



VISION 2030

for

WISCONSIN STATE GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND WORKFORCE SPACE

**UPDATE
MARCH 2023**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Executive Summary

3

Work to Date

5

The Path Forward

11

Conclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2021, the State of Wisconsin put forth its [Vision 2030 Plan](#) – a roadmap for how the State could address its workforce challenges to best serve the people of Wisconsin in the coming decade. Released in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial Vision 2030 report offered solutions to multiple challenges confronting the State of Wisconsin, including aging infrastructure in state-owned buildings, the impending retirement of many state workers, recruitment challenges, and a growing demand for digital government services. It acknowledged that the pandemic had accelerated workforce realignment trends and revealed a need for government to deliver services more efficiently in the digital age.



The State Human Services Building at 1 W. Wilson St. now faces more than \$228 million in projected upgrade and renovation costs.

The plan called for the State to evaluate its overall footprint for the purpose of consolidating existing state-owned facilities and leased space, addressing the issues of deferred maintenance, and increasing investments in innovation opportunities and workforce talent attraction and retention based on expanded statewide opportunities. It offered a vision of a state government that was smaller, more efficient, and better aligned to serve the needs of Wisconsinites across the state. It envisioned a state that offers the public convenient “one-stop” venues for government services both physically and digitally, and where state workers can deliver those services most efficiently.

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Vision 2030 was introduced in response to the public’s raised expectations for governments to be more agile, accessible, and responsive, as well as the need for flexibility for the state workforce. The last two years have only reinforced the need for innovative planning and concerted action. In addition to employee engagement studies and feedback, the State recently completed a consultant-led comprehensive space consolidation study that analyzed agency plans for telework and remote work; offered recommendations for changes to current space use and locations; incorporated information on the condition of state-owned buildings, including operational costs and deferred maintenance plans; and identified currently underutilized properties.

Vision 2030 can relieve taxpayers of more than \$541 million in deferred maintenance expenses.*

Considering the study and the increased opportunities allowed with a hybrid work environment in most state agencies, Vision 2030 provides the opportunity for the State to reduce its Madison building footprint by more than 27.8 percent over the next few years and optimize its Milwaukee footprint, with many efforts already underway. This would be part of a broader effort that has the potential to generate more than \$9 million in total cost of occupancy savings and relieve taxpayers of more than \$541 million in deferred maintenance expenses in the process*.

A smaller footprint also poses additional benefits. Vision 2030 seeks to create more “one-stop shopping” options for government services. It supports the hybrid work environment that can promote higher productivity, increased applicant interest, and higher retention among employees. It also affords telework opportunities that put family-supporting public service jobs within reach of Wisconsinites who live outside of the Madison and Milwaukee areas. It allows underused state properties to be acquired and redeveloped by the private sector, fueling new economic and community development opportunities in Wisconsin communities. Lastly, reducing the state’s square footage translates into lower and more efficient energy usage that not only saves on expenses but also curbs carbon emissions.

Some of the work outlined in Vision 2030 has already taken place, but there is a need for the State to take more aggressive action. Deferred maintenance only grows more costly over time. Many public servants are nearing retirement age. Competition for workers has intensified. Demand for digital efficient government services continues to increase.

The State now has a unique opportunity to meet all these challenges through Vision 2030. It can remove geography as a barrier to State service, harness talent from every corner of Wisconsin, and build a workforce that is reflective of all 72 counties in our state. Using the results of the consolidation study and listening to input from the state workforce, this update to Vision 2030 charts how the State can most efficiently use its existing facilities in Madison and Milwaukee, save taxpayers money, and enhance access to public services in the coming years.

Nearly two years since the inception of Vision 2030, the State faces a crossroads. One path points to a state government that, through a lighter footprint, is more nimble and better able to meet the needs of the public and its public servants. The other path leads to a continuation of the status quo, where over time, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars would be invested in an aging and inefficient infrastructure that does not fully embrace an increasingly mobile workforce in an increasingly digital age.

