

February 3, 2004

MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee (CPC)

From: Christine Taylor Thompson, Planning Associate

University Planning

Subject: Record of Campus Planning Committee meeting, January 29, 2004

Attending: Carole Daly (Chair), G. Z. Brown, Garry Fritz, Cynthia Girling, Bryn Hammond Anderson, Dave Heeke, Bethany Larson, Gregg Lobisser, Chris Loschiavo, Eugene Luks, Gordon Melby, Steve Pickett, Chris Ramey, Garry Seitz, Christine Theodoropoulos, Mick Westrick

Guests: Sheri Donahoe-Whitmore (Housing), Mike Eyster (Housing), Mark Foster (ZGF), Larry Gilbert (CMGS), Allen Gidley (Housing), Drew Gilliland (PARS), John Hollan (Housing), Tim King (Facilities Services), Anne Leavitt (Student Affairs), Alyson Rogers (ZGF), Rand Stamm (DPS), Fred Tepfer (UPO), Zachary Vishanoff, Alisha Yahya (ODE)

Staff: Christine Thompson (University Planning)

Agenda:

1. Living Learning Center - Long Range Campus Development Plan (LRCDP) Amendments Public Hearing and Review

2. Living Learning Center - Schematic Design

1. Living Learning Center - LRCDP Amendments Public Hearing and Review, and
2. Living Learning Center - Schematic Design

Background: The CPC chair explained that background information for the proposed amendments and the schematic design will be provided prior to the required public hearing.

Fred Tepfer, project planner, said the tennis-court relocation and the parking plan will not be presented at this time. He is not able to determine final solutions to these issues until another larger campus project is resolved. These issues will be brought back to the CPC for review at a later date.

Mike Eyster, Housing director, summarized the need for the new Living Learning Center as conveyed at prior meetings.

Mark Foster, project architect from ZGF, presented the schematic design. He said the design had been adjusted so that the buildings no longer intrude into either of the adjacent designated open spaces.

Mark described the Living Learning Center's design as depicted in the meeting mailing attachments. The project consists of two buildings with primary public access from all sides. He said the project's activity spaces are designed to tie to the existing campus circulation and open-space framework. The major social spaces--the café and the performance space--form the north and south edges of the new open space.

Mark said all residence rooms have views. The south-facing windows have a series of sunshades, and the upper-level shades are carried around the entire building to create a parapet effect. The top floor will have either a stucco finish or second brick pattern designed to "read" differently from the lower floors to diminish the buildings' apparent size.

Mark said the corner stair towers enhance natural ventilation by serving as air exhausts. The stair towers are capped with louvers (not yet designed).

In response to previously stated concerns, Mark explained how the new quadrangle is intended for campus use and will feel open and accessible. The design ensures views into the quadrangle from the north/south axis, 15th Avenue, the EMU promenade.

Larry Gilbert, project landscape architect from CMGS, presented the revised landscape and site plan (distributed at the meeting). He explained the need to remove the sand volleyball court to accommodate the new EMU promenade walkway. The existing east/west walkway must be shifted north to make room for the new buildings.

Larry said 15 trees will be removed to accommodate the project. None of these trees are significant teaching trees, although one is a fairly significant conifer (Deodar cedar). The proposed landscape plan will triple the overall existing canopy in the area. Thirty to forty large canopy trees will be planted as well as three or four conifers and many more small canopy trees.

Larry explained that the purpose of raising the existing site elevation to match Walton Hall is to allow on-grade access to and in between the Living Learning Center and Walton Hall. In response to the committee's previous request, Larry reviewed options to improve connections to Carson Hall. He does not recommend any changes due to substantial elevation changes in the area that are difficult to resolve.

Larry described how the outside open spaces relate to the indoor activity spaces, in particular the patio and multi-purpose areas outside the café and performance space. He said the north courtyard, designed as a quiet area, opens to the EMU promenade and has a more urban, paved feel. The smaller southern courtyard faces, 5th Avenue and is shaded by an existing large Norway maple.

Larry said service access is provided along the east side of the building via a driveway between Walton Hall and the Living Learning Center. Space is reserved for covered bike parking near the main northeast complex entrance. In addition the existing covered parking at the northeast corner of Earl Hall will be moved further northwest.

Larry said although the amount of unbuilt space in the area has decreased, the amount of greenscape has increased by 20,000 sf.

Staff described the proposed revised LRCDP amendments (distributed at the meeting).

Public Hearing: The chair opened the public hearing for the proposed LRCDP amendments.

Prior to providing public testimony, Zachary Vishanoff, activist, asked for clarification about which existing recreational facilities will be relocated since it is not mentioned in the proposed amendments. In response to staff's request for clarification, Mike Eyster said the tennis courts will be relocated, but not the volleyball court.

Zachary Vishanoff provided public testimony. He said the public had not been given time

to learn about the specific proposal making it difficult to provide input. He suggested scheduling a time for the public to learn about the project and provide effective public input (e.g., similar to the EMU Expansion Project open house). Zachary expressed concern about the proposed use of advanced technologies in the building. He added that it was premature to talk about density increases before knowing where the proposed Arena will be sited.

A member suggested resolving concerns about outdated buildings and increased density by replacing old dormitories with new ones on the same site. Another member explained that the Housing department needs to build surge space before it can close down existing dormitories to renovate them.

The chair closed the public hearing.

