Memorial Union Reinvestment (MUR) FAQ

“Final Phases” vs. “Phase II”
To reduce confusion, we are calling the last phases of MUR construction the “final phases” instead of “Phase II.” The reason behind this as the last bits of construction—the Terrace, First Floor, Great Hall, Tripp Commons, 2-4th floors, etc.—will start and finish on a rolling basis over the next 2 years and it would be confusing to call it all a single phase.

“Why restore the Memorial Union?”
Upon completion, the Memorial Union Reinvestment (MUR) will have transformed Memorial Union into a 21st century building while maintaining its original charm, function and purpose. Seamlessly blending into Alumni Park as part the Lakefront Gateway, Memorial Union will remain a popular gathering place for UW-Madison students, faculty, staff, members and visitors for decades to come.

1. MUR preserves and honors an iconic campus destination.
One of MUR’s main tenets is to preserve Memorial Union’s historic integrity and welcoming atmosphere while upgrading and renovating the well-worn facility. It will also restore and upgrade beloved gathering spaces while integrating new ones for future generations to enjoy.

- So far MUR has focused on the west wing, improving accessibility, upgrading utilities and technology while preserving the building’s stature and atmosphere.
- In the Der Stiftskeller renovation, special care was taken to restore artwork, reuse or repurpose materials and replace historic furniture, fixtures and other accoutrements with materials that match or closely resemble the originals.
- Now that the west wing is finished, the effort will move to the central and east part of the building that includes some of the building’s most venerable spaces, such as Der Rathskeller, Main Lounge, Tripp Commons and Great Hall. These spaces have not been significantly upgraded since the building opened in 1928.

2. MUR will make the Wisconsin Union experience better than ever.
MUR will make the Memorial Union a more comfortable and accommodating space, ensuring staff can provide the utmost customer service.

- Students and members can now gather and relax in new spaces including the Shannon Sunset Lounge, Mendota Lodge and Sunset Deck, which was a direct response to student input.
- The Shannon Sunset Lounge features nano-walls that can open in nice weather, allowing patrons to flow freely in and out onto the Terrace and enjoy a year-round view of Lake Mendota.
- The reconfigured Der Stiftskeller is larger and better serves Terrace patrons via a new service window.
- Shannon Hall features bigger seats and better airflow, improving the Theater experience for all.
- More functional and better-equipped meeting rooms and formal spaces will enable the Campus Events Services Office to better service conference and special event guests.
- Dining units will be streamlined and re-imagined to offer a variety of quality, affordable dining options that enable natural access and flow to the Terrace as well as Alumni Park.
- The final phases will minimize level changes on the Terrace while improving way-finding and sightlines. The shoreline renovation has improved the Lakeshore Path and expanded Terrace seating close to the water.
- Expanding the Terrace stage and improving audio will increase the viewing and listening experience for film and music audiences.

3. MUR improves the building’s accessibility and infrastructure.

- Renovating the building involves updating infrastructure, modernizing technology and improving accessibility to the building according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- The project will bring Memorial Union up to code concerning fire safety, sprinklers, energy efficiency and asbestos abatement.
- It will improve way-finding and reconcile level changes in and outside the building to provide free-flowing, natural pedestrian flow in and around the building.
- Other upgrades include replacing building systems (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, etc.) that date back many decades.
- Guests can now enter through the new west entrance and walk directly down a corridor to the Terrace with no level changes.
• New elevators allow guests to reach floors that were completely inaccessible before.
• A key improvement includes relocating the loading dock underground to enable Alumni Park to replace Lot 1 and seamlessly link to the Terrace, which helps establish Lakefront Gateway as the anchor for the East Campus Mall.
• Eliminating steps and using ramps and gradual sloping where possible will improve way-finding between the Terrace, Alumni Park and Memorial Union. This also makes it possible to remove guardrails and some walls thereby improving sightlines.

4. **At the heart of MUR is a focus on sustainability.**
The project continues to adhere to the latest principles of green design and sustainable practices. The goal is achieving LEED Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.
  • Lumber used in the project comes from sustainably managed forests.
  • Demolition materials are recycled at a high rate (about 95%).
  • Environmentally friendly paint, caulk and sealants have been used throughout the project.
  • Special materials that reflect sunlight have been used on roofs to decrease cooling costs in summer months.
  • Materials are repurposed or reused whenever possible. Examples include parts of the limestone exterior, light fixtures, the historic opaque glass blocks and brass handrails in the Theater, and wood from a decaying white oak removed from the Terrace for the new bar and the balustrades in der Stiftskeller.
  • The corresponding shoreline rehabilitation project rebuilt 800 feet of shoreline along the Terrace. This project resulted in more natural water flow, cleaner water and a better habitat for fish.
  • The plan also includes a commitment to a 100-year tree canopy, providing a mix of shade and trees on the Terrace and throughout Alumni Park.

