

CAMPUS/COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE
Minutes of December 17, 2015 Meeting

Present
Tom Allen
Kim Carnot, Co-Chair
Don Chadwick
Ramona Ferreira (For Nathan Maselli)
Cara Fladd
Ken Hall
Eric Halgren, Co-Chair
Petia Mercia-Jones

Absent
Christina Baek
Mark Cunningham
Nathan Maselli
Stefan Llewellyn Smith
Marlene Shaver
Dave Stegman

Staff
Robert Clossin, Physical and Community Planning
Todd Pitman, Physical and Community Planning
Elyse Sanchez, Physical and Community Planning

Guests/Consultants
Jack Boda, Kimley-Horn
John Dorrow, SANDAG
John Gibbs, Wallace, Roberts, & Todd
Joel King, Facilities Design and Construction
Orville King, Resource Management and Planning
Michael Madsen, Kimley-Horn
Kareem Scarlett, Caltrans
Dave Stebbins, Caltrans
Susan Taylor, CCCE
Jason Valencia, Kimley-Horn

Business Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes

The November 19, 2015 meeting minutes were unanimously approved without comment.

Information Item: Open Space Master Planning Study (OSMPS)

Todd Pitman relayed that the Open Space Committee reviewed the OSMPS the previous day on December 16th. The OSMPS had been several years in the making, taking various forms before this final draft. The plan emphasizes the importance of the landscape and its relations to other campus plans.

John Gibbs of Wallace, Roberts, and Todd (WRT) gave accolades to the many years of work that came before, noting that it added clarity to ideas and recognized other plans on campus. He noted the strength of the 1989 Master Plan Study and the Campus Strategic Plan, and suggested the OSMPS would help inform the forthcoming LRDP Update.
This plan is intended to help recognize and reinforce the principles and framework of other plans as we develop capital projects. It is not prescriptive on color or materiality, but is meant to advance the vision and goal of open space planning, design and management on campus. The document is user-friendly and organized into three main sections.

UC San Diego open space is one of the main aesthetics that students, staff, faculty and visitors experience. The Plan outlines several principles: Legibility, Identity, Mobility, Social Spaces, and Resiliency. “Legibility and Identity” are both meant to strengthen the physical features of the campus open space and can help convey information to the campus community and public. The campus open space should say something about what occurs on the campus, what type of research is done or what type of medicine is practiced. “Legibility” can also assist in intuitive wayfinding by providing physical cues that help people navigate to their destination. “Mobility” discusses open space’s function as access corridors through the campus. It is tied to sustainable strategies and active transportation. For example, Ridge Walk is multimodal. “Social Spaces” create places for students and others to interact, from large events to casual conversations. These are also less intimidating spaces for students and faculty to have one-on-one interaction. Examples of these space include Pawka Green and Town Square. “Resiliency” helps champion the mandate for carbon neutrality and the role of transit modes in this goal. The campus is a living landscape, a living laboratory. As new projects develop, they must acknowledge adjacencies and how each site is informed by the greater network. The OSMPS departs from the 1989 Master Plan Study when discussing the Park as one feature and instead focuses on the unique roles of the different types of Park lands. The Restoration Lands, Ecological Reserve and Grove Reserve are all treated as individual and unique areas. The Grove consists of Eucalyptus trees but is meant to be an interactive place that is considered a cultural landscape and part of the UC San Diego heritage. Places are discussed in the plan, including well-defined spaces such as Library Walk, and areas that could use more strengthening elements and features, such as Warren Mall. Ridge Walk passes through multiple neighborhoods and changes character as it meets new neighborhood edges, but still remains recognizable. More study has been done to evaluate how different modes are accommodated on Ridge Walk.

The Committee was very supportive of the plan and had no additional comments.

Pitman explained that the OSMPS would return to the Committee at the next meeting for plan endorsement.

**Comment to DRB: Caltrans North Coast Corridor Project – Voigt Drive/Campus Point Drive Roadway Improvements**

The SANDAG and North Coast Corridor team were introduced. Scarlett gave an overview of the North Coast Corridor project that connects from Oceanside down to UC San Diego. The regional bike path, connecting to campus via the I-5/Genesee project, is also part of this project. Highway improvements to include high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes and Direct Access Ramps (DARs) on I-5 are located throughout the corridor, and the planned DAR at Voigt Drive has spurred this advanced construction at UC San Diego. Caltrans would have to reconstruct the Voigt Bridge to accept the DAR, not anticipated to start construction until 2025. Advancing the Voigt Drive Widening now to allow for construction to coincide with the Mid-Coast Corridor Light Rail Transit project. The HOV lanes will have intermediate access points, with direct connectors forming the HOV lanes on I-5 as it merges with the 805. This will allow for people to not have to merge out and back into the HOV lanes. DAR off-ramps tie into the median of the freeway. The new Voigt Bridge will in essence be formed with “stub outs” on the bridge.
Jason Valencia showed the extent of the Voigt Drive Widening project. One of the larger features includes the realignment of Campus Point Drive. The new LRT station on East Campus will straddle the new Campus Point Drive. The old Campus Point Drive will be removed and converted into surface parking until future building sites occupy the space. The intersection of Gilman and Voigt will also include a reconfiguration of parking lot P510, which serves the Campus Services Complex and nearby recreation spaces. At the intersection of Voigt and Lyman Lane, a roundabout will be constructed to help improve the flow of all modes of transit. Bicycles would use sharrows through the roundabout due to limited space. Caltrans is including it as part of the project in this point in time. Michael Madsen reviewed the goals for transportation for the project, including improved traffic flow, safety, convenience and accessibility, and low-impact-design (LIDs) features. The landscape design suggests using California Sycamores and large swaths of bioretention. Sections show the new sidewalks that are 8.5' wide for pedestrian flow. New bike lanes are typically 6' wide to help with flow. Madsen shared some sketches on proposed bike node that connect the regional path to the northern part of campus. The current street striping proposal suggests that bicycles entering campus at this point and wishing to continue south along Gilman will need to dismount and use crosswalks to get across the intersection. Cyclists would need to use the crosswalk at least once before being able to safely join vehicular traffic. Halgren challenged whether cyclist would use the crosswalks. Clossin suggested bike calming measures at the node and that more detailed design solutions needed to be studied at this location.

