

# University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus Master Plan

## Vilas Neighborhood Association Meeting

Meeting Notes - February 23, 2005; 7:00-9:00 pm  
Monroe Street Branch, Public Library

Presenting: Gary Brown, Alan Fish, Gwen Drury (Facilities Planning and Management)  
Attending: approximately 24 residents and interested parties from the Vilas Neighborhood

Agenda: This meeting presented draft concepts of the overall campus master plan to residents of the Vilas Village Neighborhood Association for their initial review and input. Below are comments and questions recorded at that meeting. Items shown below in *italics* are comments by FP&M staff for clarification.

- 1) How will we know that our comments will be heard and considered?

*To ensure that we have heard you – and heard you accurately – we will be writing down your comments and projecting them on a screen so that you can double check them. We will forward the notes to our consultants and we will post them on our website. We consider community input and insights to be very important to the successful development of our plan.*

- 2) I was wondering if these plans and procedures are generated by a need to improve or a change in enrollment or what.

*The Board of Regents sets enrollment targets, and there is no change anticipated. We will continue to have about 40,000 students on campus. The 1996 Master Plan proposed a number of projects, and about 80% of those have been completed at this point. At the same time, we are experiencing tremendous success in our research programs and need to adapt and decompress our research spaces in order to maintain and even increase our level of productivity and international competitiveness. Since our success has attracted increased gifts and grants, we are able to expand our physical facilities, but we need to do so in a planned and unified way.*

- 3) Vilas and Greenbush have been preparing a plan for Regent Street. Are you going to talk about that?

*We won't talk about the neighborhoods' plan for Regent Street at this session, but we do want to "be at the table" when the plan is developed and finalized with the City. We hope to work along with the neighborhoods to revitalize this area.*

- 4) One of the big issues for Vilas is that we are your de facto parking lot, for students and some of your staff, during the day.

*We have recently hired a full time Transportation Planner – Rob Kennedy – and our master plan team includes transportation planning consultants as well. We plan to examine all aspects of transportation and parking, with the ultimate goal of creating a wide variety of appealing options for both long-distance and short-distance commuters. We will pass your comments on to our traffic planning team so that it will inform their research and recommendations.*

- 5) Were you thinking that in addition to structured parking that you could consolidate...might you consider administrative measures like telling freshmen they can't have cars?

*We already have a policy that students cannot park on campus. Only students with exceptions based on medical issues or documented, pressing need for immediate access to long-distance transportation, are allowed to buy permits. Of course, we cannot regulate whether a student owns a*

*car or not and parks near the place of residence in the neighborhoods.*

- 6) In Berkeley, the city has such heavy enforcement of parking in the neighborhoods, it's basically impossible to park.

*The City of Madison also enforces their neighborhood parking requirements. It will be up to the neighborhoods and the residents in those neighborhoods to work with the city on any parking issues they have on their streets. Many neighborhoods around the campus have been successful in implementing 2-hour parking limits that have cut down on campus users parking in the neighborhood.*

- 7) What is the natural parking demand on campus for anyone who wants parking?

*Among those who are eligible for parking – students are not – the current demand is met, at roughly 13,000 spaces. Anyone eligible person who applies for parking can currently get parking. They may not be offered the parking space they had in mind, but parking is available and in most cases throughout the year.*

- 8) Have you put an absolute number on the various neighborhoods as to numbers of faculty/staff?

*We haven't correlated numbers of employees with neighborhood boundaries, per se. However, we have mapped the locations of faculty & staff residences throughout the area so that we can see where the highest densities are located. This information will help us plan commuter bus routes, Park & Rides, etc.*

- 9) Do you have the same map for students?

*It is a little more difficult to generate the kind of same map for students because students often have more than one listed address. They may have a home address with one parent, a billing address with another parent, and a changing address here in town. Whereas we can require their billing address to be updated each semester, or they cannot enroll, we must rely on them to continuously update their living address. Since their living address is often not their legal address, these are often inaccurate.*

- 10) Could you go to the landlords to find out where the students live?

