New York State Environmental Quality Review Act
Statement of Findings

Proposed Action:
University at Buffalo
Comprehensive Physical Plan

North Campus
Amherst, NY 14260
Erie County

South Campus
Buffalo, NY 14214
Erie County

Downtown Campus
Buffalo, NY 14202
Erie County

May, 2012

Lead Agency:
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1. **Introduction**

   The State University of New York at Buffalo ("UB") has prepared a Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) to assess the potential economic, social, and environmental effects of undertaking the proposed University at Buffalo's Comprehensive Physical Plan (the "Plan" or the "Proposed Action"). The Proposed Action would expand and enhance UB facilities at its three campuses, providing an additional seven (7) million gross square feet (gsf) of building floor area to accommodate a projected additional 10,000 students, 1,000 faculty, and 2,750 staff by the year 2030. The purpose of the Comprehensive Physical Plan (CPP) is to provide the facilities and spaces to achieve the UB 2020 strategy which has the goal of nothing less than the advancement of the University at Buffalo into the ranks of America's great public research universities. Buffalo needs and New York State deserves an institution that can take its place among the best of these – Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and UCLA – to educate our people and to produce the knowledge our region, state, and nation need to thrive in the 21st century.

2. **The SEQRA Process**

   This document is the Statement of Findings issued by UB pursuant to its responsibilities as Lead Agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (ECL Article 8 and its implementing regulations at 6 N.Y.C.R.R. § 617.11 "SEQRA"). This document represents the conclusion of the environmental review of the Proposed Action. UB has acted as Lead Agency in evaluating the environmental, economic, and social implications of the Proposed Action. Under
SEQRA, the Lead Agency is the governmental body "principally responsible for undertaking, funding or approving an action, and therefore responsible for determining whether an environmental impact statement is required in connection with the action, and for the preparation and filing of the statement if one is required." At the outset of the review process, UB declared the Project to be a Type I action and, acted as Lead Agency. UB prepared a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement ("DGEIS"), and after public comment on the DGEIS, it prepared the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement ("FGEIS") with the assistance of its legal and technical experts. The DGEIS is incorporated into the FGEIS, and the two combined documents are herein referred to as the GEIS.

Under the SEQRA regulations, this Findings Statement attests to the fact that UB has given due consideration to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement and other documents prepared in conjunction with the SEQRA process, as well as the comments from other agencies and the public. Further, this Findings Statement considers and balances the relevant environmental impacts with "social, economic and other considerations" so as to provide a basis for any determinations made herein on the Proposed Action (6 NYCRR § 617.11(d)).

3. **Future SEQRA Actions**

This Statement of Findings, and the particular determinations in the GEIS, set forth a process for review of future actions, both through general principles and specific conditions by which future actions (i.e. site-specific projects) associated with the Proposed Action can be undertaken, including requirements for any subsequent SEQRA or other regulatory (such as review by the Office of Parks, recreation, and Historic Preservation) compliance.

No further review under will be necessary if a future action associated with projects undertaken in conformance with the baseline conditions established in the GEIS or this Findings Statement. For example, where a future action is not in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established in the GEIS, or was not specifically considered (and therefore conditions and thresholds
were not set), an environmental assessment form (EAF) will be completed to assist the lead agency in the evaluation of conformance with the GEIS and Findings Statement, as well as potential adverse impacts related to such action. Thereafter, one of the following SEQAR compliance steps will be carried out:

1. Amended Findings Statement: If the future action was found to be adequately addressed in the GEIS but was not addressed or inadequately addressed in the Findings Statement, an amended Findings Statement will be prepared; or

2. Negative Declaration: If the future action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the GEIS and the subsequent action – based on the hard look review of that action - will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts, a negative declaration will be prepared; or

3. Supplemental EIS: If the future action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the GEIS, and such action may have one or more significant adverse environmental impact, a Supplemental EIS will be prepared, covering those aspects which were not considered.

By using this approach UB can best utilize the community’s efforts in creating the GEIS when considering site specific projects and associated environmental protection issues, with the ability to modify requirements or implement additional mitigation based on the results of the supplemental SEQRA analysis.

In particular as to the moving of residents of McCarley Gardens, any relocation process must be undertaken and completed in compliance with a HUD-approved Relocation Plan and in accordance with the conditions and standards established in such an approved Relocation Plan. To the extent any relocation of McCarley residents is to take place outside of the scope of or in a manner inconsistent with an approved Relocation Plan, additional analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of the McCarley Gardens Component will be required.
4. **Project Description And Timing**

UB's Physical Plan translates the University’s simple desire to achieve excellence into physical space requirements. The plan will be played out across three campus of UB:¹ Given the overall size of the Proposed Action, development is expected to occur in four phases with Phase One anticipated to be completed by 2013 and the final phase anticipated to be completed by 2030. The phasing plan was carefully constructed to ensure that each campus remains “whole” and viable during and after the programmatic moves. Phased growth also helps the University manage interdependent maneuvers from a physical standpoint.

**a. North Campus**

The 1,192-acre North Campus will serve as the home of Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Management as well as the center of administrative, cultural, and athletic activities. It will contain expanded and enhanced facilities for the College of Arts and Sciences as well as the Engineering School and the School of Management. The professional schools of Education, Law, and Social Work will vacate North Campus entirely, as will the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Additional non-academic facilities proposed at the North Campus are as part of the proposed plan including: an Alumni/University Club, a center for the humanities and culture, a Recreation and Wellness Center, and a Conference Center/Hotel. To accommodate these changes at the North Campus an additional 3.3 million gsf of space will be necessary to accommodate an additional 650 students, 100 faculty and 550 staff for the proposed North Campus Plan.

