



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

June 24, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING Minutes

I. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Verner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street. Commissioner Perkinson attended the meeting via Zoom. Chair Verner thanked Commissioner Perkinson for his outstanding service as he exits the commission. She noted that Greg was leaving because he no longer resides in Ashland, which is a requirement for being on the Commission.

Commissioners Present:

Lisa Verner
Kerry KenCairn
Eric Herron
Gregory Perkinson
Russell Phillips
John Maher
Susan MacCracken Jain

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Manager
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Council Liaison:

Jeff Dahle (absent)

II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Staff Announcements:

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcement:

- The Council reviewed the appeal of 231 Granite Street at its recent meeting and remanded it to the Planning Commission to review and adopt more substantive findings related to the approval criteria. This matter will be coming back to the Planning Commission in August, 2025.

2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports – None

III. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of Minutes

1. April 29, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
2. May 27, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
3. June 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes





Planning Commission Minutes

Commissioners Phillips/Perkinson m/s to approve the consent agenda as presented. Voice Vote: all AYES. Motion passed 7-0.

IV. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

V. **LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING**

PLANNING ACTION: PA-L-2025-00016
APPLICANT: Southern Oregon University
LOCATION: The Southern Oregon University District
ZONE DESIGNATION: SO (Southern Oregon University)
COMP. PLAN DESIGNATION: Southern Oregon University District
ORDINANCE REFERENCES: 15.04.210-.216 Demolition
or Relocation of Structures
18.3.6 Southern Oregon University District
18.4.7 Signs
18.5.2.030 Review Procedures
18.5.7.020 Applicability & Review Procedure
18.5.9 Comprehensive Plan, Zoning &
Land Use Ordinance Amendments
18.6.1 Definitions

DESCRIPTION: Ashland's Planning Commission and City Council will conduct public hearings to consider a legislative amendment to the Southern Oregon University Facilities Master Plan. This amendment includes proposed zone changes for properties identified on the attached map that may be sold into private ownership by Southern Oregon University. With adoption of this Master Plan amendment, the zoning for these properties will be changed as noted on the attached map, however they would remain subject to the SOU Masterplan and SO zoning overlay while under SOU-ownership. Once under private ownership, these properties would be subject to the zoning regulations of the underlying zoning proposed here.

Commissioner Perkinson recused himself from reviewing this action and left the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Ex Parte Contact

No conflicts of interest, ex parte contact, or site visits were disclosed.

Staff Presentation

Planning Manager Derek Severson presented the staff report on the proposed adoption of the 2025 Southern Oregon University (SOU) Facilities Master Plan as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan, along with amendments to the city's land use ordinance and zoning code. The





Planning Commission Minutes

proposal also included zone changes for properties identified on the proposed zoning for transferred properties map (see attachment #1). Staff recommended that the Commission recommend that the Council adopt the SOU Masterplan update.

Questions of Staff

Commissioner Herron asked about how parking maximums are currently calculated, focusing on whether they are specific to the university or vary by zone. Mr. Severson explained that the parking maximums are consistent across zones and are not specific to SOU.

Questions were raised about the redundancy of demolition and relocation codes between local regulations and state requirements. Mr. Severson noted that there is overlap, but state requirements are more comprehensive.

Clarifications were sought regarding the alignment of the proposed facilities plan with existing site review processes, specifically concerning the public hearings related to zoning and conditional use permits. Mr. Severson stated that the process aims to provide clarity and align more closely with existing zoning regulations.

Mr. Goldman addressed a query about the implications of converting from conditional uses to site review for properties near private boundaries. He indicated that the change would streamline the approval process while considering compatibility with the surrounding area.

Commissioner Phillips asked about the details of parking standards, particularly concerning the potential impact of new solar installations on existing parking lots and how those would align with environmental goals. Mr. Severson clarified that the solar installations would not trigger new parking lot standards unless pavement is significantly altered, but they could enhance environmental sustainability.

