



# **AEC WORK GROUP REPORT**

**COMPILED AND PRESENTED TO  
DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE JOE PARISI  
BY LEADERSHIP SYNERGIES LLC**

**DECEMBER 2012**

# AEC WORK GROUP

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND WORK GROUP FINDINGS

### INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

An official task force was appointed in early 2012 by County Executive Parisi to study and make recommendations for short- and long-term enhancements/needs of AEC. This work group completed the “short-term” work at the end of August 2012.

County Executive Parisi addressed the GMCVB, MASC and Spirit Boards in late June 2012. At this meeting, Executive Parisi asked our leadership to “continue this conversation” and expressed his openness to our input and opinions on the subject of AEC’s future. As a result, the GMCVB established a working group with participation and representation from each of these boards to complement the work of the official task force and respond to the County Executive’s request for our input.

This group met twice in August and September on its own. It then contracted with Leadership Synergies LLC to facilitate, lead and provide industry expertise for work sessions in October and November 2012.

### EXECUTIVE NARRATIVE

The GMCVB established the work group to provide recommendations and advice to support longer-term visioning work for the AEC, as well as to provide continuing advice and feedback as the process moves forward.

Our work group discussions focused on the AEC and surrounding campus area, but the group expressed the desire to consider any AEC building/campus changes or any research initiated to support changes at the AEC in a larger context of creating a broader vision for the destination of Madison overall.

The **key themes** from the GMCVB work group discussions include:

- Urge the County to continue to work quickly toward eliminating the AEC’s reliance on reserves for operating the facility by retaining and recruiting customers.
- Determine the appropriate future core mission of the AEC campus and relevance of existing or future on-campus amenities, while considering the plan in an even larger vision for the destination.
- Build out the vision/plan to include better public access to the lakes, more/better lakefront amenities, and a plan that better connects the campus to downtown with enhanced transportation modes and corridors.
- Urge the County to explore “big ideas” for creating unique, once-in-a-lifetime transformative change toward developing a world-class city destination that delivers unique experiences for both locals and visitors.
- Urge the County to examine creative private/public funding models.
- Structure the long-term visioning process/master plan to:
  - Include private developers in the process (private developers can be instrumental in the idea-generating and planning stages of a facilities/destination vision process).
  - Develop a detailed timeline with measurement points
  - Allow for flexibility to fully explore ideas and concepts prior to implementation

### AEC Work Group Participants

Deb Archer, GMCVB

Chris Armstrong, Avante Properties

Mark Clarke, WDE

Mark Clear, City of Madison Alder

Sharon Corrigan, Dane County Supervisor

Justin Doherty, UW Athletics

Bill Geist, Zeitgeist Consulting

Lynn Hobbie MG&E

Diane Morgenthaler, GMCVB

Delora Newton, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce

Susan Springman, Mullins Co.

Vince Sweeney, UW Madison Chancellor’s Office

Jeff Tyler, Clear Channel

Joel Weitz, Vitense Golfland

Rob Zache, Central Place Real Estate

Stephen Zanoni, Madison Concourse Hotel & Governor’s Club

Work Group members represent:

GMCVB Board of Directors & Community Relations Committee

Madison Area Sports Commission Board of Directors

Spirit of Greater Madison Board of Trustees

Numerous **strategic questions** emerged from the discussions. Following is a sample (all questions are reflected in final section of document):

- How can we determine the highest-value use for this area, and what funding model is needed to achieve this?
- Does the County have long-term interest in controlling this land or, will the County consider a role different from today's County ownership and management model for the AEC campus/venues?
- Does the County have quantifiable and well-defined understanding of the current impact and benefits of AEC on the County, City, region, or state? (If yes, this could help in establishing a future impact goal.)
- How do we avoid losing sight of the bigger development opportunity (larger, destination context), if the initial research study focuses only on the AEC campus?
- How do we streamline the process to expedite planning and implementation of the process/project?
- How do we ensure that proposed, interim changes in the immediate area of AEC will not impede longer term visions for the campus (private, municipal, residential, etc.)?
- What is the County's "appetite" for considering development outside the current mandate and expertise associated with AEC?

To address the variety of issues and work ahead, the work group **structured its recommendations** into three timeframe categories.