Discussion: Staff summarized the applicable LRCDP patterns and policies related to the proposed amendments and the schematic design.

In response to a member's question, staff explained the meaning of the proposed .970 floor area ratio (FAR) referring to the background information provided in the meeting mailing. The proposed increase is equivalent to a 21% increase or about 100,000 gsf. Another place on campus with similar allowed densities is the Lawrence Hall area (existing is .900 FAR, maximum allowed is 1.000 FAR). The allowed densities across campus vary to reflect the historic character, existing development, existing and proposed use for the area, and adjacent uses. Central campus densities are about .500-1.000 FAR. The exceptions are the sciences area and the Memorial Quadrangle (due to PLC). In addition, allowed densities vary from area to area to balance out the overall density of the campus. For example, areas designated for recreational uses have lower densities, because the land is reserved for playing fields and recreational courts.

A member suggested changing the proposed LRCDP amendment to include a statement that requires future existing building renovation to reduce the area's density level back to the existing allowed maximum level (.800). Another member supported this idea saying that it would address the goal stated in the letter from administration about the project site selection.

A member said he was not in support of the proposed amendment to increase the area's density. However, the president has already made the decision to do so. The CPC is advisory to the president so the CPC's recommendation will not make much difference. The committee already knows how the president will act.

A member stated her support for the density increase because the proposed project will be an improvement over the existing use. It will benefit the campus as a whole. In the long

term, increased density will have to be addressed. Increasing density on the main campus will avoid having to expand outwards. The situation is difficult because there are limited siting options.

Another member added that campus will have to expand either up or out. He speculated that the housing area will decrease in density over time as existing buildings are renovated, but he did not feel that this decrease was essential to improving the area.

A member pointed out how the existing LRCDP patterns and policies have required a great deal of dialog about the proposed building design. This dialog has resulted in a much-improved project. Adding an element of tension to the policies--e.g., the proposed change that would require a reduction in the area's density--will require continued discussion as future renovations take place. This interaction represents the success of the LRCDP.

A member said the proposed amendment will take the campus one step closer to a higher density unnecessarily. Other opportunities are available to achieve the project's stated goals.

A member said places on campus with a density ratio similar to the proposed .970 feel overbuilt.

A member expressed concern that the project will serve only a limited part of the student body. Fred explained that the Living Learning Center classrooms are intended to serve all student levels. The housing units are designed for freshman students, but housing programs are adaptable. As housing capacity increases, it is more likely that upper-level students will have greater on-campus housing options.

A member said the proposed text change to reduce density in the future may not achieve the desired open-space component. Future coverage would have to be reduced below the currently allowed level to achieve this goal.

A member said density is only one component of design; it does not define good design. A .800 ratio is not a magical number and therefore she supports the proposed density increase without the proposed text change.

A member said students would probably not miss the lost open space in the future.

A member said the coverage and density ratios are the primary LRCDP tools available to ensure that the key component of the campus character, the open space framework, is not eroded. If one project exceeds stated limitations, what will happen when the next project proposes the same?

The committee did not agree, with seven opposed, six in favor, and two abstentions, to make the change to the proposed LRCDP amendment text that would have added the following statement to amendment #2: "Future development that occurs in area 41 will reduce the existing density levels with a target of .800 FAR."

Members discussed the first proposed amendment that would increase the allowed density.

A member noted that since the committee's action on the proposed amendment will not make much difference (the president has already made his decision), his greatest concern is that this project will set a precedent for future projects. Therefore, he drafted a letter to the president stating his concerns and pointing out the importance of preserving the campus open spaces. He invited other members to join as signatories as a way to move beyond this project and prepare for future ones.

A member suggested this letter could accompany the action taken by the committee. Another member said the draft letter's points should be very well received by the CPC because of the way the university has bypassed the committee when making recent campus-planning decisions.

The letter was distributed to committee members with the understanding that it will be discussed at the next meeting.

Members acted on the first proposed amendment (see "Action" below). They agreed to continue review of the other amendments and the schematic design at the next meeting (February 5, 2004 from 3:30 - to 5:00 p.m.)

Action: The committee agreed, with nine in favor, five opposed, and one abstention, to recommend approval of the first proposed LRCDP amendment to the president, which reads as follows: "Amend Table 1 on page 17 by raising the maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for Analytical Area 41 (Carson, Walton, Straub, and Earl Halls) from .800 to .970."

Please contact this office if you have questions.

cc. Sheri Donahoe-Whitmore, Housing

Mike Eyster, Housing

Mark Foster, ZGF

Allen Gidley, Housing

Larry Gilbert, CMGS

Drew Gilliland, PARS

Becky Goodrich, Straub Building Manager

Melinda Grier, President's Office

John Hollan, Housing

Tim King, Facilities Services

Anne Leavitt, Student Affairs

Steve McBride, Athletics

Dennis Munroe, PARS

Jeff Nelson, Fairmount Neighbors

Steve Nystrom, Eugene Planning

Peg Peters, South University Neighbors

Karen Sprague, Undergraduate Studies

Rand Stamm, Public Safety

Kristen Taylor, Fairmount Neighbors

Fred Tepfer, University Planning

Zachary Vishanoff

Barbara West, President's Office

Lew Williams, Foundation

Dan Williams, Administration

Nancy Wright, Housing (DAG chair)

Alisha Yahya, ODE