Governor Tony Evers is committed to building a more agile and resilient workforce to serve the people of Wisconsin. His budget proposals bolster these recruitment and retention strategies and further advance the State’s efforts to develop and support its homegrown talent. As Wisconsin emerges from the pandemic, this update answers the question initially raised by Vision 2030: how will state government adapt, invest, and innovate to better serve all Wisconsinites?

**Percentages and savings are estimated and functions of inflationary factors, good and services, legislative actions, minimizing disruption of services, and other factors.*

WORK TO DATE

The work of the last two years has laid a foundation upon which the State can build. Indeed, work on Vision 2030 has been underway since the plan was introduced almost two years ago and reflects state employee input as well collaboration with agency leadership. The results have already improved public access to services, generated savings for taxpayers, identified opportunities for further space optimization, and more. Highlights include:

Analyzing Current Building Usage and Consolidation Plans

In February 2023, the State completed a comprehensive Space Consolidation Study, based on existing and anticipated space use, for the purpose of optimizing the footprint of state-owned buildings in a post-pandemic world. Consolidation options were developed to reduce overall square footage and operational costs and right-size the DOA real estate portfolio to meet the operational and business needs of the State. The review and resulting consolidation plans assessed not only the current condition of state-owned buildings but also their deferred maintenance plans, remaining debt service, total cost of occupancy, and potential savings.

Updating Space Standards

The State has revisited and revised facility space standards to meet the changing needs of the state workforce. This work included general updates, added language related to space sharing, and telework guidelines, as well as adding the intent to change space calculations to an accepted industry space measurement standard.



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Increasing Shared Workspaces

Shared workspaces, or hoteling suites, were added in Madison, Wisconsin Rapids, La Crosse, and Green Bay to accommodate hybrid work for state employees. The suites are available to any agencies' employees that rent space in DOA buildings. The State now has five hoteling suites across the enterprise, with more to come in 2023 and beyond.

Consolidating and Relocating

At the time Vision 2030 was introduced, consolidation was already underway within the Tommy G. Thompson building in Madison. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) relocated from multiple locations including the General Executive Facility (GEF) 1 building, the GEF 3 building, and two leases to the Tommy G. Thompson facility. DCF's move reduced state-leased space by almost 30,000 square feet.

In Milwaukee, the State has already taken steps to consolidate and relocate operations from outdated and/or underused facilities to optimize space and increase efficiencies in customer service. The Milwaukee Southeast Regional Crime Laboratory is in the process of moving from its existing site that is outdated and not suited for a modern crime lab. Both Milwaukee Wiscraft Buildings, originally constructed in the 1930s on West State Street, have been vacated since the relocation of Beyond Vision to a new facility. Those two properties have been listed for sale, and with significant interest in the location, offers have been received on both buildings. In 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) relocated its Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MilES) Center to improve safety, security, and access, and be better able to meet the needs of community members. This move will save the State \$15 million dollars over the initial term of the lease.

In total, the State realized lease savings of more than \$17.3 million in 2022 through negotiated cost savings for lease renewals, agency downsizing, and the MilES move to a more cost-effective facility.

Selling Underused Properties

In March 2022 the State sold the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Southeast Regional Headquarters for approximately \$1.6 million to be privately redeveloped as an arts and cultural center. DOA has also sold five parcels of underutilized land in Chippewa Falls, which was the first sale of underutilized state property DOA facilitated in many years. Two more underutilized properties in Milwaukee have also been put up for sale.

Building on Sustainability

Sustainability Guidelines were updated in December 2021 to provide a roadmap for State agencies when designing for improvements and renovations to align with the State's first ever [Clean Energy Plan](#). Modernizing buildings and industry is one of four key pathways of the Clean Energy Plan. Square footage reductions as part of the consolidation plans will result in lower energy use and cost and can help reduce the State's overall carbon footprint. This practice in turn presents economic and environmental benefits to Wisconsinites, including savings from reduced fuel costs and less air pollution.

