



Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Campus and Facilities Planning

FOR INFORMATION

TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Interim Project Planning Report for a Student Commons on the St. George Campus

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under the Policy on Capital Planning and Capital Projects, the Planning & Budget Committee reviews Project Planning Reports prepared for a capital project and recommends to the Academic Board approval in principle of the project.

BACKGROUND:

In the summer of 2005 a Committee was established to review the current University approach to student activity space and the extent to which the multi-nodal approach continues to serve the needs of the students on the campus. In the September 2005 Final Report of the Committee to Review Student Activity Space, the Committee recommended the development of a new large node of student activity space and recommended that the University establish a Project Planning Committee to commence the formal planning process in collaboration with student unions and other key stakeholders.

A Project Planning Committee was established in October 2006 and the Interim Report that is now submitted for approval identifies a preferred site, space program, and estimated project cost. Acceptance of this report, and assignment of the site will allow students to fully consider components of the space program that are preferred to be included in the new facility, governance models and funding models.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Student Commons Project Planning Committee met on numerous occasions and confirmed that a multi-nodal approach was the desired model for the provision of student space on campus and determined the types of space that should be included in the large node. The space program defined for the new facility will add approximately 3290 nasm to the current inventory of student activity space. It can best be described as space to meet with friends, study, host conferences, show films

['rehearse for student productions'], enjoy healthy and affordable food and find out about activities on the Campus and at the University. This is to be a place for students in between classes and afterwards to create community.

The report outlines components of a proposed space program to be considered and requires detailed discussions by the student body. The process for broad discussion will occur in the fall of 2007 led by the University of Toronto Student Union, and a final space program will be identified. Both capital costs and operating costs will be determined once the final program is known.

Site Considerations

The Project Planning Committee considered the remaining development sites on the Campus as possible locations for the student commons facility. Three locations, sites 10 (47-55 St. George Street), 11 (91-97 St. George Street) and 12 (100 Devonshire) were extensively debated. Each site had advantages and disadvantages. Ultimately two criteria directed the student members of the Committee to a preferred location: proximity to transit, the east-west/north-south subway lines, and to the new Varsity Centre facilities that had recently opened, and those planned for the future phases, which would establish a very significant student presence in the northern part of the campus. Site 12, which is the site being proposed for this facility, can also accommodate a component of the Varsity Centre for High Performance Sport. By co-locating these two facilities, benefits of complementary space programs can be realized.

The capacity of site 12 is 32,000 gsm. It can also accommodate other activities and functions compatible with those planned for the site, such as student services and classrooms.

Total Project Cost

The total project cost, based on approximately 3280-3780 net assignable square metres or 5900-7570 gross square metres, is estimated to cost between \$25 and \$36 million having a construction start in 2008. A detailed estimate will be provided when the space program is finalized and a construction date is known.

Funding Sources

The UTSU Discussion Paper stated that students would be expected to contribute to the costs of the Student Commons in the form of a levy, proposed through a referendum planned to be held in the fall of 2007. This levy, along with a contribution from the University will fund the capital cost of the project. The amount of the levy will be determined once the space program is finalized. It is recognized that occupancy costs for the facility will be outside of the University's operating budget.

The University will secure a source of funding in order to commit fifty cents against each dollar raised through the levy for the capital cost of the project consistent with contributions to student centres on the UTM and UTSC campuses.

A memorandum of agreement between the University and UTSU will be required prior to the approval and implementation of the project, which sets out:

- a) governance of the facility
 - b) capital funding
 - c) operating funding
 - d) any other significant concerns that must be specified concerning the construction, operations or occupancy of the facility.
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Schedule

This Interim Report is being brought forward for approval in principle recognizing increased space needs for the students at the St. George Campus and to assign a portion of site 12 to this project. Further refinement of the space program, costs, and funding will be required to finalize the project committee report. A final report is expected to come forward late in 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Planning and Budget Committee recommend to the Academic Board:

1. THAT the Interim Project Planning Report for the Student Commons on the St. George Campus be approved in principle, and that a portion of site 12 be assigned for this project, co-locating activities with Varsity Centre for High Performance Sport.
2. THAT approval of the final report be contingent on identification of the total capital project cost, operating costs, funding and governance of the proposed facility.