Applicant Presentation

Alan Harper and Rob Patridge presented further details of Southern Oregon University's proposal and outlined pending property sales, building height limitations, and community concerns. Mr. Harper detailed SOU's strategy to sell certain properties, addressing public concerns over future land use and neighborhood impact, and highlighted the following aspects of the proposed update:

- SOU's shift to being an independent university and associated funding changes
- Declining enrollment and housing numbers on campus
- Plans for new student housing and academic building projects
- Goals for increasing solar power generation on campus
- Proposed zoning changes for properties that may be sold
- Requests for more flexibility in development standards within the SOU zone





Planning Commission Minutes

Questions of the Applicant

The Commission asked the following questions:

- **Timeline for solar array installations.**

Mr. Harper explained that they do not have a specific timeline for installation due to funding challenges and dependency on available grants.

- **The intended use of the proposed tall "University District" building**

Mr. Harper responded that the tall building at the corner of Walker and Ashland is envisioned as potentially mixed-use, though specific plans are not yet determined. He elaborated that the intention is to explore development options that could benefit both Ashland and the university economically.

- **Clarification on proposed parking standards**

Mr. Harper stated that parking maximums would apply according to the planned future uses, though the university is reportedly over-parked and has reduced the need for student parking permits due to changing student behaviors and arrangements.

- **Details of the proposed sign code changes**

Mr. Harper and Mr. Patridge clarified that the master plan includes a detailed sign code to ensure consistent design and sizes across campus, with no large digital signs allowed. New sign codes would ensure compliance with both university and ODOT standards while maintaining aesthetics in line with the university's vision.

- **The lack of communication with surrounding neighbors about the proposed Masterplan updates**

Mr. Harper responded that SOU hosted forums and conducted public relations outreach but that no direct mailings were sent to neighbors. It was noted that City staff sent mailings before this meeting to properties within 200 feet of campus, and Mr. Harper and Mr. Patridge agreed to improve direct communication with neighbors in the future.

Public Comments

The following community members expressed concerns regarding the proposed update, particularly potential zone changes, the lack of communication from the applicant, and the loss of Roca Park:

- Jeannine Grizzard (see attachment #2)
- Beth Remington
- Bruce Bergstrom
- Sydnee Dreyer
- Kathy Uhtoff
- Amy Swan
- Alyse Emdur
- Jay Harrower
- Pat Ajemian
- Alison Laughlin





Planning Commission Minutes

Discussion

The Commission engaged in a comprehensive discussion about the SOU Master Plan, including:

- **Zoning Changes:** Many public comments, particularly concerned with the designation of zoning changes, addressed potential impacts on surrounding areas and emphasized the importance of ensuring that new zoning aligns with neighborhood characteristics. SOU's properties on Liberty Street and Roca Street were particularly notable, with the applicant maintaining the alignment of zoning with neighboring areas (R-2 for Liberty Street, R-1-7.5 for Roca Street).
- **Use of Solar Arrays:** The Commission discussed the possibility of exempting solar arrays installed over existing parking lots from thorough land use reviews, contending they are significant improvements offering sustainable solutions without creating excessive infractions, referring to standards for parking provision to be unaffected by these installations.
- **Height Restrictions:** Debate centered on aligning building height within the CFA framework, limiting most buildings to standard allowances while maintaining the potential for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for structures up to 110 feet, especially focused on the significant site at Walker and Ashland Streets if warranted by future proposals.
- **Conditional Use Permits:** Commissioners concluded that neighborhood engagement was critical, thus emphasizing retaining CUP protocols for substantial construct proposals entering proximity borders within 50 feet.
- **Exemption of Tree Removal Permits:** Recognizing SOU's aim to streamline processes while noting obligations to licensed evaluations guided decision towards forest ecosystem management in SOU's jurisdiction without a strict permit system.
- **Public Outreach:** Concerns from speakers about a lack of adequate communication from SOU informed an outlook that direct community communication standards regarding future developments should be incorporated, ensuring that residents within 200 feet receive direct mailers notifying of impact opportunities regarding university-led projects.

Chair Verner closed the Public Hearing and Public Record at 9:36 p.m.

Deliberations and Decision

The Commission further discussed incorporating better community communication into SOU's master plan requirements. They deliberated on maintaining alignment with Ashland's standards, especially concerning building heights and conditional use permits, focusing on consistency with existing climate-friendly area regulations.

The Commission proposed various amendments such as requiring CUPs for developments over certain heights to ensure community interest is considered. They also advocated for height restrictions similar to those within CFA regulations and necessitated licensed arborists manage tree removals.