**b. South Campus**

As health-related facilities move downtown, the 154-acre South Campus will transition into a professional education campus with Law, Education, Social Work and professional elements of

¹ As a result of the Plan Implementation, existing off-campus functions will be consolidated, resulting in approximately 56,000 gsf of space currently occupied in off-campus locations being eliminated, moving 2,000 students, 280 faculty and 250 staff to one of the three campus centers.
the Management program joining the School of Architecture and Planning. An addition of 1,000 students, 25 faculty and 350 staff would occur at the South Campus. Functions which accompany the migration of these professional schools to the South Campus are: Community Partnership Center, Campus Clubs/Social Center, Recreational Wellness Center, Executive Education Center and Hotel, Incubator/Business Park I & II, and a Campus Commercial and Community Center. Due to elimination of temporary buildings and adaptive reuse of existing structures on South Campus, no net change in square footage is anticipated for this transition.

c. **Downtown Campus**

A UB Downtown Campus will be created within the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) as the new home of the University’s five health sciences schools: Medicine and Biomedical Sciences; Public Health and Health Professions, Nursing; Dental Medicine; and Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Their downtown presence will promote research, clinical and educational collaboration with the region’s leading hospitals including those on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Related UB downtown facilities include: the existing New York Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences (COE); the existing Research Institute on Addictions (RIA); and the ‘UB Gateway’ (M.Wile Building) which will include new medical office space for UBMD, the practice plan that includes physicians who are also UB professors. Approximately 3.5 million gsf of new space will be necessary to facilitate 10,500 students, 1,250 faculty and 2,150 staff at the new Academic Health Center in Downtown Buffalo.

d. **McCarley Gardens**

In regards to the development of the Downtown Campus, in 2010, an affiliate of the UB Foundation entered into an agreement to purchase McCarley Gardens, a 149 unit affordable housing apartment complex located on a 15 +/- acre parcel of land (“McCarley Site”) at the southern end of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The purchase of the McCarley Site is contingent upon approval by
the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") of a relocation plan for tenants of McCarley Gardens, which would include the construction of one for one replacement housing for all households currently residing at the McCarley Site. While this process will take several years to complete, initial planning for the possible incorporation of the McCarley Site into the Downtown Campus has progressed. Conceptual plans for this action (hereinafter referred to as the "McCarley Gardens Component") focus on the support of academic services with approximately 1.2 million gross square feet ("gsf") of new development on the McCarley Site, including academic buildings, research space, incubator buildings, parking and/or University housing. At the northern end of the McCarley Site, the realignment of Virginia Street to its original configuration is contemplated and would provide space for an urban park.

In order to remain competitive and attain excellence in the health related fields associated with the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, the School of Nursing, the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and the School of Public Health and Health Professions, UB must relocate these schools downtown to join the leading health care institutions of the region on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Due to its size, location and current low density development unrelated to Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus uses, McCarley Gardens is a key strategic site which will greatly aid the University to achieve its vision for a Downtown Campus. Moreover, the implementation of the McCarley Gardens Component will have a tremendously beneficial economic impact, particularly in the City of Buffalo. When finished, it is projected that the Downtown Campus will bring in excess of 13,000 new faculty, staff and students to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus with approximately 5 million gross square feet of new building space. It is anticipated that approximately 25 percent of this build-out will occur on the McCarley Site.
5. **Findings & Conclusions**

The GEIS evaluated potential impacts across a range of potential concerns. For each concern, the GEIS described the existing conditions, identified the likely future situation without the Proposed Action, and the future with the Proposed Action. This approach recognized that the University is a dynamic institution, with numerous initiatives already underway (such as the implementation of the Five-Year Capital Plan (DGEIS at ES-3)), and therefore presented a mechanism to evaluate the marginal impacts that implementation of the Proposed action would present. The following facts and conclusions for each area are drawn from the DGEIS as amended in certain cases by the FGEIS. For McCarley Gardens, which is a specific project potentially nearing commencement, the concerns have all placed together in that section.

6. **McCarly Gardens**

While much of the Plan is conceptual, the McCarley Gardens Component is a specific Project, and the various impacts and mitigation are described together herein. In terms of socioeconomic impacts, implementation of the McCarley Gardens Component would require the demolition of the existing 149 housing units in twenty-three garden-style apartment buildings on the McCarley Site and the relocation of all current residents of McCarley Gardens. The purchase of the McCarley Site is contingent upon HUD's approval of a Housing Relocation Plan for the current residents of McCarley Gardens, in accordance with all applicable HUD regulations. Under the terms of the proposed Relocation Plan, all 149 units will be replaced with new housing (one-for-one replacement) and all households currently residing at McCarley Gardens will be offered replacement housing. The Relocation Plan, being developed in accordance with all HUD requirements, will mitigate potential adverse impacts from the relocation of McCarley Garden residents to the greatest extent practicable. The HUD approved Relocation Plan will assure that no relocation will occur until suitable replacement
housing is identified and that tenants have the support that they need to facilitate the transition to new housing. In addition, to the extent demolition of the existing buildings on the McCarley Site occurs in phases, an appropriate mitigation plan will be developed and implemented to minimize disruptions to remaining tenants. Accordingly, socioeconomic impacts from the McCarley Gardens Component will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable,

In terms of impacts to cultural resources, a Phase 1A Archeological Study shows that the McCarley Gardens area has a low potential for archaeological finds and high prior disturbance (including cut and fill, removal of original topsoil, etc.). The Phase 1A Study and GEIS were provided to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau ("SHPO") for review and comment. By letter dated March 7, 2012, SHPO confirmed that it has no archeology concerns with either the acquisition or the redevelopment of the McCarley Site.

