

University of Colorado Design Review Board Meeting Notes

Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021,
including comments from March 3, 2021 (DRB only)
Time: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom Meeting

DRB and Campus Members present: Don Brandes, Sarah Brown, Cheri Gerou, Victor Olgay, Chris Shears, Mike Winters, and Richelle Reilly, interim campus DRB member for the University of Colorado Boulder campus (“CU Boulder”).

Others in attendance not otherwise noted:

Kori Donaldson, Senior Director of Capital Assets and ex officio member of the DRB
Linda Money, CU Real Estate Services, CU System employee / DRB note taker

Don Brandes, Chair, determined a quorum and called the meeting of the Design Review Board to order at 2:05 p.m.

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Campus Master Plan 2021 Update – CU Boulder
Second Presentation** (Information/Direction)

Architects/Engineers:

Sasaki Associates, Inc., Boston, MA

Presenters:

Tyler Patrick, AICP, Managing Principal, Sasaki Associates, Inc.
Caroline Braga, ASLA, PLA, Landscape Principal, Sasaki Associates, Inc.

Joshua Brooks, ASLA, PLA, Sasaki Associates, Inc.

Nicole Friend, Campus Planner and Project Coordinator,
Sasaki Associates, Inc.

Romil Sheth, Design Principal, Sasaki Associates, Inc.

CU Boulder Campus Presenters:

David Kang, Vice Chancellor for Infrastructure and
Sustainability and Chief Facilities Officer

Ida Mae Isaac, Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor
for Infrastructure and Sustainability/I&S Strategist

Amy Kirtland, Architect, Facilities Planner, Facilities Planning

Description:

Second presentation on progress of CU Boulder’s Campus Master Plan (“CMP”) update.

A/E Presentation

A comprehensive presentation was made of the submittal package, which can be found in the following document on the DRB website, *Meeting Dates, Agendas and Minutes*:

[Attachment 1 – Boulder Campus Master Plan Update - 02-17-2021]

DRB General Comments

How a campus lives and how we absorb knowledge in the future is exciting to contemplate when looking at a masterplan. The Boulder Campus Master Plan (“CMP”) should build on the existing campus design framework to incorporate feedback from Campus Visionaries (Page 7) and Campus Life (Pages 13,14,15,16) such as:

- **Connect:** Connect main campus, east campus, and Williams Village (particularly bike and pedestrian connections).
- **Mix:** Mix uses, mix disciplines, mix class years—this will make a more interesting, rich and dynamic learning environment.
- **Integrate:** Integrate the campus with the Boulder community. Blur the campus edges and intentionally create community connections.
- **Create:** Create opportunities for learning, meeting, and collaborating in outdoor spaces.

In order to create “a there ... there” moment for Williams Village and the east campus, the campuses need to connect (via bike and pedestrian pathways) to the main campus, add a mix of uses, and integrate with the community.

- The scale comparisons on Page 81 are great. Do more of them and show how they could be used for the east campus, north of Boulder Creek, and Williams Village.
- Add goal and vision statements to the CMP to contextualize the information and plans.
 - What do you want to maintain in the built environment?
 - What do you want to improve/change in the built environment?
- Harmonize CMP with city planning objectives.
- Coordinate with City of Boulder planning initiatives—connections shown between campuses are important and offer a great opportunity to coordinate with the city.
- Consider including in the planning process and maps the areas surrounding the close-up, detailed sections of the CMP in order to show the context and character of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Detail anticipated project prioritization and phasing in the CMP.
 - Doing this will help the community see the big picture over the next few decades.
 - It will also show how planning efforts inform future decisions about spending.
- Address how the college experience may change in the future:
 - How will the educational experience be enhanced? What will these changes mean to the physical campus? How will this CMP reflect or adapt to these changes?
 - How will the academic experience be influenced by new innovations?
 - How will cost and equity considerations change the campus experience?
 - How will online learning change the campus?
- Emphasize and expand on how the university’s future growth benefits the larger community. The university is a significant benefit to the community; the future of the campus needs to be blended into the future of the community.

- Consider creating continuity among the three campus planning areas for the creekfront and riparian habitat areas. This would serve to connect the greater Boulder community and students to new creekfront plazas, bikeways, pedestrian crossings, overlooks, and restored natural/wildlife areas.
- The surveys and audits performed a few months prior, combined with the experience of the Sasaki design team, are enlightening in terms of showing the history, context, legacies, attributes, and deficits of the Boulder campus.
- Master plans at other campuses have been helpful with planning smaller, individual projects.
- The Boulder CMP will inform future building projects and give designers the information they need to support the development of new buildings and spaces;
- Please note that the CMP will serve, in large part, as the regulatory guide for the DRB in reviewing campus projects.
- The Sasaki team is encouraged to spend more time in Boulder and on campus.
- Bike circulation should be extended and enhanced throughout—connecting all campuses.
 - Bike racks, storage, and repair should be expanded and enhanced. Bikes are only going to become more and more prevalent. (Think Copenhagen.)
- Faculty Housing should be mixed housing with amenities and thoughtful outdoor spaces (Page 64).
- When capturing the character images for the final presentation, ensure they relate to the Boulder character.

