

INTRODUCTION

Boise State University is requesting a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezoning from the City of Boise, driven primarily by the decision to develop a men's NCAA baseball field on campus. Parcels subject to the rezoning request include those associated with the baseball site and elsewhere along the Campus Planning Boundary. A Conditional Use Permit for the development of the baseball field will be processed by the University at a later date.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

The baseball field requires changes to the street network not reflected on the 2015 Campus Master Plan (as approved by the City of Boise). In communicating these changes with City of Boise planning staff, it was determined that the changes were significant enough to warrant the Comprehensive Plan Amendment update.

The proposed baseball site is roughly bound by Euclid and Denver avenues and Beacon and Belmont streets. To meet NCAA minimum dimensions, the field must span across Belmont Street and Grant Avenue. As such, Boise State will be requesting vacation of these rights-of-way. To maintain connectivity between Euclid and Denver Avenues, a new pedestrian and bike linkage is planned near the Belmont vacation. A portion of Grant Avenue (near University Drive) will remain open to provide ingress/egress to a future parking facility.

Aside from these right-of-way changes, the infrastructure, facilities and circulation plan on the proposed master plan closely represent the 2015 plan. New and/or adjusted facilities include additional student housing (icon 9 on Exhibit A), an addition to the Liberal Arts Building (icon 7 on Exhibit A), and additional buildout of Albertsons Stadium for improved access, seating, and parking (icon 22, 23, 25 on Exhibit A).

The conversion of University Drive to a pedestrian mall, as considered previously, is not part of this request. The addition of a new intersection where Boise Avenue meets Capitol Boulevard is still shown, but an implementation date is uncertain. This intersection work is most likely to occur alongside project #2 on the Exhibit A (*Gateway Academic Building*). Overall, the infrastructure and facilities shown represent 10 – 20 or more years of campus growth.

REZONING

The City of Boise has a zoning designation unique to universities – the University District zone, or “U” Zone. This allows Boise State to build facilities that relate to and accommodate higher education needs. This includes academic buildings, administrative buildings, student housing, athletic venues, etc. The U Zone provides flexibility, but also has limits and controls that address nearby neighborhood compatibility. Boise State is requesting to rezone certain university-owned properties that are contiguous or within its existing planning boundary.

The University initially identified 18 individual parcels for rezoning. However, feedback received at a neighborhood meeting held on August 21, 2019 led to adjustments. More specifically, Boise State has scaled back its request to six properties (as shown on Exhibit C). These parcels are closest to near-term facility growth, including the on-campus baseball field.

Along with our rezoning request, we request the City consider changes to the U Zone's dimensional standards. Boise State is proposing that height restrictions be removed for areas considered interior to campus. “Interior” is not formally defined at present, but a 50-foot buffer from the Campus

Planning Boundary is already referenced in City Code. Areas further than 50 feet from the boundary could benefit from these dimensional changes.

As demand for housing, academic, administrative and athletic facilities increases, flexibility for vertical construction will assist with development amid land constraints. These changes will be especially beneficial in limiting horizontal growth into expansion areas or neighborhoods near campus. Boise State believes that our campus - especially given its location in the City of Boise's "Downtown Planning Area" – is a justifiable area for increased urban land use policies.

Lastly, we look forward to discussing a revised Campus Planning Boundary with City of Boise planning staff. The boundary will incorporate newly rezoned properties, but as in years past, may also include certain areas without the U Zone.

TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY

For the baseball field and proposed circulation plan in South Campus¹, Kittelson & Associates conducted a traffic impact study in 2018. This study modeled three scenarios, all with Boise State's preferred circulation plan in place:

1. New structured parking facility to assist with baseball;
2. New surface parking lot to assist with baseball; and
3. No additional parking provided with baseball.

Each scenario shows no major impact to level of service (LOS) on nearby streets or intersections. At two intersections (Belmont/Broadway and Beacon/Michigan), LOS would indicate the need for a signal warrants study. However, traffic volumes collected during the study would indicate that signalization is premature and/or unnecessary.

Further, recent data display that traffic patterns on campus have dramatically changed over the past ten years. Notable findings include:

- A 17% decrease in through traffic on University Drive,
- Only 5-10% of traffic entering campus (from Capitol or Broadway) actually travel the entire corridor, showing that streets on campus are primarily campus serving.

The traffic impact study has been included with our application.

CONCLUSION

Boise State is confident our Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezoning requests reflect acceptable and responsible changes to our campus. Our outreach with nearby neighbors has influenced a substantial change in the original rezoning scope. The development of the baseball field, and associated impacts to rights-of-way, were thoroughly studied by planners and engineers, and show no negative consequences for campus or the adjacent streets.

We appreciate the opportunity to formally present these applications to the City Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. As you complete your review, please don't hesitate to let me know if we can provide any additional information to clarify the project's vision.

¹ The area of campus bound by Lincoln Avenue, Denver Avenue, University Drive and Beacon Street.