



08/18/2025

Deanna Schmidt
City of Fitchburg
5520 Lacy Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711

Re: WI DOC Juvenile Corrections Facility – Dane County
BWBR Commission No. P.2300288.00

Dear Deanna:

We are submitting with this letter our applications for a Conditional Use Permit and Architectural Design Review for the project referenced above. This letter provides a narrative describing the project that we hope will answer any questions which may come up during your review.

Overview and Background

The State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) is seeking approval of a Conditional Use Permit to construct a new Type 1 Juvenile Facility on DOC owned property near the existing Oakhill Correctional Institution, Oregon Correctional Center and GROW Academy. The property is located north and west of the existing GROW Academy. It is zoned as A-X - Exclusive Agriculture, and is surrounded by a Rural Development lot and the US Highway 14 right-of-way on the east side, and the County Road M right-of-way to the south, and other Exclusive Agriculture lots on all other sides. As a Governmental Facility, the proposed use is permitted in A-X zoning as a Conditional Use. The property is comprised of three lots that will need to be combined through a Certified Survey Map, which will be taken care of separately at a later date.

The proposed project is part of the statewide plan approved by the legislature to build state-of-the-art, smaller regional facilities to replace the DOC Division of Juvenile Correction's (DJC) existing Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School ("Lincoln Hills") in Irma, Wisconsin. Aligning with evidence-based research, the new facility is to be located close to a major population center and to the communities where their families are located so that youth can have better access to family visitation and other community supports during their stay. This will increase opportunities for more culturally relevant programming and increase diversity among staff. The new location will facilitate the hiring of youth counselors, behavioral health professionals, teachers, and other trained staff from the surrounding community. Youth from the south-central part of the state make up the second largest percentage of the DJC's youth population. The new facility's operations and programming will not be based on the traditional punitive correctional model, but instead operate as a secure, research-based treatment facility.

The main building will be approximately 102,000 GSF in floor area and will provide housing, food services, health services, education, counseling, vocational training, visitation, indoor and outdoor recreation, administrative offices, and other supporting spaces for a population of up to 32 male and up to 8 female juveniles. It is a single-story building with two mechanical penthouses above. The project will also include a separate Outbuilding (approximately 14,000 GSF) that will include a loading dock. Site elements will

include secure outdoor recreation spaces, an agriculture yard with garden, orchard, chicken coop, storage shed and greenhouse, a security fence and perimeter patrol & emergency vehicle access road around the recreation & agriculture yards, a surface parking lot, a truck staging area adjacent to doors on the buildings for deliveries and youth transport vehicles, and bicycle parking.

Design Aesthetics

The overall design is based on a community- and research-based therapeutic approach to youth corrections. The design is intended to communicate the aesthetic of an educational environment rather than a correctional facility. This design philosophy applies to both the interior and exterior of the facility. The resulting design will convey a feeling of hope and joy, incorporating light, color, and wood on the interior and using durable, timeless materials (mainly brick) on the exterior.

The design approach is inspired by regional farm, barn and educational aesthetics, as well as the design and materials of the nearby Oakhill Correctional Institution. The materials will include a tan-colored brick along with a darker charcoal accent brick, as well as high-pressure laminate siding with a barnwood look, composite and vertical metal panel and translucent Kalwall. Colored glass will be used at key spaces to assist with conveying the feeling of hope and joy noted above. The building mass is broken up with varying roof heights, projections from the façade and housing wings extending from the main building mass.

Windows will be pre-finished aluminum with tinted glass. As part of the therapeutic design approach, windows in secure areas will be designed to prevent escape and maximize safety & security without the use of security bars, using security glass designed specifically for correctional facilities.

Landscaped outdoor yards will be provided to allow youth to participate in a variety of social and recreational activities. The yards will be located opposite the public side of the facility to promote sight and sound separation, to support both safety of the facility and privacy of the youth. Security of the yards will be provided by a continuous perimeter security fence. The fence will include “no-climb” mesh and be tall enough to prevent climbing over the top.

Screening with landscaping, vegetation and decorative fencing will be used to soften the view of parking, refuse and recycling dumpsters, and exterior mechanical and electrical equipment. In addition, the one major piece of rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened from views from the ground level entrance area, parking and loading dock.

Noise-generating equipment serving the building will generally be located within the buildings, with the exception of a standby generator located on-grade next to the building.

