Narrative Summary of the Projects Considered in the Draft 2023-33 Ten-Year Capital Plan

STATE FUNDING - PROGRAMMATIC

Classroom & Lab Upgrades

This is a multi-year program that will repurpose and upgrade existing instructional space on campus. The goal of the program is to ensure the Institution has adequate access to high performance and modern learning space and, in the short term, partially accommodate the recent growth in STEM. The determination of what instructional space is upgraded or re-purposed is based on the following criteria:

1. Measurable Outcomes – The upgrades will increase capacity and room usage. The capacity and usage should be supported with usable data.
2. Course Data – The structured, academic use of the renovated room must be recorded and tracked within the Institution's enterprise data system. This will preclude using the funding for renovations of scholarly activity space that was never intended to be used for instruction.
3. Performance Thresholds – The renovated rooms will operate at a minimum level of usage per academic year.

The 2023-25 scope of work includes both the renovation of upper division instructional labs, as well as comprehensive renewal of general use classrooms.

Student Development & Success Center

This project will develop a vibrant welcoming facility at the south end of campus to serve as a gateway for prospective students, a resource dedicated to inclusive student success, and a way for Admissions to showcase Western’s strengths. The center will help students successfully transition into and out of the university as thoughtful, engaged citizens prepared for lives of purpose. Specific goals include:

- An active, inclusive, and student development centered space to coach and engage students in making healthy choices which support their academic success and development of personal and civic responsibility
- Easily accessible and visible presence of social justice, sustainability, leadership and community groups in the building to educate and encourage engagement and connection.
- Provide collaborative shared study spaces for group learning and multiple purposes throughout the day and evening.

The predesign/programming exercise is considering which of the following programs will be housed wholly or in part in the new facility: Academic Advising, Student Outreach Services, Career Services (including Internships), Counseling & Wellness, New Student Services/Family Outreach, Admissions, Transfer & Commuter Spaces, and representatives from Registrar and Financial Aid, etc. By moving these services to a new location, other spaces (Old Main primarily) can be repurposed to house administrative offices and centers, e.g., moving Human Resources to Old Main, while freeing up significant space in academic buildings for critical academic needs.

This project received pre-design funding in the 2021-23 biennium.
Minor Works – Program

Our Minor Works Program omnibus categories are for requests of projects ranging in size from $25,000 to $2,000,000. Several of our older academic buildings were designed decades ago and are in need of modernization in order to improve function and flexibility in our academic support spaces. The programmatic projects currently identified include: collaborative study areas, office space-optimization projects, renovating a computer lab to enable relocating the existing data center to core campus, and room improvements to accommodate new or enhanced technology. Additionally, these funds are also intended to make progress in converting or adding gender neutral restrooms on campus. If the projects identified in this category exceed $2 million, they will not be eligible for this funding and will need a separate appropriation.

STATE FUNDING - PRESERVATION

Environmental Studies Center Renovation

This project will renovate, modernize, and grow the Environmental Studies Center (ES), originally completed in 1973. ES primarily houses the College of the Environment and the Geology program. While ES remains structurally well suited for intensive science use, significant upgrades to critical mechanical systems and space utilization are required to address costly inefficiencies and maximize the building’s potential. The renovation will address the maintenance and repairs backlog, implement an entirely new HVAC system, upgrade the exterior envelope, and provide modern teaching and research space needed for a 21st century education. ES is also well situated in direct proximity to other STEM programs on campus. STEM majors continue to experience unprecedented enrollment increases. A strategy must be developed to balance the need for swing space during construction and the growth and modernization needs of programs in other buildings on campus.

Minor Works – Preservation

Our Minor Works Preservation omnibus categories are for requests of projects ranging in size from $25,000 to $2,000,000. The project requests are submitted by departmental personnel and include facility preservation, health, safety and code compliance, and infrastructure renewal. Many of the projects have been identified in Western’s Facilities Management Backlog Reduction Plan; others are critical departmental needs or are intended to mitigate existing deficiencies while awaiting a more comprehensive building renewal. Based on the recommendations from our consultant, Sightlines, and the cost just to keep up with maintenance, we estimate our biennial capital preservation need to be $30 million. If the projects identified in this category exceed $2 million, they will not be eligible for this funding and will need a separate appropriation.