In terms of impacts to historic resources, the GEIS includes an assessment of historic structures and resources in the vicinity of the McCarley Site and the Downtown Campus. This assessment is further supported by an Historic Resources Manual, which is part of the UB 2020 Master Plan. The Downtown Campus Plan contained in the Historic Resources Manual illustrates the structures that were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as of 2007. Most of the structures are along the west side of Main Street, well to the west of the McCarley Site. The closest historic structure to the McCarley Site is the Trico building, which is located a full block west of the McCarley Site and is in a state of disrepair. Reuse and/or demolition options for the Trico building are currently being studied as a part of expansion plans by the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Nonetheless, SHPO has expressed concern about potential negative impacts that the development of the Downtown Campus could have on the Allentown and Fruit Belt neighborhoods. From SHPO's perspective, the demolition of the non-National Register eligible McCarley Gardens is not a concern but
the construction of large scale buildings on the Downtown Campus could impact the character of the Fruit Belt and/or Allentown. In order to minimize adverse impacts to historic structures to the maximum extent practicable, UB will consult with SHPO (as required under Section 14.09 of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law) as designs for each building on the McCarley Gardens Component are developed, to ensure that adverse impacts from such development to the character of the Fruit Belt and Allentown neighborhoods are minimized.

In terms of urban design and aesthetic impacts, the McCarley Gardens Component will replace a two-story, suburban-style garden apartment campus with a denser mass of buildings and activity. The development of McCarley Site has been designed to create urban-style building parcels, served by re-established streets with the realignment and reconnection of Virginia, North Oak and Elm Streets. The new mid to high-rise buildings that are proposed for the McCarley Site will be massed to be consistent with adjacent buildings along Goodell and Ellicott Streets and to create a progression in scale and massing as one moves toward the adjacent Fruit Belt neighborhood to the east. During more detailed design, attention will be given to building siting, massing and streetscape design to expand the public realm in the area and enhance the connection between the Downtown Campus and surrounding neighborhoods. The McCarley Site also lies on the edge of downtown and the proposed development will further transition the Downtown Campus area into the adjacent urban core. Moreover, the McCarley Gardens Component as conceptualized is highly consistent with the new City of Buffalo Green Code Land Use Plan that recommends the transition for the McCarley Site from suburban apartments to health or education campus. Accordingly, through appropriate land use planning and the conceptual design of the McCarley Gardens Component, urban design and aesthetic impacts from the McCarley Gardens Component to the surrounding area have been minimized to the maximum extent practicable.
In terms of stormwater management, the McCarley Gardens Component will result in the McCarley Site being redeveloped with buildings accommodating academic space, incubator/office/research uses, a vehicular parking, and student housing. The Illustrative Campus Plan for the Downtown Campus contained in the UB Physical Plan shows buildings and a parking garage replacing the existing residential development on the McCarley Site, and a new urban park constructed along a realigned Virginia Street. Although this concept recreates large areas of greenspace, impervious cover is estimated to increase. This increase in impervious surface will result in an increase in runoff rates and volumes. Stormwater runoff will continue to be collected and conveyed to the existing combined sewer system as this is the only locally available storm sewer. It will be necessary to mitigate the impacts of increased stormwater runoff from the McCarley Gardens Component. This mitigation will likely take the form of stormwater detention, green roofs and implementation of other sustainable development practices. Additional detention and/or treatment may be necessary depending upon requirements from the Buffalo Sewer Authority. As plans for the McCarley Gardens Component are further developed, hydraulic and hydrologic calculations will be performed to determine existing and proposed rates of stormwater discharge from the McCarley Site. Detention will be provided, as necessary, to meet Buffalo Sewer Authority requirements. In addition, green infrastructure and/or additional treatment or detention may be necessary to achieve the water quality treatment and runoff reduction volume objectives of the Buffalo Sewer Authority. Accordingly, stormwater impacts from the McCarley Gardens Component will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

In terms of traffic impacts associated with the McCarley Gardens Component, 2013 baseline conditions were analyzed and compared to 2030 projected background conditions and 2030 projected McCarley Gardens Component build conditions (1.2 million gsf). The results of this analysis indicated a reduction in the level of service and failing operations at a number of locations and a number
of improvements and mitigations are recommended for the area including installation of a traffic signal at the Elm Street/Goodell Street intersection; installation of a traffic signal at the Virginia Street/Ellicott Street intersection; and, traffic signal timing adjustments throughout the study area, as necessary. The traffic impact study shows that with the recommended mitigation the operational efficiencies of several intersections are improved over what would be experienced with general 2030 background traffic without the McCarley Gardens Component. However, there remain several intersections where the Level of Service is projected to be made worse by the McCarley Gardens Component generated traffic and appropriate mitigation for such impacts is identified in the traffic study. However, because a worst case scenario was used to analyze the proposed development, the actual transportation impacts from the McCarley Gardens Component will likely be less than what is projected. Thus, at 25 percent build out of the McCarley Gardens Component, the Traffic Impact Study will be updated to reexamine existing conditions, adjust background and McCarley Site generated traffic volumes, and determine what additional development can occur without further detriment to the operation of the roadway network, or identify if additional mitigation is warranted. Accordingly, traffic impacts from the McCarley Gardens Component will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

