May 21, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. R. Bowen Loftin

SUBJECT: CBE Recommendation: Student Recreation Center Expansion

The Department of Recreational Sports requested on May 9 to appear on the CBE Agenda at the May 14 meeting. Request for approval of the schematic design of a major expansion to the Student Recreation Center was urgently needed; concerns for the facility’s expansion in the direction of the railroad tracks presented potential for a delay in construction which would result in significant cost. The concept stage of the request was approved by CBE in February 2012, with contingencies listed in the attached Sub-Council reports. The proposed expansion adds activity and meeting room space through an addition of almost 100,000 square feet. The facility is currently 300,000 square feet.

During the schematic design review, representatives from Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities Coordination expressed concern about the close proximity of the proposed expansion toward the railroad tracks. These concerns were reviewed at the Technical Review Sub-Council on May 13 and documented in email exchanges included below:

EHS is concerned about the proposed expansion of the facility (especially the gymnasium and bathroom area) towards the railroad tracks (towards the east). The edge of the existing Rec Center building is about 122 feet from the centerline of the railroad tracks. The following issues are related to our concerns:

- The gymnasium and bathroom area (according to the attached documents) will be ~81 feet from the centerline of the existing Union Pacific (UP) railroad tracks
  - Rec Center personnel have indicated the final design of the gym will require about 10 feet additional width, so the actual distance to the current railroad tracks will be about 71 feet

- UP personnel have indicated they intend to install an additional set of railroad tracks (double tracks) within their right-of-way in the next 5 years
  - UP indicates that a second set of tracks must be a minimum of 14 feet from centerline of the current tracks, and they prefer a separation of 20 feet
  - Due to the configuration of the bridges associated with the underground passages at Kimbrough and Old Main (under construction), the additional set of railroad tracks must be installed west of the current tracks
  - If double tracks are installed, the proposed building expansion would be somewhere between 51 feet and 57 feet from the double tracks
- According to UP, railroad cars vary in length, between 45 feet and 90 feet
- The existing railroad tracks are rated by UP as Category 4 tracks, with a maximum allowed speed of 60 miles per hour
  - UP and TAMU have an unwritten “gentleman’s” agreement that trains will not exceed 30 miles per hour

EHS is concerned that the proposed expansion of the Rec Center towards the railroad tracks will increase the risks associated with a possible train derailment, due to the issues described above. No specific rule or regulation exists in the US that prescribes or establishes a safe distance from the railroad tracks. In Canada it appears that the minimum distance is set at 15 meters (49.2 feet).

EHS would like to note that the portion of the proposed Rec Center expansion associated with the weight room will also expand towards the railroad tracks, to about 104 feet from the current railroad tracks, and as little as 84 feet if double tracks are installed by UP. EHS believes that any expansion of the building, which results in structures that are closer to the railroad tracks than the current structure, will increase risk. It does appear that with some modifications to the proposed design, the weight room area could be expanded without moving closer to the railroad tracks than the current structure.

The Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc) reviewed the project at Conceptual Design phase and will review the Schematic Design at their June 5th meeting in accordance with standard design review procedures.

CBE had a split vote on their recommendation. Although no regulations are being violated, the nays offered some compelling comments in their dissension:
- Lack of clarity as to why the ‘southern option’ for expansion is not viable (direction further from the tracks)
- Increased risk to students more important than loss of parking spaces and additional cost
- Discomfort with rush to vote; inability to discuss openly; request is too important and complicated to address without CBE process engaged and review from subcouncils
- Safety issue deserved more attention earlier in the process
- Decision will set precedent for building near the tracks
- Agreement on speed of trains through campus needs to be formalized
- Fifty feet is 17 paces
- Many of the carrier cars on the train carry sulfuric acid
- Personal experience from a representative in Bryan witnessed a number of derailments when residing near the UPR tracks over a 17-year period
The Council for the Built Environment does not recommend the plans for construction to expand the Recreational Center as proposed. Additionally, communication between the Office of General Counsel and representatives of Union Pacific on UPR’s right-of-way indicate some questions remain in identifying these boundaries. The CBE recommends the Department of Recreational Sports re-engage with the relevant CBE Sub-Councils and their contracting party to address the concerns raised, complete right-of-way confirmations and present options to avoid new construction in the direction of the railroad tracks.

