

**TOPIC: FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE-WESTMINSTER
CAMPUS FACILITIES MASTER PLAN**

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I. SUMMARY

A new Facilities Master Plan for Front Range Community College Westminster Campus was submitted to the Department of Higher Education for review by the Commission on Higher Education in May of 2007. The Plan was completed by the consulting firm Paulien and Associates in 2007 and was approved by the institution and the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education at its April 11, 2007. This Facilities Master Plan updates and replaces the previously approved Facilities Master Plan for the Campus approved by CCHE in 1993.

The original FRCC Westminster Campus facility design was meant to serve students in traditional technical and industrial programs, and had large spaces devoted to collision repair manufacturing, and electronics laboratories. The campus was also originally designed as a long, thin structure in order to take advantage of solar energy and was once the largest solar heated building in the world. Today, demand for technical and industrial programs has decreased and the campus solar panels are no longer functional. Program demand at FRCC now centers on health care and students looking to transfer.

Several capital construction projects have helped the school transition to serve current demands including a renovation of a portion of the original building and adding a library and student center, but the school still has needs to reallocate space in order to best suit current programs.

FRCC expects campus enrollment to grow by 11% by 2011 due to population increases in the area surrounding the campus, re-organization of programs and increases in penetration rates, especially among high school students.

The space analysis conducted for this master plan shows the campus does not necessarily need new space, but is in need of major reconfigurations of space. Another major need identified by the plan is to create a new student service center accessible to the campus entrance. Due to these needs, the campus has developed or is developing program plans for projects to meet these needs. This Facilities Master Plan has led to the development of two specific capital improvement projects, both of which will request state funds.

A program plan for the *One-Stop Student Service Center and Instructional Facilities Renovation* was submitted to DHE and approved by CCHE in FY07-08 and is again on the CCHE priority list for FY08-09. The project is the #26 priority on the priority list approved by the Commission on October 4, 2007. This project consists of three major

parts, each modifying the existing structure to fit with current campus needs and trends for a total of approximately \$5.2 million.

The program will create a one-stop student center that will combine student service functions from four different sites on the campus. This part of the project will entail the renovation of 16,105 assignable square feet (ASF). The new center will combine the offices of admissions and records, financial aid, cashiers, advising, testing, special services, non-credit student enrollment, and distance learning student services. The one-stop center will also include a single welcome desk where students can get a basic variety of questions answered, make advising appointments and get help with basic registration and online payment. Surrounding the desk will be office areas where students can access an advisor and get assistance on more detailed financial aid, registration or payment issues.

The program plan also calls for the renovation of 2,620 ASF of Math Department offices and classrooms. This renovation would combine all math offices in one location and provide department meeting space and tutoring spaces where math faculty could meet with students. The center would also house three classrooms designed for math teaching. These classrooms would replace two of the five classrooms lost in the construction of the on-stop student service center.

The plan also calls for the renovation of 6,000 ASF of large group meeting, performance, gathering and exhibition space. The large group meeting/performance space will seat 120-150 people and will accommodate musical performances, lectures, speech competitions, etc. The open-area gathering space will serve as a lobby area for the performance and exhibition spaces and a general community gathering space. A new gallery will also be built in a flexible open box style with moveable partitions.

The plan also calls for approximately 1000 square feet of physical plant storage areas being constructed in vacated math offices that have been identified as ideal storage space. This will be possible if the other aspects of the plan are implemented.

The second identified capital improvement program identified in Master Plan is for a phased renovation of academic space. The project is scheduled to be submitted to CCHE for FY08-09. The budget included in the Master Plan estimates total costs at \$9.3 million. The project will redistribute and reallocate the correct sizes of classroom space so as to better meet the needs of current and future curriculum by providing greater collaborative spaces and multidisciplinary spaces

Combined, the two identified projects will require an estimated \$13.9 million in Capital Construction Funds Exempt (State General Funds).

The facilities Master Plan also includes information about the FRCC Brighton Center, a satellite of the Westminster Campus that offers general education, developmental studies

and business classes for students looking to complete an Associates of Arts degree or fulfill prerequisites for another program. The center is currently located in the old Adams County Courthouse with less than 4,000 square feet that is being leased. The program currently has four classrooms and one computer lab. The Brighton Center currently serves around 68 FTE and is projected to grow to 120 FTE by 2011. The current location will likely not be available after Fall 2007 and the institution is currently looking into several possible lease alternatives in Brighton.

II. BACKGROUND

FRCC is an open-access institution serving anyone 16 years of age or older in college preparatory or two-year college-level instruction. FRCC provides both general and occupational education for those seeking certificates in a number of fields or an associates degree in Applied Science, Arts, Science or General Studies. FRCC also serves many students who are looking to transfer to a four-year institution.

