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Sunday, March 22, 2026

portagedailyregister.com

WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

STATE CONSIDERS ALTERNATIVE SITES



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL ARCHIVES

A visitor to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum takes in a diorama depicting a Civil War battle. The state is looking to build an expanded and updated facility for the museum.

Officials looking to redevelop museum's aging building

NICOLE POLLACK AND MITCHELL SCHMIDT
Wisconsin State Journal

Alternative sites in Downtown Madison may be considered for a new Wisconsin Veterans Museum as the state looks to redevelop or exit the aging building on Capitol Square that's housed the museum for decades.

The museum's current location just west of the Capitol remains the primary goal for the future building, and the state Department of Administration on Thursday issued a request for submittals from firms that can provide consulting, architectural and engineering services for the new museum.

Posted with the request for submittals was a feasibility study, which is about four years old and lays out three potential new homes for the museum in addition to its current site.

It wasn't immediately clear whether all of the sites are still under consideration; even in 2022, when the study was completed, it said some of the scenarios were "hypothetical."

Submissions are due April 14. Since the veterans museum opened at 22 and 30 W. Mifflin St. in 1993, the museum "has grown and developed within an existing building never imagined to host

an institution like this museum," the feasibility study said. "The limited space leaves no ability to expand within this building."

The state began exploring options for a new facility in 2021.

A couple years later, DOA notified the current property's four owners — Madison Real Estate Properties, Madison East Shopping Center LLP, 30 West Mifflin LLC and Mainsail Development LLC — that it planned to buy the building for \$9 million in accordance with the process outlined in its lease. The state Legislature has allocated money to the department for the purchase.

Preliminary concepts for the redevelopment showed a five-story museum with a large, glassy atrium and exhibit, classroom, research and event space above.

But the property owners sued, arguing the state lost its option to purchase the building when it was late in making a rent payment in fall 2023. The case is ongoing in Waushara County.

While the state's lease was set to expire in November 2025, Waushara County Circuit Court Judge Guy Dutcher issued a temporary injunction last October allowing the lease to continue until a future order from the court.

Joey Hoey, assistant deputy secretary with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, said the existing site remains the first choice for the museum, and officials with DOA, DVA and the state Department of Justice believe they have "a very strong case, that will likely prevail."

"It is a hurdle, but we believe that we are going to get a judgment that our option was valid, and then we will have to figure out the final purchase price," Hoey said.

Hoey said the consulting and design process, expected to cost about \$6 million, can proceed separate from the lawsuit.

He added officials "are definitely moving forward with the expectation that we will be able to purchase that site."

"They'll be designing a museum based on what our holdings are, and what we would like to display, and what we think we would like to display for the next 50 or 100 years," he said.

"The site will be a bigger concern when we hire the actual construction company that builds it," Hoey said. "It's less of an issue in terms of the design because they're going to design a box. 'In a year and a half or so the actual physical location will become a bigger factor.'"

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Trump ramps up pressure on Iran with ultimatum

Cities near Israeli nuclear site struck by missiles

SAMY MAGDY, MELANIE LIDMAN AND JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

CAIRO — President Donald Trump on Saturday said the U.S. will "obliterate" Iranian power plants if it doesn't fully open the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours.

He issued the ultimatum in a social media post as he spent the weekend in Florida.

Trump faces increasing pressure to secure the strait as oil prices soar.

Earlier, Iran struck two communities near Israel's main nuclear research center late Saturday, leaving at least seven people seriously injured, hours after Tehran's main

nuclear enrichment site was hit as the war spun into a dangerous new direction at the start of its fourth week.

It was the first time Israel's nuclear research center was targeted in the fighting. Israel's military said it was not able to intercept missiles that hit the southern cities of Dimona and Arad, the largest near the center in Israel's sparsely populated Negev desert.

"The war is not close to ending," Israel's army chief, Gen. Eyal Zamir, said earlier in the day.

Footage from Israel's emergency service showed a large crater next to what appeared to be apartment buildings with outer walls sheared away. The missile appeared to have struck an open area.

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OHAD ZWIGENBERG, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israeli security forces and rescue teams work Sunday at a site struck by an Iranian missile in Arad, southern Israel.