Planning Commission Minutes

The commission encouraged allowing adjustments to parking standards for enhanced solar projects but expressed concerns about zoning consistency and green space preservation.

Commissioners Phillips/KenCairn m/s to recommend adoption of the 2025 SOU Master Plan amendment including zoning for transferred properties and zoning map amendments, with the following adjustments:

- 1. Any project within 50 feet of private property would be subject to a Conditional Use Permit, with notice to properties within 200ft, a public hearing before the Planning Commission, and the potential for an appeal to the City Council.**
- 2. Exempting solar arrays over parking lots from land use review when they meet specific criteria.**
- 3. To allow proposed height allowances consistent with Climate Friendly Area standards, with conditional use permits required over 50 feet up to a 110 foot maximum**
- 4. Parking lot design requirements not triggered by solar arrays and new parking lots to comply with existing design standards.**
- 5. Proposed buildings with gross habitable floor area of 15,000sqft or more automatically triggering a Type II Site Design Review.**
- 6. Allow SOU to be exempt from Tree Removal permits processes when contracting a licensed arborist or when using a licensed arborist on staff.**
- 7. Allow adoption of the new sign code into the SOU Masterplan.**
- 8. Establish a standard of direct communication from SOU with neighbors before the construction of new buildings, sales of university property, or Master Plan updates.**
- 9. That SOU be subject to the Water Resource Protection Zone ordinance.**

Roll Call Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION - None

V. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*





SOU Master Plan

Ashland Planning Commission
June 24, 2025 Public Hearing



SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

SOU Master Plan
PC Hearing

Southern Oregon University Masterplan

Planning Commission Hearing

'Light Update'

Standard Legislative Public Process

**Joint Study
Session**

April 22, 2025

**PC Public
Hearing**

June 24, 2025

**CC Public
Hearing & ORD1**

July 15, 2025



2010 Master Plan

Figure 10: Master Plan

Also see accompanying large format plan

Theater Arts Building
& JPR
Renovation/Addition

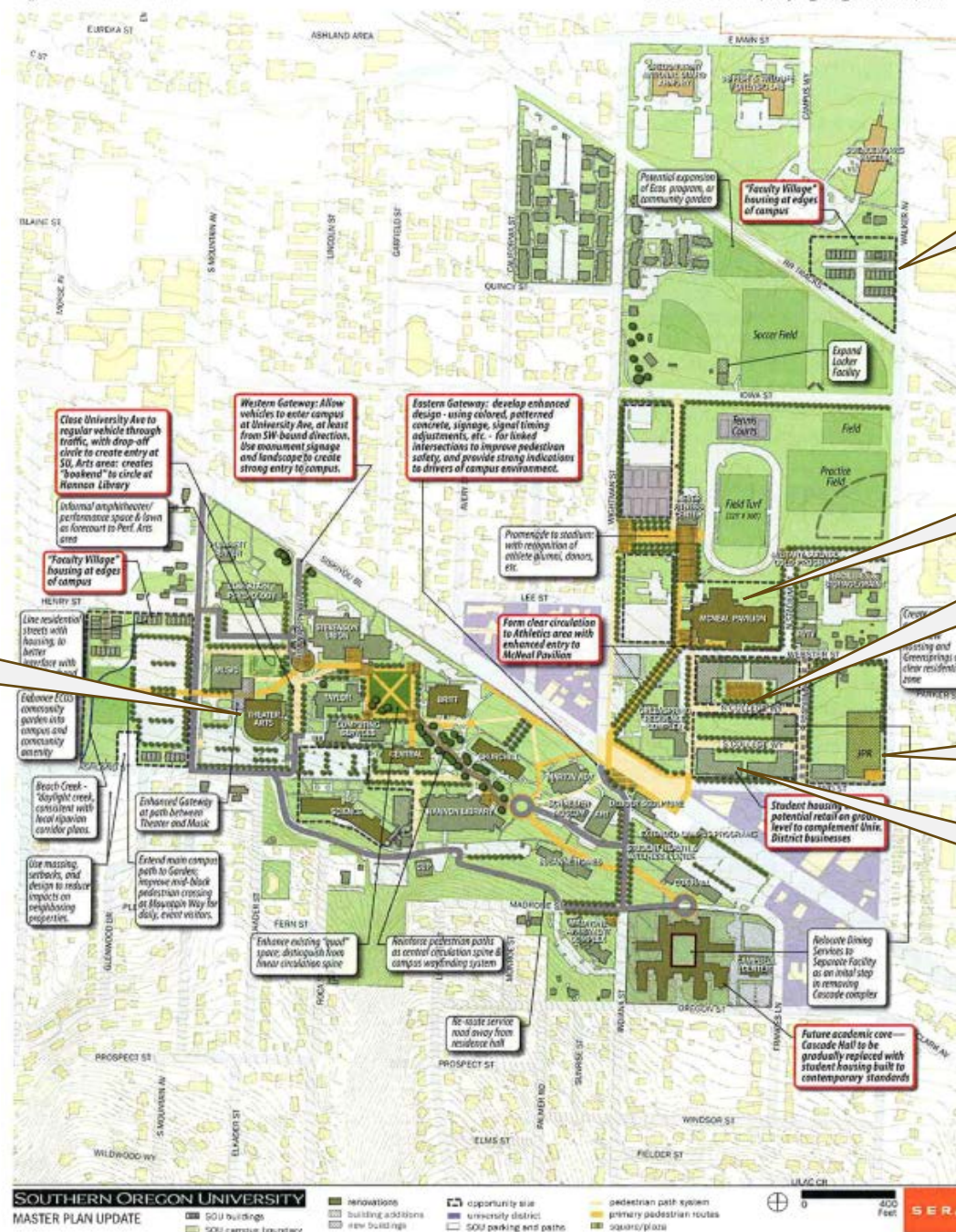
Faculty Village is now The
Farm/Center for
Sustainability
(Modification Approved)