FRCC's Westminster Campus was originally constructed in 1977 as the North Campus of the Community College of Denver and was changed to FRCC by the State Legislature in 1983. Today, FRCC has campuses in Fort Collins, Boulder, Longmont and a center in Brighton.

According to Department of Higher Education Policies Section III Part D, Commission approved facilities master plans should be re-examined every ten years. Given the changing nature of development needs and fiscal constraints, institutions can submit amendments to their master plans in the interim to incorporate new development strategies and changing needs without undertaking the task of creating a new master plan. Section III Part D of DHE policy states:

A long-range plan must be developed as a flexible framework for campus growth that recognizes the dynamic nature of higher education. As enrollments grow or decline and/or as academic programs change or become more comprehensive to serve new student needs, campus facility needs inevitably will change. A facility master plan must be capable of meeting these changing circumstances. To ensure that a Long-Range plan remains valid, an institution must do one of the following before the ten-year life of the plan expires:

- *Create a new Long-Range Plan;*
- *Send a letter to DHE stating that all assumptions contained in the master plan are still valid and that all facilities' needs outlined in it are still needed but have not yet been completed; or*
- *Amend the master plan to bring it up to date.*

Thus, at least every ten years the long-range plan for each campus must be re-examined or updated in order to keep it current.

The submittal and approval of this program plan will but FRCC Westminster in compliance with CCHE/DHE policy.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Department of Higher Education staff had the following questions in the course of their review. The questions were submitted to the College and have been answered satisfactorily. College responses to the questions are shown below in italics.

1) Are the solar panels integrated in the original campus design no longer functional? Has the campus reconsidered using solar energy to take advantage of the original design?

They are no longer functional and the heat for the campus was converted to natural gas via a new central plant several years ago. We have had discussions with Xcel Energy regarding the possibility of new technology solar panels. There has been some interest on their part based on the legislative requirements for solar they will have to meet in the future---but nothing too serious has come of it yet. The cost/benefit isn't there for us on our own but we think it would present a good marketing opportunity as this building was once the largest solar heated building in the world. We are also looking at a small grant program that would involve a project of a few panels on the roof---highly visible and well marketed. This particular grant is the same one that put the panels in center field at Coors Field.

2) What is the current condition of the open space to the north of campus? Has FRCC considered landscaping this area in a way that would both preserve natural habitat and provide a student amenity?

It's open space land with some trails and ponds. Some students and staff currently utilize the space.

3) Does the campus have any estimates or data related to the number of parking lot users in terms of permits issued or estimated number of students/faculty/staff that commute to campus by car?

Currently there is no permit system. All students pay for parking via per a mandatory per credit hour fee. I can get you the headcount for the campus if you'd like but that would probably be on the high side as far a parking lot users go.

- 4) Has FRCC considered submitting portions of the identified 'CIP-2' as capital renewal or controlled maintenance projects? Are there anticipated portions or phases of this project that do not cause the reconfiguration of classrooms?

We have spoken with Larry Friedberg at State Buildings regarding this and it is our understanding that this project does not qualify for capital renewal or controlled maintenance funding. Because we haven't completed a program plan for this project at this time, I don't have an absolute answer to your 2nd question but I believe all phases would have to involve at least some reconfiguration of classrooms based on the current floor plan and space use.

- 5) Does the current FRCC five and ten year controlled maintenance plan relate to needs identified within the master plan?

Yes and it more so relates to the most recent facility audit.

- 6) Does FRCC plan to continue the Brighton Center if new facilities are not available after Fall 2007?

Yes, we're currently looking at alternatives including a potential lease at the old Brighton hospital---you may have seen this in the recent Denver Post article. It also appears we're going to have the ability to continue the lease at the current site for up to one year after the expiration of the current amendment in December 2007 although it's not a great building and we would become one of only two tenants and have to pick up a larger share of utilities.

- 7) Have any alternatives for a new Brighton Center location been considered? If so, do any alternatives involve capital construction projects?

Yes as discussed above. Because we're looking mainly at a lease, it doesn't involve capital construction at this point. We might use internal funds for leasehold improvements depending on the type of deal that evolves.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the Front Range Community College- Westminster Campus Facilities Master Plan 2007.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-1-106 Duties and powers of the commission with respect to capital construction and long-range planning

(3) The commission shall review and approve master planning and program planning for all capital construction projects of institutions of higher education on state-owned or state-controlled land, regardless of source of funds, and no capital construction shall commence except in accordance with and approved master plan, program plan, and physical plan.

(4) The commission shall ensure conformity of facilities master planning with approved educational master plans and facility program plans with approved facilities master plans.