7. **Specific Thresholds**

As noted in section 3, although all specific future projects will be reviewed for compliance with SEQR and against the GEIS and associated Findings Statement, actions which exceed the thresholds or conditions below will not be considered to have been addressed by the GEIS and associated Findings Statement. When the following thresholds are exceeded in a specific future project, additional environmental review will be undertaken in accordance with Section 3.

- Any specific future project that is built on land that is not identified as part of the three campuses in the GEIS.
- Any specific future project that involves a land use not currently
contemplated in the Comprehensive Physical Plan.

• Any specific future project that will cause the University population to exceed:
  
  • 13,796 faculty, staff and students on the Downtown Campus;
  
  • 9,118 faculty, staff and students on the South Campus; or,
  
  • 29,339 faculty, staff and students on the North Campus.

• Any specific future project impacting an historic resource which deviates from Department of Interior standards for additions and alterations.

• Any specific future project that will deviate from the archeological mitigation protocols specified in this GEIS.

• Any specific future project that involves construction in designated no-build zones in the areas surrounding the Campuses and Lake LaSalle.

• Any specific future project that would cause energy consumption to exceed amounts listed in table 23.3 titled, “UB’s Annual Energy Consumption, 2030, Proposed Action Worst Case Scenario” in the DGEIS.

• Any specific future project that would cause water demand to exceed amounts listed in table 23.4 titled, “Projected Water/Sewer Demand” in the DGEIS.

8. **Socioeconomic Conditions and Neighborhood Character**

There are expected to be significant socioeconomic impacts from implementing the Plan. The entire Western New York Region, primarily the City of Buffalo and the Town of Amherst, will experience the benefits of the generation of 20,000 construction jobs and 10,000 new jobs over the
course of the Plan's build-out. The Proposed Action is estimated to increase the total economic impact of the University from $1.7 billion to $3.6 billion dollars annually. The Proposed Action also calls for specific actions to ensure that the impact of growth is more equitably enjoyed. These will include collaborative neighborhood redevelopment efforts with citizens in University Heights, the Fruit Belt, and Allentown. It will involve the development of programs in association with organized labor to ensure broad participation in the construction and operation of new UB facilities. Key community programs will benefit from new, improved, or expanded facilities, and improved transit access to them, provided under the Proposed Action.

Under the Proposed Action, the full development of the proposed Comprehensive Physical Plan is not expected to result in any significant adverse impact to socioeconomic conditions, historic resource or community facilities and services. In fact, the full development offers significant long-term benefits for the neighborhoods, City of Buffalo, Town of Amherst, and the region. However, growth at the Downtown Campus will likely require the acquisition of property, relocation of residents, and significant planning and correspondence with residents to coordinate neighborhood redevelopment with implementation of UB's Plan. Long term construction and demolition projects on the North and South campuses are not expected to adversely affect adjacent neighborhoods.

Due to the long-term nature of the proposed project and uncertainty of development strategies, the adverse impacts to residents within the affected neighborhoods are nonspecific, but are anticipated. Strategies to mitigate any negative effects on the residents and neighbors due to relocation, construction delays, and any other consequential effects should be addressed through a public review with affected neighborhoods.
9. **Infrastructure and Utility Service Issues**

Growth will impact service needs. Estimated demand for water at North Campus would account for approximately 1.12 percent of the ECWA yearly water consumption, a 0.20 percent increase from current demand. This situation, considered an insignificant increase in demand, would not be expected to overburden the ECWA water supply. While South Campus demand is expected to decrease, the demand at the Downtown Campus is expected to increase due to its significant growth. However, the combined demand for South Campus and the Downtown Campus is estimated to be approximately 0.34 percent of the City of Buffalo’s average water demand, and is therefore considered an insignificant increase. A 0.85 percent increase in sanitary sewage is anticipated at North Campus under the Proposed Action. Although a relatively small overall increase, the anticipated capacity of Town of Amherst Sewer District No. 16’s conveyance system and treatment plant in the year 2030 should be evaluated for system limitations and ability to handle this increase.

South Campus and Downtown Campus combined would increase the number of gallons to the City of Buffalo sewer system by 0.29 percent. This contribution is considered insignificant in relation to the City’s current water treatment capacity.

The Proposed Action includes an array of strategies to control storm water flows into critical natural resources, such as minimizing the amount of non-porous surfaces. New buildings will be outfitted with planted or “green” roofs to absorb storm water, and with underground cisterns to capture the overflow and store it for use in flushing toilets.

Over time there would be a need for the University to replace existing infrastructure as necessary due to age at each campus. The growth and construction in this scenario should not greatly alter the effect of stormwater at each campus. The existing drainage zones and storm sewers are capable of handling the additional impervious area that this scenario would create. The implementation of the
proposed action will also lead to nearly all new construction on existing parking lots, reduce the total amount of roadway surface, and break up plazas with larger planted areas, thereby minimizing the new impervious surfaces introduced by campus growth.