New Lithia Pavilion &
Student Rec Center
Constructed

Two Residence Halls &
Dining Hall Constructed

JPR Shifted to
Theater Arts

Dorm Location Shifted &
Envelope Reserved
Along Ashland Street





New Residence Halls during 2013 Council, Planning Commission & Staff Tour



New Residence Halls during 2013 Council, Planning Commission & Staff Tour



New Residence Halls during 2013 Council, Planning Commission & Staff Tour



The Hawk Dining Hall during 2013 Council, Planning Commission & Staff Tour



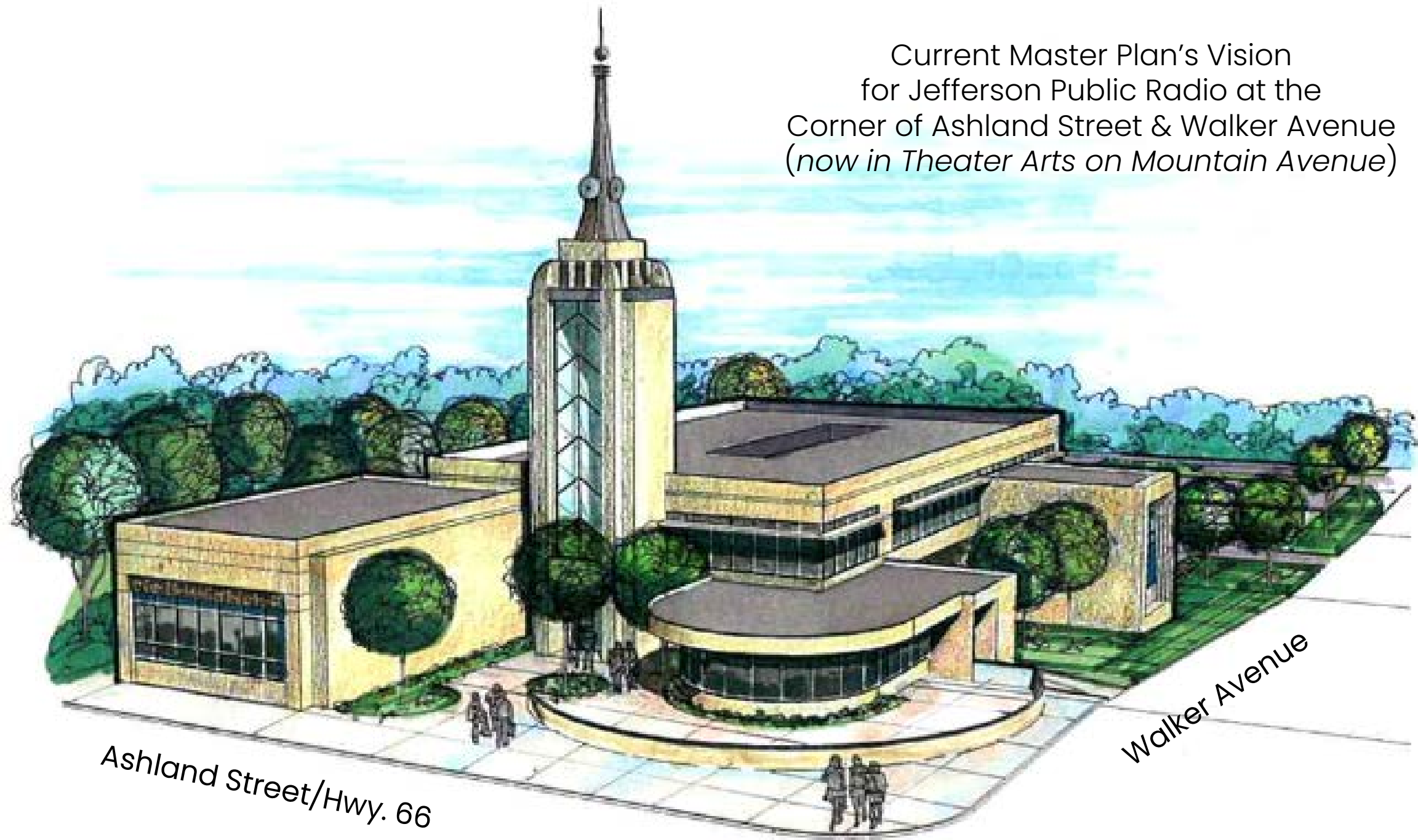
2018 PC Retreat Site Visit to new Lithia Pavilion & Student Rec Center