THE PATH FORWARD

The work achieved over the past two years has illustrated the benefits of optimizing the state's footprint. Underutilized and inadequately used properties can be downsized, vacated, and put up for sale, creating redevelopment opportunities in Wisconsin communities and savings for taxpayers. Consolidated facilities create more one-stop shopping opportunities for government services.

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By contrast, the cost of the status quo is steep. Maintaining the State's existing footprint in Madison and Milwaukee would require more than \$541 million in renovations and upgrades to multiple facilities over the next several biennia. Over 80 percent of those costs would be incurred in Madison through renovations to the General Executive Facility (GEF) 2 and 3 buildings and the current DHS building at 1 W. Wilson St.

There is a better path to take. That is why this Vision 2030 update proposes the following focus.

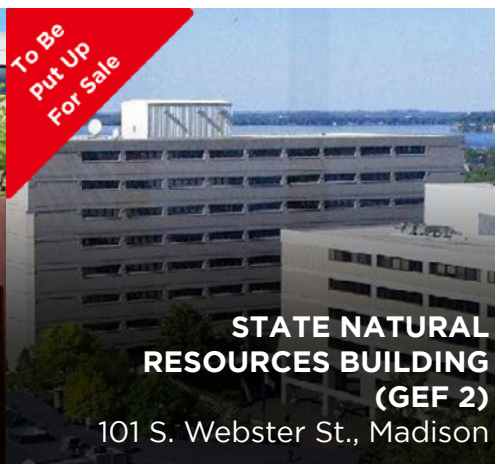
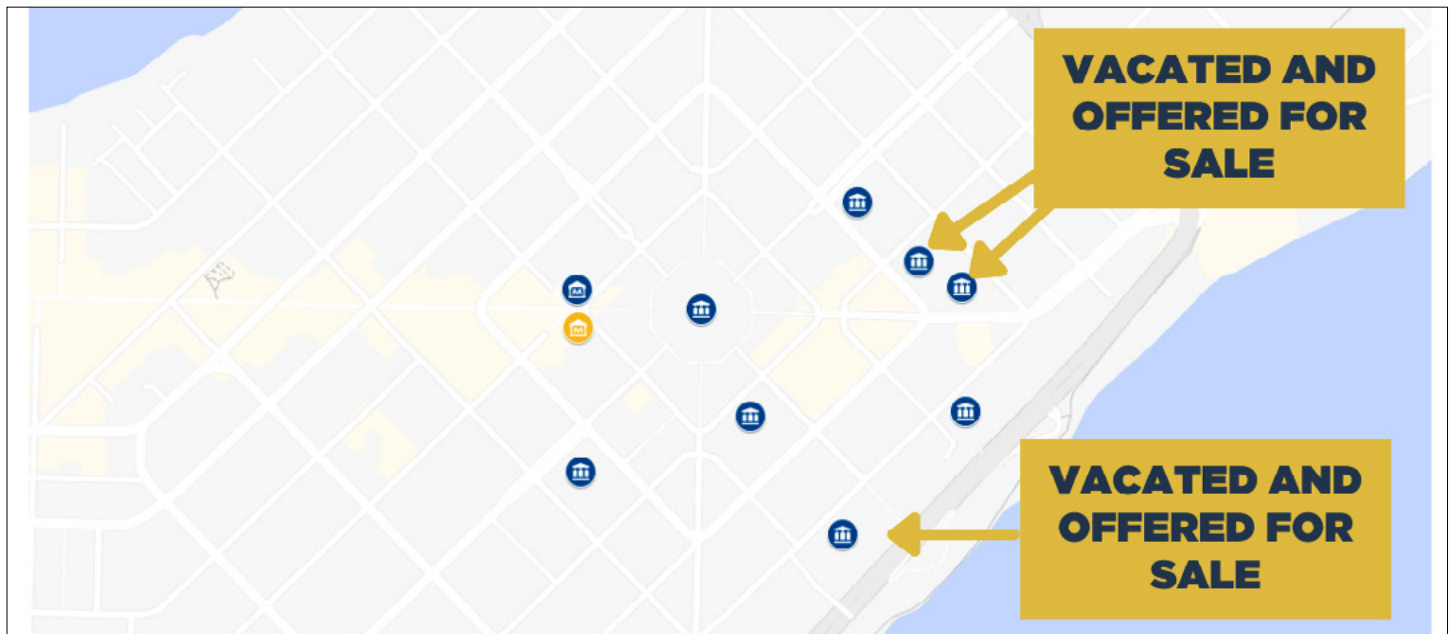


