

1.3 | LETTER OF INTENT

ZONING REQUEST:

Planned Development: General Development Plan

PROJECT NAME:

Four Lakes District

PARCEL LOCATION

4002 Evan Acres Road, Madison, WI 53718

PROPERTY OWNER:

Ho-Chunk Nation
P.O. Box 667
Black River Falls, WI 54615

ARCHITECTURE, MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/ PLUMBING ENGINEERING, INTERIOR DESIGN

Strang
811 E. Washington Ave. #200
Madison, WI 53703

CIVIL ENGINEERING:

JSD Professional Services
161 Horizon Drive #101
Verona, WI 53593

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:

SAIKI DESIGN
1110 S. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715

PRECONSTRUCTION/COST ESTIMATING:

CG SCHMIDT
10 West Mifflin Street Suite 400
Madison, WI 53703

BRANDING AND SIGNAGE:

ZEBRADOG
1249 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703

PLANNING:

URBAN ASSETS
807 East Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53703

SITE:

The GDP site is 47.5 Acres located at Southeast intersection of Highway 90 and Highway 12/18; Aldermanic District 16; Madison Metropolitan School District. The owner's existing 60,000 sf. building located at the southern corner of the property would remain to be expanded and remodeled.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The City of Madison Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as a General Commercial District.

EXISTING ZONING:

The site is currently zone General Commercial.

EXISTING USES:

Casino, Parking, Vacant Land, Multifamily Housing Zoned Commercial District

SURROUNDING USES:

North: Commercial/Retail, Hotels, Highway 12/18, Landfill. Zoned Commercial and employment.

South: Highway 90/94

West: Highway 90/94, agriculture and single-family housing beyond

East: City Golf Course

DESIGN NARRATIVE:

OVERALL DESIGN INTENT

A goal of this project is to create a casino/hotel/convention center campus, a cultural and entertainment destination that has a decidedly modern, forward-looking design vision. Traditional motifs and metaphors are interpreted in an abstract, non-literal design idiom, to appeal to, and reach a whole new generation of gamers. The design of this project reflects the historic importance of gaming in Ho-Chunk culture through the millennia and celebrates the Ho-Chunk tradition of gracious hospitality. Outdoor dining and activity areas as well as a large outdoor event space extend the visitor experience to the landscape.

HERITAGE CENTER

The proposed Heritage Center is designed to fulfill the goal of sharing, preserving and celebrating the stories of the Ho-Chunk nation, who has made the Madison area, the "Four Lakes" region their home for thousands of years. As is the case with the rest of the campus, the architecture of the proposed Heritage Center is also conceived of in an abstract, non-literal idiom in order to create a more timeless context for celebrating and honoring the culture and history of the Ho-Chunk people.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

This project is deeply rooted in the goal of stewardship of the land and the Ho-Chunk nation's connection to their ancestral homeland. The site, civil engineering and landscape architecture is conceived of with this goal of honoring, connecting and restoring the land. The existing wetland on the site will be carefully restored, and the surrounding prairie and oak savanna will feature interpretive walking paths that enable the visitor to enjoy the beauty of the landscape and learn from the experience.

PROPOSED USES:

The General Development Plan (GDP) includes 7 Buildings and 2 Parking Structures. The following is a summary of potential future uses. The final building area, and parking counts will vary based on the Specific Implementation plans.

Building 1	Heritage Center
Building 2	Casino
Building 3	Conference Center
Building 4	Hotel, Spa, Restaurant
Building 5	2 Parking Structures
Building 6	Restaurant
Building 7	2 Future Development Sites

Approximate Total Parking: 2,000 Stalls

ENTRY SEQUENCE AND SITE APPROACH

As one approaches the site from the east along Millpond Road, one experiences an unfolding vision of the project. An entry gateway element and a water feature greets the visitor, framing views of the campus and the restored landscape beyond. The Heritage Center is located on a rise in the land to the east of the entrance drive. One enters the Heritage Center on the upper level, and looks out over the circular Great Room towards a framed vista of the restored native landscape and the Casino-Hotel-Conference Center campus beyond.

SITE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The site and landscape design involves sculpting of the land to define and create space - defining the Great Circle, berming to screen the parking structures, creating view corridors and reflecting the Ho-Chunk heritage and tradition of mound building. Circles are important in Ho-Chunk culture as the form of their gathering spaces, and this is reflected in the Great Circle and the Great Room of the the Heritage Center. The Great Circle is a large circular lawn-covered green space that will be the venue for celebrations and performances. On axis with the Great Circle is a large overhead garage door that opens up the Conference Center to the outside, creating a stage for performances and celebrations. The Great Circle lawn will provide ample space for audiences.

(DESIGN NARRATIVE CONTINUED)**“FOUR LAKES”**

Reflecting the Ho-Chunk name “DeJope” which means “Four Lakes”, a chain of bio-retention basins, dry streams, landscape and hardscape forms and water features come together to represent the metaphor of Madison’s chain of lakes that has graced the Ho-Chunk Nation’s ancestral homeland for millennia.