- **Short-term (within one year):** recommendations that address AEC relying on reserves to operate; these short term recommendations may impact other budget areas within the County budget and, could impact AEC large event retention and new event contracting
- **Mid-term (one to five years):** recommendations regarding the research and feasibility study that will be useful for longer-term decision-making
- **Long-term (five to ten years):** recommendations regarding a *Master Plan* and broader vision for AEC as an element of the destination

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Short-term Recommendations (within one year)**

- Determine the scope of change needed at AEC by quantifying the negative impact of existing building repairs/update needs on business retention and contracting
- Quantify the cost of existing repairs and updates needed and, compare this to available reserves
- Determine if (and amount of) County resources beyond AEC reserves are needed to address repairs/updates and identify potential impact on County budget and other services if other County resources are applied to AEC repairs/updates
- Quantify the upside potential economic benefit of improvements/expansion/upgrading of AEC
- Quantify the market potential and measurements that a gateway study or Master Plan would generate
- Develop a leadership model for the planning process, including: public, private, governments, use of consultant/paid facilitator
- Develop a funding model for the process and Master Plan
- Develop a process model for community engagement
- Consider a City/County moratorium on any construction or development changes in immediate area of AEC until Master Plan process is underway

*Guiding principle: Ensure that short-term plan for the AEC does not interfere with or hinder long-term plan/visioning.*

### **Mid-term Recommendations (one to five years)**

Conduct research (AEC enhancements, land use study, and feasibility study) that will be useful for long-term decision-making, to include these components:

- Identify competitive set (destination/facility) focusing on other venues and destinations offering similar services to current or potential customers

- What events exist that we want to capture?
- What events can we expand/create?
- What are growing/emerging market segments to pursue and, what is needed to capture business from these markets?
- What is Madison's sports potential?
- Analyze lost business (full analysis of all types of lost business).
- What are our strengths (SWOT) as a destination (TRENDS)?
- Retail market analysis for this market (and AEC campus/region)
- Operating/governance/capital funding plan
- Conduct land-use study/plan for AEC grounds and adjoining City land
- Analyze event pricing analysis by target market
- Analyze event attendee expectation analysis (considering various group types/demographics)
- Conduct economic impact study

### **Long-term Recommendations (five to ten years)**

In the AEC/destination Master Plan, be open to considering the following:

- On-lake access (public); boardwalk along lake; (safe, convenient); connectivity from AEC campus to lakes; attractive performance venue on the lake
- Retail/restaurants/entertainment/hotels/housing
- Sports venue(s)
- UW presence (teaching, other facilities)
- Corporate presence/facility
- Land use plan
- Transportation connectivity
- Connections: to Park Street, Lakeside, bike paths, west side to east side of John Nolen, Yahara River
- Ingress/egress to campus
- Orientation to beltline
- Family activities
- Wellness elements
- Recreational elements
- Property-tax-generating options (on campus; adjacent/nearby property)
- Iconic attraction ("inspiring" building or landmark)
- Medical facilities
- Private development on AEC grounds

### **Process Model**

The group felt that the planning process used recently by Madison College could serve as a model for this visioning work. **Their key steps included:**

- Get the right people at the table
- Utilize a clear and strategic communication strategy
- Create a bridge from past task force work to this process and study
- Conduct a feasibility study
- Identify and address areas of expected sensitivity
- Conduct research/market analysis
- Conduct competitive assessment
- Articulate consequences of not taking action (quantify the pain)
- Articulate opportunity (quantify the upside)
- Finalize Master Plan/vision (draft), including rationale and visuals
- Syndicate draft vision
- Engaged leaders/stakeholders/others
- Collaborate with media/editorial boards
- Engage Strategic partners
- Gauge community "reaction" to the vision

## Identify community and industry leaders/experts

We considered a broad variety of stakeholders who may be interested in – and valuable to – the conversation about AEC’s future and the broader destination vision:

- Dane County—executive, board, staff
- City of Madison—mayor, council, staff
- Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau
- UW- Madison —chancellor, athletics
- Madison Area Sports Commission
- Spirit of Greater Madison
- Thrive
- Madison College
- City of Fitchburg (City/CEDA)
- Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Madison
- Clean Lakes Alliance
- Greater Madison Hotel & Lodging Association
- WIAA
- Restaurant association
- Corporate property owners
- Commercial property owners
- Dane County Regional Airport
- Downtown Madison Inc.
- WI Department of Transportation
- DATCP
- WEDC
- Neighborhoods
- Promoters (such as Frank Productions)
- Wisconsin Southern Railroad
- Wisconsin Alumni Association
- Madison Community Foundation
- WI Dept of Tourism
- Monona Terrace
- Downtown Madison BID
- WI Dept of Revenue
- Epic
- Metcalfe/Nolen Project
- WDE and other customers
- Users: customers/unique needs captured
- Major utilities (esp. those with presence near or adjacent to AEC campus)