5. **MUR will make new and innovative programming possible.**
The renovated Memorial Union will provide modern spaces for staff, student leaders, volunteers and employees to program events in ways they were only able to imagine before.
  • Innovative technology and smart room design create flexible spaces that can adapt over time to accommodate new student needs, ensuring that the Union remains relevant for generations.
• New spaces have allowed programs to re-imagine their offerings, resulting in the new Outdoor UW and Wheelhouse Studios brands.

• The renovated Shannon Hall features new back-of-house technology, a sprung stage floor and expanded orchestra pit, which will attract artists who wouldn’t have been able to perform here before.

• Fredric March Play Circle was designed as a black-box space with telescopic seating to accommodate small, intimate performances and will allow students to test new shows like cabarets, comedy acts and one-act plays.

• Adding the Festival Room not only increases student programming space, it serves as a rehearsal space, freeing up the main Theater stage for other uses or performances.

• The new boat repair shop, Chart Room and Mendota Lodge in Outdoor UW provide space for new teaching and hands-on learning opportunities.

6. MUR embraces the future with the Lakefront Gateway.
Along with Memorial Union Terrace, Alumni Park and One Alumni Place will anchor the east end of the campus mall. The Lakefront Gateway’s inviting green space and promenade will become a destination for current students, alumni and the Madison community, enhancing the UW-Madison experience for all.

• Memorial Union’s east wing dining operations and meeting spaces are designed to connect seamlessly with the Terrace and Alumni Park.

• Alumni Park will celebrate how alumni fulfill the Wisconsin Idea through service, discovery, tradition, legacy, progress and leadership, inspiring positive change in the world.

• The Goodspeed Family Pier enables boat access to Alumni Park, creating another avenue to attract visitors.

“How have students been involved in the process?”
Students play an integral role in the design process of the Memorial Union Reinvestment. Students consistently shared their ideas and input through surveys, open forums and interest group meetings. A student majority leads the three main design bodies that make important design decisions.

“How is the Memorial Union Reinvestment (MUR) funded?”
The building project is being funded through a variety of sources:

• Students (via segregated fees)
$48 per semester in student segregated fees for the first two years following the plan’s implementation
$96 per semester after the first two years, for up to 30 years. Students will never pay more than $96 a semester for construction.
Student fees cover up to 62% of construction costs. Union operating revenue and donations cover the rest.
This fee includes funding for the construction of Union South and the preservation and enhancement of Memorial Union.

- Private donations
- Revenue generated by Union services

“Will the historic integrity of the building remain?”
We are working closely with the Wisconsin State Historical Society to preserve the historic integrity and charm of the building. A preservation plan was written for the Memorial Union, which has been utilized throughout the project. A historic structure report was created as part of the process. Beloved parts of the building, such as the Great Hall or Tripp Commons will receive mainly infrastructure updates, keeping the original charm of the spaces as intended.

We are proud to have recently been added to the State Register of Historic Places and are working on being listed on the National Register of Historic Places as well.

“Will Memorial Union remain open during the final phases of construction?”
The west wing of the Memorial Union will remain open during construction, but the east wing and central core will close so they can be renovated.
- The west wing of the building will remain open during the final phases of construction. Patrons will have access to Wheelhouse Studios, Outdoor UW, the Wisconsin Union Theater spaces, Shannon Sunset Lounge, Sunset Deck, and the Class of 1925 Gallery.
- A food and drink shop (“Daily Scoop”) will be open during construction to serve coffee drinks, snacks and Babcock ice cream in the Paul Bunyan room.
- der Stiftskeller will remain open during construction.

“What is the tentative construction schedule for the final phases?”
The construction schedule of the final phases will be set when a contractor is awarded the project and the governor approves the project early this spring.

May 26, 2015
• Langdon Street Utility project begins. While not technically a part of MUR or the Lakefront Gateway, the Memorial Union will be impacted by the Langdon Street Utility project. (Much of the work will be done in the vicinity of the southeast corner of Lot 1, but there will be some work that happens farther west). We anticipate that most of this work would tentatively be done by October 30. Langdon Street will be closed during construction, but Lot 1 will be accessible via Lake Street.
• Secant Wall work for the new underground loading dock begins. Work will start in the area of the loading dock (Lot 1), not in the area of the tunnel to Pyle Center.

September 1, 2015
• Part of the Terrace will close September 1, 2015 so it can be renovated over winter, which will allow it to reopen in the summer of 2016. The exact re-open date will be determined by weather conditions during construction. During construction, seating will remain available near the west wing in areas that have already been renovated. The first phase of MUR added nearly 50 seats to the Terrace.
• The East Main Entrance (“Commons Entrance”) will close along with the eateries and other areas on the first floor. This does not include the Rathskeller seating area, but does include the Rathskeller food service area. Der Stiftskeller will remain open during construction.
• The west wing will remain open throughout the final phases. This space includes Outdoor UW, Wheelhouse Studios, the Wisconsin Union Theater spaces, and the Class of 1925 Gallery. Click here to learn more about the west wing spaces.

