

Responses to Comments on the UNM Master Plan Update

UNM North Golf Course

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *No development on the North Golf Course. For the time frame of this master plan, the North Golf Course will remain as reserve lands for UNM.(p. 34)*
- *Improve the perimeter walking trails*
- *Relocate the Observatory to the northern edge of the Barren Fairways and establish a “celestial garden”.*

Summary of Comments: UNM does not give a firm commitment to preserve the golf course indefinitely.

RESPONSE: The master plan does not propose any development on the golf course for the timeframe of this master plan (10 years). The master plan does propose to make improvements to the perimeter walking/jogging trails. It also proposes to make the golf course more sustainable by using recycled water from UNM’s cooling towers and installing more efficient irrigation equipment. The golf course currently uses 60 million gallons of water per year – this is not sustainable. On the area known as the Barren Fairways, the master plan proposes to relocate the Physics and Astronomy Observatory and create a “celestial garden” in the area near the existing John Gaw Meem shelter. This will create a space that gives the public a place to enjoy star-gazing and the expansive views of the city.

Student Housing

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *Expand housing options on Central Campus by building new dorms and renovating some existing facilities*
- *Establish a residential village for upperclassmen on the South Campus*
- *Redevelop themed housing on Mesa Vista Road*

Summary of Comments: Why is UNM proposing housing on the South Campus near I-25? UNM should build a parking garage instead of housing on the South Campus to alleviate traffic impacts on the neighborhoods near Central Campus. On the Central Campus, UNM should provide more details about proposed housing.

RESPONSE: UNM is proposing to build new student housing as part of UNM’s core mission to educate our students, provide a better campus experience, and improve graduation rates. This is a student-driven project that will have a major impact on making UNM more of a residential campus.

On the South Campus, UNM, along with its housing developer American Campus Communities, is working with the Office of Neighborhood Coordination at the City of Albuquerque to meet with neighborhoods in the vicinity of the housing proposed on the South Campus. These neighborhoods include South Broadway, Clayton Heights, and the Kirtland Addition. As part of the due diligence for creating a residential village, site conditions and environmental issues will be studied in greater detail. Planned retail in the area will support student housing, an amenity for which the neighbors have expressed a need.

On the Central Campus, UNM will share details of housing concepts as they are developed.

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Parking and Transportation

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *Cap Parking on Central Campus and provide accessible short-term parking (p. 42)*
- *Prioritize access and parking for hospital and clinic patients (p. 64)*
- *On the South Campus, coordinate event parking to maximize use of existing parking and transition to structured parking to free up land for other uses. (p. 64)*

Summary of Comments: People submitted more comments on this topic than any other. The range of comments reflect the reality that parking impacts people in different ways: faculty and staff generally are concerned about the availability of parking on or near campus while neighbors want assurance that traffic impacts on the neighborhoods will be minimized. Several comments linked parking with sustainability, questioning why UNM was proposing to build new parking structures while also committing to significant carbon reductions.

RESPONSE: The overall parking strategy for UNM is to continue to provide essential parking for faculty, staff, and visitors while offering transit, bike, and pedestrian options to reduce overall parking demand. With over 50,000 trips daily to and from UNM, the University is committed to making a concerted effort, in coordination with the City, to make transit a more efficient and cost-effective option for accessing the campus.

Process of Neighborhood Input

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *A single point of contact at UNM for questions about UNM projects*
- *A representative neighborhood group that meets monthly to discuss UNM developments*
- *An interactive website that allows the public to gather current information and submit input*
- *A more formal notification process to neighborhood associations on upcoming projects*
- *A quarterly open house that invites the public to discuss and give input*
- *An annual meeting w/ the President (p. 77)*

Summary of Comments: Neighbors were not provided opportunity to give input on the master plan. Should have followed the process of the 1996 Plan and had a neighborhood work group.

RESPONSE: The master plan team held over 30 meetings and open houses to share information and solicit input on the master plan. This was well above the 12 meetings required in the contract for the master plan update. Even before consultants were hired to work on the master plan, Roger Schluntz organized a multi-day charrette to frame master plan issues. City officials and neighbors were invited and participated in this design workshop. During the process of the master plan, UNM held facilitated meetings with City and neighbors to resolve issues about the proposed parking structure.

Clearly, there are opportunities to do more and UNM, as evidenced by the Master Plan Update, is committed to improving communications with its neighbors.

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Physics and Astronomy

The MP Update did not specify a new location for P&A

Summary of Comments: There is no mention of a new building for Physics & Astronomy in the entire plan.

RESPONSE: In response to the comments, the MP Update identifies the need to upgrade Physics and Astronomy facilities and recommends moving to a location closer to the academic core. (p. 38 –final draft) As a follow-up to the master plan, Institutional Support Services will continue to work with P&A to identify strategies for renewing or rebuilding facilities.

The Reservoir Site

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *The MP Update does not specify which programs or colleges will occupy remaining infill sites on the Central Campus. It calculates the potential square feet that could be added on a given site.*

Summary of Comments: We are desperate for space in College of Fine Arts/It is imperative that the Reservoir site be designated as a new Center for Arts

RESPONSE: ISS will work with individual colleges and programs to identify facility needs and conduct pre-design and integrated planning for each college. The MP Update has been revised to acknowledge the need for new facilities for the College of Fine Arts but it does not designate the Reservoir site, which UNM does not yet own, to the College.

