

Summary of Campus Master Plan Phase II Town Meeting Discussion
Student Services Building
September 9, 2009

James Foerster, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facility and Space Planning, welcomed the participants to the Town Hall Meeting and then introduced David Mann, an architect and the Project Manager for the UIC Campus Master Plan consultant team from Booth Hansen and Hargreaves Associates.

David Mann gave a PowerPoint overview of some of the issues and goals his team was addressing during Phase 2 of this three-phase process. He also introduced some plan approaches and design concepts the consultant team was considering for both the East and West Sides of campus and discussed some opportunities for immediate impact projects.

The PowerPoint that Mr. Mann presented can be found in its entirety on the Campus Master Plan website at http://www.uic.edu/master_plan/community_forums.htm.

After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments by those in attendance. David Taeyaerts, Director of the Office of Campus Learning Environment, facilitated this portion of the meeting. The following is a summary of the discussion.

24/7 Campus

- Can you expand on concepts of a 24/7 campus? What are the opportunities for retail spaces?
- These are some issues the consultants are grappling with. They are analyzing hubs of activity where various elements that encourage 24/7 activity can be introduced. These elements could include such things as coffee shops, areas to congregate and relax, enhanced lighting and enhanced security. The master planning team has also engaged a consultant to analyze where first-floor retail activities could be introduced and flourish in an effort to bring a greater level of activity to certain parts of the campus.

Barriers

- All of the master planning schemes appear to create a boundary between the campus and the surrounding neighborhood. The schemes appear to isolate the campus from the neighborhood rather than act as filters to the neighborhood. There seem to be no moves to respond to the community similar to those used by various higher education institutions in the South Loop for example.
- There will be a variety of immediate impact projects that begin to remove barriers to the community that allow for better interaction with the campus. Future buildings will introduce an appropriate level of porosity between the campus and the community.

Bicycles

- The master plan should develop a bicycle plan that incorporates bicycle paths on and between the East and West Sides of campus and provides for supporting facilities. The plan should also look into ways to connect to existing city bicycles paths.

Campus Expansion

- A concern was raised that UIC would expand its property into the adjacent community and overtake other properties. Members of the campus master planning team stated that UIC has no intention of expanding its boundaries on the East Side of campus into other properties. UIC has sufficient land on the East Side of campus and will seek building and development opportunities within its existing land.
- It was noted that none of the planning concepts show any new buildings north or east of the expressways. The campus master planning team stated that there is no intention in the master plan to expand north or east of the expressways. The focus of the master plan will be to reinforce existing spaces.

Landscapes

- Winter represents the longest season at UIC and most of the landscape is barren during this time. There should be efforts to introduce more seasonal landscapes such as those that incorporate evergreens.

Parking

- The West Side of campus currently does not have enough parking. How will parking requirements be accommodated if surface lots are removed and new buildings are added?
- Several parking structures on the West Side of campus can be expanded horizontally and/or vertically.
- An issue concerning parking policies outside of the scope of the master planning process was raised and deferred to the proper UIC officials.

Pedestrian Pathways

- Where it makes sense, pedestrian tunnels will be continued on the West Side of campus as the medical center expands.
- The planning concepts for the West Side of campus have a very building-centric feel. The plans do not incorporate the relationship between pedestrian and vehicular flows of traffic and buildings. The plans could show critical nodes of circulation to help people understand what these building plans mean.

Priorities

- Immediate impact projects such as lighting and water features are nice, but more immediate issues such as bike paths, bus routes, and pedestrian conflicts should be addressed first.

Traffic Flow

- How will the Roosevelt and Halsted intersection be affected by the narrowing of Halsted Street? Does the large volume of traffic through this intersection cut off the South Campus from the rest of the campus?
- The master plan and traffic engineering consultants will analyze a variety of techniques involving road designs, changes to pavement, and modified pedestrian traffic signaling devices to address these concerns. Many of these details will be worked out in Phase 3 of the master plan.
- Will focusing on Taylor Street as the main campus connector between the East and West Sides of campus lead to conflicts due to its narrow width and frequent congestion?
- Taylor Street presents an opportunity to connect the two sides of campus through a direct street that sees slower traffic speeds than Roosevelt or Harrison. The consultants will be looking for ways that this connection can be leveraged through improved shuttle service and better coordination with the neighborhood.
- A comment was made that Halsted Street's width accommodates tour buses that visit the Hull House and parking during move-in/move-out activities involving the student dormitories.

The Quad

- The Quad is an area students use to gather and engage in a variety of activities such as throwing a Frisbee. Future designs should allow for students to engage with this space in a variety of activities rather than just walk by.

University Hall

- UH is a very visual icon that is prominent and visible from long distances. If UH is removed, it should be replaced with another icon of equal prominence and visibility.

Walter Netsch's Design

- Though there are considerations to possibly replace University Hall or the Behavioral Sciences Building in the long-term, the essence of some of Netsch's original design concepts should be respected and reinforced.