In Madison

The State Human Services Building, GEF 2, and GEF 3 Are Vacated and Marketed for Sale

Together, the State Human Services Building, GEF 2, and GEF 3 require more than \$446 million in upgrades and maintenance. Wisconsin taxpayers will be spared from that expense when the existing staff and operations in those buildings move to vacant office spaces in the other Madison facilities. The sale of these three properties will fuel redevelopment projects in downtown Madison, reduce the State's Madison footprint by more than 27.8 percent, and result in more than \$7.4 million in total cost of occupancy savings annually.

The sale of underused properties can create a win-win scenario for taxpayers and their communities. For example, when the DNR sold its southeast facility to the Bronzeville Center for the Arts, Inc., an inefficiently used state property with high deferred maintenance costs, is now being converted into an arts and cultural center to tell the historical and culturally important story of the Bronzeville area in Milwaukee. Similar opportunities could be opened up with the sale of underutilized properties in Madison.





**STATE EDUCATION
BUILDING
(GEF 3)**
125 S. Webster St., Madison

Closure of GEF 3

\$93.3 million
Anticipated Savings
(Upgrade/Renovation
Cost Avoidance)

The Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance Relocates from GEF 3 to the State Administration Building

- Estimated Timeline: 18 Months
- Estimated Cost: \$300,000

The Wisconsin Office of Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) is currently housed on two floors inside the State Education Building, also known as GEF 3. Under Vision 2030, OCI offices will move to the State Administration Building at 101 E. Wilson St. This move will relieve the State from projected upgrades, deferred maintenance and associated renovations anticipated at the GEF 3 building. There will be minor renovations to the Administration Building to accommodate the relocation of OCI.

The Department of Public Instruction and the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board Relocate from GEF 3 to the Tommy G. Thompson Center

- Estimated Timeline: 12 Months
- Estimated Cost: \$300,000

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, the lead state agency on child abuse and neglect prevention efforts in Wisconsin, share GEF 3 with OCI. Under Vision 2030, those offices will relocate to the Tommy G. Thompson Center (TGTC) at 201 W. Washington St., where DCF is now located. Approximately \$300,000 in minor renovations to the TGTC will be needed to accommodate DPI and the Board moving there.

Closure of GEF 2

\$124 million Anticipated Savings
(Upgrade/Renovation Cost Avoidance)

The Department of Natural Resources Relocates from GEF 2 to the Hill Farms State Office Building

- Estimated Timeline: 30-36 Months
- Estimated Cost: \$1.7 million

The headquarters of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is currently housed in the State Natural Resources Building, also known as the GEF 2 building. GEF 2 was renovated in phases from 2001 to 2009, but it still faces projected upgrade, deferred maintenance, and associated renovation costs. Under Vision 2030, DNR will relocate its headquarters to the Hill Farms State Office Building at 4822 Madison Yards Way. There will be necessary renovations to the Hill Farms State Office Building to accommodate the relocation of the DNR headquarters.