“Can I still eat at the Union during construction?”
Der Stiftskeller will remain open during renovations, a temporary drink and snack store will be located in the Paul Bunyan room (called “Daily Scoop”), and the Subskeller will open in the seating area of der Rathskeller. The Subskeller will be a sandwich shop. The Brat Stand will remain open seasonally as weather permits.

Once the final phases of construction are complete, re-imagined dining spaces will better serve our students, members and the community by better meeting demands and needs.
• Re-imagined ice cream parlor
• Expanded Peet’s Coffee & Tea
• Fresh food options to-go
• Badger Market

“Where can I park at Memorial Union when Lot 1 is closed?”
There are more than 1,400 visitor parking stalls located within three blocks of Memorial Union:

- **Lot 6 (Helen C. White Library Parking Garage)**
  - 70 metered parking spaces available daily in the upper level
  - 83 meters in lower level available to visitors evenings and weekends only (except on special event days)
  - Sundays, and after 10 p.m. Mon-Sat free
  - Located west of Memorial Union
  - Enter on Park Street

- **Lot 46**
  - 92 metered visitor spaces
  - Available daily
  - Located between University Avenue and Johnson Street, adjacent to University Square
  - Enter on Lake Street

- **Lot 83 (Fluno Center)**
  - 50-100 spaces
  - Available daily
  - Adjacent to Lot 46; enter on Lake Street

- **Lot 7 (Grainger Hall)**
  - 45 metered spaces available for limited hourly parking daily
  - 400 visitor spaces available evenings and weekend hours (except on special event days)
  - Sundays, and after 10 p.m. Mon-Sat free
  - Located between University Avenue and Johnson Street
  - Entrance on Brooks Street

- **Lake Street Ramp**
  - 1,066 spaces of paid visitor parking
  - Available daily
  - Located three blocks southeast of Memorial Union on Lake Street between State Street and University Avenue
  - Enter on Lake Street or Francis Street

“Where can I find handicap-accessible parking?”

Visitors with disabilities can park in the Helen C. White library parking ramp. The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) disabled permits or DIS and VET DIS plates may park in the disabled stalls (unless signs indicate UW Disabled permits are required) and meters (30 minutes or greater) without paying an additional fee.
“Where can I park my bike?”
Bike parking was added in front of the Memorial Union at the west wing. Bikes can also be parked at Helen C. White library and along Park Street.

“Where can I find the inter-city buses that used to load right in front of the Memorial Union (Megabus, Badger Bus, etc.)?”
The inter-city buses, including Megabus, Van Galder and Badger Bus currently pick up and drop off in front of the Chazen Museum of Art on University Avenue, two blocks south of the Memorial Union.

“Why is the Terrace being renovated? What’s being done?”
The Terrace undergoes major repairs about every 20 to 30 years. Periodically, repairs are made to cracks, uneven areas, and other minor damages.

Future Benefits
- Accessibility for all
- Additional concession stand
- Improved Terrace stage and sound system
- Improved sightlines from Memorial Union to Lake Mendota

Trees
- Keeping all healthy historic trees on the historic terrace
- Will consult with an arborist
- Usable wood will be reused in the renovation of the central core and the west wing
- The trees by Lot 1 will be removed to make room for Alumni Park

Accessibility for All
Improving accessibility throughout Memorial Union is a priority of the renovation project. The central and east wings of Memorial Union opened in 1928 and the Theater Wing opened 11 years later. This was many decades before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed so the design at that time did not accommodate patrons with varying needs. Over the years, additions and transformations resulted in an astounding 27 different levels, some of which can only be reached by stairs, completely inaccessible to guests in wheelchairs. As the first comprehensive renovation in the building’s history, the Memorial Union Reinvestment will bring the entire structure up to ADA compliance.
Infrastructure
One of the first steps of the Memorial Union Reinvestment project was assessing infrastructure building-wide. The engineering firm Arnold & O’Sheridan completed an exhaustive study of the building’s electrical, plumbing, technology, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Their findings prior to the start of renovation are listed below.

Memorial Union Reinvestment Engagement and Involvement Facts
As a membership organization, it is important that the Wisconsin Union involves as many students, staff and community members as possible throughout the Memorial Union Reinvestment project. From conception through finishing details, public input has been crucial to the project. At times, community feedback has resulted in major redesigns. The project also features constant engagement between the Union staff and the design and construction teams.

- A Design Committee was formed to track the project’s progress. The committee features a student majority, along with faculty, staff and alumni representatives. The Design Committee must approve all designs before they move on to Union Council, the University Administration, the UW System and the State of Wisconsin Design Review Board.
- Student Design Committee representatives are appointed both through the Associated Students of Madison—UW-Madison’s student governance body—as well as Union programs.
- The project features a Student Project Manager, who represents students concerning project design and construction.
- To date, over 17,000 individuals have contributed to the Memorial Union Reinvestment design process, through workshops, open forums, committees and surveys.