

CAMPUS/COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of June 15, 2023 Meeting

PRESENT

Adrienne Gallo
Belinda Zamacona
Brett Covington (on behalf of Kristin Hill)
Cristiana Winter
Drew Hunsinger
Elizabeth Winzeler
Francisco Salinas
John Hughes
Ken Hall
Prabhakar Bandaru
Richard Garfein
Tara Cameron

ABSENT

David Kirsch
Elizabeth Komives
Michael Salas
Robert Brill
Sky Yang
Uwe Send

CAMPUS PLANNING STAFF

April Alarcón
Elyse Hegstad
Ingrid Stromberg
Jennifer Mora
Robert Clossin

GUESTS/CONSULTANTS

Campus Police—Lamine Secka
Capital Program Management—Matthew Smith, Roland Bartsch
Facilities Management—Bryan Hooks, Jason Kayne, Walt Kanzler
Triton Transit—Jose Perez
VC-RMP—Stephen Jackson

Dokken Engineering—Darwin Cruz
Spurlock Landscape Architects—Brad Lents

BUSINESS ITEM – APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the March 16, 2023 meeting were approved without further comment.

COMMENT ITEM – EAST CAMPUS LOOP ROAD: HEALTH SCIENCES WALK SCHEMATIC DESIGN (Robert Clossin, Roland Bartsch, Dokken Engineering, Spurlock Landscape Architects)

Robert Clossin introduced the first item in the agenda, the Health Sciences Walk schematic design, explaining this work is within the scope of the East Campus Loop Road (ECLR) project and is in close coordination with the adjacent Science Research Park (SRP) project. Both the ECLR project and SRP project were introduced to the Committee in December 2022.

Brad Lents launched the presentation with an overview of the ECLR project, describing the proposed road reconfiguration that will create a more intuitive loop road on East Campus. Health Sciences Walk is the primary east/west pedestrian and multi-modal connection bisecting the heart of East Campus, from Regents Road, through the Moores Cancer Center and Koman Family Outpatient Pavilion, to the entry lawn west of Jacobs Medical Center. As part of the ECLR project a portion of Health Sciences Drive that is being closed would be redesigned as the easternmost terminus of Health Sciences Walk.

Lents shared Health Sciences Walk is designed to be a pedestrian-only environment, therefore, the southern, vehicular staff entrance to Athena Parking Structure, along the northern edge of Health Sciences Walk, will be removed; the roadway will be reconfigured in such a way to facilitate vehicular entry from Regents Road into Athena's northern entry. The design team reviewed the East Campus Planning Study (2022) design standards and guidelines to ensure creation of a unique space that still relates to other campus promenades and promotes wayfinding. Wayfinding techniques include use of a repeating theme for visual continuity; for East Campus, this includes use of regularly spaced Elms, live oaks as accent trees, low understory planting and outdoor furniture and seating near facility entries.

Lents explained there are three completed phases of Health Sciences Walk and this will be the fourth. Each phase has designs varying in paving color and finish, seating and wall material, helix pattern design and use of column lights: (1) Area 1, at the entry lawn west of Jacobs Medical Center, includes two paving colors/finishes, one type of seating and wall material, a helix design with irregular spacing and column lights. (2) Area 2, north of the Koman Family Outpatient Pavilion, includes six paving colors/finishes, two types of seating and wall materials, a helix design with irregular spacing and column lights. (3) Area 3, north of the Moores Cancer Center, includes four paving colors/finishes, one type of seating and wall material, a helix design with regular spacing and no column lights.

The fourth phase will be north of parking lot P784 (future Cancer Center expansion) and south of Athena Parking Structure and Radiation Oncology PET/CT Center; it will be flanked with Evergreen Elms, include three paving colors/finishes, one type of seating and wall material, a helix design with regular spacing and use of column lights. On its western end it will connect to Area 3 of Health Sciences Walk, and on its eastern end will include an at-grade crossing with adjacent passenger loading and shuttle bays that connects to the future Science Research Park's primary north/south promenade, Innovation Walk.

Lents concluded the presentation and welcomed questions.

Ingrid Stromberg shared Open Space Committee comments on this item:

1. Accessibility – The Committee discussed the population likely to use the new section of Health Sciences Walk will likely have more mobility needs than other parts of campus, and recommended the design team investigate the right amount of accessible seating for the various seating areas included in the design. This will likely be more than is required as a baseline for code. The Committee further discussed paving materials and asked the design team to consider the experience of people in wheelchairs or using mobility assistance devices when making final paving selections. This could mean avoiding rough or overly textured finishes and materials to prevent uncomfortable bumps.
2. Coordination with Utilities: The Committee appreciated the informal arrangement of trees along the Walk as this would more likely keep its design integrity even with current or future utility conflict and disruption due to maintenance. It was also suggested that the final paving material selection should be tolerant of utility maintenance work and absorb relatively seamlessly saw cuts, patches, etc.
3. Future alignment at Cancer Center Expansion: The Committee suggested that the design might take into consideration a realignment of the pedestrian path from the north side of the walk to the south side in front of a future Cancer Center Expansion, if and when that project happens. While not feasible now, a realignment in this section might reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflict at the intersection with Medical Center Drive.
4. Extension of Elm trees: The Committee suggested that if it is within budget, the project might consider extending the proposed row of Elm Trees further west past the current project boundary into the Phase One area. This zone in front of Glaucoma and Retina Center is currently without trees after the original trees failed, and could benefit from additional shade as well as the visual connectivity between the phases of the project.

At discussion, the Committee considered the design and configuration of the western end of Area 4 of Health Sciences Walk, where it connects to Area 3, north of the Moores Cancer Center drop-off. The design features less trees and the pedestrian connection is interrupted by north/south vehicular activity on Medical Center Drive, resulting in an overall uninviting area and weak connection. Bryan Hooks noted the absence of trees or even vertical architectural elements leaves this area fully exposed to the sun/heat. The Committee advocated for trees in this area, reminiscing on areas of the Medical Center where the presences of trees foster a calm environment. Hooks cautioned that the glass architecture in this area can burn and stunt the growth of trees—recommending a study of solar radiation from the buildings onto trees.

The Committee also discussed leveraging the future development of parking lot P784 in way that better configures vehicular and pedestrian circulation so Health Sciences Walk can be its own standalone pedestrian facility with separation from the Cancer Center drop-off.

The Committee also noted the convenience of Athena Parking Structure’s southern entry and requested the design team consider not removing it, but transforming it into a pedestrian-only entry that would offer direct access from Athena to Radiation Oncology PET/CT Center.

Committee Comments to DRB:

1. Addition of trees north of the Moores Cancer Center drop-off: The Committee requested the design consider including trees (or preserve if possible existing trees) on Health Sciences Walk where it passes just north of the drop-off in order to create a more inviting and visually continuous area.

2. Future vehicular and pedestrian circulation: The Committee requested the design leverage the future Moores Cancer Center expansion (at current lot P784) to better configure vehicular and pedestrian circulation, each with separate right-of-way.

This item concluded the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "April Alarcón". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

April Alarcón
Associate Planner