10. **Hazardous Materials and Potential Property Contamination**

Under the Proposed Action, there is potential for adverse impacts associated with excavation for new construction resulting from the potential presence of subsurface contamination and with demolition related to hazardous material within structures. Although these activities could increase pathways for human exposure, the hazardous materials that could potentially be encountered by implementation of the Proposed Action will be managed, isolated, and/or removed during the construction phase. Hazardous building materials would be abated and managed prior to renovation and demolition activities. By utilizing proper construction management of hazardous/ contaminated materials, significant adverse impact related to hazardous materials can be avoided during construction and remediated afterward. Therefore, significant adverse impacts related to potentially hazardous and/or contaminated materials are not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.

If new property is to be purchased, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be completed in accordance with the standard developed by the American Society for Testing Materials ASTM entitled E 1527-05 (Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process). These assessments are written to evaluate and establish a record of environmental conditions related to the property to be acquired. At completion, copies of the Phase I ESA will be forwarded to Environment, Health, and Safety Services (EHS) care of the Environmental Programs Manger (EPM) for file.
11. Solid Waste And Sanitation Services

Solid waste generation under the Proposed Action may increase up to 34 percent, but it is fully anticipated that solid waste reduction will improve over the years due to advances in technology, environmental awareness, and UB's commitment to improve their recycling program to reach their goal of recycling a minimum of 50 percent of the solid waste stream.

12. Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy

For the North and South Campuses, most of the future expansion proposed will be within existing campus boundaries and will not have any significant impacts on land use and zoning within the study area surrounding these campuses. The largest portion of growth associated with the Proposed Action occurs at the Downtown Campus, which is not currently a physically distinct UB Campus, but is integrated as part of the multi-institutional BuffaloNiagara Medical Campus (BNMC). The majority of the BNMC itself is zoned R3 as a Dwelling District, where schools and other compatible commercial uses are allowed. Land use surrounding the Downtown Campus is more balanced than that of the other two campuses with the two most prominent land uses being a mix of residential and commercial. The Proposed Action will not have an adverse effect on the existing land use and zoning at the Downtown Campus. The Proposed Action is in accordance with comprehensive plans for the subject areas, and provides opportunities for greater cooperation in achieving the host community's goals. For example, Proposed Plan supports the Amherst Master Plan's recommendation for the creation of a town-wide open space and greenway network, and will specifically enhance the Amherst Bike Path by improving on-campus community spaces, bicycle facilities and pedestrian amenities.

13. Natural Resources

The Plan will enhance a number of elements in the campus environments. Proposed enhancements include Lake LaSalle's ecological restoration efforts, tree trenches, rain gardens and soil augmentation to improve landscape and wind attenuation on North and South Campuses. There are
proposed stormwater interventions on North and South Campuses; any future stormwater practices and
drainage improvements will be designed to meet and or exceed NYSDEC requirements. These
improvements will avoid increased runoff that could occur under the No Action Alternative, which
would adversely affect stormwater systems, including natural systems, such as Ellicott Creek, Bizer
Creek and detention/retention basins.

The planned reduction of lawn areas to reforested areas is expected be a maintenance cost
savings for the University that will not be realized absent the action. The Proposed Action with regard to
natural resources on the North and South Campuses is restorative, and will correct landscape issues and
past construction oversights that will improve environmental function and value.

The University’s goals for a sustainable design and policy for environmental stewardship
will make tremendous improvements to restore the campus landscapes and improve existing natural
resources. The ambitious plans described in the Comprehensive Physical Plan will reduce paved
surfaces and increase forestation, improve water quality with better stormwater management and add
recreation benefits. Rain gardens for bioretention of rainwater will help to remove pollutants while
providing attractive landscaping along the edge of standard asphalt surfaces. The creation of additional
habitat and efforts to amend soils for healthier trees on the North Campus will be a positive effect on
natural resources.

14. Cultural, Historical, and Archeological Resources

The total renovation of Kapoor Hall (formerly Acheson) for occupancy by the School of
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences demonstrates the University’s commitment to sustainable use of
existing building stock and respect for existing building placement. Other projects such as the
rehabilitation of Abbott Hall, rehabilitation and adaptive use of Wende Hall, and rehabilitation of Hayes
and Crosby Halls, involve exterior renovation, which will be designed and constructed in keeping with.
the historic character of each structure. The reconstruction of Harriman Quad on South Campus tests sustainable landscaping and stormwater management techniques to be used across the University. This reconstruction of the historic quadrangle surrounded by historic Abbott Hall, Foster Hall and Harriman Hall is a demonstration of the University’s understanding of the E.B. Green plan.

With the Proposed Action, there will be no impacts on historic resources on the North Campus. No properties there are listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places. The status of those that may become eligible as a result of their advancing age (Governor’s Complex will be 50 years old in 2022) will not be affected by implementation of the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action is not expected to have significant adverse impact on historic resources at South Campus. The Plan takes several steps forward toward restoring open spaces and viewsheds of the historic buildings. The “temporary” Butler buildings, which significantly detract from the historic intent of the E.B. Green Master Plan will be removed. Because the Proposed Action was developed with the historic, cultural, or architectural value of the buildings in mind, all significant historic structures will be preserved. Creation of a university-designated historic district will provide UB with the flexibility to modify the district’s boundaries and further develop the university’s preservation guidelines as migration and other aspects of plan implementation transform the campus.