### Post-session additions:

- UW-Madison Master Plan experts
- Area contractors
- Experts in destination design (architects, developers and planners)

## Potential Campus/Destination Models

The work group recommends identifying comparative examples of destinations that have made successful and impactful changes to their event venues and “destination footprints”. Examples include:

- Indianapolis, IN: Lucas Oil Stadium and new 1,000 + Marriott Hotel
- Louisville, KY: new downtown sports arena, new Marriott Hotel, new entertainment district downtown
- Washington, DC: new convention center, new 1,000 + Marriott Hotel
- Virginia Beach, VA: new Hilton Hotel, new convention center

## Conclusion

The GMCVB work group respectfully submits these recommendations and suggestions for your consideration and hope the information is useful in setting the most appropriate strategy for AEC, and the overall future of the destination. We will make ourselves available as the conversation unfolds. The GMCVB is planning to budget \$25,000 in 2013 to contribute to the next steps of visioning for AEC.

### Document Author:

*Leadership Synergies is a global performance improvement firm specializing in helping individuals and organizations gather and assess usable qualitative and quantitative data. These data are used to formulate lasting, strategic personal and business initiatives that will support growth in both life and work. Leadership Synergies has served more than 60 CVBs and convention centers and contributed to the DMAI standards for CVB guidelines.*

## APPENDIX

### All Questions

The work group generated questions it could not answer, but believe are important and necessary in order to move forward:

- Who will drive (and be responsible for continuing) the AEC and destination discussion?
- Who will ultimately make the final decisions on what occurs next and in the future?
- What is the decision process?
- If World Dairy Expo moved or ceased to exist, would it change this conversation? If so, how?
- What makes a “brand” for a section of the city?
- What is the perception of AEC among Madison and Dane County residents?
- What would be built if starting from a blank slate?
- What are “unchangeable” factors that provide permanent limitations to our vision (landfills, etc)?
- What are considered “sacred cows” that will limit the vision? Why are they sacred?
- Would the County consider selling AEC and/or the campus/ground? How does the County determine the answer to this question?
- What is the actual geographic area that should be studied?
- There are continuing concerns that we may lose sight of the bigger development picture if the initial study focuses on the AEC 160 acres. How do we correctly frame this discussion?
- When will the business community and private developers be invited into this conversation/Master Plan process and land-use discussion?
- How can we determine the highest-value use for this area, and what funding model is needed to achieve this?
- Does the County have long-term interest in controlling this property, or will the County consider a role different from today’s County ownership and management model for the AEC campus/venues?
- Does the County have quantifiable and qualified understanding of the current impact and benefits of AEC on the County, City, region, or state? (If yes, this could help in establishing a future impact goal.)
- How do we avoid losing sight of the bigger development opportunity (larger, destination context), if the initial research study focuses only on the AEC campus?
- How do we streamline the process to expedite planning and implementation of the process/project?
- What is the County’s “appetite” for considering development outside the current mandate and expertise associated with AEC?

#### (Post-session additions):

- What/if any long-term interest does the City of Madison have in the AEC campus/region (based on impending annexation, other reasons)?
- Should a “theme” for this campus or area of the destination be considered (food, sports, etc.) that could help drive the process and decisions about the campus and area?
- Should a City/County moratorium on any construction or development changes in immediate area of AEC until Master Plan process is underway be considered?

### Common Terminology

During our conversations, we found it helpful to use common terminology:

- **Master plan:** a comprehensive or far-reaching plan of action; a long-term outline of a project or government function; “the zoning board adopted a master plan for the new development.”
  - Source: [wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)
- **Strategic planning:** an organization’s process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. In order to determine the direction of the organization, it is necessary to understand its current position and the possible avenues through which it can pursue a particular course of action. Generally, strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions.
  - ✓ "What do we do?"
  - ✓ "For whom do we do it?"
  - ✓ "How do we excel?"Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic\\_planning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning)