

# City of Portland approves naturopathic college's 10-year master plan

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

In the face of zero public opposition or concern, Hearings Officer Gregory Frank last month approved the National College of Natural Medicine's 10-year master plan for its campus.

The plan covers a 5.4-acre area bounded by Southwest Naito Parkway, Woods Street, and Corbett and Kelly avenues. Within this area the college currently owns 80 percent of the land. It also includes some single family homes owned by others.

Several of these property owners attended the hearing. In testimony obviously aimed at these owners rather than Frank, NCNM consultant Beverly Bookin said that the designation merely "an alert to the City and owners of the College's ultimate intent."

To do otherwise, Bookin said, would require the college to go through a costly plan amendment process in order to acquire any such property.

However, Bookin added, "We want to assure you that this is based on acquisition over time between a willing buyer and seller. We don't have power of eminent domain, and we wouldn't use it even if we did."

In the meantime, she said, owners could continue to use the property for any use allowed by the zoning. "There are advantages to being in the boundary," Bookin said.

"You can expect your property to increase in value. Also, if you ever want to sell your home you know that you have a potential willing partner."

The master plan calls for new development in four phases, based on the school's most pressing needs.

Phase I calls for using a recently acquired house for "academic support," a second site for a new classroom building with underground parking, and a third for a mixture of uses that will include student housing.

Phase II calls for using four more houses for offices, another classroom building, the vacation of Southwest Meade and Hooker streets in the campus, and a new surface parking lot.

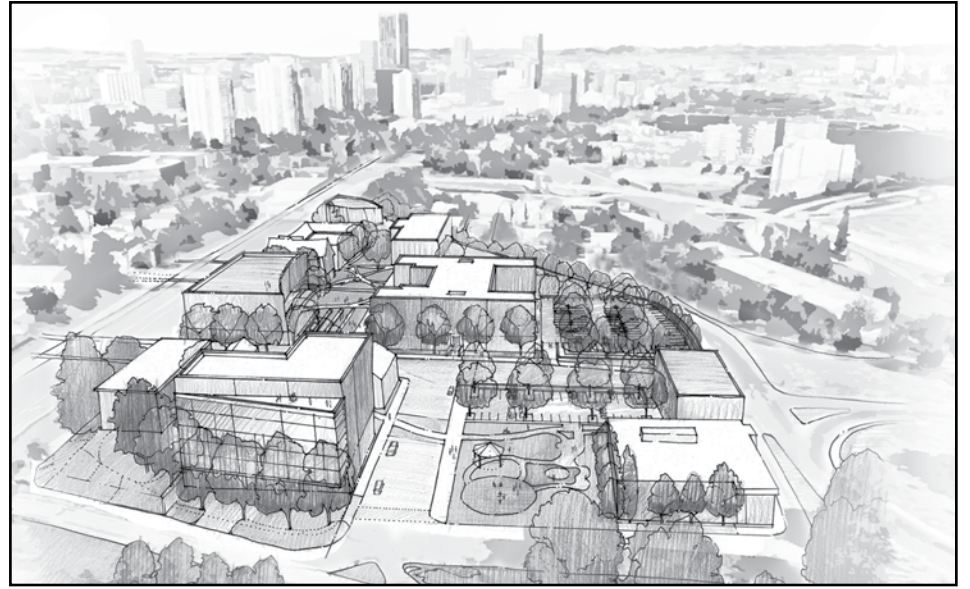
Phase III would include the expansion of an existing outpatient clinic, and creation of a two-story parking structure.

In Phase IV, the college would redo its main building. Originally built as Failing School in 1913, the building was later used by Portland Community College until being acquired by NCNM in 1995.

Although NCNM has worked extensively with the South Portland Neighborhood Association in creating its plan, that group gave no official input on the final document; neither did anyone else prior to the hearing.

At the hearing itself there was no public testimony offered. Frank asked Bookin if the college was satisfied with the conditions of approval recommended by planner Sylvia Cate.

"We're comfortable with the conditions; they're all fair and reasonable," she replied. Frank then took the unusual step of announcing that he would approve the plan with Cate's conditions, unchanged.



An aerial view facing north of the proposed National College of Naturopathic Medicine's campus. Downtown Portland is in the background. (Illustration courtesy of Jenny Bowdlin, NCNM)

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