

**Southern Miss Cross Creek Master Planning Committee  
Work Session II Executive Summary  
October 8-9, 2008**

**Present:** Pat Joachim, Bob Lyman, Joe Morgan, Chad Driskell, Russ Willis, Dale Ledford, Robert Bass, Rusty Postlewait, Greg Havens, Jim Eley, Elizabeth Alley, Chet Allred, Hoppy Allred, Caitlyn Clauson, Igor Anderson, Suzy Hebert, Shelia White, Faye Mitchell, Lynn Estes, Sheri Rawls, Ann Billings, Christy Elias, Skeeter Dixon, Bill Hawkins, Rob Turner, Steve Jackson, John Hayman, David Taylor, Edward McCormack, Ray Scurfield, Rachel Carpenter, Philip Terrell, Bryan Billings, Sid Gonsoulin

October 8, 2008

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

**Collaborative's Presentation to Committee and General Comments**

Greg Havens, lead member of the Collaborative, presented a work-to-date PowerPoint presentation which included a review of the locations from which Southern Miss currently delivers instruction, a review of the wetlands and wildlife research, an overview of the original Cross Creek Development plan and the proposed road infrastructure. Greg then moved into a brief overview of three case studies on recent planned community developments. These developments included Verrado in Buckeye, Arizona; SouthWood Town Center in Tallahassee, Florida; and the Princeton Forrestal Center, a Corporate and Research Park in Princeton, New Jersey, near the campus of Princeton University. These case studies provide the Planning Team an opportunity to learn from the success and failure of other communities.

Sasaki is studying site issues including a potential 50 foot buffer for the wetlands, permitting issues with Army Corp of Engineers, restraints on the Natural Habitat, Turkey Creek, Flat Branch Creek and the flood plains.

**General Comments:**

- The Planning Committee would like the master plan to reflect a commitment to a pedestrian campus.
- The Planning Committee is not in favor of locating structured parking in the core, except for handicap parking.
- Introducing a shuttle system would assist with LEED Certification.
- The next phase of analysis should explore surface and structured parking.
- The Leadership Team and the Collaborative are working closely with the development partners to glean consensus regarding the location of the campus and the town center.
- The Gulf Park Student Service Center was cited as an example of an integrated campus that reinforces student, faculty, and staff interaction.

**Town Center Planning Process**

- The projected Town Center, as portrayed by the development partners, represents 15.8 percent of the land area, somewhat higher than the case examples presented by the Collaborative.
- Roadways and interchanges through Cross Creek are still in the planning phase.
- The total percentage of residential land being considered by the developers is somewhat smaller than depicted in the case examples presented by the Collaborative.
- Consideration is being given to locating the campus closer to the town center than what had previously been discussed. A main street road will separate the majority of the Town Center from the University. There will be other streets and roads within the University providing appropriate circulation.
- Ingress and egress to the campus will be from the east and west as well as from the north and south
- Pending the final site of the campus and when possible (code allowance), parking lots will be sited under the power lines.
- Charrette Alternatives – the Collaborative presented two scenarios depicting the relationship between Campus and Town Center.
  - Scenario 1 demonstrated a single point relationship between Campus and Town Center.
  - Scenario 2 demonstrated two separate points of interaction between Campus and Town Center
  - Although the Planning Team preferred the two points of interaction, both scenarios provided a five minute walk opportunity from the center of campus to Town Center.

- Committee members believe that the construction of the roadways and the phasing of the roadways should be taken into consideration when planning the entire campus. The Collaborative agrees and will take this point into consideration with the understanding that some of the roadways may not be finished until after the comprehensive University is completed.

#### **The Campus Master plan**

- As previously mentioned, all Cross Creek Master Plan phasing is based on an opening enrollment of 5,000 students and future enrollment of 12,000 students.
- The Collaborative is studying climate strategies to determine other sources of energy that may be applicable to the Cross Creek site.
- Orientation and height of the buildings will help with natural ventilation. To reduce heat in the buildings, the Collaborative indicated that we should consider
  - positioning of the buildings
  - trees for shade
  - protection of the rooftops
- Stormwater management planning is important to reduce flooding or standing water after rainstorms.
- The primary focus of Work Session II was centered on the location of Campus and Town Center and initially creating density and flexibility among academic and student life facilities.
- Upon entering the campus vicinity and when the campus is completely built out, icon facilities may include a student life center of three buildings (library – union – recreation/fitness).
- Facilities such as a recreation/fitness may present opportunities for a third-party to construct a YMCA type of facility available to the entire Cross Creek community, including the Southern Miss community.
- Academic facilities and staff offices should extend along the east and west of the property facing opposite the Town Center.
- Initial parking lots should be located within a 5 minute radius of the academic buildings.
- When designing the streets within the campus, sidewalks lined with trees and other greenery should be considered, features comparable to small town sidewalks.

