Campus Master Plan Update Process & the State Budget

By now, we have all seen an overwhelming amount of information about the 2015-17 State budget deliberations and how this may affect UW-Madison. Some of the suggested changes are related to the UW capital building program and facilities maintenance projects to help expedite project implementation. The State capital bonding limits may also reduce the number of projects we can develop and may reduce facility maintenance funds overall.

The main thing to remember is we can’t stop planning for and maintaining our campus facilities. The physical campus has been here for over 165 years and we’ll continue to be here for another 165 years, or more. We must always look forward and plan for the future of our physical campus. Funding for the master plan update process, which happens every 10 years, is provided by Facilities Planning & Management’s operating budget which is outside the current State budget process.

We typically don’t look specifically at project budgets or develop cost estimates related to the master plan as we simply do not have a clear crystal ball as to when any one recommendation would actually be implemented. Any number we estimate would likely be wrong. However, we do detailed budgeting every two years as part of the biennial capital budget process for projects in the next two years and out two additional biennia into the future as part of a six-year capital improvement plan.

So we must always plan for the future. Each 2-year budget cycle will bring its own expectations and surprises, but we must always continue to look ahead and provide a roadmap for the future of our amazing physical campus.

Campus Institutional Zoning (CI)

The city of Madison’s 1966 zoning code was recently updated, becoming effective on January 2, 2013. The previous code did not reflect current best management zoning and planning practices which led to excessive use of planned unit developments (PUD) and excessive requirements for conditional uses which burdened city staff time and resources. One outcome of this rewrite came in section 28.096, the Campus Institutional (CI) District, established to recognize the City’s major educational and medical institutions as important activity centers & traffic generators, accommodate the growth & development needs of these institutions, and coordinate the master plans of these institutions with the City’s plans, policies and zoning standards. The district is also intended to:

- Permit appropriate institutional growth within boundaries while minimizing the adverse impacts associated with development and geographic expansion;
- Balance the ability of major institutions to change, and the public benefits derived from change, with the need to protect the livability and vitality of adjacent neighborhoods;
- Encourage the preparation of campus master plans that enable adjacent neighborhoods and the broader community to understand the levels of development being proposed, their likely impacts, and appropriate mitigation measures to be considered.

The UW is no stranger to campus planning (first plans date back to 1850). Not only are campus master plans required under Wisconsin State Statutes through the State Building Commission, they are also required by UW System Board of Regents policy. Under the new CI district code, UW-Madison is required to have an approved master plan, which ultimately puts more importance on this 20-year long range planning document.

2015 Campus Master Plan Update Website:
www.masterplan.wisc.edu