

# Suggested Campus Planning Procedures

Facilities Council  
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## PLANNING PROCESS

### Preliminary Work: The Plan before the Plan

Process is the most critical element of the work of planning. One product of a successful planning process is a campus plan; another is the institutional learning that occurs.

- The primary focus of planning teams and consultants should be to establish and ensure the quality of the planning process.
- The process should ensure genuine input from all constituents in the College community.
- The process should establish a reliable method for defining strategic goals, identifying requirements, vetting requirements against the best available evidence, prioritizing goals and needs, generating appropriate alternatives, and defining criteria for selecting preferred alternatives.
- It should be decided early in the process how and where the large amounts of inventory and analysis data will be managed.
- The process should be flexible and capable of change.

### Steps in the Planning Process

Each campus planning activity should proceed through the following steps:

- Develop a plan for planning.
- Identify who will be involved.
- Determine the scope of the planning activity.
- Verify the College's current vision, mission, and core values.
- Verify the College's current strategic academic, financial, and sustainability plans and any existing campus plans.
- Conduct inventory and analysis of existing conditions.
- Identify needs that relate to physical facilities.
- Identify planning standards and policies and define criteria which will be used to prioritize needs.
- Prioritize needs using an open, public process so that the entire College community understands how the priorities respond to the College's vision, mission, core values, and strategic plans.
- Generate alternatives to address needs.
- Assess alternatives and select one or more preferred alternatives using an open, public process so that the entire College community understands how and why the alternative was chosen.
- Produce the plan.
- Review, assess, and revise on a regular basis.

## **Keeping planning alive: review and revision**

- Campus planning should be understood to be an ongoing activity. Plans should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.
- Plan review should allow the College community to learn from past planning activities.
- Plan review should result in continuous improvement.
- Planners should identify methods for communicating that planning is an ongoing process and for keeping the College community aware of the planning process and its outcomes.

## **Funding the plan**

- Planners and decision-makers should promote an understanding of the costs of not planning and the explicit benefits of planning so that it is understood as a positive investment.
- Campus planning projects should engage in-house financial experts or professional fund locators to identify funding sources such as operating budget allocations, capital budget allocations, State appropriations, bond issues, donors, sale of an asset, grants, shared use of community facilities, tax credits, and entrepreneurial revenue streams.

## **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED**

Effective campus planning requires a combination of broad participation and objective technical competence. Decisions about when to use committees, staff work, or outside consultants should always be driven by the fundamental goal of maximizing broad participation, stakeholder knowledge, and professional planning expertise.

## **College committees**

- Planning may be organized by a single planning committee or by a small steering committee plus a larger planning committee.
- Each planning committee or steering committee for planning should be broadly representative and should incorporate the interests of multiple constituencies.
- Members of planning and steering committees should be constructive, capable of strategic thinking, and able to foster planning-oriented behavior.
- Each planning committee or steering committee for planning should have access to decision-makers and should be allotted sufficient time to do its work. Decision-makers should consider providing partial release time for committee members.
- In addition to standing committees, representative focus groups and task forces should be convened and engaged when possible to provide input about particular issues.

## **Employee work**

- The planning process should take advantage of the in-house knowledge base available and should facilitate an exchange of ideas and experiences between the College community and planning, design, operations and maintenance staff, and employees with other appropriate technical expertise.
- Components of planning that do not require participatory process and that can be performed by staff should be identified.
- Components of planning which require participatory process should not be performed solely by staff without the participation of the College community, including students and other members of the community whom the decisions will ultimately affect.

- In-house staff should contribute technical skills to facilitate and support the work of planning committees and outside consultants.
- Planning may be conducted by planning staff, if in-house staff with professional planning expertise are available and if a fully participatory process can be maintained.

## **OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS**

- The hiring of a professional planning consultant should be considered in order to provide objectivity and expertise beyond what is available in-house.
- The word ‘consultant’ as used in this policy can refer to an individual campus planning professional or to a professional planning firm consisting of multiple professionals.
- The search for and selection of an outside planning consultant should be conducted as a formal process.
- The search process should begin with a request for proposal (RFP).
- Planning teams may elect to issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) prior to issuing an RFP in order to narrow the pool of potential candidates before conducting the full RFP process.
- The RFP document should be submitted to professional planning organizations and posted in professional planning journals. Additionally, it may also be sent to multiple firms which are acknowledged experts in campus planning.
- The RFP should describe the College, the purpose of the proposed plan, the key issues if known, a general scope of work, and the requirements for submission.
- The RFP should require a description of the firm’s qualifications and references from past campus planning clients.
- The RFP should require that candidates demonstrate experience and expertise in planning of higher educational facilities specifically. Campus planning is a distinct specialty; architecture, landscape architecture, or urban planning experience are not sufficient to qualify a consultant as a planner for educational institutions.
- The RFP should require that candidates demonstrate previous experience with campus plans by providing at least two detailed samples of campus plans similar in type and scope to the plan for which the RFP has been issued. Candidates should provide a narrative describing how past campus plans developed by them were similar and why their experience is relevant to the College plan for which the RFP has been issued.
- The RFP should require candidates to describe their planning philosophy and approach to the planning process.
- The RFP should ask for the names and positions of planners, project managers, and other specialists who will be assigned to the College plan for which the RFP is issued. The RFP should require a demonstration of qualifications and experience for every member of the firm who will be involved in the planning process, not just the firm’s principals.
- If the prime consultant will hire subconsultants, the College should retain the authority to approve all subconsultants.
- Once potential candidates have been selected through the RFP process, College planning teams should conduct interviews. Interviews may take place on the College campus or with a visit to the candidate firm or both.
- Hiring decisions should be based on the candidate’s demonstrated ability to facilitate an entire complex planning process. Attractive drawings and other marketing materials not

backed up by proven experience in planning for higher education should not be used as a basis for selection.

