



Master Planning Council (MPC)

MEETING NOTES - April 19, 2007

Office of the Architect for the University

Summary: Grounds Plan Strategy

MPC Members

David J. Neuman, FAIA
Architect for the University

Ed Ayers
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

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Vice President and Provost

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Assistant to the President

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VP and Chief Financial Officer

Colette Sheehy
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Wayne Cilimberg
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Bill Edgerton
Albemarle County Planning Commission

Cheri Lewis
Chair, Charlottesville Planning Commission

Julia Monteith, AICP
Sr. Land Use Planner, Office of the Architect

Donald E. Sundgren
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Tim Rose
CEO, UVA Foundation

Jim Tolbert
Director of NDS, City of Charlottesville

Rebecca White
Director of Parking & Transportation

Ida Lee Wootten
Director of Community Relations

Student Members

Elliott DeJarnette
Student, School of Law

L. Bernard Harkless, Jr.
Undergraduate Representative

Meeting Agenda

- Grounds Plan Strategy, David Neuman FAIA, Architect for the University & Julia Monteith AICP, Senior Land Use Planner, Office of the Architect

Grounds Plan Strategy

David Neuman and Julia Monteith

Background

The purpose of this Master Planning Council meeting is to provide an overview of the studies completed to date that form the basis of planning and guide decision-making for the Grounds Plan.

The Grounds Plan will not resemble a typical master plan that lays out specific building footprints, but rather the Plan will serve as a guide for future planning decisions. While not required by the state, the environmental impact of the Grounds Plan will be assessed. Since sustainability has been a key component of the Plan since the very beginning, the environmental impacts of the Plan are expected to be minimized.

The University has set a modest growth rate of 1,500 additional students over the next decade, but the Plan must also address growth in other areas of the University such as staff, faculty, institutes and research programs. The Provost's plan identifies 300 faculty who will soon retire and recommends replacements for those 300 along with an additional 300 in order to reach a faculty to student ratio similar to that of other top institutions. The space implications of this growth are being accounted for in the Plan. These additional faculty members will also require housing, which is a prominent issue in current community discussions; but aside from the Health System's interest in affordable housing for nurses there has not been much interest in faculty housing from schools and departments. The availability of high quality rental housing is a factor in recruitment, but long-term UVA faculty generally desire to purchase, not rent, homes.

These six planning objectives for the Grounds Plan were presented in 2005 and the Office of the Architect has explored and expanded upon these objectives since then:

- Sustainability
- Preservation
- Context
- Environment
- Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration
- Connectivity

William Johnson, a well known American Landscape Architect is assisting in the development of the Grounds Plan. His sketches of the spatial organization of the Grounds provide a framework for future expansion. While the Academical Village was originally sited with a significant viewshed to the south southwest, later development eliminated views in this direction, leaving views to the west towards Observatory Hill and Lewis Mountain to be the most dominant today. Those two features, together with the stream valley to the north of Darden and the Law School naturally bound Grounds. As the University grew beyond the Academical Village, high points of topography guided new development. Carr's Hill, West Grounds, and even the recent Darden School all took advantage of hilltop locations.

The planning objectives mentioned above establish the opportunities and constraints in land use planning. Starting with the environment, you may recognize studies presented at previous MPC meetings, such as the NatureServe biodiversity analysis. Layering the hydrology and slope conditions over the areas of high biodiversity makes the relationship between the three visible.

In terms of context, University land uses can be shown alongside those of the City and County to illustrate the complex interaction between the three agencies, but also the opportunities present in these adjacencies. Many areas have the mixed use we seek in new developments, but have been separated by busy roads and other barriers.

Reducing these barriers by improving connectivity is a third planning objective. A planned Stadium Road extension, as a managed street, will allow for bus service to Fontaine Research Park; linking the growing number of University operations at Fontaine to Grounds without requiring the use of a car. The pedestrian network is strong in Central and West Grounds, but there is limited pedestrian connectivity in North Grounds. The Gateway to the Arts project is meant to provide a node for improving connectivity throughout the area, including a possible at-grade connection to the athletics area of North Grounds which would not require walking along a road or crossing up and over a bridge.

Preservation is both an opportunity and a constraint. The Grounds Plan will use the findings of the Historic Preservation Framework Plan to ensure that the preservation of the University's history is enhanced as UVa grows.

Finally, Sustainability weaves itself into the entire planning process. Planning new development in areas served by major utility corridors maximizes the value of existing infrastructure and reduces the cost and impact of extending corridors into unserved areas.

President Casteen has recently formed the Commission on the Future of the University. Directly related to planning, the Sub-Committee on the Physical Plant has been asked to identify the general planning guidelines that are needed to effectively guide future land use decisions. The Grounds Plan provides much of the response to this question.

The Grounds Plan will be provided to the MPC for review and comments in June. After adoption of the plan, the MPC mission will shift to focus on implementing the Grounds Plan.