*Landlords' information is also often inaccurate, and the fact that a property is a rental does not mean that students are living there, so a map of rental properties does not prove to be very helpful either.*

- 11) This is obviously the biggest issue for Vilas - off campus student housing. It seems that if you're really serious about doing a transportation management plan, you need to know where the students live. She has a professor and a UW staff member on her street...they walk to campus. Students who live there drive.

*We continue to work with the local Metropolitan Planning Organization and others on how to generate map data that might help us define where students live in the city. We can make a fairly educated estimate and map the data that we have but unfortunately, based on student living patterns, it is hard to define exactly where students live. We can do targeted marketing to students in hopes to increase the use of alternative modes of transit to the campus.*

- 12) Do you know how many of the faculty/staff that are on the maps actually drive to work?

*We know that 50% of the faculty and staff use some means other than driving alone in their car to campus. We are far ahead of most of our peer institutions, many of whom have up to 90% of their*

*employees drive alone to campus.*

- 13) I don't quite follow the numbers. You say that you have 13,000 spaces and 8,000 drivers or 50% of faculty/staff.

*We actually have about 18,000 faculty and staff on campus and 13,000 parking spaces on campus. Many faculty have flex parking permits that count towards use of "alternative modes of transit". Some faculty and staff have permits but then commute with others in their car, actually a form of ride-sharing. Some of our parking stalls on campus are also not annual permit spaces and are reserved for departmental vehicles, metered parking, visitor parking, accessible parking, etc. Those items typically make up the balance on the parking numbers. Only about 9,000 of our faculty and staff actually still drive to work by themselves on a regular basis.*

- 14) Have you correlated where people who work on campus work vs. where they live? It could help you plan bus routes, etc.

*We have not done a specific detailed correlation between where people work and where they live. We may pursue this in the future. Right now, we are using aggregate numbers and seeing where natural groupings occur where people are living in the city and the county. This helps us define logical route expansions with Madison Metro.*

- 15) You need to pay student workers on campus more money, so that students don't need to drive to higher-paying jobs off-campus.

*Student wages on campus are set by local market rate conditions. In most cases, students are commuting to jobs that are directly related to their field of study and not found on campus.*

- 16) Are you thinking about depressing Johnson Street and University Avenue?

*This idea was put forth in the last master plan, but has since been ruled out when it was determined that moving the extensive network of utilities that cross beneath those roads would be prohibitively expensive. For example, the block between Park Street and Lake Street, when Johnson Street was being redeveloped, would have cost up to \$10 million to lower and provide the necessary utility service relocations. We have worked with the city in providing a new mid-block, at-grade crossing on Johnson Street that has been very successful.*

- 17) Is that going to push more traffic into the surrounding neighborhoods [by putting in mid-block lights for pedestrian crossings].

*We have found that the mid-block pedestrian crossing light between the residence halls and the University Square area has been extremely successful. Not only does it make it easier and safer for the students to cross the street to their homes, it makes the driving experience less stressful in that one isn't repeatedly dodging randomly crossing pedestrians. Also, though the Park and East Johnson intersection that is closest to the new crossing is a very busy intersection, the new mid-block crossing does not seem to cause any backups and should not encourage traffic into the neighborhoods.*

- 18) Are there any plans for the bike lanes in the Campus Drive/Johnson/University intersection area?

*There are significant changes proposed to that entire intersection. Please consult our website and see the Transportation plan first hand.*

- 19) One of the big issues for the near west neighborhoods is that there is no bus route going north/south. Coming north of Regent. You have to get to Regent and Mills first. Kids tend to drive their cars instead. I think it would be interesting to know from your survey what kids are doing who live in the

neighborhoods...because they're not taking the bus. The farther west you get, the less they are using the bus.

*Our Transportation Planner, Rob Kennedy, will pass your observations on to Madison Metro and will incorporate this issue into his assessments of existing conditions. Thanks for the information.*

- 20) Maybe putting some other north/south bus routes further west would help.

*We will forward your suggestion to our new Transportation Planner.*

- 21) What are your plans with regard to fuel for diesel? What is your percentage of bio-diesel? Is there any thought about buying different equipment in the future so that you can get that percentage up?

