian vehicular intersections within the loop road for safety, quality of life, and aesthetic reasons. To further these objectives, a parking structure might be constructed at one of the existing parking areas on campus to expand parking capacity at that location. Development of a parking structure would reduce the amount of land on campus that would be necessary to meet parking needs and make this land available for other academic or recreational use. The size, location, cost and funding of a parking structure is

speculative at this time, as is the date of construction, although the latter is anticipated at this time to be after 2014.

### **13. Construct Addition to Grounds Building**

The construction of an addition is proposed adjacent to the Grounds Building. This potential 10,000 square foot addition will contain space for shops relocated from Service Building A (SBA). These shops are small engine, vehicle operations center and the metal shop. This project will increase operational efficiency, allow consolidation of other facilities functions in SBA, and permit the vacancy of Service Building C (SBC) for alternate use. Construction could begin March 2010.

### **14. Construct Combined Heat and Power Plant**

A combined heat and power plant (CHP) is a facility designed to produce both heat and electricity from a single fuel source, such as natural gas, although a combination of fuels can be used. Such facilities, if properly designed and operated, can reduce an institution's energy use and environmental impact.

A CHP differs from a cogeneration plant in that cogeneration facilities are designed to produce heat and power in a sequential manner, while CHP plants may not be so designed. Additionally, a CHP Plant does not necessarily meet the legal definition of cogeneration in the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act, or PURPA.

The advantage of a CHP system over other options for either heat or electricity generation is that these systems provide for a greater conversion efficiency from the fuel(s) than would otherwise be obtained from a traditional generation operation. In traditional schemes, heat is wasted. In a CHP system, efficiency can be as much as doubled, and emissions may be reduced significantly, helping the University to meet its green and energy goals.

UAlbany will perform an appropriate evaluation to ascertain the benefits of a centralized CHP facility versus a dispersed generation system, or a combination of the two. At present, a specific location for such a facility has not been selected, although the most viable option is to co-locate it at the existing power plant. A date for construction of a CHP Plant is not known at this time, but is anticipated to be approximately 2013.

### **15. Entry Improvements**

Both the Washington Avenue and Western Avenue entrances to campus are being re-considered to provide greater safety and a more appropriate first impression of the Uptown Campus. This project will implement a re-design of the entrance to improve safety and aesthetics. Construction activities, which could begin in 2010, may include improvements to turning lanes, signals, signage, landscaping and grading. Overall, this will develop a more inviting and secure environment for students, staff and visitors to the campus.

### **16. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

This project is intended to develop an integrated, multi-modal transportation system over a ten-year period and to identify strategies and projects that would help to facilitate connections and linkages between the University at Albany and other mass transit facilities throughout the Capital District along with the Harriman Research and Technology Park and perhaps the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering site.

In concept, this project would establish a transportation spine linking the campuses. The concept is to create a multimodal facility for transit and non-motorized users that will provide connections from Harriman through to Nanotech campus and potentially through to Crossgates Mall and downtown Albany. The BRT service is intended to provide high-speed, high quality transit service between downtown Albany through the City's neighborhoods, to the UAlbany Campus and beyond to Crossgates and possibly New Karner Road. It is conceived as an integral service in the wider Capital District Transit Authority (CDTA) service network and link to other regional resources such as the proposed Albany Convention Center. The proposed BRT service will provide a more convenient link from the four UAlbany campuses to student neighborhoods. The high level of transit service between job centers at the campuses and downtown, retail, entertainment areas, and the residential neighborhoods in-between will make living and working in Albany a more attractive choice in the future.

The purpose of this project is to develop the design of the BRT to a level of detail that will allow preliminary engineering to be completed showing the required street modifications, stations, terminals and support infrastructure. This will provide the basis for implementation funding. Implementation of this plan is beyond the control of UAlbany which will collaborate with the CDTA and other transportation entities to make this concept a reality; however, based on reasonable planning schedules, a date of approximately 2013 is anticipated for implementation.