Sustainability

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *Outlines goals, strategies and objectives for increasing sustainability and achieving carbon neutrality of 2030. (p. 24-25)*
- *Synthesize sustainability into all major development decisions. UNM's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 impacts all development and transportation issues.*
- *Includes sustainability in the Campus Design Principles (p16), Architectural Design Principles (p.18). and Landscape Design Principles (p. 22)*
- *Sustainable concept spans all three components of the campus. All planning, design and operational decisions assessed for impact on sustainability (p. 50)*

Summary of Comments: The plan does not show how UNM will reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

RESPONSE: The UNM Climate Action plan outlines steps, actions, projects the University will take to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. That plan can be viewed at <http://frem.unm.edu/PCD/index.html> .

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Campus Architecture Style

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *Create a campus that continues to reflect UNM's unique cultural and architectural heritage. This means preserving UNM's architecture and landscape while allowing new buildings to articulate a contemporary expression of New Mexico culture. The UNM campus should manifest New Mexico's "brand" of art, culture, and technology. (p. viii)*
- *Referenced UNM Design Principles and Guidelines for the Development of Main Campus, 3.30.07 draft#8 as integral component of the Master Plan Principles (p.16) which state "The stylistic themes(Pueblo-Revival or Spanish-Pueblo) originally endorsed by President Tight and further promulgated by John Gaw Meem, John Carl Warnecke and VanDorn Hooker have been embraced and endorsed as contributing to the unique regional character of UNM Albuquerque and shall be maintained as the basis of the architectural vocabulary during the expansion and intensification of the campus...."*

Summary of Comments: The campus architecture style should be referenced as "Spanish Pueblo Revival" style in the plan; Ensure new facilities retain the southwest vernacular architecture.

RESPONSE: The Plan will reflect the change of the campus architecture style to "Spanish Pueblo Revival" as appropriate. Approval of draft #8 UNM Design Principles and Guidelines will be noted in Chapter 5, Implementation, as the framework for ensuring adherence to the unique southwest architectural style.

Campus Landscape/ Open Space

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *This 2009 Update focuses on creating usable open space as organizing features of each campus (p.63)*
- *Smith Plaza is a large, featureless expanse of paving that could be significantly enhanced with rich paving patterns as well as the addition of a pop-jet fountain to physically cool the space on hot days. (p. 38)*
- *Landscape architecture principles in this 2009 Update place more emphasis on regional expression, sustainability, consistency between campuses and the development of specific open spaces and trails. (p. 22)*

Summary of Comments: 600+ acre green space of 1996 plan should be retained; Duck Pond should be preserved any changes/ upgrades should be minimal to the character of the green space design; Smith Plaza should have shade and other features to make it a more useful open space

RESPONSE: The substantial and rapid growth of the Health Sciences Center in the last eight years was not anticipated in the 1996 Plan. In order to address the significant needs of this fundamental mission of the University, a balanced approach to land use reduced the width of the "green space" while retaining the grand idea of connectivity and open vistas. The University values open spaces and the Update seeks to organize those spaces into useful features of each campus. The Duck Pond is an integral part to the campus landscape and an important open space and destination; the integrity of this site will be preserved. Upgrades and modernization are necessary to increase the sustainability and safety of

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this aging green space. Any water features, shade structures and landscaping added to soften Smith Plaza will adhere to the President's Climate Commitment and the Landscape Design Guidelines. Details of those projects will be provided as they develop.

Commercial Development

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *Mixed-use and commercial uses become an integral part of each campus. Commercial corridors currently exist adjacent to or within all three of the campuses. (p.63)*
- *Key Zones proposed for commercial development (p.62)*
- *Placement of commercial uses along arterial streets as a smart approach that is aligned with the requirements of retailers and serves the needs of the University.(p.63)*

Summary of comments: UNM should not develop commercial for any and all commercial enterprises, but only those that will benefit the campus community; Neighbors are concerned over the impact of commercial development on campus negatively effecting existing businesses and increasing the traffic thru their neighborhoods.

RESPONSE: Commercial development occurs near major traffic corridors and intersections. Generating revenue for future campus capital needs has inherent benefits to surrounding communities, as well as students, by providing needed amenities. Planning for any commercial development will follow the CoA process and ensure communication and input from effected neighborhoods and constituents.

HSC Fitness Center

The MP Update did not specify a fitness center in the HSC master plan:

Summary of comments: Request a large fitness center be included in the HSC master plan.

RESPONSE: The MP Update identifies the strategic framework of healthy communities (and lifestyles) as a fundamental principle of the plan. It does not address specific needs in a building. Domenici Center for Health Education was constructed with a fitness center option on the second floor of the first phase. Due to significant need for classroom space, the fitness area was divided into seminar rooms and a large classroom; this can be remodeled as additional classrooms are constructed. As a follow-up to the master plan, Institutional Support Services will continue to work with the Health Sciences Center to identify strategies for building those facilities.

Mental Health Center

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *The MP Update does not specify which programs will occupy infill sites on the North Campus.*

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- **Summary of comments:** Two variant viewpoints: The relocation to the barren fairways is acceptable; The relocation to the barren fairways is unacceptable.

RESPONSE: The assessment of adult psychiatric facility needs will require further study to determine appropriate siting of this important program. This will include communication and input with constituent groups.

Student Recreation Center

The MP Update proposes the following:

- *A new Recreation Center would help support a healthy life style for students and serve as a valuable recruiting tool. It would also allow Johnson Center to focus on providing classes and serving educational programs.*

Summary of comments: Site is inappropriate; Recreation Center is very important to recruitment and retention of students; Important campus amenity available to students.

RESPONSE: This student driven facility received site approval in May 2009 from Regents when ASUNM President Ashley Fate and GPSA President Christopher Ramirez presented this project. Further study will be needed validating the proposed program, site, parking considerations and costs when funding becomes available.