UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | Office of Campus Planning

November 24, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee

From: Liz Thorstenson, Campus Planning
Campus Planning and Facilities Management (CPFM)

Subject: **Record** of the November 20, 2020 Campus Planning Committee Meeting

Attending: Dean Livelybrooks (chair), Pamanee Chaiwat, Christopher Chavez, Kassy Fisher, Hilary Gerdes, Michael Griffel, Michael Harwood, Ken Kato, Terry McQuilkin, Joshua Skov, Cathy Soutar, Philip Speranza, Christine Thompson, Chuck Triplett, Peter Walker, Laurie Woodward

CPC Staff: Liz Thorstenson (Campus Planning)

Guests: Craig Ashford (General Counsel), Leo Baudhuin (Daily Emerald), Jane Brubaker (CPFM), Emily Eng (Campus Planning), George Evans (Economics), Allen Hancock (Community Member), Brent Harrison (PE & Rec), Saul Hubbard (University Communications), Lynn Nester (PE & Rec), Aaron Olsen (Campus Planning), Kay Porter (Community Member), Ben Prahl (EMU), Matt Roberts (University Advancement), Bitty Roy (Biology), Shawn Rubino (EMU), Anne Schwarz (CPFM)

## CPC Agenda

### 1. Campus Plan Amendment: North of Franklin Boulevard – Action

Background: CPC staff introduced the purpose of the agenda item as described in the meeting mailing and the relevant key *Campus Plan* principles and applicable patterns to the project. She reviewed the format of the meeting and the purpose of the Zoom recording, adding that all recordings are part of the Public Record.

CPC chair, Dean Livelybrooks, reviewed the format of the meeting, and explained that after the presentation there would be time for discussion by committee members.

Campus Planning staff, Aaron Olsen, gave an overview of the proposed *Campus Plan* amendment and reminded members of the Campus Planning Committee's role and that

of the *Campus Plan*. He highlighted shared values of the members and community and goals of the university, and reviewed the process of the *Campus Plan* amendment.

Aaron summarized feedback since the November 10th Public Hearing. Approximately 35 new comments were received by email and through the project website survey. A number of comments were from students requesting the entire area north of the railroad tracks be designated as a Natural Area. Many of the comments similarly identified concern that the amendment allows for development of turf fields or buildings within the sensitive riparian zone north of the tracks, referred to the decades of opposition to development, and requested that the amendment be withdrawn to protect the river. One comment described the potential for establishing the entire area as a Natural Area, which could serve as a hub for social and educational activity including trails, gardens, and a small café for people to gather and enjoy the Natural Area. As mentioned during the public hearing, ASUO passed a resolution at their November 11th meeting, which demands all land north of the tracks to be designated as a natural area (all members have received a copy emailed by student senators).

He provided an overview of the context of the uses and open spaces surrounding university land North of Franklin Blvd

Aaron described proposed changes since the prior meeting, as included in the mailing materials, in response to prior committee and public feedback. In addition, he described two new refinements to the final language of the proposed amendment in response to the most recent public feedback:

1. Millrace Design Area – Add language that addresses screening in the CPFM area (as highlighted below):

   As opportunities arise, CPFM should continue to consolidate operations west of Onyx Street. Consider vegetative screening to buffer facilities related activities from adjacent areas.

2. Willamette Design Area – Add language to the Area-wide Space Use Comments that recognizes that this area has several different remnant habitats and that most of the trees are native (as highlighted below):

This area includes land that was previously disturbed by industrial uses resulting in a significant amount of fill material throughout the site and a steep riverbank making access to the river difficult. Historical uses included large scale resource extraction and manufacturing, including gravel mining, an asphalt and concrete plant, and a utility storage yard. Much of the design area has been minimally managed, primarily with periodic mowing, and allowed to be revegetated reflecting a somewhat natural state. Several different remnant habitats exist and most of the trees are native, although significant amounts of invasive plant species are present throughout the area. West of the Millrace outfall there are remnants of past industrial uses throughout the site.

Aaron said that members from the public submitted an additional request to add language requiring proposals to respond to previous resolutions by the ASUO and the University Senate. He explained that the resolutions, along with all other feedback, have been considered by the committee during this process. The resolutions are not the basis for the amendment and future proposals are not limited by the resolutions; therefore, no change is proposed.

Discussion: The following is a summary of questions and comments from committee members:

- Thank you for the productive presentation. What is the additional language shown regarding CPFM buffering, where does this appear in the amendment, and what is the intent?
- What is the CPC process for making recommendations when voting? Can amendments be included?
- Stronger language for natural materials over using synthetic turf is needed. Require the conversation to happen for future project proposals.
- Technology for future artificial turf options is unknown.
- Some members support new language "for any proposals for recreation fields provide careful consideration of materials…"-
- This has been a long process and proud of the work and addition of the Natural Area. Very thoughtful. Urban farm and outdoor program are good examples of why recreation should continue to be considered as a future use. However, it is important to consider stronger language to ensure uses adjacent to the Natural Area are designed with great care - careful consideration for recreation fields and how turf selection vs. impact on natural setting is balanced. Different

playing field surfaces technology may change but still need to set the bar high for future projects.

