

OHSU breaks ground on new South Waterfront building; design review pending

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Oregon Health and Sciences University is so eager to have its new Collaborative Life Sciences Building underway that last month they held a ground-breaking ceremony – while City-required design review is still pending.

The 480,000 square foot building will be located on Southwest Moody Avenue at Porter Street, adjacent to a future Portland to Milwaukie Light Rail station.

It will be shared by OHSU, Portland State University and Oregon State University, all of whom contributed to its \$295 million cost.

City planner Kara Fioravanti's latest staff report recommended against ap-

proval of the building's design at this time.

At a hearing last month, the Portland Design Commission, which had already held two informal Design Advisory sessions with the development team, concurred and asked for additional adjustments. Another hearing was set for 1:30 p.m. November 17 at 1900 SW Fourth Ave.

OHSU is proceeding with work on the structure's foundation under a so-called "hold harmless" agreement with the City.

Under this procedure, a developer can begin work on a project still under City review at his own risk, with the understanding that the developer may be required to change work already done if it is deemed necessary.

During a brief discussion, Design



Officials take part in a groundbreaking event at the site of the new OHSU Life Sciences building. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)



An artist's rendition of the OHSU Life Sciences building. (Photo courtesy of OHSU)

Commission members assured the development team that they were safe in beginning the foundation work.

The building is the first on a proposed new 19-acre campus, on formerly industrial land donated by the Schnitzer family. The building's most prominent feature will be a 12-story tower on its north end, and this will be named for Bonnie and Gene Skourtes in honor of their \$10 million gift.

Including the Schnitzer's gift of the land and a \$40 million anonymous contribution, the project received \$83 million in philanthropic contributions.

Governor John Kitzhaber attended the ground breaking, as did the presidents of the three institutions. All three said that the structure would represent a collaborative approach not just in

development resources, but also in the function of the completed edifice.

George Bernsteiner, chancellor of the Oregon public university system, said the building would "set a tone that all of us shed the silo mentality that has characterized our institutions for so long."

Kitzhaber, after recalling his medical school days, said, "I'm excited to be on a future campus. Walls will be torn down so scientists and educators can share, and students can benefit. It will be innovative in its approach to education. Scientific research will depend on a collaborative approach. It will be a shared experience."

Paying tribute to the donors, the governor said, "It's fair to say no institution gets built without the generosity of its (Continued on Page 6)

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