Access Control Security and Infrastructure Upgrades

A project to replace the campus head-end access control system and convert existing building access control systems to a new system was completed in 2020. This project will install electronic controls on high priority exterior doors that were key-based in past and other designated high security internal
doors of all major academic buildings. The project will also install new hardware on selected classroom doors to enable locking from the inside in the case of a campus emergency.

An integral component to the access control system is the communications pathways through which data and information must flow. The current fiber network that serves all of campus is reaching the end of useful life and does not have the capacity to accept the additional anticipated load of an expanded and improved access control security system. In addition, emerging technologies in building systems as well as increasing needs of faculty, students, and staff are placing unattainable demands on the existing fiber cable. Exacerbating the condition is that fact that the fiber cable has been damaged in numerous locations over time, effectively reducing the capacity of the entire network. The recommended solution is to install new multi-mode and single-mode fiber cable between and within campus buildings.

Overall, these upgrades will improve campus building access and security, provide improved integration with other security systems, such as video monitoring and intrusion detection, and simplify dispatch functions during emergency responses.

This project received partial funding in the 2021-23 biennium.

Elevator Preservation Safety & ADA Upgrades

In 2015, with an increasing incidence of elevator breakdowns, Facilities Management hired a consultant to inspect and analyze campus elevators more than 15 years old to determine their current condition, code compliance, and safety requirements, and to identify and recommend options for elevator modernization. Overall, 29 elevators were identified as needing some level of modernization, repairs, or renewal. In the past two biennia 12 elevators have been upgraded, leaving 17 still in need of modernization.

We have created a prioritized list of work to be accomplished on each elevator, based upon 1) building and personal safety and code compliance; 2) current operation and performance to reduce the repair rate; and 3) appearance and quality of life. Analysis determined that correction of the deficiencies generally cannot wait for a full building renovation and instead must be accomplished as part of a stand-alone elevator renewal project.

Wilson Academic Renovation

Funding for the Wilson Library project was requested in prior biennia to provide for more effective and efficient use of space for student learning and collection access, improved accessibility, and updating of building systems (some of them original to its 1927 completion) that have met or exceeded their useful life. There are multiple programmatic opportunities in renovating the facility. To a large degree, those opportunities hinge on the installation of compact shelving and other collection storage efficiencies, necessary to create additional instruction and collaboration spaces to support student research, writing, tutoring, academic technology, and other library and learning programs and services designed to support undergraduate and graduate education.

Since the completion of the Carver Academic Renovation, Wilson Library has the largest facility maintenance backlog on campus at $15 million. The brick exterior for the original building and the 1976 addition are solid masonry and have water infiltration issues. Windows are all single pane with energy
inefficient steel frames. The multi-level sloped built-up roof and walkways have drainage path bottlenecks and need replacement. There are no draft stops in the attic, making even a small fire difficult to contain. The 1927 section of the facility has no functioning fresh air ventilation system and depends on open windows year-round for fresh air. Given the local climate’s near-constant high humidity, interior conditions threaten tens of millions of dollars in books and other physical materials. The HVAC equipment in the 1970’s wing has had recent in-house and ESCO energy savings upgrades and is operating acceptably despite being past its expected service life. The main electrical service was replaced in 2012. Branch panels and wiring in the old and newer sections are original and overdue for replacement.

**CFPA Renovation & Addition**

Exterior renewal of the Performing Arts Center facility (PAC) was approved and executed in the 2013-15 biennium, along with the exterior roofing renewal of PAC which was completed winter of 2015. However, the renovation and addition project proposes an intense overhaul of the Performing Arts Center to address a multitude of facility infrastructure, building renewal, code compliance and programmatic needs. It was previously requested and referred to as the “Gateway Complex” project. The project includes adding several thousand square feet of multi-disciplinary academic and performance spaces that meet contemporary technology and curriculum requirements. The expansion would require removal of High Street Hall and Canada House. The Center for Canadian American Studies and the Border Policy Research Institute would be relocated to the PAC addition. The project also involves upgrades/replacements of mechanical and life safety systems that are in poor condition.

**Fine Arts and Arts Annex Renovation and Accessibility Upgrades**

The Arts Annex (AA) building was built in 1968, housing instructional space for the Art and Design departments on three levels with a gross square footage of approximately 16,000. The lower level holds the Ceramics program, while the first floor is dedicated to the sculpture program and the STEAM Makerspace. The second floor has classrooms, faculty offices and studio space for the Design department. The building lacks an elevator, making the second floor inaccessible to those with mobility issues. This project will either renovate the Arts Annex by adding an elevator, while minimally impacting available program space, or connect the Arts Annex to the nearby Fine Arts building.