Main Campus

- Establish a hierarchy of entrances and gateways to the main campus.
 - Some entrances and gateways should be scaled for pedestrians.
 - All entrances should be intuitive for visitors.
 - Consider incorporating a primary entrance or gateway to the main campus off of Broadway.
- Revisit the relationships between existing/historic buildings and the landscape strategies on the main campus reflected in the CMP.
 - Reflect and re-emphasize the historic pattern of the campus in terms of courtyards, terraces, forecourts and other site planning and landscape improvements that Klauder and others established. (See Page 58 noting Baker Hall, Norlin Quad, Sewall Field.)
 - Be careful not to sacrifice these existing relationships for the creation of curvilinear pathways.

North of Boulder Creek

- The “restoration and enhancement” of Boulder Creek could be a community/University collaboration that celebrates the diversity of visitors to this amenity. The creekfront typology, riparian habitat, walkways, bikeways, overlooks, crossings and signage should define the University’s commitment to creek front/waterfront improvements for all three campus planning areas.
 - The main campus relationship to Boulder Creek should illustrate this commitment for the other campus creek front and riparian areas.
- Further study the connections to north Boulder Creek.
 - Add another bridge.
 - Add more connectivity to the community.
- Investigate rezoning this area to allow for more mixed use, including retail that benefits both the University and the Boulder community.

- The North Boulder Creek area could be a “neighborhood” that hosts a more complex and integrated mix of uses, activities and services for the residents, students and visitors to the area.
- Explore the possibility of creating a North Boulder Creek Neighborhood that is still connected and related to the University, but has its own identity and diversity of uses.
- The North Boulder Creek area seems to be an urban site that could accept a medium to high density mix of uses that may exceed the 55’ height limitation. The planning and design guidelines for North Boulder Creek may appear to be very different, yet related to those of the Main Campus.
- Evaluate major redevelopment proposals for the area bound by Folsom Avenue, 28th Street, Arapahoe Avenue, and North Boulder Creek that could inform planning strategies for CMP.
- Study the intersection of Arapahoe and Folsom Avenues where the CMP is replacing existing married student housing to determine if there is an opportunity to replace an athletic field on the corner with a mixed-use project that would engage the community.

East Campus

The location of Boulder Creek and its intermittent drainage ways are a major influence on the east campus—much like the restoration and use of Boulder Creek on the main campus. The programming, planning, and design of these natural areas could be a continuity element that draws the three campus areas together.

- Reconsider proposed future use of the east campus. The plans should be revised to emphasize research use and to recognize and respond to riparian areas of the property.
- The existing east campus site planning and architecture is diverse. The master plan should provide planning and design guidelines to inform and guide future development of the campus. Currently, it seems like the east campus invites a wide range of architectural styles and materials.
 - The DRB supports an approach that provides guidance for future development rather than showing building footprints.
 - Page 70 shows zones of use rather than building footprints. The DRB prefers this approach to what is shown on Page 71.
 - The wall of buildings shown on Page 71 isolates the campus from the natural areas to the north.
- Of the three campuses, the east campus offers the most undeveloped land for future expansion. Early in the master planning process it would be helpful to clearly articulate the development program, namely academic, undergraduate/graduate, research, housing, athletic, mixed-use, student life and other anticipated uses.
 - Creating a nationally recognized research center with a variety of supporting uses seems difficult to achieve. Most dedicated research parks look, feel, and operate as dedicated technical research centers. Is the east campus area suited to accept and activate a variety of supporting uses without jeopardizing its future expansion as a research center?
 - Evaluate if and how much housing is appropriate on the east campus.
 - Is the campus planned to have mixed use? 24-hour use?
 - Incorporate active, mixed use along Discovery Drive (Page 70)
- The proposed access and circulation scheme seems to provide greater flexibility for future development than the existing alignment.
 - The planning site should show connections to the community, rather than be bounded by four roads.

- Designate entrances and gateways to east campus, with particular attention to pedestrian entrances.
 - Show more opportunities for enhancing connections—on the east campus, between campuses, and with the community.
 - Add more in-depth study of pedestrian mobility (what works, areas that need to be strengthened).
 - Add a pedestrian mobility diagram for the east campus and Williams Village.
 - Add a diagram showing bike circulation and connections for the east campus, including the new 30th Street and Colorado Avenue improvements.
 - Evaluate bike and pedestrian connections along North Boulder Creek between the east and main campuses.
- Consider potential partnership opportunities on the northwest corner of the east campus.

Williams Village

- Historically, this campus has been viewed as a “bedroom community.” The CMP survey results indicate that this campus lacks diversity in use.
 - Study the proportion of proposed housing, academic, and mixed use space to ensure the blend reflects an intentional mixed use.
 - What amenities can be added to the campus? What will make the campus a desirable place to live? How will you draw people to the campus?
 - Look at the opportunity for ground floor retail/student life-type amenities at the base of the towers (Page 63).
 - Consider urban design of Kittredge Village as possible inspiration.
- When communicating the idea of adding mixed use to Williams Village, include precedent images illustrating the before and after improvements made to the Ohio State north campus in order to show magnitude of potential transformation.
- Consider creating a community resource south of the creek to alleviate potential community concern about traffic increase along Caddo Parkway.
- All mobility diagrams should acknowledge and show existing and future connections to Williams Village.

DRB Action

The DRB noted that outstanding work has been done on the CMP and that it appreciates the time spent by the design team and staff to present the progress to date. The DRB looks forward to the next presentation. Formal approval by the DRB is not required for this submittal.

There being no further business, the public meeting of the Design Review Board was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.