

# Master Planning Council (MPC)

**MEETING NOTES - October 1st, 2014**

Office of the Architect for the University

## University Emmet Ivy Planning, Grounds Improvement Fund, Bikeshare Update

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Graduate Representative

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Undergraduate Representative

### Meeting Agenda

- University-Emmet-Ivy Planning by Michael Vergason, Principal, Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
- Grounds Improvement Fund by Mary Hughes and Helen Wilson, Office for the Architect for the University
- UBike update by Julia Monteith, Senior Land Use Planner, Office of the Architect for the University

### Presentation Summaries

David Neuman began the meeting at 3:30 PM with brief remarks.

#### University-Emmet-Ivy Planning by Michael Vergason, Principal, Michael Vergason Landscape Architects

The University Emmet Ivy study began in the first half of 2014. The Office of the Architect (OAU) was tasked by the BOV to get a better understanding of the Emmet Corridor and the Ivy/University entrance corridors and make recommendations to enhance this area as an entrance to the University. The OAU is working with the transportation consultant Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) and a landscape consultant Michael Vergason Landscape Architects (MVLA) on this project. Michael Vergason of MVLA is presenting their work today.

Michael Vergason gave a short introduction and explained the physical scope of the study is broken up into 5 zones. There are two phases to the study: 1) Precedents and Landscape Findings and 2) Recommendations.

The study included benchmarking of several other campuses to help to define different campus entry experiences. The team also reviewed previous studies related to this area, going back to 1994.

Precedents from other universities are organized into several categories:

Growth: Planned or Organic

Setting: City or Country

Type of Visitor: First, Returning or Daily

Comparable universities to UVa using this categorization were identified including Princeton and UNC-Chapel Hill. Each have common characteristics.

The study also looked at historic and physical context of the arrival to UVa:

1) Hill location implies you always approach uphill

2) Approach has migrated over the years from a south arrival to the east and now arrival from the north and west. The arrival is a multi-leveled: approach--arrival--entry. Arrival from each direction has this tiered approach, but with different qualities from bucolic (west), highway corridor (north) and urbane (west).

The study identified five elements to the arrival experience:

- Water re-emergence
- Bridges (across Emmet) act as points of compression and natural thresholds
- Pathways some nice, but others in not so good condition
- Walls define the edges along some roads.
- Plantings: natural, turf and tree and evergreens. Evergreens tend to be used at points of entry and along edges.

The study identified the strengths of the 5 elements and what they have to offer for the landscape planning.

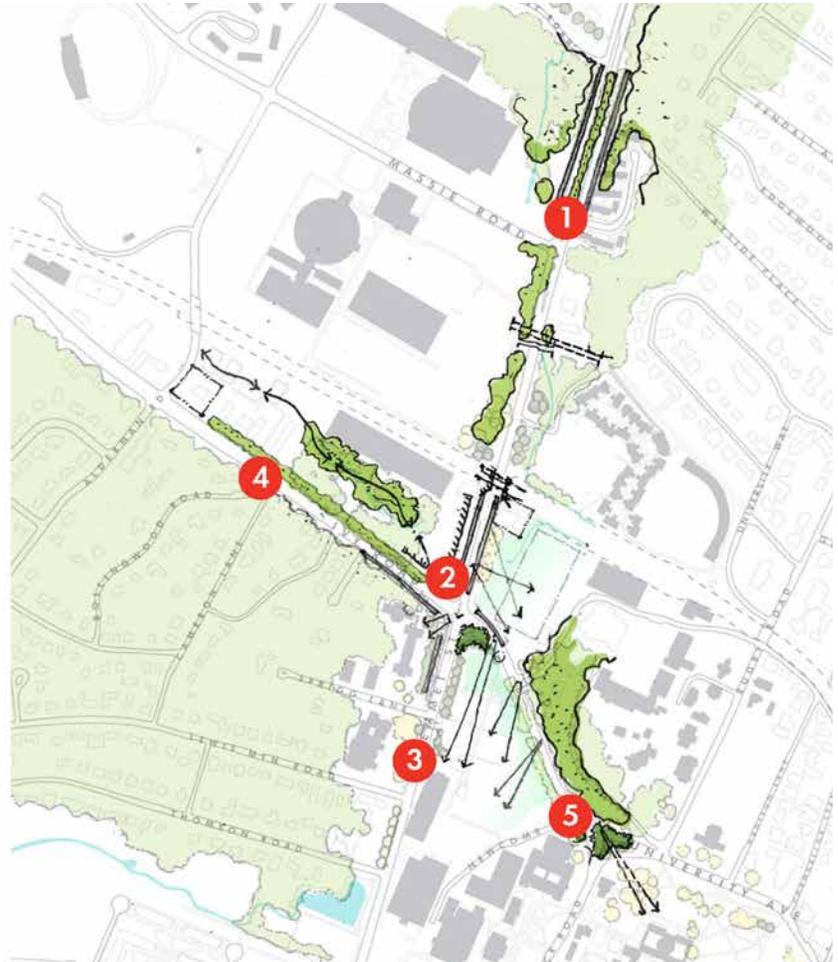
Five principles were developed to guide the landscape development:

- Extend landscape character of the historic Grounds to the Entry Corridors
- Enhance Entry Corridors as a sequence of landscape thresholds that improve intuitive wayfinding
- Use open space, views, low stone walls, plantings, water & bridges to enrich entry experience
- Preserve and enhance existing residual woodlands
- Create a sense of place that encourages people to linger

These principles were applied to develop specific landscape recommendations for each zone.

### Guidelines: Landscape Recommendations

- 1** Protect woodland threshold  
Explore median trees/Expand slope plantings  
Improve sidewalks  
Extend stone walls  
Bridge as identity
- 2** Preserve filtered views to Carr's Hill Field  
Frame view/open access to the IRC  
Improve SW corner walk/wall
- 3** Preserve views to tennis courts  
Improve Memorial Gym ramp  
Improve intersection and identity of visitor parking
- 4** Provide generous setback on Ivy  
Organize buildings to preserve interior woodland  
Develop soft transitional streetscape
- 5** Preserve woodland  
Maintain filtered views to Nameless Field  
Consider widening traffic island on McCormick



### Landscape Zones and Recommendations

*Recommendations include:*

Zone 1 - Emmet St. at Copeley/Arlington -- median planting, low walls, etc.

Massie Road intersection -- consider redevelopment for housing, maintain view from Massie to east, but provide better screening of athletics parking.

Goodwin Bridge-Small additions of plantings and creating a feeling of commingling with the woodlands.

Zone 2- General idea is to create connections across the four corners of Emmet/Ivy intersection.

Recommendations for the NW corner, NE corner include providing street level seating and opening up views to Carr's Hill Field.

SE corner -- Recommendations include removing some tennis courts for informal turf space. Improve the traffic island to make it more inviting with landscape and walls and relocating the traffic control box.

SW corner - Add stairs to the International Residential College and widen the sidewalks on Emmet and Ivy around this corner. Add stone walls for retaining the hillside.



**Conceptual view of new stair to the International Residential College, retaining walls and sidewalk at the corner of Emmet Street and Ivy Road**

Zone 3 - The zone has a nice feel, but some changes can be made to Central Grounds Parking entry. Enhancements could include adding a stone wall, improving signage and providing a table crossing at Dell parking lot.

Zone 4 - Create setbacks on the north side of Ivy Road and preserves woodlands, walks, and water along the corridor. Should the Cavalier Inn site be redeveloped, a 40' setback from Ivy Road should be maintained. The sidewalk on the south side of Ivy Road should be widened as it approaches Emmet Street.

Zone 5 - It is important to maintain views to Nameless Field. It would also be beneficial to improve McCormick intersection by lessening the distance of the crosswalk by constructing a bump-out. This would provide more turf and landscape and enhance the final approach to the Rotunda.

*There were several questions and comments:*

Mary Hughes explained that the corridor plans have been presented to the BOV on two occasions. At their November meeting the Office of the Architect plans to bring design guidelines to the Board. The University has started to work with the city to get trees in the median on Emmet and lower the speed limit on Emmet north of Ivy Road and possibly replacing/relocating the traffic control box at the Emmett/Ivy intersection.

Michael Vergason added that the landscape recommendations can be approached incrementally, since there are multiple projects involved.

Richard Minturn asked if ideas for improving the walking experience across the Emmet/Ivy intersection were looked at such as a pedestrian overpass. Michael Vergason explained that a bridge has been previously studied. It would make sense if it works with the topography. But it must be easy to use or it will not be used. A pedestrian bridge might work if it is attached to a building and has the right programmatic use.

Dean Meyer asked if implementing a pedestrian scramble at the Emmet-Ivy-University intersection was discussed? One example on Grounds is at the Alderman/McCormick intersection but the study did not evaluate the efficacy of a scramble at the Emmet Ivy intersection, but might be worth analyzing.