Building Construction

The Main Building will be fully sprinkled and constructed with Type I-B Construction per the International Building Code (IBC). The foundations will consist of standard concrete spread footings at frost depth along the exterior perimeter of the structure. Interior spread footings in conditioned spaces will be placed one to two feet below the top of the first-floor slab on grade. At load bearing walls, continuous strip footings will support the walls. Ground floor slabs will be 6” concrete slabs on vapor retarder and compacted granular fill. The roof structure will consist of metal deck with concrete topping supported on steel beams, girders and columns. The roofing materials include a fully adhered EPDM roof system at flat roofs and standing seam metal panel at sloped roofs.

The Outbuilding is a standalone building designated for maintenance and storage. It includes office space and a break room, with the remaining areas allocated for equipment, vehicle, and dry goods storage. It will be fully sprinkled and constructed with Type II-B Construction per the IBC. The foundation consists of spread footings with concrete foundation walls. The exterior walls will be masonry cavity walls with brick veneer on CMU backup. The roof structure will consist of metal deck supported on steel beams, girders and columns, with a fully adhered EPDM roof system.

Site Access and Traffic Impact

Due to the configuration of the site, only one access point will be provided, located on County Road M.

The facility operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. All traffic in and out of the facility is monitored and controlled, and all people coming in and out of secure areas are required to undergo security checks. Access to the secure area of the building will be controlled inside at the public lobby, and access to the secure part of the site via the perimeter road will be controlled using motorized gates operated from within the building at a location that's staffed 24/7 to provide access for emergency and maintenance vehicles as needed. Intercoms will be provided at the gates to provide communication with staff in the building. All areas of the site, including the secure perimeter, perimeter road, receiving and building service area and parking lot will be monitored using an array of state-of-the-art digital CCTV cameras.

Most of the vehicular traffic to and from the site will occur during staff shift changes, which will occur at 6:30 AM, 3:30 PM and 10:30 PM. These will occur outside the typical peak traffic times on County Road M at 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM.

Traffic for other purposes will be less frequent:

- The facility will have pre-approved established times for families to visit youth in the facility. Family visitation will occur on a regular schedule (for example, bi-weekly), and will be broken up into separate times for different groups of youth, based on the capacity of the visitation space. All visitors are required to go through a security check, are vetted and pre-approved by staff prior to coming to the facility. People will not be allowed to loiter in the parking area, and the parking area is actively monitored as part of overall operations.
- Youth will be securely transported to and from the facility only upon admission, discharge, or off-site medical appointments. Admissions and discharges are only expected to happen a few times per month, since youth will typically stay at the facility for several months. Youth transport to the facility will typically occur via law enforcement or DOC transport vehicles. With pre-approval by the facility, families will typically pick up youth upon discharge, or they will be transported securely to another location (e.g., family, residential living) upon discharge. Youth will never go in or out of the facility on their own and are never allowed to be wandering through the surrounding areas.
- Several daily visits are anticipated by others such as volunteers (e.g., religious services), DOC staff from outside the facility and lawyers representing the youth. All visitors are scheduled and pre-approved by the facility.
- Delivery vehicles, including food service, typical goods and services, and trash and recycling removal, will be required to support building operations. These deliveries are assumed to be infrequent, averaging approximately one or two deliveries daily. Deliveries will occur at a secured area separate from the visitation area. All deliveries are scheduled in advance and are required to undergo a security check.

A Type “D” Intersection with a Bypass Lane was proposed in an application for a Permit to Work in Right-of-Way to the County, and is currently under review. An application for a New Driveway Permit was submitted to the City of Fitchburg, and based on their review they indicated they have no concerns.

Site Design

The existing site survey documents existing topography and vegetation. The facility will be sited in the center of the northern portion of the site, within the existing agriculture field to preserve existing mature trees and steeper topography at the edges of the site. The proposed entry drive is routed to preserve tillable area of the existing agriculture field and existing vegetation at the west edge of the site. Along Highway 14, a 65-foot-wide mixed conifer, multi-row planting will provide a natural visual and noise buffer between the facility and the roadway. Tree plantings in the parking lot and perimeter will be provided to soften the view from the entry drive and parking lot to the outbuilding and service yard. Tree plantings and earthen berms will be used around the building, where feasible, to provide additional visual buffering.