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

#### **Follow-up Discussion with Committee**

- Some parking lots will be greater than a five minute walk to the middle of campus/town center.
  - For convenience, shuttle services should be considered, one that would help secure LEED certification -- an electric trolley of some sort should be considered.
- Re-emphasis was placed on the desire for interaction of students, faculty, and staff prior to and after classes.
- Close proximity housing for students, faculty, and staff should be considered when designing spaces contiguous to campus boundaries. Care should be taken regarding site locations for apartment complexes near the campus boundaries, especially as these complexes age and become unsightly. It would not be in the University's best interest for these types of facilities to be the first viewed when approaching Town Center or the Campus.
- Committee members expressed concern regarding traffic constraints from the high school making it congested at times for the University.
- The sale of beer or alcohol within or around the campus community was discussed.
  - The committee stated there may be local zoning ordinances against the sale of alcohol within so many feet from the University.

12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

#### **Discussion of Planning Principles**

- Planning Principles developed by the Planning Principles Work Team were discussed in small group sessions with facilitators reporting comments and suggestions at the end of the session.
- Overall, the Planning Team was pleased with the Planning Principles presented, making only a few suggestions for enhancements.
- Suggested improvements included language to emphasize integrated student life and academic spaces, informal gathering and discussion spaces, creating a sense of belonging, an emphasis on shaded areas for sitting as well as walking, and emphasis on designing transparent spaces to afford views of outdoor spaces.

2:15 – 3:30 p.m.

**Faculty, Staff & Student Forums Update & Discussion**

- Sid Gonsoulin and Bryan Billings discussed feedback from forums held on both campuses (Coast: September 25 and October 1; Hattiesburg: September 25, 30 and October 1). Discussions centered around the following: funding, architectural style, fitness and wellness center, library, transition plans, Cross Creek planned community, office space, flexible lab space, and the economy.

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

**Focus group session with Executive Committee of Gulf Coast Business Council and Leadership Team**

- The Council is interested in locating a multi-modal transit hub on the campus.
- Development partners have acquired the land extending to the railroad, south of Interstate 10 and east of County Farm Road.
- At the full build out of 12,000 students, a shuttle system may be possible.
- In the short-term, bus service should be pursued, as should an integrated bike system.
- Future connections between the Hattiesburg campus and Cross Creek were mentioned.
- Stennis Space Center has become a leading location for national homeland security.
- The Cross Creek community is a potential location for employees of the Stennis Space Center.
- The 5,000 enrollment level program needs to be tested against the need for four initial buildings.
- The Cross Creek site could also act as a research venue for the Stennis Space Center.
- The Council mentioned the potential of a high tech workforce development training center locating on the site.
- The Gulf Coast will continue to serve as a major entertainment hub.
- The creation of affordable housing for workers is strongly encouraged
- This Cross Creek community could also provide housing for aging communities.
- Cross Creek is a good venue for other partnerships, such as a recreation center or a joint use library.
- The Port project anticipates a regional population of 400,000 people in the next 50 years.
- Members of the Gulf Coast Business Council Executive Committee were generally pleased with the progress of the Planning Team. All indications are that we are moving in the right direction.

October 9, 2008

**Supervisors and Mayors Focus Group Meeting Feedback**

- Stressed that an interchange along I-10 is very important to both the town center and the University. Supervisors and Mayors believe that MDOT would be very responsive to a proposed interchange.
- Recommended that the master plan include proposed uses on non-university sites.
- Covenants should be developed to address design standards for both Southern Miss and the town center development.
- It was noted that three populations will contribute to the success of the site: residents, students and local communities.
- It was confirmed that the County zoning ordinance prohibits alcohol from educational campuses. However, it is allowed as an accessory use, i.e. served within restaurants.
- The Cross Creek campus is essential to the growth of Southern Miss.
- To date, public response to Cross Creek's growth has all been positive. Currently, it is generally believed that Southern Miss campuses and teaching sites are meeting a proven need in the region.
- The new campus also supports projected population growth estimates.
- Recommend to consider offering concentrated executive education courses with accommodations for families.
- New elementary and middle school may be introduced near the high school.

**Superintendent Focus Group Meeting Feedback**

- The development of the Cross Creek campus should invite partnerships between the high school as well as the middle and elementary school programs, especially regarding student teaching.
- Suggested meeting with the consortium of local Principals to better understand educational needs would be beneficial.
- Regarded the location of Southern Miss near the local high school as beneficial. High school seniors could potentially take courses offered at the University.