UNIQUE SITE CHALLENGE: ACOUSTICS

The location of the site immediately northeast of I-90 presents the challenge of creating an pleasant experience for users of the outdoor spaces. The massing strategy of the buildings creates an effective acoustic barrier for highway noise. The Heritage Center and the restored native landscape with its interpretive pathways are located in the center of the site, away from the highway. Water features in the Hotel and Casino Entrance Plaza provide pleasing sound-masking white noise for guests.

UNIQUE SITE CHALLENGE: EXISTING GAS PIPELINE

An existing underground gas pipeline that runs through the site is carefully accommodated in the design. The required setbacks from the pipeline Right-of Way are fully integrated into the design of the Casino/Hotel Entrance Plaza and the Great Circle. An indoor bridge connects the Hotel to the Casino Lobby.

A GATEWAY TO MADISON: TRANSPARENCY AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE PUBLIC REALM

The existing Casino is transformed into a transparent facility that reaches out to the community and a whole new generation of gamers. Floor to ceiling glazing opens up the Lobby to the main entrance to the north. The southwest facade of the Casino-Hotel complex is designed to reflect its role as a gateway element for the city of Madison: The transparent form of the 2nd floor of the Casino reaches out the highway, announcing what happens inside. The curved form and rhythm of the screening elements of the West Parking Structure take on the metaphor of the traditional Ho-Chunk long house. The screening consists of planes that are perpendicular to the direction of traffic on the highway, providing a dynamic experience for the viewer as they drive past the southwest facade.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION, FEBRUARY 13, 2019**Items discussed and the Design Team’s responses:**

1) Concern regarding the relatively long distance between the two organizing elements (the restored wetland and the Great Circle) and the people activated buildings. Concern that the great circle is right up against the northwest façade of the east parking structure.

Design Team’s Response:

The Great Circle is a large outdoor celebration/performance space modeled after the traditional Ho-Chunk Pow-Wow grounds. It is appropriately located next to the large garage doors of the conference center which will double as a stage area. In response to the UDC’s concerns, the Great circle has been reconfigured and moved west, to be further away from the parking structure to allow space for the ground to berm up to the parking structure, reducing its visual impact on the Great Circle.

The restored wetlands and the surrounding prairie and oak savanna are conceived of as a quiet contemplative natural space with interpretive walks, reflecting the Ho-Chunk culture’s connection to the land. This natural area is appropriately located in the middle of the site surrounding to the Heritage Center.

The Entrance Plaza next to the Casino and Hotel entrances is an equally significant space to the above two spaces, and it is appropriately designed to reinforce the activity and uses at the entrances. It is conceived of as a open, covered, paved hardscape area to accommodate vehicular dropoff, large groups of people entering and exiting the Casino and Hotel and outdoor dining. Water features that are an abstract representation of the 4 Lakes metaphor and landscape areas further animate the space. Please refer to the rendered perspectives in our submittal package that represent our design vision for this space.

The site plan carefully balances the location vehicular access/dropoff with pedestrian access: driveways curve in from the north and arc around the Great Circle, bringing vehicular access to the two main entrances while

preserving the spatial integrity of the Great Circle.

2) Question regarding whether the project as presented will be executed in phases, with many years in between the phases. The Commission expressed a desire that at each phase, the campus has the character of a complete project. A project phasing plan was requested.

Design Team’s Response:

As shown on Sheet 4.1, the Initial Phase of this project will include all components of the Master Plan, with the exception of the two future development sites on the northwest and the northeast of the campus. Sheet 4.9 Schedule and Phasing Plan shows the project schedule and phasing of the Initial Phase. No time will elapse between each of the phases of the Initial Phase of the Master Plan.

3) Aesthetic concern regarding the Existing Casino Screen Wall

Design Team’s Response:

After carefully considering the Commission’s aesthetic concerns regarding the proposed Existing Casino Screen Wall, our current proposal is to dispense with the idea of the screen wall and instead refinish the exterior of the existing casino to match the clean lines and architectural expression of the rest of the project. We believe that the massing of the Southwest facade of the existing Casino fits well with the massing of the entire composition of the project. This solution will draw more attention to the “prow” of the 2nd floor Casino expansion, which is appropriately hierarchically the most important element on the southwest facade.

4) Suggestion of a green alternative for screening the southwest (highway) facade of the West Parking Structure.

Design Team’s Response:

After having explored the Commission’s suggestion for a green alternative for screening, our recommendation is to utilize architectural materials for the screen elements, for the following reasons:

- Use of architectural materials would be more in keeping with the desired aesthetic of the project, and consistent with the long-house metaphor intended for the screen elements.
- Long-term maintenance considerations.
- Year-round screening is more easily achievable.