Plantings used in landscape areas and vegetative buffers will be provided in a range of sizes depending on species. Evergreen trees will be a minimum 6’ or greater height and most shade trees 2.5” caliper or greater. Landscape beds will have plant density to provide sufficient groundcover and aesthetic interest within three years of planting.

Bicycle access to the site is very limited due to the rural location. The current Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan does not list this type of facility in Non-SmartCode Bicycle Parking Guidelines Table A.4. The general recommendation for Institutional/Public use is minimum 6 spaces. The current site plan includes three double-loaded racks, for a total of 6 spaces. The bicycle parking spaces are located adjacent to the main entry, visible from the main approach line to the entrance, and visible from the interior looking out from the lobby through the vestibule and from the visitation windows.

Exterior lighting will be provided for perimeter security and general-purpose usage, such as parking lot and building entrance lighting. Light level calculations are provided for the entire site and show it does not exceed 0.5 fc along the site boundary. All exterior lighting will be provided with external glare shields to minimize light output above 90 degrees and significantly reduce light outputs between 75 and 90 degrees. Optics of exterior lights will include full and semi-cutoff distribution depending on light location. All exterior lighting shall be provided at or below 2700K to reduce light pollution and minimize output of blue light wave spectrum. Target average light levels for exterior lighting will be 1 f.c. Perimeter lighting provided shall include pole mounted area lights located on the inside of the secure perimeter, directed towards the perimeter road to maximize security of the site and optimize camera coverage. Exterior lighting used for security purposes will be designed to minimize the max/min ratio of light level to target a 10:1 ratio. Exterior lighting controls will be provided to operate lights on a dusk-dawn basis. Lights not used for security purposes will be provided with occupancy sensors to reduce light output of fixtures when no movement is detected.

Site Utilities

Sanitary Sewer: The OCI/OCC campus owns a sanitary sewer system that connects to the Village of Oregon’s sewer system. The two systems connect on the south side of County Road M east of the railroad tracks. The JCF project will also connect to Oregon’s system, under an amendment to the existing agreement between the State and the Village. A grinder and lift station are included in the design.

Water: A public water supply is not currently available along County Road M. The State is currently investigating options for either constructing a well on the site, connecting to the existing well serving DOC's nearby OCI facility, or connecting to the Village of Oregon's water system. The nearest point on the City of Fitchburg's system is much farther away than the Village of Oregon's system. If the State chooses to make a connection to the Village of Oregon's water system, it will need to be approved by both the Village and the Public Service Commission.

Stormwater: The drainage pattern for the site design will direct stormwater around the facility to bioinfiltration ponds. The pond designs will be verified by infiltration testing done as part of the geotechnical exploration conducted in the fall, after the fields on the site have been harvested. With the proposed design, impervious surfaces cover 19% of the overall site area.

Power, Natural Gas and Telecommunications: These services are all available along County Road M, and connections to them will be run underground along the main access driveway.

Thank you for your consideration. Let us know if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

BWBR



Courtney Cooper
Project Manager, BWBR

CLC

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Attachment: 0_Conditional Use Acknowledgement_Signed.pdf
1_3D Renderings.pdf
1_Site Plan - Overall.pdf
1_Site Plan - Rendering.pdf
2_Site Fence Details.pdf
3_Site Plan - Landscaping.pdf
4_Site Plan - Civil - Demolition.pdf
4_Site Plan - Civil - Existing Conditions.pdf
4_Site Plan - Civil - Grading.pdf
4_Site Plan - Civil - Utilities.pdf
4_Site Plan - Lighting.pdf
5_Floor Plan Diagram - Main Building.pdf
5_Floor Plan Diagram - Outbuilding.pdf
6_Building Elevations - Main Building.pdf
6_Building Elevations - OutBuilding.pdf
7_Monument Sign.pdf



Conditional Use - Owner or Authorized Agent Acknowledgement

** It is highly recommended that an applicant hold at least one neighborhood meeting prior to submitting a CUP application to identify any concerns or issues of surrounding residents.

PLEASE NOTE - Applicants shall be responsible for legal or outside consultant costs incurred by the City. Submissions shall be made at least four (4) weeks prior to desired plan commission meeting.

By signing below, I certify that the information included with this Conditional Use application is true and correct, to the best of my knowledge. Any agent signing below verifies that he/she has the consent of the owner to file the application.

Kevin Trinsotic

Owner's or Authorized Agent's Signature

August 18, 2025

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)