2018 PC Retreat Site Visit to SOU Theatre & JPR Building

Current Master Plan's Vision
for Jefferson Public Radio at the
Corner of Ashland Street & Walker Avenue
(*now in Theater Arts on Mountain Avenue*)



Ashland Street/Hwy. 66

Walker Avenue



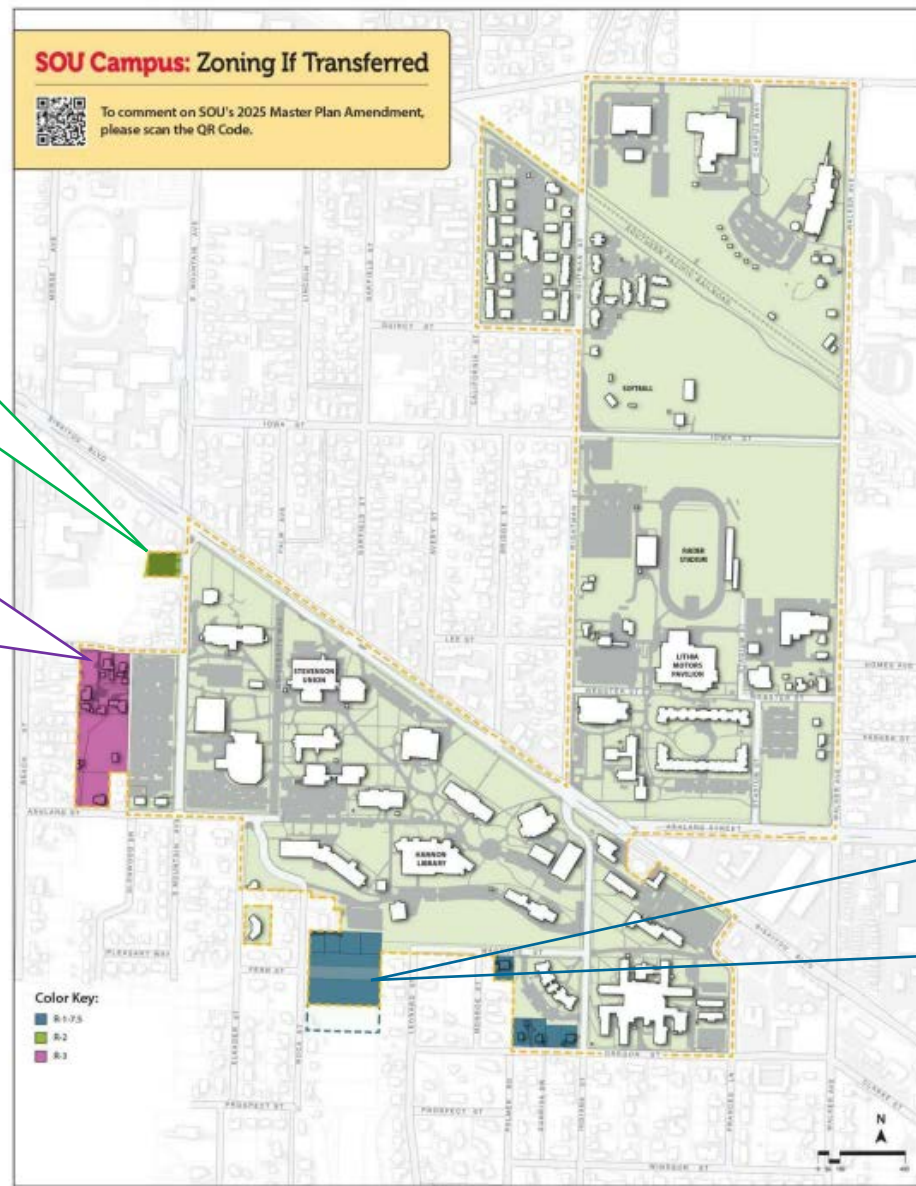
Thalden Pavilion at the Center for Sustainability on Walker Avenue (The Farm in the background)