*We recently instituted a program of using biodiesel in many of our fleet vehicles. Some of our campus vehicles don't run well on biodiesel and we are investigating ways to improve their ability to do so. We are also investigating electric vehicles on campus as an option for an alternative fuel source.*

- 22) How does this plan deal with people with physical disabilities? It looks great for people without disabilities, but what about others?

*We have a full time Facilities Access specialist on staff – Carol Hotchkiss. She has been involved with the development of the new Master Plan. She also reviews the plans for individual projects and visits sites during construction to ensure that access for people with disabilities is built into our environment as we go. Additionally, she works one-on-one with people who have requested accommodation, and will personally work out accessible routes with the person, to each of their desired destinations on campus.*

- 23) Are the proposed street cars the mayor is talking about, rubber-tired trolleys?

*Our understanding is that the Mayor is considering both rubber tired trolleys and in-ground tracks. A decision has not yet been made. The Trolley Committee has just begun to meet and will make a recommendation to the mayor as part of their final report.*

- 24) What's the difference between a trolley and a bus? Isn't Portland's trolley a rails in the ground type?

*A trolley tends to serve a more targeted and limited area, and it generally does not look like the other vehicles in a broader transit network; it has a distinctive look and is usually identified with a particular area. A trolley may have more frequent stops and shorter "headway" times, since it serves a more limited area. Some trolleys are rubber-tired but are electric powered with overhead wires. They look like buses but are electric powered and again serve a smaller area.*

- 25) What are the plans for developing new student housing on campus...for getting them out of the dilapidated houses around in the neighborhoods, where they probably don't want to live anyway? This issues cuts to the heart of the issue in our neighborhood.

*The only plans for new housing on campus are for 700-800 new beds to accommodate the demand by first year students to live on campus. These halls will be located among the existing housing in the Lakeshore area. You probably recall that recently the University proposed to include this housing in the new University Square development, which is a public/private partnership. Steve Brown, who owns many private residence halls and other properties around the campus objected, and lobbied the legislature to prevent the university housing from being included in the project. The legislature was inclined to see university housing within that development as unfair competition with the private sector, so we dropped that idea. There will still be a student apartment tower built in that development, but it will be privately owned and operated. There would need to be a lot more support from the neighborhoods for the University to develop any other student housing beyond the*

700 to 800 beds mentioned above. It may also be difficult to find additional space to build residence halls on the campus over and above what we have shown in this plan.

- 26) I think you're right that there needs to be more neighborhood support for more housing on campus. Can you make land available for these private dorms?

*There are already quite a few student apartment high-rises in the works in the private sector downtown and they seem to be finding the space to develop. We don't have spare land for this type of use and would have to sell off land to the developers for this to work properly, something the Board of Regents probably wouldn't be interested in supporting.*

- 27) We would like to see more on campus student housing, regardless of whether you do it privately or however. Take this away as one of the biggest issues for parts of Vilas. How do you envision the neighborhoods getting rid of all this dilapidated student housing? Or speeding it up?

*We heard from quite a few neighborhoods that they are interested in finding a way to improve the housing stock in their neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, many of the landlords who own detached rental properties around the edges of campus are having a hard time renting them, for the first time in years. Students are choosing to live in the brand-new accommodations much closer to campus, if they can afford those. If they want more room for less money, many students are choosing to commute to outlying communities, with their free bus passes. Either way, the landlords who own fully depreciated properties are finding it a challenge to rent them. One way to address this issue could be to work on initiatives to encourage owner-occupancy.*

- 28) I can see why the neighborhoods and the city can bring pressure to bear about these housing issues, but how can the University influence anything? What can you bring to the table?

*We are committed to exploring these issues with the neighborhoods and the City, and trying some innovative new things. This is a unique moment in time, because of the low housing interest rates coinciding with this private trend in apartment development. A lot of the owners of these fully-depreciated properties need a new market, and that's where we might be able to help.*

- 29) You said Bassett, Mifflin, Vilas and Greenbush are most likely to be turned over at this point. Why these areas and why now?