Orville King asked about speed limit along Voigt Drive. When the DAR ramps are constructed, people that travel on Voigt westbound accidentally can easily turnaround in the roundabout. Orville asked about surveillance, and if there would be a potential to watch and monitor the area. Clossin noted the campus could bring this in as an element, not Caltrans. Joel added that as the project progresses in design, we would bring in as campus initiative. Valencia suggested they slow traffic before the roundabout, and streets are signed 25 mph there.

Hall asked about the grade change at the regional bike node – it was noted that some portions of the route may be close to 5% grade. The monument design is still under discussion. Pitman requested to see monument signage design.

Voigt Drive will have new lighting throughout the corridor, and it will be lower in height on the side with the guideway (south). Clossin added our typical lighting standard is 30 feet but went down to 15 feet but will have tighter spacing. Pitman asked if the lighting could be mounted on the guideway. The project team noted the challenge with maintenance if they are mounted on the guideway. The team reviewed integration with Mid-Coast Light Rail Transit project at Campus Point Drive and the East Campus station plaza. Transit stops accommodate the UC San Diego shuttles, LRT stations, and MTS including the SuperLoop. Low-impact design features (LIDs) are being integrated to accommodate stormwater management requirements, including permeable paving in the parking lots and bioretention. Madsen reviewed the plant palette, which illustrates a seamless transition with the existing selections for East Campus. Jacaranda would accent the Campus Point Drive node at Voigt Drive. Jack Boda emphasized that the design teams for Mid-Coast and North Coast are sharing information in order to create one comprehensive design in aesthetics, stormwater, and beyond. Clossin noted the efforts to integrate.

Pitman asked about the grasses in the plant palette. He noted that there has been maintenance issues where these grasses are prolific on campus. They are manageable in the 3-5 year time period, but require replacement at that time expiration. He suggested a woodier plant where possible. Don Chadwick requested to see more detail on the bike path and the connection at Sorrento Valley. Clossin
described the path crosses Genesee Avenue via a special bridge and then runs along east edge of the Campus Services Complex but its final condition is not complete until the North Coast Corridor Voigt Drive construction is complete. A retaining wall is located on the north edge of the bike node in order to make a platform.

Tom Allen voiced concerns about the Jacaranda trees causing flower debris in a prominent area. The project team clarified that they are in the road, not on plaza, and that they are also used at the Campus Point Parking Structure (north of SCVC). Valencia explained the Voigt Drive will be mostly two lanes in each direction, except as it approaches the roundabout. When the DAR is constructed, studies show that most traffic will travel east.

Joel King clarified that the North Coast Corridor design includes the Voigt Bridge, but images of the new vehicular bridge were not shared as part of this presentation. He requested images of the design and its comparison to the proximate Gilman Bridge for consideration by the Design Review Board. A cumulative visual impact study has been prepared, and the DAR ramp is also part of that study. King also voiced concerns about the funding constraints and that impact on the roundabout and bridge finishes. Scarlett confirmed that the current proposal is to design the Voigt Bridge to look similar to the Genesee Bridge in color and material, with a patina beige color; consistent with the North-Coast-Corridor design guidelines. King noted that UC San Diego might suggest a different concrete color, perhaps to better integrate with the Gilman Bridge and overhead LRT guideway. These bridges are campus loop road elements that need to maintain the character of loop road.

The Committee had the following comments:

1. The Committee suggested using “hardier” plantings where possible due to the high maintenance requirements for grasses.
2. The Committee requested further evaluation of the bike node where the San Diego Regional Bicycle Pathway arrives on campus at the Voigt Drive and Gilman Drive intersection. Members had particular concern about how cyclists would cross the intersection to continue on Gilman Drive toward the Regional Bike Pathway network to the south, both during the short and long-term.
3. Some members voiced concern about traffic safety and the introduction of new traffic features on campus. The Committee agreed that tools or references should be available to educate people on these new features, such as a roundabout.
4. Voigt Drive Bridge design was not adequately presented in the presentation; design details will need to be presented DRB for review.

This item concluded the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elyse Sanchez
Recording Secretary