Karan L. Watson  5/21/13
Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

Rodney P. McClendon  5/28/13
Vice President for Administration
Co-Chair, Council for the Built Environment

R. Bowen Loftin  6/3/12
President

cc:  Sub-Council Chairs, Council on the Built Environment
     Mr. Dennis Corrington, Executive Director, Department of Recreational Sports
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson  
Provoest and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Rodney McClendon  
Vice President for Administration

FROM: Prof. David Woodcock  
Chair, Design Review Sub-Council

DATE: January 26, 2012

RE: Design Review Sub-Council Report  
Proposed Student Recreational Center Expansion

On January 18, 2012 the Design Review Sub-Council (DRsc) reviewed a request from TAMU Rec Sports to expand the existing Student Recreational Center. Potential areas of expansion include a weight room on the north side of the facility and four potential gymnasium areas on the south side.

In discussion of the expansion, it was noted that the nature of the original building reflects the multiple range of activities being carried out inside and it is anticipated that the expansion facilities will maintain a similar character and use compatible materials. The DRsc recommend approval of the concept to expand the Rec Center as presented and looks forward to reviewing Schematic Design and Design Development proposals as those are available.

cc: Dennis Corrington  
Design Review Sub-Council Members  
Jo Williams
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson
   Provost and Executive Vice President

   Dr. Rodney McClendon
   Vice President for Administration

DATE: January 24, 2012

SUBJECT: Student Rec Center Expansion

The CBE Technical Review Sub-council reviewed a request by Dennis Corrington, Executive Director of Recreational Sports, to add additional facilities to the existing Student Rec Center.

Recreation space used by Recreational Sports will be eliminated with the slated demolition of the Read Building and G. Rollie White.

The proposed addition to the Rec Center would be approximately 70,000 gross square feet and would be attached to the current structure. The estimated cost of the project, $25 million, will be funded by bonds.

Recommendation
The CBE Technical Review Sub-council supports the idea of the Department of Recreational Sports adding on to the Student Rec Center, as long as a funding model can be developed and approved by the Division of Finance and Treasury Services.

The following details were submitted by members of the Technical Review Sub-council. The Sub-council recommends approval, if the concerns below are addressed and funded.

CIS Networking
The design should include design and funding for the cost of cabling for any wired and wireless network coverage in the expansion areas.

Transportation Services
The REC expansion has the potential to remove several hundred parking spaces from the inventory of parking lot 100j. Our preference would be for the expansion area to have a minimal impact on parking, but we have seen the master plan for the REC in the past and could absorb the loss of space if the department decided to expand to the south (between the REC and Olsen Field). As with other auxiliary projects that have taken parking spaces as part of the project, we have asked that the project add equivalent space in the area or pay Transportation Services the replacement cost of the space that is taken, and we will add the space back to the area. We will welcome an entrance on the southern side of the REC so that we can take advantage of the available parking in lot 100j.
Financial Planning
The proforma will continue to be reviewed by the Division of Finance as this project develops. Approval by the Division of Finance and Treasury Services will be required before the project moves forward.

Environmental Health & Safety
During the design phase, EHS will review the plans to ensure we keep appropriate fire lanes available for emergency response.

Tom Reber
Chair, Technical Review Sub-Council
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Attachments
Xc: Technical Review Sub-council
   Jo Williams, Executive Assistant to the Vice President
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan Watson, Co-Chair, Council on Built Environment
   Dr. Rodney McClendon, Co-Chair, Council on Built Environment

THROUGH: LtGen Joe Weber, USMC (Ret)
         Vice President for Student Affairs

THROUGH: Mr. Tom Reber
         Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

FROM: Dennis Corrington
      Executive Director

DATE: December 5, 2011

SUBJECT: Rec Center Expansion

The Department of Recreational Sports proposes to add additional facilities to the existing Student Recreation Center. The destruction of the Reed Building and G Rollie White will remove physical activity facilities currently used by the Physical Education Activity Program (PEAP) and the Department of Recreational Sports for their respective programs. Rec Sports and PEAP have been working together to design the future PEAP Building and the addition to the Rec Center to guarantee that there will be no unnecessary duplication of facilities while assuring that the needs of both programs will be met.

The addition to the Rec Center would be approximately 70,000 gross square feet and would be attached to the current structure. The estimated cost for the project is $25 million and will be funded by bonds. We have worked with the Division of Finance to develop a pro forma that assures we have the debt capacity to build this addition. The Department of Recreational Sports requests this project be placed on the Texas A&M University Capital Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.