#### **17. Podium West Building**

This building is envisioned as a major extension to the Academic Podium to help the University meet surge space needs (for renovations elsewhere on the Podium) and growth/expansion needs in its research and education programs. The current site is occupied by parking, green space, and the University's primary loading dock. This project will include architectural design and construction for the completion of this proposed new facility. Construction could begin in 2017.

#### **18. Bicycle-Pedestrian Path**

The current layout of roadways and sidewalks from the inner campus toward the ring road does not provide adequate access to the future location of the Purple Path and requires upgrades to enhance and promote pedestrian, biking, and other sustainable modes of transportation and recreation. Motorized vehicles intersect too often with the pathways that extend from the Podium to the ring road, and inadequate walking and biking facilities make it difficult for people to safely access the Purple Path. The intent of this project is to provide pedestrians with the right-of-way in all situations and reconfigure the pathways and roadways accordingly. Removing parking and restricting the majority of vehicle access from proposed car-free zones would improve the pathways that connect to the Purple Path.

Specific recommendations were made to the University to improve such pedestrian and bicycle circulation on the University at Albany uptown campus. A 2006 student-written report called the "University at Albany Golden Grid Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan" highlighted a series of site improvements that could improve safety, usability, and image of the campus by constructing greenways, paths, trails, and bicycle lanes in roadways to encourage pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

This project would seek to implement all, or portions, of the recommended work, depending on funding and coordination with other projects described herein. Conceivably, the proposed project would design, construct, and improve new and existing paths, better connecting each quad and parking lot with the Podium. It would also include improved lighting, security, benches, bus

shelters and bicycle racks adjacent to the paths. The creation of the Purple Path around the campus will be a valuable asset to the University community and would be linked to these other paths. A date of 2011 is anticipated for construction of the path, safety elements and other features.

### **19. Athletic Master Plan**

The role of athletics and recreation at UAlbany is evolving in new directions as participation in NCAA Division I programs continues to evolve and grow in status and reputation on and off the field. Opportunities for student recreation may be a discriminator in the selection of higher education options by prospective students. Today, with changing demands in athletics and recreation the existing needs and future needs of the University cannot be adequately met in the University's existing Physical Education (PE) building, SEFCU Arena, University Field, and several natural turf fields as they are now configured. The purpose of the UAlbany Athletics and Recreation Master Plan was to provide a design and planning framework for the University to implement the Department of Athletics and Recreation's mission over approximately the next 10 years. This Plan will define site and building improvements and identify new athletic and recreation facilities within the existing campus fabric. It also will outline phasing and identify costs. At this time, with the multi-use athletic facility addressed in a project above, continuation of a the athletics plan would likely seek to next focus on the outdoor track and field facilities, which are antiquated, in disrepair, and do not meet NCAA standards. A tentative completion date for the Athletic Master Plan is Spring 2011.

### **20. Renewal of Main Fountain and Water Tower**

The main fountain on the Podium is a signature feature of the campus as is the water tower which is not only an architectural landmark, but a functioning 300,000 gallon storage and water pressure facility. As functioning mechanical, electrical, and plumbing components of the campus, they have aged and are in need of total renovation and upgrade. Indeed, many of the parts used in these systems must be fabricated by hand, as replacements are no longer mass manufactured. Repair and upgrade of the water tower will likely involve improvements in system condition and efficiency with no appreciable difference in exterior aesthetics (besides new paint). The University, however, will study how planned capital work (the various projects described herein) will impact water pressures and how the tower fits into these needs. With regard to the fountain area, work is envisioned to modernize the systems and layout of the fountain so that it operates more efficiently and is redesigned in a manner that provides year-round aesthetic quality and perhaps conversion to alternate uses (such as skating in the winter). The cost and funding for such upgrades is not yet known, but will be evaluated in 2010. Construction could begin in spring 2011.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The DGEIS will include a discussion of alternatives to the projects described above. These alternatives may include that:

- Some of the projects described may not be implemented.
- Other projects of a related nature may be implemented instead of, or addition to, the projects described above.
- The projects may be implemented at alternative locations; alternative locations have been evaluated for a number of these projects, but in several cases a final location has not been

selected. In other instances, project planning is immature, that is, planning has not as yet been performed.