- Was an open space along the Franklin corridor (north side) in front of Knight Campus considered? This strip is important. It corresponds with the south side of the Boulevard.
- Emphasize natural turf.
- Make the default natural grass turf.
- Well done proposal. Natural vs. synthetic turf should be addressed by focusing on language that requires the least environmental impact. Natural turf can also pollute (e.g., fertilizes).
- Appreciate the plan for preserving a natural space while allowing multiple uses and getting close to the river.
- Thank you campus planning team. Thank you George and Bitty for introducing concept of natural areas. Not supportive of artificial turf but should keep options open and support mixed use. Be more restrictive on turf language. (Proposed examples of restrictive language). If needed, the committee does not need to take action today. PE & Rec is supportive of working within constraints of more restrictive options for natural fields. Natural turf should be the expectation.
- Preference for not delaying action.
- What are the red-dashed lines shown on the Willamette Natural Area map? Why does it change in dimension?
- Will non-committee members have opportunity to speak before committee takes action?
- The last meeting was for public comment which was much appreciated. Unless there is something new that has come up since the last meeting, the desire is to focus on committee discussion and have time for member statements for those who want to.
- Clarify proposed change regarding the natural area designation (pg. 8) received previously from Bitty and referred to by Aaron about protecting wildlife. Following Aaron's review of the existing Natural Area definition per the meeting mailing, member expressed support.
- Supports the proposed new language addressing existing remnant habitats.
- Regarding proposed new wording about turf materials, focus on defining a framework of elements future projects must address, not a specific solution. This is the intent of the *Campus Plan* - to provide direction for future discussions about proposed projects.

- The Franklin Boulevard edge was considered as a possible open space but defining this area as an open space is a challenge and there's already a city setback, which accomplishes the goal. The open space on the south side of Franklin was established due to the LISB project.
- Regarding natural grass language, replace "would likely be preferred" with "is strongly preferred."
- Regarding lowest environmental impact as well as the function associated with this new open space type and balancing trade-offs, it is important to focus on the function that natural areas serve. Suggest new language to minimize environmental impacts. Set a minimum below which we shouldn't fall regarding fields by adding language that explains the need for a rigorous process if an artificial turf field is ever proposed.
- This proposed Design Area description goes into more detail than the rest of the Campus Plan. This is understandable, given the importance of the area. However, it is not necessary to describe the steps we would go to for a future project.
- A member proposed language with fewer words.
- Some members discussed how the proposed wording should be clear about giving first consideration to natural turf.
- Other members thought that the proposed language does not go far enough and should use more restrictive language, such as "should use natural materials" or "natural turf."
- Some members said the language needs to set an essential minimum to balance the importance for preserving adjacent natural functions.
- A member said the proposed turf field language should focus on addressing the environmental impacts and keep future options open. The role of the committee is not to define the needs or mission of UO or how these needs are designed to meet the mission; that is the role of UO leadership. While natural turf fields may end up being the best solution, it is not definitive. For example, natural turf fields require different usage pattern (rest periods), which may result in the need for more land.
- CPC Chair summarized the potential condition for consideration regarding turf fields.
- Some members expressed support for the rewording of language.
- Support the proposal but omit the use of the term "grass."

- Are there exceptions made to the *Campus Plan* and are they allowed when projects come forward? If so, why add in an exit clause? Could leave stronger language around natural materials, knowing that any project can propose an exception based on some extreme circumstances that would tip the scales toward the program over the natural preservation function.
- *Campus Plan* amendments are possible and have been made to accommodate projects.
- Preference for keeping revised language short and simple. Each project must demonstrate it is meeting a programmatic need. Replace existing sentence about natural turf fields with, "For example, *for any proposals* for recreational fields, natural turf *is the first choice."*
- Some members express support for this proposal.

The following is a summary of questions and comments from committee members, after the committee took action:

- Respect for the enormous amount of effort that has gone into this process; however, uncomfortable as a new CPC member joining late in the process for this proposal (first meeting). Voted against the proposed amendment due to concern about the lack of the democratic nature of the outcome of this process. The history of opposition for the area is consistent with the member's recollection of consensus by the campus and off-campus community across generations. The trade-off for potential recreational space vs. the potential for saying the whole democratic political process going back decades doesn't matter, is very concerning. Recognize the democratic voice that goes back decades even if it doesn't change the outcome.
- Pleased with progress the committee made and that Campus Planning was willing to incorporate changes and suggestions; however, the resolutions passed by the ASUO and UO Senate are significant. Therefore, voted against the proposed amendment. If recreational fields had not been in the proposal, there would have been more comfort for voting yes.

In response to questions and comments from committee members, Olsen, Thorstenson, and Eng provided the following clarifications:

- The *Campus Plan* is sensitive about the views of service areas from everywhere (Principle 2). The Millrace Design Area special conditions, area wide space use

comments, also includes wording for opportunities to consolidate CPFM functions.

- When making a recommendation for approval, the committee has several options, one of which is to recommend approval with conditions.
- The proposed recreation field material language is about making sure thoughtful conversations take place when future projects are proposed. Natural grass may be preferred because of the setting.
- Any future proposals would go through the typical planning process.
- The 100' setback line is the code required setback from the top of high bank. The 200' setback line is what the CUP established from the top of high bank. It narrows east of riverfront parkway to allow for potential development. The CUP establishes code required maximum coverage.
- The current proposed draft states native plants, which support a wide variety of wildlife, in particular endangered or threatened species, will be prioritized and the proposed language is in the amendment.
- Proposed language regarding existing remnant habitats and native trees has been captured without calling out each specific type of habitat.
- The *Campus Plan* is adaptable and can evolve. An example of this is when an opportunity like the Housing Transformation Project arose, the proposal included changes to established designated open spaces.
- Implementing the goals of the Natural Area will be for future projects to consider.

**Action:** With 13 in favor and 2 opposed, the committee agreed that the proposed ***Campus Plan* Amendment: North of Franklin Boulevard** is consistent with the *Campus Plan* and recommended to the president that it be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Regarding the proposed language for recreational fields on page 11 of the proposed *Campus Plan* Amendment summary, omit "For example, if recreation fields are proposed, natural grass would likely be preferred due to the setting, although careful consideration is needed to ensure programmatic needs are met," and replace with the following, "*For example, for any proposals for recreational fields, natural turf is the first choice.*"