- Hiring decisions should be based on the candidate's demonstrated experience and expertise in campus planning. If a bidding process is involved, low bids should not be used as a primary basis for selection.
- RFP and contract documents should clearly state what tasks the consultant is to perform and what they are to achieve.
- Legal counsel should be consulted before issuing an RFP.
- When a decision is made to hire an outside consultant, a College planning committee should execute as many preplanning tasks as possible, optimizing the consultant's time and freeing the consultant to contribute their expertise in a focused way.
- The consultant should be provided with existing plans, plan history, data, and any other documentation that will give them a basis for a thorough understanding of strategic and physical existing conditions.
- A review process should be established to check and verify the work of the consultant.
- The professional planning consultant should support the planning process, offer advice based on their professional experience and expertise, facilitate the participatory work of the College community, provide technical services, and draft planning documents for review based on the work of the College community. The professional planning consultant should not function as a decision-maker.

## **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

Site inventory and site analysis are separate activities. Inventory involves collecting information about the existing conditions of a site. Analysis uses this information to evaluate its implications for future development and to identify assets and liabilities, opportunities and constraints.

### **Inventory**

#### **General guidelines:**

- A thorough knowledge of existing conditions is a prerequisite to developing recommendations.
- An inventory should collect both qualitative and quantitative data.
- An inventory process will collect and need to manage a vast amount of data. It should be decided early in the process how and where these data will be managed.
- The type of plan being developed will determine which inventory elements are relevant.

#### **For a campus master plan, an inventory of existing conditions should include:**

- Background material including current vision, mission, and core values; academic plans; financial plans; sustainability plans; maintenance and operations plans; existing policies which could impact physical facilities and planning; campus history; planning history; and State or other legislative requirements
- A base map including property boundaries, surrounding land uses and road systems, campus roads and walkways, building names and functions, outdoor spaces with uses, topography, vegetation, and utilities
- Open space data including soil, slope, natural hazards, vegetation, surface and subsurface water, ecosystem types and condition, drainage, microclimate, noise and smell, views,

lighting, current outdoor spaces, open space patterns and urban structure, historic and cultural information, and any special physical features and issues.

- Building data including building names, functions, and floor area in both net assignable space and gross area; dates of construction and renovations; materials, style, massing, height, door and window locations; condition; adaptability; space utilization; and cultural or historic significance
- Circulation data including roads, walkways, linkages, walking distances, accessibility, wayfinding, parking capacity and function, automobile-pedestrian intersections, traffic patterns and volumes, locations and function of entrances and exits, and areas for service, delivery, and waste removal
- Infrastructure data including use, capacity, height or depth, condition, distance to hook-ups, accessibility for maintenance and repairs, and visual or other problems
- Town and gown data including the land uses, zoning, and property values of surrounding land; acquisition potential; civic assets including schools, police, fire, and commercial facilities; neighborhood character and condition of surrounding buildings; types and conditions of surrounding vegetation and waters; circulation to and from the campus; public transportation; consideration of the campus sphere of influence; and regional plans

## Analysis

- Analysis should include work by professionals.
- Analysis should include a participatory process in which stakeholders identify conditions to be overcome or respected using SWOT or PAK categories or similar techniques.
  - SWOT analysis means identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
  - PAK analysis means identifying Preserve what we have that is positive; Add what we do not have that is positive; Remove what we have that is negative; and Keep out what we do not have that is negative.
- SWOT or PAK analyses should be facilitated by planning professionals or by others with experience and skills in facilitation.
- The results of inventory and analysis should be readily available and visible so that all stakeholders can understand the campus and its environment as a physical place.

## DEFINITIONS

**Campus:** The entire property of a college or university, including buildings, open spaces, circulation, and infrastructure

**Campus master plan:** A conceptual comprehensive plan for an institution's physical spaces, integrating the institution's financial and academic plans and developed through a participatory process, which provides a framework for decisions about changes to the built environment.

**Campus planning:** The translation of academic plans and philosophies into physical space

**Consultant, planning consultant:** An individual planning professional or a professional planning firm consisting of multiple professionals with training and professional experience leading to expertise in the field of planning.

**Infrastructure:** The technological support systems needed for the functioning of a college or other community, including water supply, wastewater treatment, energy, waste disposal, information, and communications

**Master plan:** A plan that looks at the whole and considers how all the parts fit together.

**Plan:** For purposes of this policy, the word ‘plan’ refers to a document for campus planning; it does not mean a drawing for design or construction.

**Planning:** The process of deciding what to do and how to do it. Planning is a process that identifies needs and alternatives for meeting them, and selects an alternative as a direction to pursue. Also, a professional specialty organized around planning and distinct from design.

**Space:** A contiguous area that accommodates a single use. The word ‘space’ can refer to interior or to exterior space.

**Space utilization:** A quantitative measure of the productivity of room use. Space utilization is often measured with two elements: Room Use, in number of hours per week in use or percentage of hours available; and Station Occupancy Rate, in average percentage of seats occupied during scheduled classes.

**Stakeholder:** A person directly associated with the space affected by the space assignment and/or an adjacent space.

**Strategic:** Concerning issues which are of fundamental importance within an integrated whole.

**Town and gown:** A term referring to the relationship between members of an educational institution (gown) and the non-academic community surrounding it (town).