

Campus planning process works to integrate sustainability, public input



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When people look at the 2015 master plan for UW–Madison, they will not find a section about sustainability, says Gary Brown, the director of campus planning and landscape architecture.

Instead, they will see a plan that integrates elements of sustainability throughout.

“It’s in every little thing we talk about from the landscape master plan to the stormwater master plan to transportation – it’s in every piece of that discussion,” Brown says.

The **campus master plan** is updated every 10 years. The last one, unveiled in 2005, focused on sustainable building development on campus. Now, with a recent building boom nearly complete, the focus is shifting toward infrastructure, energy, transportation, and designing usable outdoor landscapes.

“Sustainability is our way of doing business here at UW–Madison,” says Bill Elvey, associate vice chancellor of facilities planning and management. “You’ll see some aspects of sustainability on every page of the document.”

“When we are talking about utilities management, we are going to be talking about alternative forms of energy production – what about solar?” says Brown. “When we look at transportation, we look at alternative forms of transportation and how can we encourage more. [Sustainability] is in every piece of the master plan.”

The planning team is hosting **two public open houses** this week to provide information and seek input from the campus community to guide the planning process.

- Tuesday, Sept. 15, 7-9 p.m., in room 1325 of the Health Sciences Learning Center, 750 Highland Ave.
- Wednesday, Sept. 16, 7-9 p.m., in the Sonata Room of Gordon, 770 W. Dayton St.

The team will give a progress update and present initial ideas based on meetings with several stakeholders. Attendees are encouraged to give feedback, ask questions, and make suggestions.

Brown says community input is vital to shaping these discussions and creating a productive and resilient campus. For example, he wants to hear how people would use green spaces and how frequently.

South campus is one area of particular interest since it currently blends with the city more than the rest of campus. The team is looking at adding more vegetation and open spaces as a way to better connect the area to the rest of campus and counteract negative effects of the urban heat island.

They are also working with the campus UWell initiative to explore how they might be able to promote healthy behaviors through design of outdoor spaces.

Another area of interest is integrating educational components into the built environment, such as interpretive signage about sustainable elements of design, says Aaron Williams, a campus landscape architect working on the project.

There will be an additional opportunity for public comment once preliminary plan concepts are shared in late October. A draft master plan is expected in January 2016.