

Construction

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\$260M complex for Capitol Campus

- *The project will usher in a new wave of development on the campus in Olympia.*

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Image courtesy Perkins + Will [\[enlarge\]](#)

Ground breaking for the Washington State Department of Information Services headquarters and data center is set for the spring of 2008. Perkins + Will did predesign work.

The Washington State Department of Information Services has issued a request for proposals for a \$260 million office complex and data center on the Capitol Campus in Olympia.

The Wheeler project will usher in a new era of development on the campus. It will be the first large project to be built on the east side of the campus since 1992.

The complex will stretch over 7.6 acres and total 456,000 square feet. There will be a 166,000-square-foot data center, a 115,000-square-foot headquarters for DIS and a 175,000-square-foot general office building.

DIS is the state agency that provides technology services and products to all state agencies, city and local governments, tribal communities, and qualified higher education institutions and nonprofits.

In the last decade, state agencies have had to look outside of the Capitol Campus for new office space in cities like Lacey and Tumwater, which has bolstered those cities' economies. Now, there

is a push to bring agency offices back onto the Capitol Campus.

Sally Alhadeff is the Wheeler project facilities development manager. Alhadeff previously worked at the Port of Olympia and has 20 years experience in Seattle's commercial real estate industry. She said this project will allow other on-campus projects to occur.

“We like to think of ourselves as the cutting edge of the wave of development coming for state offices and state facilities (on the Capitol Campus).”

Today, the 500 DIS employees are scattered across Thurston County in 10 different offices.

Joanne Todd, communications director for DIS, said concentrating employees in one space would have enormous benefits. “Our services are intertwined and there are many economies that can be gained by being in the same building.”

For example, Todd said she recently met with an Olympia office that needs a service from the Lacey office. If all employees were in one building, it would be easy to set up one meeting but instead, she said there would be at least three meetings between Olympia and Lacey just to figure out the issue.

Being in one building should also cut costs by eliminating redundant systems such as phones and computers.

DIS will house employees in the headquarters and data center. Because DIS works with technology and administers the state's Internet systems, the new buildings need to be flexible and secure.

The data center will have raised floors, climate controls and redundant power systems.

Additionally, the spaces need to be accessible for everyone. “They don't design it for yesterday or today, they design it for tomorrow,” Todd said, “so there has to be flexibility involved and clearly that's where they're going.”

The department is growing rapidly so the complex must accommodate future growth. In the last year, 50 new employees have been hired.

DIS will use the data center and headquarters, but the third building will be general office space. Its primary tenant will be the Washington State Patrol, though it will also house small agencies of less than 50 people.

The Wheeler project must be completed before work can start on the Heritage Center, a \$111 million project that will house the state library and archives. The Heritage Center is going to be built on the site of the current General Administration Building.

Alhadeff said the original proposal for the Wheeler project was for two DIS buildings, but the state legislature decided there was enough space on the site to accommodate another building. The third building will house agencies displaced when the General Administration Building comes down.

The DIS center must be completed by February of 2010 so the other projects can proceed.

Alhadeff said, “We're attempting to develop this in a very fast track schedule. We'll be looking for developers that have this sort of track record.”

Responses to the RFP are due by Nov. 2. DIS plans to break ground in the spring of 2008. Perkins + Will did predesign work for the project.

For more information, visit the Wheeler project Web site at <http://www.dis.wa.gov/wheelerSM.htm>.

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