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City gives nod to UW-Madison campus master plan, expedited review process

PAT SCHNEIDER | The Capital Times | pschneider@madison.com Jul 21, 2017



Proposed North Charter Street and Linden Drive intersection under the newly approved UW-Madison Campus Master Plan.

Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects

A master plan for the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus adopted by the City Council this week gives the university an expedited process of review for its development projects.

The plan, unanimously approved Tuesday, provides for a new design review board to consider and approve development proposals in the newly formed Campus Institutional Zoning District that typically would have gone to the city Plan Commission.

Each new university capital project — whether it be a new building, renovation or addition — will take less time and cost less money, reducing the impact on scarce state funding and private gift funds donated to the university for building projects, the university said in a news release Thursday.

University officials estimated that streamlined process will save six to nine months of development time on typical campus projects.

The master plan was developed over the course of 260 meetings with stakeholders from campus and the larger community that begin in early 2015.

"This is truly a momentous occasion not only for the university but for the entire city of Madison," Gary Brown, director of Campus Planning & Landscape Architecture in Facilities Planning & Management, said in a statement. "Thousands of stakeholders, from faculty, staff and students to our many interested neighbors and partners, have been involved with creating a roadmap for future development opportunities across our 936-acre campus."

It is the first campus master plan approved by the city in the 169-year history of UW-Madison.

The master plan sketches potential development and redevelopment on campus over the next 20 years. Only those properties now owned by the UW System Board of Regents, state of Wisconsin or affiliates fall under the Campus Institutional Zoning and streamline approval process.

Several areas on campus will remain outside the Campus Institutional Zoning District, including any development associated with Camp Randall Stadium, the Kohl Center and the Wisconsin Energy Institute, which all have their own zoning requirements from previous approvals. In addition, the majority of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the far west recreational fields remain zoned "Conservancy." Any significant changes to those areas would continue to require a full conditional use zoning review process with the city.

Among the seven voting members of the Campus Design Review Board, four will be UW staff or designees; the others will be city staff or committee members or designees.

After concerns raised by citizen members of the city's standing committees on campus-area issues, it was determined that the chair of the Campus Design Review Board will vote only to break a tie among other voting members.

The chair of the group will be the university architect, or other designee chosen by UW's associate vice chancellor of facilities planning and management.

In addition, a City Council proposal introduced Tuesday in response to community concerns would:

- Require that final development plans, before submission to the Campus Design Review Board, be submitted to the city committee on campus issues overseeing the area where development would take place.
- Allow decisions of the Campus Design Review Board to be appealed to the city Plan Commission by the university or the alderperson representing the district where development would take place.

Mike Verveer, a long-time campus area alder, remarked Tuesday that the new review board represented a “sea change” in city procedures.

He said that he had been convinced by city staff, however, that providing the expedited process to the university is the right thing to do. The change also was considered in a rewrite of the city zoning code that went into effect in 2013.

Mayor Paul Soglin praised the cooperation between the city and the university on the plan.

"I want to thank the university administration ... the various citizen groups and the various campus planning groups that spent a good deal of time on these proposals," Soglin said during the council meeting. "I really believe that at this juncture, the university has done more to recognize its place in the city and I'm hoping the city, by adopting this (plan), will do the same."

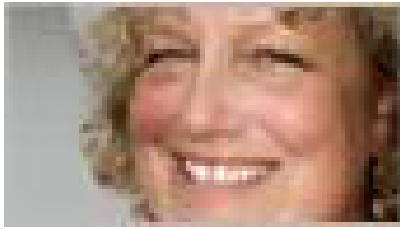
This master plan update focused on the campus landscape and includes the first-ever campus landscape master plan, which was developed in conjunction with a comprehensive stormwater management/green infrastructure plan, according to the university news release.

Prior master plans for utilities, transportation and major building opportunities were also updated as part of this process. The new plan also includes a set of design guidelines and detailed planning information related to bulk, height and mass of new facilities. Sustainability is a key organizing principle for the entire plan, the university said.

"Even though this plan suggests potential growth of up to almost 5 million additional gross square feet of building space, it is important to remember that the university continues to focus on reinvestment in its existing buildings through renovation, reprogramming and renewal projects," Brown said. "The most sustainable building is one you don't have to build."

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Pat Schneider



Pat Schneider

Pat Schneider joined The Capital Times in 1989 and has written on a wide variety of topics including neighborhoods, minority communities and the nonprofit sector.



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