The establishment of more connective links with the neighborhoods surrounding the South Campus, including University Heights, Winspear Avenue and Bailey Avenue will encourage further restoration and/or adaptive reuse of the existing building stock.

Portions of UB’s three campuses have various levels of sensitivity and potential for pre-contact and/or historic archeological sites. When build-out occurs in areas of archaeological sensitivity, specific protocols will be followed to minimize the impacts on archaeological resources. Recommendations for archaeological reconnaissance and other mitigation measures are anticipated at
certain sites under the Proposed Action. If archaeological field testing demonstrates that significant archaeological resources are not present, then no further work is necessary. If the archaeological field testing indicates that significant archaeological resources are present, then mitigation could be undertaken if the specific project would result in significant adverse impacts. Mitigation would consist of archaeological resource excavation, project redesign, or a combination of both.

15. Transportation

As outlined in the GEIS, it is anticipated that the demand for transit services will continue to increase based on future population projections for the three UB campuses. Transportation improvements listed under both the GBNRTC 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and long range projects, would still result in unacceptable levels of service during peak PM hours in the year 2030, which further suggesting the need for additional improved transit services in the region. It is also anticipated that the demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and infrastructure will continue to increase based on future population. The Comprehensive Physical Plan aims to address these concerns with a comprehensive transportation minimizing the impacts of the University’s growth and support improvements to existing transportation networks. The Plan will help improve the effectiveness of transit by supporting new development in established activity centers already served by transit. Consistent with current regional planning, UB’s Plan also supports the enhancement of transit service, not only between the three UB campuses through a new express bus or Metro Rail extension, but across the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) service area. The Comprehensive Physical Plan also recommends bike and pedestrian improvements which are intended to improve pedestrian friendliness, safety, and accessibility at all three UB campuses, while minimizing the impacts of parking and traffic on the environment.

Towards these ends, the Plan proposes new sidewalks, trails and paths both within the campuses and connecting to the existing surrounding and regional networks. With improved bicycle and
transit networks, and incentives and restrictions to encourage reduced dependence on cars, it is anticipated that more people will be walking and biking at UB’s campuses.

16. Air Quality

Construction related short term air pollutant emissions will include the emission of dust from the physical removal of structures and the haul-out of debris, and from construction/demolition vehicle/equipment exhaust. Typically, these emissions are produced in the vicinity of active construction/demolition and along travel routes used by construction vehicles. The Proposed Action is expected to be built-out in four phases over a 20-year period. As a result, construction/demolition emissions will be spread out over time (i.e. not concentrated in any single year) and spread among the three campuses.

Under the Proposed Action, building space at North Campus will increase by approximately 3.2 million square feet. It is anticipated that each new building will be heated by individual heating units using both on-site and off-site electric power generation. Off-site electricity may result in increased indirect emissions. The total building space at South Campus is expected to decrease by 200,000 square feet. It is anticipated that the Mackay plant will be able to supply steam heat and hot water for the reconfigured South Campus with no increase in emissions. Renovations to existing buildings would incorporate energy conservation measures that would reduce the energy consumption of the South Campus, potentially resulting in some reduction in direct emissions from the Mackay heat plant, and a reduction in indirect (off-site) emissions associated with on-campus electricity use.

Implementation of the Proposed Action will result in approximately 3.6 million square feet of new floor space at the Downtown Campus. It is not known if a distributed heating system or a central system utilizing a central heat plant will be built. If a central heat plant is built, it will likely require an air permit from the NYSDEC and would be built using state of the art equipment. Similar to
the North Campus, each new building on the Downtown Campus will also use electricity, which will result in the generation of off-site, indirect emissions from power generation. The amount of off-site, indirect emissions may be partially mitigated if renewable, non-fossil fuel sources such as wind, solar and hydropower are used.

Under the Proposed Action a modest increase in traffic volume of 10 percent is expected. An increase in traffic volume would normally result in an increase in emissions, however by the year 2030 average emission rates per vehicle would be expected to decrease as older vehicles are retired from use and replaced with newer, cleaner emitting vehicles. Also, improvements in vehicle emission controls, increased use of hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles and efficiency improvements in local roadways can reasonably be expected to occur over the next 20 years. These latter factors contribute to a reduction in emissions that would offset emissions associated with the traffic volume increase.

17. Noise

It is anticipated that there will be short-term construction noise level increases with the Proposed Action due to building demolition and new building construction activities, from the operation of construction equipment and vehicles traveling to and from the construction sites. Noise from construction. As construction or renovation activities at each campus will be spread over several years, there may be some concentrated periods of intense construction of several buildings at the same time in close proximity to each other. If this were to occur, mitigation measures would be applied to reduce noise.

As noted, traffic will increase, and with traffic related noise. Projected traffic volumes developed indicate an increase in the traffic volume on the main access routes:

• one to four percent for North Campus,
• two to three percent for South Campus, and
• two percent for the Downtown Campus.

It is expected that this traffic would include mainly passenger cars for university staff and commuting students. As a rule of thumb, a doubling of the traffic volume (100 percent increase) would be expected to result in a 3.0 dBA increase in noise level along a roadway, which is considered to be a perceptible increase. Given the small percent projected increase in traffic volume as a result of implementing the comprehensive plan, the increase in noise level due to traffic would not be perceptible along the main access routes.