ZONING IF TRANSFERRED: R-2		
LOCATION	MAP	TAX LOT #
S. Mountain Av. (Parking Lot #34)	39 1E 09DD	400
349 S. Mountain Av. (Parking Lot #34)	39 1E 09DD	500

SOU Campus: Zoning If Transferred



To comment on SOU's 2025 Master Plan Amendment, please scan the QR Code.



Those properties identified on this map may be sold into private ownership by Southern Oregon University. With this Masterplan adoption, their zoning is proposed to be changed as noted on this map, however they would remain subject to the SOU Masterplan and SO zoning overlay while under SOU-ownership. Once under private ownership, they would be subject to the zoning regulations of the underlying zoning proposed here.

ZONING IF TRANSFERRED: R-3		
LOCATION	MAP	TAX LOT #
1049 Ashland Street	39 1E 09DD	5300
Ashland Street	39 1E 09DD	5500
Beach Street	39 1E 09DD	5600
1060 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	5700
1040 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	5800
1038 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	5801
1038 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	6000
1056 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	6100
Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	6198
Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	6199
1066 Henry Street	39 1E 09DD	6200

ZONING CHANGE TO: R-1-7.5		
LOCATION	MAP	TAX LOT #
630 Roca Street	391E15BB	1500
620 Roca Street	391E15BB	1501
624 Roca Street	391E15BB	1502
628 Roca Street	391E15BB	1503
Fern Street	391E15BB	1600
648 Roca Street	391E15BB	6800
668 Roca Street	391E15BB	6900
Fern Street	391E15BB	Right-of-Way
1352 Madrone Street	391E15BB	9200
1349 Oregon Street	391E15BA	1200
1383 Oregon Street	391E15BA	1201
681 Indiana Street	391E15BA	1700
Indiana Street	391E15BA	1701

AMC 15.04.210 to .216 – The city's Demolition/Relocation Ordinance would no longer apply to university properties.

AMC 18.3.6 – Clarifies that the SO zone is subject to the Water Resource Protection Zones regulations in AMC 18.3.11 & that areas within 50-feet of privately owned property would be subject to "Type II" Site Design Review with a public hearing before the Planning Commission rather than to a Conditional Use Permit, and that any construction greater than 70 feet in height would be subject to a Conditional Use Permit (*Currently, construction greater than 40 feet in height requires a Conditional Use Permit*).

AMC [18.4.7](#) – Southern Oregon University would not be subject to the sign regulations of AMC 18.4.7 but would be subject to a campus master sign program incorporated in the proposed Master Plan.



