

March 12, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee

From: Emily Eng, Campus Planning
Campus Planning and Facilities Management (CPFM)

Subject: Record of the March 6, 2020 Campus Planning Committee Meeting

Attending: Ken Kato (chair), George Evans, Emily Fenster, Michael Harwood, Shawn Kahl,
Maxwell Mindock, Cathy Soutar, Christine Thompson, Chuck Triplett

Staff: Aaron Olsen (Campus Planning); Liz Thorstenson (Campus Planning)

Guests: Jane Brubaker, Allen Hancock, Bart Johnson, Harper Keeler, Matt Roberts

CPC Agenda

1. Campus Plan Amendment – North of Franklin Boulevard (Initial Discussion)

Background: The purpose of this agenda item was to have an initial discussion on the draft amendment work related to Principles 2 (Open-space Framework), 3 (Densities), and 12 (Design Area Special Conditions) for a *Campus Plan* amendment to incorporate the university's land between Franklin Boulevard and the Willamette River. This amendment will establish a framework of designated open spaces and major campus pathways, establish building density guidelines, and identify development opportunities and constraints. Following an introduction at the last CPC meeting (February 18, 2020), this was the second in a series of CPC meetings that discussed and reviewed work for this *Campus Plan* amendment.

Presentation materials are available at: <https://cpfm.uoregon.edu/campus-plan-amendment>

Aaron Olsen provided the committee with a presentation of the Draft Preliminary Discussion Points. Olsen provided a brief overview of the amendment area, site

context, and background on the *Campus Plan* Principles of focus, and circulation (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle). The majority of the discussion was focused on the draft outline of key considerations for the proposed Willamette Design Area and Millrace Design Area in Principle 12.

Discussion: The following is a summary of questions and comments from committee members and guests, and clarifications by Olsen and others:

Process:

- Olsen stated that the meeting purpose was for the committee to provide feedback on the outline of work that staff will use to draft the proposed new text in the *Campus Plan*. Eventually the committee would be taking action to recommend approval of the amendment to the president. He clarified that it was a possibility there would be a need for more meetings than shown in the example schedule.
- Densities:
 - A guest asked if an artificial turf recreation field would count as “coverage.” Olsen explained that “coverage” means building coverage, so artificial turf fields would not count.
 - Another guest asked what is included in “open space.” Members provided answers on what is included (i.e. landscape, courtyards, streets, parking, etc...). A member suggested more clearly defining what we mean when we talk about open space (i.e. natural area, courtyards, roads, plazas, etc...).

Circulation:

- A member advised looking at opportunities and constraints from the City’s new Franklin Blvd design and how it will tie into the open-space framework and circulation systems.
- A member noted the railroad tracks as a significant barrier and the difficulty of tunneling underneath. Another member acknowledged there would not be much opportunity for more underpasses except potentially at one new location somewhere west of what is now called “Gallery Walk.”
- In response to discussion about service access to the western portion of the property, a guest noted that the land includes a future underpass identified in the City of Eugene Transportation System Plan at Alder Street that would connect to the river bike path, and reminded the committee that the university’s Conditional Use Permit promised not to inhibit this connection.

The current diagram showing service circulation along the train tracks may not be possible due to geography.

Willamette Design Area

- A member said that it was important to address Principle 10 (Sustainable Development) and advocated adding an open-space category called “Natural Area” to the university’s system of Quads, Axes, Promenades, and Greens to Principle 2 (Open-space Framework). The member felt that the definitions of open spaces in the Framework Vision Project and *Campus Plan* were too limited, and that the proposed “Willamette Green” needed to be broken out in its own category to preserve ecosystems. Then there could be a discussion on how much area should be dedicated to the natural form. The member noted that many universities specifically recognize natural areas. .
- A member explained that “Greens” cover many types of open spaces ranging from plazas to landscaped areas, and that the “Willamette Green” would be described to address its unique natural area attributes in Principle 12 (Design Area Special Conditions). Another member felt that definitions matter, and that calling the Willamette River riparian area a “Green” was stretching the definition a bit much.
- Members agreed that adding a new Natural Area or Natural Edge category should be considered. This would allow for a more accurate description of the amorphous shape that is natural and not rectilinear.
- Olsen reminded the members and guests that Principle 10 (Sustainable Development) doesn’t just apply to open space, but to all types of development.
- A member reminded the committee about the rationale behind the 200-foot riparian enhancement setback, which was based on much thought and study, including a riparian assessment report.
- A guest commended the flexibility in UO planning, but noted that the weakness of the designated open-space system is that, while the designated open spaces are set aside so you know where you can’t build, no areas are prioritized for ecological functions.
- A member asked if there was a priority for either active or passive recreation in the area, and if there should be. He also noted that there was advocacy for recreation fields at the previous meeting, but those members were not here today. Olsen explained that overall, active and passive recreation would be allowed. In the designated open space, there would be no active recreation such as recreation fields, which are specifically not allowed; therefore, there is a

priority for passive recreation in the designated open space (in addition to other uses typical in conservation areas).