Additionally, the project is proposing to renovate Fine Arts and add program space. Fine Arts is listed as one of the buildings on campus most in need of renovation and renewal due to antiquated mechanical systems and program space.

**Humanities Building Renovation/Replacement**

The Humanities building (HU) was built in 1962 and currently holds seven general university classrooms, English department offices and classrooms, and the University Human Resources department. The building is three stories high, with a gross square footage of approximately 33,000. The proposed renovation would address the aging infrastructure of the building and renovate to expand accessibility and remedy structural inefficiencies of the original design. Predesign will also consider whether it is preferable to take down the current structure and construct a new building in its place. Advantages of
this approach would be the ability to construct a taller, more functional building and increase usable space in the core of Western’s main campus.

**STATE FUNDING – INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Heating System Carbon Reduction & Energy Efficiency Improvements**

This project would reduce our annual CO2 emissions by converting our central steam heating system to a hot water system. Our current steam piping does not meet our commitment to work toward a zero-carbon footprint by 2050. Additionally, the current system is impacting our operating utility budgets. In previous biennia, we had to spend approximately $2.5 million in essential repairs and anticipate spending another approximately $15 million over the course of the next 10 years to assure reliable operation.

A study is currently being conducted for this project to determine the most viable capital option for this conversion. The study will also inform if it’s possible to implement this conversion in phases.

**Westside By-Pass Road Realignment**

The Westside By-Pass Road Realignment projects re-aligns the connection with West College Drive to Bill McDonald Parkway. The realigned road was developed during a previous south campus roadway predesign study in 2003-05. The realigned roadway would improve pedestrian safety and create an improved south campus transit center and southern entry to the campus. The realignment will also allow non-university bound traffic to avoid student pedestrian traffic.

**Southcentral Campus Roadway Revisions**

Requests for roadway revisions have been submitted in several biennia. There is a critical need for improving pedestrian safety when accessing the campus from the south. The congestion at two intersections involves pedestrians, bicyclists, transit buses, private vehicles, vendor semi-trucks and any number of motorists using the campus roadway as a standard route to downtown Bellingham. The project involves creating a safe area for crossing by redirecting pedestrian and bus traffic related to East and West College Way where Bill McDonald Parkway enters the campus. Included in the project is the installation of a traffic signal at Bill McDonald Parkway and South College Drive.

**AUXILIARY FUNDED PROJECTS**

The Wade King Student Recreation Center and the Housing and Dining System (consisting of University Residences and Viking Union Facilities) are auxiliaries that finance the construction and maintenance of their own facilities without State support. These entities issue bonds when prudent to spread the cost of improvements over multiple years. Like State-funded facilities, the auxiliaries assess and maintain the infrastructure and condition of buildings, investing annually to minimize backlog of deferred
maintenance and to plan for major renovations and additions. Currently, Western’s auxiliary facilities are aging and in need of modernizations and accessibility upgrades.

Within the next ten years, cash reserves and annual operating cash are planned to fund the following projects:

- Additional gender neutral restrooms in the Recreation Center and the Viking Commons
- Program improvements in the Viking Union
- Ongoing maintenance and renovations in residence halls including access control, networking, utilities infrastructure and building components (Many of these renovations are timed to maintain the stability and function of buildings until their next major renovation)

Long term planning is still in progress, but it is likely that within the next ten years or so, bonds would be issued to finance major renovation and improvement projects such as:

- Renovate and/or replace Fairhaven Residence Halls
- Renovate the Viking Union
- Refresh Birnam Wood Apartments
- Replace Edens Hall North
- Renovate Mathes Hall
- Renovate Nash Hall
- Begin to replace the Ridgeway Residence Halls

**Parking Renewal & Capacity Projects**

The Transportation office has identified several renewal projects, including repairs and resurfacing of the student residential parking lots in the Birnam Wood housing complex and the Lincoln Creek Park & Ride. There is also consideration happening for the construction of Western’s first parking structure, which could help free up valuable land area for future facilities. Potential locations for a parking structure are being considered for benefits including convenient event parking, and the reduction of vehicle/pedestrian crossings. Since the future of conventional automobiles is uncertain, and in some ways inconsistent with Western’s sustainability goals, the placement and design of a new parking structure should allow for future conversion to academic, residential, or other beneficial program use.