

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Redevelopment Project Update – *Schematic design phase nears completion; Redevelopment plans considered in context of the current conditions*

While many activities throughout the world have come to a grinding halt – or an extended pause – some essential activities have continued. Frontline workers in health care, food service, social services and education, for example, continue to find alternate ways of delivering their critical goods and services. On a parallel track, important efforts that will, eventually, be crucial for ensuring future economic recovery also continue to advance.

Members of the Alliant Energy Center Redevelopment Committee believe there will be a role for the campus to play in reigniting the economy by safely driving and supporting the return of the meeting, convention and tourism industries as part of the post-pandemic recovery. To that end, critical work that has been in motion continues. The schematic design phase for the Phase 1 Exposition Hall expansion being conducted by Madison-based Strang Architects in association with Perkins + Will is an important step in a long process of advancing the Master Plan.

To date, the architects are approximately three-quarters of the way through their work to develop those schematic designs. This work, expected to conclude in June, represents the completion of one element of a long, thoughtful process that has been underway for several years. And it is essential to position the Committee for being able to quickly undertake the final steps in the design process and move ahead with construction as soon as it is strategically and economically feasible and advisable to do so.

Current designs include a larger and enhanced expo hall that features more space and greater functionality. Plans will also improve aesthetics and connectivity with amenities. The schematic designs are necessary to conceptualize the project and understand its budgetary needs. They make it possible to continue the process toward construction plans when the time is right.

Right now, the Alliant Energy Center is helping to meet current community needs to address the COVID-19 pandemic. But once the community begins to re-emerge and the economy restarts, an expanded Alliant Energy Center will be an essential piece of our economic recovery as we safely come back together as a community.

The Committee believes this readiness could help position the project for potential federal stimulus dollars, which may be made available to help communities with recovery. Visit the Alliant Energy Center Redevelopment website for the [most recent update on schematic design development](#) (April 20, 2020).

An expanded Alliant Energy Center is a central component of a master plan that enhances public access, encourages economic development and supports community engagement. That's why planning continues even during a massive disruption like a pandemic.

The Redevelopment Committee acknowledges the gradual re-emergence from social distancing may slow the reopening of the Alliant Energy Center for events and activities and will likely require innovation and flexibility, such as exploring virtual opportunities. There also will be competing community priorities for resources due to the pandemic. Those may affect the pace of the Alliant Energy Center's planned expansion, but the behind the scenes work and public outreach continues.

"We know we'll probably need to slow the process down, but the Redevelopment Committee is keeping the vision and dream alive and continues to communicate that to the public. That's the power of community," Miles explains.