*Over the years, some of these areas have become the most severely depreciated housing stock, since landlords were practically guaranteed that they could rent their properties, regardless of its condition. However, a lot of these properties do have "good bones," and could appeal to owner-occupants who were willing to make the investments needed to restore them. Since there has been a recent surge in the construction of high-end condominiums at the core of the city, there is a broader demographic range of people who support a broader range of businesses. These businesses - restaurants, entertainment, drug stores - make the walk-able areas more appealing to owner-occupants. There are just lots of factors that are all developing at the same time that make this turnover more likely right now. Alan Fish actually purchased a home on the near east side and has seen his neighborhood transform very successfully.*

- 30) I'm glad to hear that you [Alan] went through this (housing turnover) situation twenty-five years ago, and that it seems like the time is ripe now for it to change. It's frustrating to be in a neighborhood as nice as this one, yet next to some "chicken-pox" properties.

*It sounds like your objection to student rental properties is not to the students themselves, but to the condition of the properties around the neighborhood. It is a difficult subject, but we are committed to working with you and the City to assist in this effort.*

- 31) It seems like some of these smaller ticket items can be very effective. It seems like a matter of a critical mass thing.

*This sort of change is the result of the convergence of many factors, combined with well-timed, targeted initiatives.*

- 32) In concert with things like the college residential concept in Chadbourne Hall, is there a philosophical basis for saying that there are really good reasons to support freshman housing on campus (where students can't have cars on campus)?

*We have proven, statistical evidence that students who spend their first year living in University Housing have better retention rates, better grade-point averages and better graduation rates. University Housing has developed extensive initiatives to help acculturate students to the campus, to help them build social and academic support networks, and to orient them toward academic success. It is no accident that students want to live on campus for at least their first year. Every year, there are about 700 more requests for on-campus housing by first year students than can currently be accommodated. We have one of the lowest numbers of on-campus housing units in the Big Ten, currently housing just over 6,000 undergraduates. Since there are about 27,000 undergraduates here, that is a small fraction of the population. We rely on the private sector to house the bulk of the student population. The impact the University can have on first year students through their housing experience is exceptional, and well worth pursuing.*

- 33) So, it's a little bit like fighting the battle of the before and after Labor Day start – you have to convince the legislature, who doesn't care about the issue.

*We hope that we will have the support of citizens, especially those in the neighborhoods, to help lobby the legislature and local decision makers to help in this effort.*

- 34) Politically, you have a hard time getting more housing on campus...what can you do to encourage the development of private housing for students?

*A lot of private apartment-style housing is already in development. Competition for students' rental dollars is ratcheting up. We typically don't get involved in the local student housing development process. When all available University Housing has been filled, our Housing office refers students to the Campus Information and Visitors' Center to access their private housing listings.*

- 35) You've said things are ratcheting up and that suggests a process. But time is really of the essence due to the current and/or potentially changing interest rates. You'd better move fast.

*We agree, but this will need to be a cooperative effort with the neighborhoods and the City.*

- 36) Brad Richer announced that he has been the Vilas representative on the Joint West Campus Area Committee. If you'd like to get involved with this issue, see him.

- 37) Is the V.A. Hospital going to be there?

*The Veterans Administration Hospital is, of course, owned by the Federal Government. They currently have no plans to relocate. We are doing some joint planning with them to help look at their future facility plans.*

- 38) Would you keep the Union South function? The ice cream, mainly?

*If we end up razing Union South, we would only do so in order to rebuild it in a more serviceable form. We would still want the public to take advantage of this community resource – and that means we'll probably have ice cream!*

- 39) What was the problem with these buildings? They didn't have much integrity, but was it a low-bid situation?

*A lot of these buildings were built in the 1960s and 1970s, when campuses all across the country were responding to first the GI Bill era overcrowding, then the Baby Boom. Also during this time, the Federal Government was making lots of funds available to higher education - due to Sputnik and the Space Race causing increased interest in science - and for housing projects in general. Campuses at the time had to build a lot and build it fast. On our campus, many of these buildings were created with a 40-year life span in mind. Well, it's 40 years later, and that design intent has been realized! We are currently constructing buildings that hopefully will last at least 50 years if not 100 and beyond.*

- 40) When I came to Madison, I heard that McArdle lab was built to be taken down in a few decades, so I'm surprised that it's not on the hit list to be taken down now.

