

OHSU previews Schnitzer campus building design

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

A development team from Oregon Health and Sciences University has discussed their plans, and given the public a preview, of their proposed Collaborative Life Sciences Building, the first structure on their new Schnitzer South Waterfront campus. In two sessions before the Portland Design Commission, the west side remains an issue.

The project, known as the Collaborative Life Sciences Building is, as its name suggests, a collaborative project by OHSU, Oregon State University and Portland State University. It will be situated at Southwest Moody Avenue and a future Porter Street, immediately north of a future Light Rail station.

It will house classrooms, lecture halls, research facilities, a student lounge, cafeteria, and ground floor retail. It will be the first building on the future Schnitzer campus, a 19-acre tract donated to OHSU by the Schnitzer family.

The building will comprise 470,000 total square feet. It will have 470 space parking garage below a 75-foot high podium housing most student activities. Above the podium will be two

towers, one six stories tall on the south end and another rising to 14 stories on the north; this will house the research facilities.

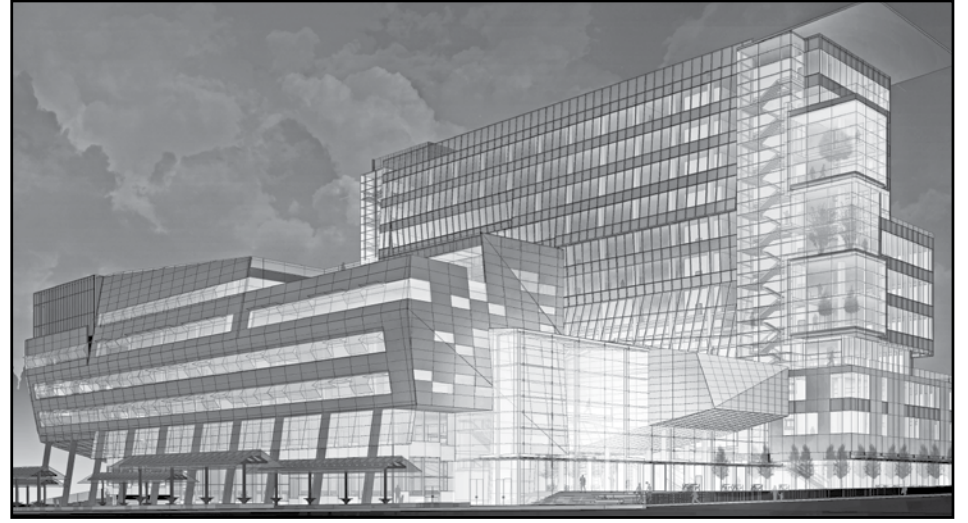
The main entrance will be at the southeast corner behind a pedestrian plaza. The building will face a future pedestrian promenade down the middle of the campus, architects Paul Zajfen and Carol Mayer Reed said.

OHSU vice president Mark Williams said the project had been made possible by some "extremely generous gifts," including an anonymous \$40 million donation.

Among other things the new building will replace the existing Dental School, which Williams said was "a testament to deferred maintenance. It would cost us \$20 million to meet code and keep it open, and it wouldn't be money well spent."

The development team showed the project to the Portland Design Commission in July at a Design Advisory, a voluntary, informal review in advance of a formal design review application.

In general, Commission members seemed enthusiastic about the project. Their strongest criticism was of the western façade, which they found to be too stark and uninviting a wall.



OHSU's Collaborative Life Science Building (Courtesy Jim Newman, OHSU)

Commission member Andrew Jansky said, "This will be the main frontage that most people will see who come by car. We need a building with striking visual interest."

At a subsequent session in August, landscape architect Carol Mayer Reed proposed making the west frontage a "linear park," with landscaping separating it from both the side of the building and the roadways and light rail line to the west.

Some of the Commission members

were critical of this approach. Commission member Kathryn Schultz said the area between the landscaping could become a "dead zone that people will pass through, not want to hang out in."

Commission member David Wark said, "Not every street frontage has to have the same level of activity, but Moody will have such a huge investment in infrastructure."

Commission chair Gwen Millius told the development team to make the west side "not look like a sewer space."

EarthTalk

(Continued from Page 2)

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