Rebecca White had a question about the recommendation for two mid-block crossing across Emmet Street on either side of the Central Grounds Garage entrance. She wondered if they might be too close together. Michael Vergason answered that they were treating that area as an intersection rather than two separate crossings. The hope is that

the crosswalks will become well used and vehicles will slow down without incident. A comment was made by Dean Meyer that a double crosswalk here signals a beginning of a heavily used pedestrian zone as one drives north on Emmet Street.

Dean Meyer also commented that it would be nice to integrate the recommended stone walls into bus stop seating.

### **Grounds Improvement Fund by Mary Hughes and Helen Wilson, Office for the Architect for the University**

Mary Hughes and Helen Wilson gave the council an update on the Grounds Improvement Fund (GIF), implemented in 2007. It requires a 1.5% assessment on building projects at UVa and the College at Wise. UVa-Wise funds stay at UVa-Wise. UVa funds can and have been used at field stations in addition to the main campus. Proposals for projects are submitted annually. Project variety includes pedestrian and bike facilities, outdoor areas, lighting, site furnishings, planting and public art.

Projects are rated and chosen by a selection committee. Highly rated projects are vetted and cost estimates are created. Once a project list is developed that matches available funding, the list is brought to Collette Sheehy for approval. There is a defined selection criteria that is applied to each project in an effort to standardize the process. There have been a total of 76 GIF projects since 2008.

Some recent and current projects include:

- Emmet and University Avenue improvements--This project was done in conjunction with the City.
- Lambeth Stream Restoration (2011-12)--was co-funded by the Housing Department.
- GIF funds paid for four interpretive signs in the Dell.
- Stadium Road Pedestrian Safety improvements (2014)--This project is in design. The University is waiting for city approvals. This project will improve an unsafe pedestrian condition, as the new crossing at Stadium Road will be shorter and provide better visibility than the current condition.
- JPA steps to Central Grounds--This project was an engineering study to assess the feasibility of putting in steps at an ad hoc crossing from JPA to Dawson's Row. The study found that the stairs could be installed, but would be expensive to implement. The conceptual design includes bike stair channels because the City has interest in that. This project would need a partner to help with funding.
- Ruffner Hall rain garden and permeable paving in parking lot. (2013)



**Ruffner Hall Parking Lot Rain Garden**

- North Grounds Sidewalks and stormwater management study (2014/15)--will seek different solutions to a serious water management problem opposite the North Grounds Rec center in the Distillery Branch watershed.
- Clark Park improvement (2014)--GIF was used to expand design of battle landscape across to Clark Park. The idea is to make the space more inviting and used.
- McCormick Road West study (2015)--Incredibly congested area that needs thoughtful study to come up with solutions to the conflicts in this area. STEM study identified building projects in corridor that might lead to increase in GIF funds. The idea is to get a sense of what projects would be best and should be included in the designs for the science building renovations.
- Open Grounds Streetscape study-- will look at creating a better landscape around the Corner building. There are

a lot of conflicts here with pedestrians/cars and trucks. Bill Sherman submitted this as a way of improving the Open Grounds collaborative space that has been recently added to the corner building.

**UBike update by Julia Monteith, Senior Land Use Planner, Office of the Architect for the University**

The biggest news to report is that the bikes have arrived at UVA.



To recap, funding is through a matching grant from VDOT. A planning grant was awarded in 2010 and an implementation grant in 2012. The UBIKE system will be available for community/visitor use. Bikeshare programs have been implemented in cities throughout the country. Typically a smart docking station and non-smart bike system is used. Our system is the opposite: a non-smart docking system and a smart bike. The vendor for the UBIKE system is Social Bicycles (SoBi). The bike contains a lock, GPS and an integrated computer. All the technology is on the bike.

The system will have two kiosks. One will be located on Newcomb terrace and at OHill for people to sign up for the system. Memberships can also be purchased online or with the SoBi app. Bikes are reserved online or from the bike. There is an annual membership rate with a discount for University faculty, staff and students. There are also monthly, weekly and daily rate options.

There are 18 stations planned around Grounds with approximately 230 bike racks and 120 bikes. Stations are located mostly along the McCormick Road Corridor, as well as the Health System, The Corner, the Architecture School and Wilson Hall. Redistribution will occur and the system will be managed to prevent overloading of racks. The system is largely ready to go, but we are waiting on a few components before UVA can implement. Blue Ridge Cyclery is performing the maintenance and redistribution for the UBIKE system. Users will be able to track their use and we can look at how riders use the system spatially.

*Questions and Comments*

Will helmets be available? No, but members will receive a discount on a helmet when they sign up.

How about locating stations at parking areas? The initial system is focused on maximizing student use, but hopefully we can move beyond student focused system to provide for staff and faculty in the future.