*The scientists in the McArdle Lab have told us that the building still suits their needs. Also, quite a few of them will be moving out to the new Interdisciplinary Research Center on the west campus, once it is completed. This will decompress the situation for remaining users in McArdle.*

- 41) You're going to do a master plan for the primate center, and you'll consult with the neighborhoods as you go?

*Yes. A plan for the Primate Center complex should be out in the fall of 2005. Once developed, it will be share with the Joint West Campus Area Committee where each of the neighborhoods have a representative.*

- 42) What about Humanities?

*Humanities has had severe problems ever since it opened. There are problems with ventilation, with leaking, with terrible acoustics in the classrooms, with indecipherable corridors and room numbering. On top of those issues, the building doesn't contain enough common spaces or spaces for large meetings. Occupants tell us that the building has a very anti-social feel to it inside. We intend to replace this one huge building with two smaller scale buildings that will share an underground parking garage, since parking in this part of campus is already very tight, and the new arts district is likely to generate more need for visitor parking as well.*

- 43) Vilas?

*There are no current plans to remove or remodel Vilas Hall. It currently is working fairly well for the occupants.*

- 44) Social Science?

*There are no current plans to remove the Social Science building. We may do some minor interior remodeling, but other than that, no big plans for this facility.*

- 45) Vilas has had a lot of roof problems. Make use of that plaza area; it's just dead space.

*The plaza on the second floor was created to become part of an extensive network of raised pedestrian walkways. These walkways were going to extend from the Witte, Ogg and Sellery area all the way down Dayton Street, to enter Union South on the second floor. Since these walkways were never built due to financing, these two buildings' orientation to pedestrians has always been thrown off. We hope that when the University Square development is complete, and the East Campus Pedestrian Mall (at grade) is complete as well, that the area will be more vibrant in general, and that this will improve the dead space of the Vilas plaza. The plaza decks have had all their roofs repaired and replaced recently which should take care of the roof leaking issues.*

- 46) Is the short leg of Johnson Street going to disappear next to Union South?

*Since the master plan indicates that Union South is going to be re-built, we may request that the City reconfigure the intersection from Randall onto East Johnson. This could make the whole turning experience at that intersection less confusing, while allowing us to expand the footprint of Union South. An expanded footprint would allow us to include some structured parking and a guest room tower as part of that project.*

- 47) What's the hole on Regent Street? Why wouldn't you orient the building along Regent?

*The project near the intersection of Park Street and Regent Street is a new office building and new residence hall to replace Ogg Hall on campus. This is a public-private venture being built by a local developer and will be leased by the University. The project also includes a new "Welcome Center" for the campus at our main entry on Park Street. All visitors and new students are directed up Park Street from the south beltline highway. The project goals maintained the businesses along Regent Street to continue the line of retail establishments (like Fraboni's!!) along the Regent Street corridor. The city has noted that in most cases the Regent Street corridor may be redeveloped but will continue to have retail on the first floor and possible up to 3 or 4 stories tall with apartments or live-work units above.*

- 48) Is the yellow line Regent Street? Are your plans to build up to that?

*The yellow line or shading is an area that we are called a "Joint Planning Area." What we mean by that is it's an area that both affects us and is affected by us, so we want to be "at the table" with the neighborhoods and the City when decisions are made about these areas. We will continue to work with the City and the neighborhoods as they develop plans for these areas.*

- 49) Does the existing Elvejhem stay?

*The existing Elvejhem building will stay, and will still be called the Elvejhem building. The museum entity itself has been renamed the Chazen Museum of Art, and will include another art collection building connected to the Elvejhem building with a glass-walled overhead passageway/gallery. There may be a fountain and seating area outdoors between the two structures, to complement the East Campus Pedestrian Mall, of which it will be a part.*

- 50) How will you cross the big streets along the East Campus Pedestrian Mall?

*We have talked with the City and everyone believes that an at-grade pedestrian crossing, at mid-block, with its own traffic light and specially colored pavement – much like the new set up on East Johnson – will be the best option.*

- 51) I sent Gary (Brown) a message about improving Randall and Monroe Street as a major entrance to the campus.

*We continue to look at all our major entries into campus, including the Randall/Monroe/Breese Terrace intersection. We are specifically looking at the latter in concert with the redevelopment of the Little Street area and how it fits into the overall intersection plan.*