- Members and guests discussed the aspirational nature of restoring the river's edge. Is the restoration just aspirational? Why does the Conditional Use Permit say the university will restore the river's edge "if funding is available"? A member explained that the entire *Campus Plan* is aspirational and not an implementation plan. It provides direction to projects when they happen. This amendment is about the direction we want to provide for future development. A guest suggested removing the language "if funding is available."
- A member explained that the language "if funding is available" was probably included so the university was not tied to a commitment at the City level. He envisioned expectations for the Willamette River restoration to be the same as for the Millrace restoration. The university hired a consultant to scope out restoration along the entire Millrace (and the section along the Knight Campus project was improved along with that project). The university will soon be issuing a request for proposals for a more in-depth study on the Millpond section to help the university figure out the cost.
- A member asked if we were limiting ourselves too much with the emphasis on active or passive recreation. For example, it might limit the Outdoor Program from being located in an area if the emphasis is too much on passive recreation. The member suggested looking back at the university's mission statement for guidance.
- A member referenced the 35-year history of opposition to development along the riverfront and asked why the past University Senate resolutions have not been listed in the presentations along with the previous planning efforts and studies. The member stressed the importance of student/faculty appreciation for areas like these ("jewels"). Another member explained that the Campus Planning Committee reports to the president, who has provided his direction in his 6-page letter to the Senate, written in response to the last senate resolution. The letter directs us on how to move forward and addresses the history of resolutions. Other members noted that all of this has been considered and will be considered as we move forward. A member liked the idea of including acknowledgement that we were thinking about the resolutions.
- A guest asked why this site (north of the railroad tracks) is being considered for recreation fields when there is now a final report of the Recreation Field Location Options Study that identified alternative sites to be considered.

- Olsen reminded everyone that the university is trying to meet its needs, and balance its various needs.
- A member noted that the existing recreation field is physically in the way of restoring the river's edge. The member advised the committee to not rush to a conclusion, that we will have the number of meetings necessary.
- Staff noted that one of the past resolutions was opposed to development except for open space and recreations fields, and asked if there is no longer support for recreation fields whatsoever. A member responded that there are probably varying opinions and guessed that the past support for recreation fields was for natural grass, not artificial turf.
- A member who worked closely with the Senate in the past guessed that the statement referencing 35 years of opposition was not a continuous statement, and reminded the committee that the Senate didn't open up a campus conversation at the time of the most recent resolution. Students as a whole didn't weigh in. The member noted that the president responded and gave direction. The member was not opposed to the idea of expanding the green boundary (Willamette River Green) but wanted to know how far it could be extended without precluding something else. Olsen explained that, through the input received, the CUP process already reduced the number of fields to increase the conservation area. The member noted (when voting in favor of the CUP) he never said yes to artificial turf, but yes to fields, and suggested opening up the option of expanding the green boundary.
- A guest noted that just because it's in the CUP doesn't mean you need to do it. The guest noted that during the CUP process, faculty experts who were engaged asked for a "no fields option," but that it was never provided. At that point, the faculty did not want to be associated with the project.

Millrace Design Area

- A guest noted that the Millrace Design Area drawings don't acknowledge the full size of the Urban Farm, which is not officially assigned. A member suggested looking into the possibility of making the Urban Farm an intentional part of a new designated open space.
- A guest asked how the North Green connects to other open spaces. Olsen noted that that is an area that staff is still grappling with, regarding how it fits with the open space and circulation system.
- A member noted the importance of addressing safety especially Franklin Blvd pedestrian crossings, which will become more active.

- A guest noted that future phases of Knight Campus will change the landscape, form, and movement in this area of campus, and the dynamics along the Millrace.
- A member asked to consider not establishing too many restrictions. There are a lot of other processes that will be required that are not mutually exclusive, such as permitting at various levels and complying with environmental laws.
- Olsen concluded with informing the committee about the projects in the area that are already underway, such as the Zebrafish International Resource Center expansion and a thermal storage tank for the Chiller Plant. In addition, there are projects that are anticipated (Knight Campus phases 2 and 3) or identified as a need (beach volleyball courts, emergency supply storage) that the *Campus Plan* would need to accommodate.

Action: The CPC was not requested to take action at this time.