



Capitol Square Restoration Interpretive Expansion - Summary and Alternatives

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Utilize the Capitol Square restoration as an opportunity to maximize visitation to this significant historical site, thus enhancing the economic value of this iconic attraction and Wyoming's travel and tourism industry. Capitols across the U.S. receive hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, and Wyoming should be no exception. From civics to government, to history, arts and artifacts - and many more - there are stories waiting to be shared!

History has been, and continues to be made within the walls of this historic complex. Its architecture, art, artifacts, stories and public spaces should be celebrated and displayed to ensure that the people's house, and its history, come to life and to tell the story of Wyoming, for residents and visitors alike.

There are many benefits of including the Student Learning Center and relocating the State Museum with interpretation throughout the Capitol, Gallery and Herschler public spaces and Capitol Square grounds.

- Growth in visitation equals growth in direct travel generated purchases which in turn results in direct travel generated tax receipts.
- Expanded learning opportunities for all Wyoming school children.
- Year round use of Wyoming's Capitol and surrounding areas.
- Deepened engagement with Wyoming constituents and the Wyoming Legislature.

CURRENT VISITATION:

- The State Capitol and State Museum are two of Wyoming's premier historic tourism destinations welcoming on average, 20,000 and 34,000 visitors per year, respectively.

Year	Total Visitation to Capitol	Total Visitation to Museum
2011	24,215	25,682
2012	20,515	32,558
2013	19,294	33,249
2014	17,291	45,016

- Of visitors to Cheyenne, 36% report visiting the Capitol.
- Of visitors to the SE Wyoming Welcome Center, 57% indicate that they plan to visit attractions within the SE corner of the state, which equates to on average 91,000 people per year. The intent to travel within this region demonstrates significant potential for increased visitation to Capitol Square with the investment in enhanced visitor experiences.

- Included in the current visitation are school children from across the state who visit the Capitol and/or Museum as part of their classroom study of Wyoming history, civics, and government as based on the state's Social Studies Content and Performance Standards.

School Year	Field Trips to Capitol	Field Trips to the Museum	Shared Field Trips
2013/14	2,700 (108 classes)	3,653 (110 classes)	1,215 (47 classes)
2014/15	2,425 (97 classes)	3,686 (143 classes)	1,590 (61 classes)

ESTIMATED ROI:

A survey of recent Capitol preservation projects reported a three-fold increase in visitation after restoration projects were complete. (Source. *Kansas Statehouse Historic Structures Report, prepared by Treanor Architects.*)

In 2014, leisure visitors' average daily expenditures totaled \$225.00 per person. With a conservative estimate of an increase of 30% visitation, or approximately 6,000 additional leisure visitors to the Capitol in the first year, estimated initial return on investment could total \$1,350,000.00 of direct economic impact to the surrounding area from those new visitors alone.

Current Visitation	30% Increase x Average daily spend	Estimated initial ROI
20,000	6,000 x \$225.00	\$1,350,000

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES:

Option 1

Student Learning Center with Interpretation throughout the Capitol, Gallery, Connector and Herschler Public Spaces and Capitol Square Grounds

- The student learning center will be located in a 2,500 sf room in the garden level of the Herscher. Learning center provides an opportunity to orient education groups prior to visiting the capitol.
- The learning center will provide space for student groups and individual visitors to have a guided or self guided orientation as well as provide access to nearby restrooms and space to store coats and bags.
- Interactive exhibits will provide engaging experiences related to the buildings history and architecture, public art, historical artifacts, and legislative process through means that will engage visitors of all ages, levels of ability, and learning styles.
- Interactive and static exhibits will be included throughout approximately 7,000 linear feet of wall space throughout the Capitol, Gallery, Connector and Herschler Public Spaces.
- Expandable multi-functional public areas for receptions, meetings, etc.
- Approximately 15 locations with interpretive signage will be included throughout the grounds of the entire Capitol Complex.

Option 2

Student Learning Center and Relocation of the State Museum with Interpretation Throughout the Capitol, Gallery and Herschler Public Spaces and Capitol Square Grounds

- Everything included in Option 1.
- Relocating the State Museum to the first floor of the Herschler will allow the development of a comprehensive interpretive plan that begins at the student learning center and museum and extends through all of the public spaces in the capitol, gallery and Herschler. A comprehensive plan creates a sense of continuity and flow as visitors travel through these spaces.
- The inclusion of the Wyoming State Museum in the Capitol Square would maximize the opportunity for all of the visiting classrooms to engage with both of these premier historic educational destinations.
- Locating the museum and capitol in the capitol square will increase visitation to both facilities. Past visitation demonstrates that on average about half of the student groups visit either the Capitol or the museum, but not both. Locating these facilities will increase visitation to both sites by students groups by 50%.
- A large reception/conference area will allow space for a large exhibit, such as a dinosaur to engage visitors immediately. The space would accommodate large receptions, house a catering kitchen with coffee and food service options, and could be used by all occupants of the capitol and Herschler building for hosting events too large for the capitol rotunda.. Larger gallery spaces would allow museum to exhibit oversized objects currently stored.
- The museum store currently located in the Barrett building would relocate with additional square footage and would likely see an increase of sales of Wyoming made and Wyoming related products.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS:

In order to truly understand the opportunities, challenges and budget implications, it is recommended that the Oversight Committee give authority to issue an RFP for the purposes of developing an Interpretive Plan.

As directed at the committee meeting June 23rd, School Facilities as been contacted and it has been agreed that up to \$1.2 million could be provided to fund a this endeavor. Pending Oversight Committee approval, a proposed timeline would be as follows:

- July 10 - Issue RFP
- August 10 - Award RFP
- September 1 - Contract Begins
- November 30 - Final Report