



May 18, 2026

Urban Design Commission
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Expansion
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way
Madison, WI 53713

On behalf of the Alliant Energy Center, we respectfully submit this letter requesting initial and final approval from the Urban Design Commission for the proposed expansion of the existing 172,000 square-foot Exhibition Hall at 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way. The project constitutes the first phase of the campus-wide master plan and supports the objective of establishing a cohesive campus identity. The proposed improvements will provide additional gathering and exhibition space to better accommodate public events and community use. The design intent integrates art, innovation, and technology with contextual influences drawn from the region's natural and agricultural character.

The scope of work includes building additions at the north and south ends of the existing facility. Vehicular circulation will be enhanced through the addition of a dedicated rideshare drop-off lane on the south side. The existing receiving dock on the west side of the building will remain screened and will be supplemented by a new receiving/storage addition. The receiving dock will be secured by gates that will remain open during normal business hours and will be monitored by security staff during events to maintain safe and unobstructed egress. Exterior materials will be consistent with the existing Exhibition Hall and will incorporate the stone veneer utilized on the adjacent New Holland Pavilion. New outdoor plazas with native plantings and pedestrian-scale lighting will serve the primary entrances.

To maintain continued operations during construction, the project will be constructed in three phases. Prior to mobilization, the two existing accessory storage buildings and the Ferris Center, located southeast of the existing Exhibition Hall, will be demolished.

Phase 1 includes the south addition, consisting of a single-story expansion of approximately 148,000 square feet at the south end of the existing building which includes a new connector link to the existing Spark Hotel. Program elements include additional exhibition space, banquet hall, meeting rooms, storage, and a commercial kitchen. A new mechanical penthouse will be constructed on the south roof. Large mechanical rooftop equipment not within the penthouse will be screened from view.

Phase 2 will commence upon completion of Phase 1 and includes the north addition. Work will include demolition of the existing 12,400 square-foot, single-story Administration Building located northwest of the existing Exhibition Hall. In addition, approximately 45,000 square feet at the north end of the facility (the original Forum building), which contains the existing commercial kitchen, will be removed. The north-end expansion will add a partial second level and mezzanine and will provide approximately 70,000 square feet of additional floor area, including exhibition space, meeting rooms, administrative offices for Alliant Energy

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Center and Dane County staff, and a mezzanine-level multipurpose room. A new mechanical penthouse will be constructed above the north addition. Large mechanical rooftop equipment not within a penthouse will be screened from view.

Phase 3 consists of mechanical, electrical, and systems upgrades within the existing building. The floor plan layout will remain unchanged during this backfill phase.

The project site is located within Urban Design District 1 (UDD 1). The proposed design has been developed to be consistent with the applicable UDD 1 guidelines, including the following:

- Pedestrian-friendly landscape, hardscape, and site lighting design
- Building access and entry, including connections to public transit and pedestrian routes
- Architectural building massing and articulation that meet UDD 1 guidelines
- Exterior materials, including stone, concrete, metal panel, bird-safe vision glass, and spandrel glass

Existing Building Conditions:

The existing two-story building is classified as Type I-B construction with unlimited allowable building area. The existing building footprint is 172,000 square feet, and the existing building height is 53'-0". The building is fully sprinklered in accordance with NFPA 13 and is equipped with a fire alarm system.

Building Conditions at Completion:

The building will remain classified as Type I-B. Upon project completion, the expanded two-story building with mezzanine will total 475,676 square feet. The peak building height of the new additions will be 53'-0". The ordinance maximum building height is two stories and 35 feet. Because the proposal exceeds the maximum permitted height, the project will require approval as a conditional use. The building additions will be fully sprinklered in accordance with NFPA 13, and the facility will receive a new fire alarm system. All new large rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened.

Building Footprint Summary:

Existing Building: 207,900 gsf (excludes 12,400 gsf admin building and accessory storage buildings)
Phase 1 Building Demolition: 3,500 gsf (connector to hotel)
Phase 1 Building Addition: 152,900 gsf (includes new connector to hotel)
Phase 2 Building Demolition: 57,400 gsf (includes admin building and forum)
Phase 2 Building Addition: 70,000 gsf
Phase 3 Existing Building Renovations: 159,400 gsf
Total Building at Project Completion: 382,300 gsf

Property Information:

The parcel comprises approximately 164 acres and is zoned Special District: PR - Parks and Recreation. Stadiums and auditoriums are identified as conditional uses within the PR Special District. The project meets the minimum lot area requirements and setback standards applicable to the conditional use. The project disturbs 21.4 acres of land. The remainder of the 164 acres is undisturbed.

**Parking:**

Minimal on-site parking will be displaced with this project. The existing paved surface at the south end of the site by the south addition is most commonly used for event staging and site storage and rarely used for public parking. Bicycle parking has been provided near each primary entrance. A total of 90 bicycle stalls will be provided.

Preliminary Project Schedule:

Construction Phase 1 (18 months): 2028 – 2029

Construction Phase 2 (18 months): 2029 – 2030

Construction Phase 3 (12 months): 2030 – 2031

Project Completion : 2031

Hours of Operation:

Dane County and Alliant Energy Center administrative offices will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Regular staffing is anticipated to include approximately 20-30 office personnel and 10-12 laborers. Weekday and weekend events will continue as currently scheduled, with modest growth in attendance anticipated.

The Exhibition Hall Expansion constitutes the first phase of the campus-wide master plan and establishes a framework for a renewed vision for the campus and the surrounding community. We look forward to presenting our plans in greater detail and welcome the Commission's feedback, questions, and guidance as we move forward.

Jeff Connelly, AIA
Senior Project Manager
Strang, Inc.