Closure of State Human Services Building

\$228.7 million Anticipated Savings
(Upgrade/Renovation Cost Avoidance)

The Department of Health Services Relocates from the Human Services Building to GEF 1

- Estimated Timeline: 48-54 months
- Estimated Cost: \$600,000

The headquarters of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is now based in the historic State Human Services Building, which was constructed in three phases between 1930 and 1959. The building currently requires significant system upgrades, deferred maintenance, and associated renovations. Vision 2030 reflects the better alternative: DHS relocates those offices to the State Labor Building, also known as GEF 1, which currently contains the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD). To achieve this move, renovations will be needed to GEF 1 to accommodate consolidated DWD offices.



Other Vision 2030 Moves in Madison



The State Laboratory of Hygiene Relocates IT Staff to the State Agriculture Building

- Estimated Timeline: 9-12 Months
- Estimated Cost: \$150,000

The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) is the state's public, environmental and occupational health laboratory. Their IT staff currently reside in a lease space at Walton Commons. Under Vision 2030,

the IT staff would relocate to the State Agriculture Building at 2811 Agriculture Drive. Approximately \$150,000 in renovations to the Agriculture Building would be needed for this move.



The Wisconsin Technical College Board Relocates to Hill Farms

Under Vision 2030, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board would also relocate from the Hill Farms DEL Complex to the Hill Farms State Office Building.



In Milwaukee

The State also can optimize its footprint in Milwaukee and realize more than \$2 million in total cost of occupancy savings. This Vision 2030 update envisions:



**MILWAUKEE STATE
OFFICE BUILDING**
819 N. Sixth St., Milwaukee

The Existing Milwaukee State Office Building Is Vacated and Marketed for Sale; Offices Relocate to a New Facility Planned for Milwaukee

Timeline: 48-60 Months

Constructed in 1963, the current Milwaukee State Office Building on North 6th Street is dated, in need of significant renovation, and lacks parking. To continue operations at this facility, the State would need to invest approximately \$95.7 million at a building that already suffers from a lack of adequate parking for the public.

In line with the goals of Vision 2030, the State will work to build a new office facility on state-owned land at 27th Street and Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee. The new Milwaukee State Office Building will be built through a public/private partnership with a request for proposals anticipated to be issued in late 2023/early 2024. Upon completion, many of the agencies in the current Milwaukee State Office Building would lease space at that new facility. The Office of the State Public Defender will relocate to office space closer to the county courthouse. The Department of Corrections is already in the process of relocating some of their offices to support their clients through increased proximity and care.

With a new State Office Building in place and operational, the State would then sell the existing and inadequate Milwaukee State Office Building on North 6th Street.

This move would eliminate nearly \$96 million in renovations to the existing building.

CONCLUSION

The work of the last two years has demonstrated what can happen when the State continues on the path laid out by Vision 2030. We can make financially sound choices and provide savings to taxpayers, while ensuring we continue offering excellent customer service to the public. We can develop a work environment that helps us retain our existing state workers and attract a new generation of public servants from across the state. Indeed, the “Anywhere in Wisconsin” initiative aims to expand state service opportunities for residents in all 72 counties and was developed with direct input from agency leadership and state employees.

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This new strategy will bolster our recruiting capacity, bring in top talent, and make our workforce more reflective of the entire state population and the people we serve. Where operations allow, hybrid work environments with telework options enable the State to cultivate a geographically and culturally diverse workforce that can foster innovation, creativity, and cost-effective solutions, while saving taxpayer dollars through a reduced footprint.

The pandemic underscored the need for governments to think and act differently in the face of a changing world. It is now incumbent upon the State to keep pace with those changes and identify how it can deliver high quality services at maximum value to its constituents. Vision 2030, along with the budget proposals that support it, represents the dynamic thinking that a post-pandemic world demands. Embracing that vision allows the State to deliver the public services and cost savings that taxpayers deserve. The result is a win-win: a win for taxpayers and a win for state workers.



The “Anywhere in Wisconsin” initiative will bolster the State’s recruiting capacity, bring in top talent, and make our workforce more reflective of the entire state population and the people we serve.