UAF Master Planning Committee

Meeting Notes
Thursday, April 18, 2018; 9am-11am
Lola Tilly Conference Room (SIH 330)


Non-Members: Krisan Osteby (DLR), Stu Rotheberger (DLR), Scott Bell, Kari Burrell

Meeting began at 9:00

1. Welcome and introductions.
   MPC introductions were made to the DLR Group representatives Krisan Osteby and Stu Rothenberger. DLR Group has been hired as the consultants for the UAF Master Plan update (MP18).

2. Discussion on Master Plan update.
   In a change from usual MPC meeting format, the MP18 was the sole agenda item.

Jenny Campbell provided an overview of DLR activities during their visit to Fairbanks, highlighting the various groups with which they have met. She also presented the challenge presented to MP18 of meeting future UAF research and enrollment goals.

The MPC is being viewed as playing a role of key UAF contact for review of the MP18 as it moves forward. The consultants plan on having monthly meetings with MPC throughout the process.

The MP18 schedule was provided and noted to be fairly fast tracked.

- May 17, draft analysis report, including space planning
- June, final draft assessment with recommendations
- July-August, virtual meeting with MPC, diagrammatic presentation
- September (mid to late month), Fairbanks visit to present draft plan to UAF community and engage in a prioritization exercise with MPC.
- October, draft report to MPC for review and feedback.
- November, draft report to Board of Regents
- February, Final report

The MPC was informed that Chancellor White believes we should take a bold approach regarding the MP18. A broad view is expected in developing the MP18 with need to enhance external research opportunities and enrollment growth.
The issue was raised as to how the transformative changes that higher education is undergoing will be built into MP18. Everyone acknowledged that there are a lot of uncertainties and many unknowns.

DLR noted that while it has reviewed the format of past UAF Master Plans, it is essentially starting fresh with respect to information and data collection. They have observed on campuses across the country an increased emphasis on student life. There have been spikes in student interests in college clubs. Distance learning is great and will continue to grow, but there is a need for cultivating students’ sense of an on-campus college community.

MPC members were asked to identify some key considerations for the MP18. Comments included the following:

- Learning and community are important to student success. How can this be created for distance students?
- Branding is important. A major attraction of UAF to students is that it provides a welcoming environment.
- Satisfactory lighting around campus is important to student safety.
- While the Master Plan time horizon is 10 years, it’s important to think beyond that, e.g., what will be needed in 20 years?
- How can the university take advantage of forthcoming growth at Eielson Air Force Base; more broadly how can it become more attractive to military personnel? How can the university better market itself to, and meet the needs of, the military community? For example should the university develop a service center in North Pole?
- Need to include community engagement. Possible that UAF community relations office can obtain input from the community as MP18 is developed.
- Walkability and safe transit are important to the UAF community. The Uaf community should be able to use various modes of transportation, such as walk, bike, and shuttle to easily get around campus.
- The University trail system is an untapped resource that could be used to generate revenue. Access to trail heads needs to be improved. Currently, it is not easy for outside groups to access the campus.
- There is a deficiency in the university ability to accommodate events such as conferences. It would be helpful to streamline and better coordinate the event planning process.
- UAF should be viewed as a destination, rather than current practice of taking visitors off-campus for various activities.
Currently, most entrances to the university don’t have a distinct transition when arriving on campus—clear demarcation that you are here. There are not university gateways to mark your arrival, with the exception of Morris Thompson Boulevard.

Importance of faculty and student retention was emphasized, both of which face particular challenges due to UAF’s location.

Need for improved childcare facilities.

Improved vehicular circulation is needed. Completion of Tanana Loop should be a priority. Parking ease for university community needs to be considered, although we don’t want university to revert back to having a parking lot appearance.

The UAF Sustainability Plan needs to be incorporated into the MP18.

Improved student housing is needed so that it meets students’ expectations and specific needs. Need to foster students’ ability to find their own community within UAF. Should consider other universities that utilize ‘houses’ model to develop student identity within the broader university. Housing should support student success. More broadly want to develop a campus environment that cultivates students’ critical thinking skills.

Need to have ease of ELearning access that supports its continued growth and meets student needs and expectations.

Need to consider climate disruptions and embrace resiliency in developing university infrastructure.

A variety of existing university related plans and studies were mentioned during the discussion such as the Trails and Greenways plan, The Georgeson Botanical Gardens plan, the West Ridge Campus plan, the Campus Safety study, and North Campus plan.

DLR would like to meet again with MPC on May 17th.

Schedule: Next meeting scheduled for May 3rd.

Meeting concluded at 11.10a