Stationary noise sources, including building heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, laboratory hood and other exhaust vents, and emergency generators, are expected to see a moderate increase under the Proposed Action.

18. Community Facilities and Services

Growth at the University will create a demand for increased community facilities, such as daycare and libraries and could burden emergency services, which are currently at capacity. North Campus will have an impact on the Getzville Fire Company, as increased growth will impact the responders’ ability to properly assess fire and emergency situations. Coordination between UB and the Getzville Fire Company will be crucial to ensure adequate and efficient fire protection services to the North Campus. Specific building hazards should be identified and this information should be shared with the Getzville Fire Company and Erie County Department of Emergency Services throughout the build-out of the Project. Growth will also create a greater need for a coordinated police presence as the potential for incidents and emergencies is likely to increase both on and around the campus. Police safety and security will be improved by the proposed new university police building on North Campus. North Campus growth is anticipated to impact both the Sweet Home School District and Williamsville
Central School District. Coordination with school districts in planning for additional facilities to serve the growing population of Amherst will be necessary.

The Comprehensive Physical Plan recognizes the shortcomings of public transportation and addresses several options. Transportation improvements are planned for better public transit and UB shuttles. The proposed Metro Rail extension to the North Campus through extension of the existing metro line is an unfunded NFTA rail project supported by UB.

In terms of UB provided services, the relocation of the Law School from North Campus to South Campus not anticipated to generate any negative impact to the community, since the community served for all programs is more regional than local and they are not location dependent for receipt of services.

Turning to the South Campus, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to adversely affect the Buffalo Fire Department. For emergency services, coordination between UB, the Buffalo Fire Department, Rural Metro Ambulance, and the City of Buffalo will be necessary to ensure adequate fire and EMS services. Although, the South Campus does not significantly increase the student population or significantly increase the building square footage under the Proposed Action, campus security will remain an issue that will require the continuing efforts of existing programs, such as: safety shuttle; anti-rape task force, UB Stampede; neighborhood watch; UB police and Buffalo police presence at events and evening/night activities. Recent implementation of security devices and programs will be periodically reassessed by UB to determine if crime is deterred and that the safety programs meet the needs of the community of residents and students. Under the Proposed Action the South Campus community benefits from the NFTA Metro Rail station on campus, which facilitates improved access to the Metro Rail public transit rail system in Buffalo.
A UB partnership program with Buffalo City Schools provides various summer camps and a scholarship program to raise student achievements and increase the number of students in Buffalo City schools that are ready for and interested in college. These programs are managed by the UB Center for Educational Collaboration, which is anticipated to relocate from Allen Hall to the Gateway Building in downtown Buffalo. There are no anticipated adverse impacts for area students, since summer programs and other civic engagement activities are not relocating.

Finally, as to the Downtown Campus, the Proposed Action will ultimately improve economic vitality, but will create a need for community facilities and services for the community of people who will move to areas surrounding the campus. The Comprehensive Physical Plan has identified some of the programming and planning that will be necessary in order to serve the community’s facilities and services. These include many of the campus life amenities that are proposed to be open to community use, such as parks and other outdoor spaces; meeting halls and multipurpose rooms; recreation and wellness facilities; casual dining; child care; and security. These progressive neighborhoods have embraced programs for neighborhood improvements and UB’s growth translates in a positive way for the community.

19. Energy and Sustainability

UB has a Climate Action Plan (CAP) which maps out UB’s commitment and formalizes an action plan to reach climate neutrality. The CAP addresses the impact of the University and growth at UB over the next few decades and identifies actions that UB can take to mitigate its energy use and impact on climate. UB’s commitment to climate neutrality will be achieved through resource-efficient growth, operational efficiency, and long-term planning and innovation. Sustainable design principals presented in the Comprehensive Physical Plan and energy goals identified in the CAP will serve to manage energy consumption and develop programs that will have long-reaching energy use implications to faculty, staff, students and the community. The recommendation to attain carbon neutrality is
environmentally responsible and is the recommended approach to managed growth. Adverse effects on energy related issues associated with Proposed Action are addressed by the measures outlined in the CAP.

UB has also committed itself to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and serve as a leader in the campaign to mitigate global climate change by developing and implementing measures to achieve climate neutrality by eliminating or offsetting those emissions. Implementing of the Proposed Action could affect UB’s carbon footprint in several ways. The proposed growth in UB’s built environment coupled with a 40 percent increase in students, faculty, and staff has the potential to increase UB’s annual GHG emissions significantly. However, strategic planning, the use of advanced technology, and behavioral change have the potential to offset much of this growth, and ultimately lead to a reduction in UB’s campus carbon footprint. The Climate Action Plan addresses strategies that could be implemented to mitigate GHG growth.

20. Urban Design and Visual Resources

Following the planned renovations to buildings on North Campus and South Campus, viewsheds and aesthetic appeal will be enhanced. There are no negative impacts anticipated to visual resources at the Downtown Campus under the No Action Alternative. The urban design and visual resources are greatly improved at all three UB campuses under the Proposed Action.

With the Proposed Action, building massing and location of new buildings on North Campus are in keeping with the existing scale and proportion. The size of proposed building footprints continues to knit together the density necessary for comfortable building to building movement. Improved bike and walking routes and enhanced landscapes will contribute to beautifying and reviving a campus that feels disconnected from its surroundings. Lake LaSalle will become more prominent on North Campus when “The Oval” is constructed, creating a vibrant new public space. Viewsheds framed
will enhance people’s experience of the campus assets and naturalized settings. In addition, prominent new entries and lobbies at Capen Hall and Lockwood Library will provide welcoming visual access to buildings.

