



MEETING NOTES

Meeting Location: Virtual

Project: Design Review Board – March 2026

Date/Time: 3/17/26 – 9:00 am

Re: DRB Meeting Notes

Notes By: Janine Glaeser, UW-Madison
FP&M, CPLA

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Agenda (virtual):

- 1. WI Union Shoreline – Lake Lab #0061-2415**
Schematic Design Review – DRB #1 Informational Presentation

Committee Attendees:

Heidi Natura
Mary Czyszczak-Lyne
Kevin Firchow
Rafeeq Asad
Al Oberlander
Tonia Pittman
Ex Officio: Scott Utter
Ex Officio: Peter Schlecht
Staff: Janine Glaeser

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Chair Schlecht called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Roll call confirmed quorum.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES

February 17th DRB Meeting Notes were approved noting corrections need to be made assigning comments correctly.

- Czyszczak-Lyne motioned to approve; Oberlander seconded motion

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

- None

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Utter read the Land Acknowledgement

Agenda Item #1: Schematic Design Review – DRB #1 Informational Presentation

Project Name: WI Union Shoreline – Lake Lab #0061-2415

Attendees:

- Stephanie Jo Lee, UW FP&M PM
- Jenna Staff, River Architects
- Valentine Schute, River Architects
- Michael Adler, River Architects
- Smantha Ferrell, Damon Farber
- Ben Schmidt, UW FP&M AVC REDA
- Brenda Gonzalez, UW Director of Community Relations
- Gabe Mendez, UW FP&M Transportation
- Troy Green, UW FP&M PM Manager
- Lori Wilson, UW FP&M Communications
- Aaron Williams, UW FP&M CPLA
- Jonathan Bronk, UW FP&M CPLA
- Rhonda James, UW FP&M CPLA
- Van Van Wyk II, UW FP&M CPD
- Sadie Derouin, UW FP&M CPLA - Sustainability
- Molly Lenz, UW FP&M

Project Description: The WI Union team is working with River Architects on a design proposal for the replacement and expansion of the existing Hooper's Lake Lab storage building and its adjacent program elements including Staging Area, Hazardous Storage, Stair, Outdoor Classroom with Canopy and Rooftop Event Space. Additionally, the project goals include improving site accessibility, connecting campus to the lakefront, creating a safe and inclusive experience, and including sustainable design strategies. This is the first time the DRB is seeing this project.

Entitlements Schedule:

- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| - DRB #1 SD | 3/17/26 |
| - JCAC Intro | 3/26/26 |

Project Schedule:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| - Schematic Design | Spring 2026 |
| - Bid Documents | Fall 2026 |

DRB comments:

- Czyszczak-Lyne:
 - Appreciated the proposed exciting project
 - Asked about DNR coordination related to lakefront changes and shoreline modifications.
 - Design team noted DNR coordination will be part of next phase, design development.
 - Inquired whether removal of Helen C White was still contemplated, referencing past campus planning efforts.
 - Utter noted that removal is not anticipated.
 - Questioned project funding.
 - Team acknowledged that it is gift-funded.
 - Discussed connections to Memorial Union and Park Street.

- Asked whether lower-level outdoor seating is for Hoofers, Wisconsin Union, or the public.
 - Design team noted intent was for use as outdoor classroom with public availability when not in use, and future signage exploration.
- Asked about upper-deck chair style and why doesn't it match iconic terrace chairs.
 - Project team noted concern that iconic terrace chairs could "walk away" and proposed terrace chairs are already used nearby.
- Oberlander:
 - Praised the project as strong and site-responsive; appreciated overall organization and ADA ramp alignment.
 - Noted the video was helpful in conveying circulation and sequence.
 - Appreciated clear primary stair access without hidden corners; commended the "portal-to-lake" sequence.
 - Recommended studying impacts of trees and shade structures on views toward the lake from the terrace level.
 - Requested images from the elevated Union terrace at the next meeting to evaluate visual impacts.
 - Expressed concern about triangular shade-structure supports potentially obstructing westward lake views; suggested exploring less intrusive, mast-like columns.
 - Recommended refining column design for secondary stair access to create a more sculptural, integrated solution; questioned if two columns are necessary.
 - Noted that the small daylight gap along the bridge's south side may not be visually noticeable and suggested reevaluating rail presence there; raised concern about rain entering through the gap.
 - Commented that material transitions on the terrace need refinement.
 - Warned that the single step at classroom seating could pose a hazard; recommended eliminating it.
 - Asked about the south wall of the classroom; noted outdoor blackboards are proposed.
 - Inquired whether lockers are needed; noted that outdoor lockers exist elsewhere on campus.
 - Raised landscape concerns regarding tree placement, canopy spread, and long-term view obstruction; encouraged attention to tree maturity and sizing.
 - Confirmed that terrace support systems (Silva Cells, irrigation) are anticipated for tree health.
 - Asked about required hazardous-material clearances; noted the need for 10' from exit stair and 5' from public way.
 - Inquired about replacement of the City storm sewer line conveying Park Street runoff to the lake.
- Natura:
 - Acknowledged that many points were addressed by prior discussion.
 - Appreciated inclusion of structural soils; asked whether additional soil volume can be achieved.
 - Commented that the Park Street terminus view of Mendota is important; questioned tree placement and alignment.
 - Shared concerns about tree canopies impacting views; noted design is still early.
 - Encouraged further development of canopy structures for shading effectiveness, scale refinement, and visual integration.
 - Suggested reconsidering extensive use of yellow; recommended more neutral green tones for realism and less "advertising."
 - Commented on ground-plane color treatments and hazard-striping.

- Observed that columns and railings appear as placeholders, recommended evolution toward a more integrated and expressive structural language.
- Affirmed that comments are intended to support design evolution.
- Asad:
 - Stated that the design is strong overall and largely successful.
 - Suggested better integration of the stairs with the building.
 - Recommended refining the sail-like elements to match the quality of the prow.
 - Expressed confidence that continued refinement will further enhance the design.
- Firchow:
 - Described the project as exciting.
 - Acknowledged collaboration between UW and the City.
 - Encouraged continued coordination and technical discussions with City agencies as design progresses.
- Pittman
 - As a regular pedestrian of this space, appreciate incorporation of accessibility and path access to Park street.
 - Appreciate having access to the stairwell and look forward to seeing this come together.
- Utter (Ex Officio):
 - Asked for reconsideration of the donor board and noted we don't want to see a precedent set with this project.
 - Noted that donor boards and acknowledgement are to be located on the building interior or in this instance should be on the pier and lake side of the building.
- Williams (CPLA Staff):
 - Inquired about the memorial component shown in the advanced plan
 - Design team noted there is the Yu Chen statue being incorporated.
- Oberlander:
 - Noted the City's request to have the ability to come back in the future to access the storm sewer and provided ideas for components that might be easier to construct and remove, i.e. hollow core slab.
 - Design team will continue to explore options as design evolves.

New business

Schlecht noted that UW-Madison extended Heidi's term for another year to help stagger the appointments. We appreciate Heidi's continued service and contributions.

April 21, 2026, is the next DRB meeting.

These notes are what the writer understands of the proceedings. Please contact or email any changes to the writer within 5 working days if not in concurrence. End of meeting notes.