AMC [18.5.2.030](#) – Clarifies that any new building on campus greater than 15,000 square feet shall be reviewed through a “Type II” procedure with a public hearing at the Planning Commission. (**Staff recommends that code language be GHFA rather than footprint (H. on page 43)*).

AMC [18.5.7.020](#) – The proposal would exempt tree maintenance and removal on campus from the city’s Tree Removal Permit process, but would require that SOU provide annual updates to Planning & the Tree Management Advisory Committee similar to the handling of tree removals on Parks properties (*Staff Arborist or Contract Arborist*).



- ❑ Currently, projects within 50 feet of private property are subject to a Conditional Use Permit, which allows more discretion in considering compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. As proposed here, these projects would be subject to a Type II Site Design Review procedure, with notice to properties within 200 feet, a public hearing before the Planning Commission, and the potential for appeal to the Council. **Are Commissioners comfortable with this less discretionary review procedure?**
- ❑ Is the Commission comfortable with exempting solar arrays over parking lots from land use review when they meet specific criteria?





SOU Campus: Photovoltaic (PV) Arrays



To comment on SOU's 2025 Master Plan Amendment, please scan the QR Code.



- ❑ Is the Commission agreeable with the proposed height allowances in the Master Plan? Most structures would be four stories, the Cascade replacement would be five stories, and the University District property at Walker Avenue and Ashland Street could be up to nine stories/110 feet. *Any building over 70 feet would require Conditional Use Permit approval.*
- ❑ Does the Commission support exemption from the maximum parking requirements in AMC 18.4.3 for the Cascade redevelopment or University District sites?



- ☐ Does the Commission support exemption from parking lot landscaping/tree standards based on the University's planned placement of solar canopies over parking lots? Would the Commission prefer that exempted parking lots provide parking lot trees in movable planters which would remain in place until solar arrays are installed, providing for some level of perimeter landscaping, or allowing a delay of planting for a specific timeframe?
- ☐ Does the Commission support exempting the University from the Tree Removal Permit process similarly to the exemption granted to the Parks Department?



My name is Jeannine Grizzard, I live on Roca St. Within SOU's permit application, the April 4th "Proposed Finding of Fact" states: *"SOU has sought input and communicated with stakeholders, the City and our community. We have created a web site to take input, conducted multiple open-forums for stakeholder input, etc."*

I live at 698 Roca Street, which is one house away from the Disc Golf Park that occupies the Roca properties that are proposed in the application to be rezoned ~~for multi-family apartments~~ and sold to a commercial developer. I am known to university management, having dialogued numerous times about the sale of 668 Roca St, which lies between me and the Park. I am a significant stakeholder, and yet no one from SOU reached out to advise me of open forums or a website.

Which leads to my primary point: removal of the Disc Golf Course at Roca Park is a decision that impacts not just Roca Street, or Ashland, but the entire Valley, and yet this is a notably unpublicized conversation. Where is the newspaper headline: "SOU Proposes to Sell Disc Golf Course for Commercial Housing"? Where is the public poll on a City website? There are other courses, but according to OregonDiscGolf.com only two are year round and public: SOU Roca Park and The Cove at Emigrant Lake, and online reviews for The Cove are largely poor.

The City of Ashland has a proclaimed goal of wanting to attract younger residents. A big part of attracting and retaining them is not just housing but the free recreation that goes with it: our parks, bike trails, and this disc golf course. Putting an end to it conflicts with the City's professed goals.

On a personal note: I've lived in my house 19 years. At least three of us, in the distance I can toss a ball to, have remodeled our houses with our own hands. We are dug in. Apartments next door is a significant compromise to our quality of life and property value. I was sold my house in 2006 based on an Arboretum that SOU fundraised for off of my neighbors.

I suggest that SOU's proposed permit be divided: the Henry Street properties separated from the Roca Street properties. Sell and develop the Henry Street ones first, since they are closer to commercial areas. See if the multi-family housing units are built and occupied in our emerging economy. Then return, if necessary, with a proposal for Roca Street in a few years. But for now at least, hold off until proper advertising can be undertaken so that community stakeholders can actually weigh in on the import of the Disc Golf Course—which is also the best kid snow hill in winter. Thank you for your attention.

And my husband, Jim Fritz, at end stage hospice asks: "Will this destroy our redwood?" The massive one in Roca Park.