At South Campus, new quadrangles and landscaped pathways will reinforce these historic core areas and open up previously closed circulation paths. Several elements of the Plan also assist in improving the visual cues for first-time visitors to the Campus. Removing the temporary Butler Buildings and Buildings and planning building sites in accordance with existing axes will intensify the density and usability of the site and protect its visual assets.

Downtown, the plan calls for creation of a new park coupled with the realignment of Virginia Street through the BNMC, re-linking Allentown and the Fruitbelt. This new park, flanking the restored Virginia Street between Ellicott and Michigan, and fronting the Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences would give UB and the communities a green hub centrally located for the majority of the new program. At the Downtown Campus the proposed changes are sweeping, allowing for opportunities for enhanced streetscapes, repurposed vacant buildings, busied pedestrian activity and an incentive to live, work and play in the Downtown area. The proposed investment and timeline are sizeable, yet progressively engaged to build up harmonious and beneficial enhancements for all. Substantial upgrades to existing buildings will also enhance aesthetics in the neighborhoods around the campus site.

21. Mitigation Measures

An integral part of the SEQRA process is to identify mitigating measures through which a project’s impacts can be minimized. Throughout the DGEIS, and as summarized in Chapter 22 of the DGEIS, and in Section 2.10 of the FGEIS (“Cultural, Historical and Archeological”) specific and general mitigation measures and policies are detailed. These measures will be implemented measures as
part of the Comprehensive Physical Plan. UB finds that by implementing these measures, the potential impacts of the Plan will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

22. Alternatives

The GEIS considered one alternative to the proposed UB 2020 Plan for the University of Buffalo, a No Action Alternative, in which the Proposed Action is not undertaken. This No Action Alternative thus acts as a baseline which provides a basis for comparison of the proposed action. Consideration of this alternative provided a method for the analysis of the consequences of not adopting the Proposed Action.

a. No Action Alternative

The purpose of consideration of the “no action” alternative is to examine the future condition of the subject communities if there is no Project. Here, the No Action Alternative is the alternative which would occur if the Comprehensive Physical Plan were not implemented by UB. This alternative does not indicate that no building will occur, as a certain amount of growth would typically be seen by UB without the implementation of the Comprehensive Physical Plan. To identify the No Action Alternative, historic growth trends at the university were projected to the build out year of 2030 in order to determine the baseline for future conditions without the Comprehensive Physical Plan. In other words, it depicts what the university would look like in the build out year without the build out of the master plan. Based on existing trends of student and faculty population growth, there will be a need for more facilities, as well as a need for updating of aging facilities. With the No Action Alternative, modest growth will continue as necessary through the build out year of 2030 to accommodate student and faculty needs on all campuses.

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2 Thus, although the build-out suggested by the Comprehensive Physical Plan will not occur in this scenario, the projects listed in the Five Year Capital Plan of 2008-2013 are included in the impact assessments for both the No Action and the Proposed Action Alternative.
While the No-Project Alternative would eliminate the impacts from the Project; it would also eliminate the Project Benefits which UB believes are important to its community. If the “No Action” alternative were selected, then no socioeconomic benefits would accrue to the area. Local communities, will lose the opportunity for adding a significant source of economic growth. Thus, UB finds, especially given the significant regional benefits that would be lost, that the “No Action” alternative is not preferred because the Proposed Action’s benefits outweigh the negatives.

b. Proposed Action Alternative

The Proposed Action is the adoption and implementation of UB’s Comprehensive Physical Plan. The Plan would expand and enhance UB facilities at its three campuses, providing an additional seven (7) million gross square feet (gsf) of building floor area to accommodate a projected addition of approximately 10,000 students, 1,000 faculty, and 2,750 staff by the build-out year 2030.

This growth will be largely accommodated on three (3) UB campuses — including North Campus in the Town of Amherst, and the South and Downtown Campuses in the City of Buffalo. The Plan redistributes academic programs and growth to create a distinct identity and mission for each campus that will be connected with the others through an enhanced transportation system. In Chapter 21 of the DGEIS, a comparison of the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action is presented. For the reasons stated in this Findings Statement and the GEIS, UB finds the adoption of the Plan, as tempered by the adopted mitigation measures, is the preferred alternative.

CERTIFICATION

In accordance with 6 NYCRR § 617.11, SEQRA’s required balancing of potential for significant adverse environmental impacts against social, economic and other essential considerations, the State University of New York at Buffalo hereby certifies:
1. It has fully considered the relevant environmental impacts, facts and conclusions disclosed in the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the University At Buffalo Comprehensive Physical Plan;

2. It has weighed and balanced the relevant environmental impacts with social, economic and other essential considerations;

3. It has provided in these Findings the rationale for its decisions;

4. That the requirements of 6 NYCRR 617 have been met, including the preparation and adoption of the DGEIS and FGEIS and these Findings; and

5. That Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available, the action is the one that avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and that adverse impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigative measures and safeguards that were identified as practicable.

State University of New York at Buffalo

[Signature of Responsible Official] [Name of Responsible Official] [Date]

Vice President for Finance + Admin

Title of Responsible Official

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