- Projects that may be implemented may be modified in size.

## **POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS**

Potentially significant adverse impacts to be addressed are associated with the following environmental issues:

- Impact on Land
- Impact on Water
- Impact of Drainage
- Impact on Air
- Impact on Climate Change
- Impact on Plants and Animals
- Impact on Aesthetic Resources
- Impact on Historical and Archeological Resources
- Impact on Open Space and Recreation
- Impact on Transportation
- Impact on Energy
- Impact on Noise and Odors
- Impact on Public Health and Safety
- Impact on Community Character and Land Use

The nature of potential impacts in these topic areas is presented below; these issues will be further developed and addressed in the DGEIS. Impacts addressed will include construction and operational impacts.

The accompanying matrix indicates resources that may be impacted by the respective components of the Capital Plan. These resources will be evaluated consistent with the level of information reasonably available regarding these component projects.

### **1. Impact on Land**

This topic relates to impacts on soils, geology, and topography and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

#### Soils

- Excavation, grading and restoration following demolition of existing buildings
- Excavation and grading for the construction of new buildings
- Landscaping or landscape rehabilitation following project implementation
- Disturbance of contaminated subsurface areas
- Erosion potential of existing soils
- Loss of topsoil
- Modification or 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 during or after project implementation
- Increase in runoff potential
- Alterations of drainage patterns

#### Information needs

Information from the Soil Survey of Albany County, NY published by the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) (formerly the U.S. Soil Conservation Service) and other readily existing resources will be relied on to describe surface (soil) and subsurface (bedrock) conditions. Topographic data will be obtained from existing surveys of campus and the immediately surrounding area.

## **2. Impact on Water Resources**

This topic relates to impacts on surface waters or ground water and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

#### Surface Waters

- Affects to flow rate, periodicity or volume
- Affects to course, banks or substrate
- Affects to water quality
- Modification of the existence, duration or intensity of flooding
- Withdrawal
- Accessibility
- Modification or impairment of use
- Modification of evaporation rate
- New or modified discharges to surface waters
- Affects to water supplies

#### Ground Waters

- Ground water quality
- Withdrawal demand
- Recharge capacity
- Sole source aquifer status
- Proximity to water supply well fields
- Well head protection
- Modification or impairment of use
- Modification of hydrologic system
- New or modified discharge to ground waters
- Disturbance or existing contaminated ground waters

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on water resources. Sources of information include city and county planning, the New York State Department of

Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) (waterbody class and standard, ground water resources and quality), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and UAlbany.

### **3. Impact on Drainage**

This topic relates to impacts on erosion, drainage, inundation or flooding and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Changes in slope or elevation during or after project implementation
- Increase in 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

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess drainage impacts, including the NRCS, which publishes information relating to soils, permeability and erosion potential; city and county planning departments, which may have locally developed information resources; and UAlbany, which may have information from other campus activities.

### **4. Impact on Air**

This topic relates to impacts on air emissions and air quality and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Emissions and dust from construction vehicles and operations
- Modifications of transportation patterns and other activities as a result of construction 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

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on air, including data from NYSDEC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

### **5. Impact on Climate Change**

This topic relates to impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Use of construction machinery
- Modifications of transportation patterns and other activities as a result of construction activities
- Modifications in the nature of fossil fuel use
- Modification of the nature of combustion sources
- Increased fossil fuel energy use
- 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 ACUPCC Guidelines
- Consistency with climate change policies
- Consistency with campus sustainability planning

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on climate change. This information is largely expected to be acquired from UAlbany.

