

UNIVERSITY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
LAND USE COMMITTEE  
September 13, 2015

RE: Campus Institutional Zoning Project

The UPNA Land Use Committee proposes adoption of the following comments by the UPNA Board at its September 14 meeting.



The UPNA was able to participate in the advisory group that helped create this document based on its collaborative experience in developing the current University of Portland Conditional Use Master Plan. However, the UPNA has several concerns with the document in its current form and cannot support it until 33.150.050 is amended to REQUIRE Good Neighbor Agreements.

First, it is inherently not in the interest of a neighborhood association to be in favor of this document and the policy of institutional zones whereby the neighborhood has little if any recourse to influence the actions or development of an institution. The current conditional use process does provide a mechanism for neighborhoods to raise concerns in a collaborative or adversarial manner. For instance, in the most recent University of Portland CUMP over 100 University Park neighbors were able to constructively raise their concerns about student behavior and public safety, development of certain parcels of land and the rampant growth of off-campus student housing.

As a result, the approved CUMP addressed public safety (the first time in a master plan), delayed and limited construction on University lands adjacent to two residences, and the University committed to house 75% of the undergraduates on campus. As a result of these changes, the UPNA Board unanimously supported the final Master Plan proposal, and has since supported a proposed street vacation and demolition of houses along Willamette Boulevard for student dorms.

Second, the document assumes that educational institutions are stationary. In fact these institutions do relocate as did the Methodist college that was the original institution at what is now the University of Portland, and as Heald College recently did. Higher educational institutions need the freedom and flexibility to develop their resources and adjust their business plans to meet future needs. The current document, places too many restrictions on the ability of an educational institution (p.24-37 or 33.150.100). It assumes that only small retail would benefit a neighborhood, when in fact offices, labs, warehouses, parking, outdoor recreation and religious facilities might provide benefits and should not be apriori prohibited. The University of Portland provides significant parks and open space, religious and community facilities under its Master Plan but would be prohibited or restricted from doing so under Table 150-1.

Why should the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map limit potential public-private or community-business-institutional partnerships? Nationally, many universities are developing labs, offices, senior and assisted living facilities and mausoleums or columbariums which would be limited or prohibited under the proposed rules.

Third, creation of these institutional zones may make it difficult to redevelop surplus properties. An institution may need to sell land, and this new set of zones restricts the potential uses, purchasers and value of such land in a manner that discriminates against the institution as opposed to commercial, industrial or residential zones. A neighborhood has a vested interest in such decisions.

Fourth, the UPNA supports the intention of the proposed Neighborhood Contact and Outreach (33.150.050) as a good minimal standard. However, the steps called forth require only notification to the community of an institution's development plans. It does not require any meaningful dialogue or recourse if a neighborhood disagrees with an institution's plans. All of the power rests with the institution. Therefore, the UPNA calls for a mechanism for dialog with the neighborhood or for resolving disputes beyond annual meetings.

Good Neighbor and Community Benefit Agreements are recommended, but not required under the proposed 33.150.050. Such agreements should be required. Until this section is changed, the UPNA cannot support this institutional zoning proposal.

The UPNA notes that Map 150-2 reflects the approved University of Portland Conditional Use Master Plan, and will create a clear delineation of the campus while providing a reasonable transition to the single family neighborhood across Willamette Boulevard.

Sincerely,  
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