### **6. Impact on Plants, Animals and Habitats**

This topic relates to impacts on plants, wildlife and their habitat and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

#### Wildlife

- Temporary or permanent displacement of wildlife
- Temporary or permanent 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

#### Habitats

- Loss or degradation of wetlands

- Loss or disturbance of areas with wetland characteristics
- Damage to New York State-designated Critical Environmental Areas

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on plants, animals and habitats, including from the following resource documents:

- NYSDEC. 1990. Ecological Communities of New York State. Albany, NY
- Wetland mapping (NYSDEC Freshwater, National Wetland Inventory maps)

The following information resources will be consulted:

- City of Albany Planning Department
- Albany County Planning Department
- NYSDEC
- USEPA
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Natural Areas Commission
- UAlbany

### **7. Impact on Aesthetic Resources**

This topic relates to impacts on aesthetic resources, such as ambient noise, lighting and visual resources or views, and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

#### Noise

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

#### Light

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

#### Visual

- Impairment by obstruction or physical change to a scenic resource or viewshed
- Damage to scenic resources (historic or unique natural areas or structures)
- Impairment of the enjoyment of visual resources

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on aesthetic resources.

### **8. Impact on Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resources**

This topic relates to impacts on cultural, historical and archaeological resources, and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- 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

## **9. Impact on Transportation**

This topic relates to impacts on transportation and traffic, and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

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

### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on transportation. Highway/roadway jurisdictions will be consulted to identify and compile available highway data relating to road conditions, highway capacity, level of service, and accident levels. The necessity to supplement existing information will be evaluated.

## **10. Impact on Energy**

This topic relates to impacts on sources of energy and energy use, and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Amount of energy used
- Nature of energy source
- Constraints on energy availability

### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on energy.

## **11. Impact on Public Health and Safety**

This topic relates to impacts on community services, and involves the following considerations as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Fire safety
- Police services
- Medical and healthcare facilities and services
- Emergency services
- Schools
- Community infrastructure

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on public health and safety.

### **12. Impact on Community Character and Land Use**

This topic relates to impacts on nature and intensity of land uses, and consistency of land uses with existing land use plans and policies, and may occur as a result of the following types of activities that may occur as a result of one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- Consistency with land use plans
- Consistency/Incompatibility with community character and public expectations for the site and surrounding area
- Displacement of a land use
- Alteration of a land use
- Impairment or restriction of surrounding land uses
- Modification of land use density
- Socioeconomic impacts, including employment, economics, demographics, housing
- Jurisdictional modifications
- Modifications 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
- Construction-related impacts:
  - Demolition and construction will require temporary development of staging areas;
  - Temporary construction-related closures and detours for pedestrians.

#### Information Needs

Existing, readily available information will be relied upon to assess impacts on community character and land use. The following information resources will be consulted:

- City of Albany Planning Department
- Albany County Planning Department
- NYSDEC
- USEPA
- UAlbany.

### **13. Sustainability**

This topic relates to impacts on sustainability and the consistency of plans and designs with sustainability principles, plans and policies, and may occur in connection with one or more of the proposed projects in the Capital Projects Plan:

- LEED principles in design, construction, operation
- Adaptive reuse of buildings rather than demolition
- Reuse, recycling of materials where demolition occurs.

#### **GROWTH INDUCING ASPECTS**

The potential for growth inducing aspects of the Capital Projects Plan will be described. The growth inducing aspects of a project applies to the extent to which an action may cause a significant increase in the local population and result in further development. Examples of such development might be an increase in the need for public services (*e.g.*, additional schools), the development of housing, or the encouragement of secondary or support industries and commercial operations.

#### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Cumulative impacts are those impacts "...that result from the incremental or increased impact of an action(s) when the impacts of that action are added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions" (NYSDEC 1992). The Capital Projects Plan represents a number of projects on the UAlbany campus that may be interrelated or result in cumulative impacts with respect to each other. For this reason, the elements of the Capital Projects Plan are being addressed collectively in this DGEIS. In addition, there may be other capital planning projects unrelated to but in the vicinity of the campus that may result in cumulative impacts. Information about potential or existing projects will be obtained from City and County Planning departments, and local economic and business development groups.

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Capital Project Plan  
State University of New York at Albany  
Albany, NY  
February 12, 2009**

**Cover Sheet**

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**References**

References cited in the document will be identified by title, source and date.

**Appendices**

- SEQRA Documents (Lead Agency Coordination Materials, Positive Declaration, Scoping Documentation, Scoping Meeting documentation)