



Comments to City Council on Goals for 2017-2019

I am here on behalf of the 200 community members involved in the Bend Neighborhood Coalition. I'm also speaking for the other members of an ad hoc work group who couldn't be here today, including Richard Ross, who chairs the Regional Public Transit Advisory Committee for CET, Madeleine Simmons of Galveston Neighbors, and Kirk Schueler of Brooks Resources, who also happens to be a member of the OSU Board of Trustees.

We are asking that the Council include in its goals, two tasks related to the successful integration of a university campus in Bend.

- First, we believe the City should establish a Town & Gown Committee as a standing committee of the City Council. The committee would include a wide range of participants from the City, OSU-Cascades, COCC, and the community, in line with practices recommended by the International Town & Gown Association, to which the City already belongs. The committee would address both how the city can maximize the benefits of a university and manage the inevitable side effects.
- Second, the Town & Gown Committee should recommend a strategic plan and the details of an overlay zone for a University District that would concentrate university-related development in the opportunity area adjoining the campus, while protecting nearby neighborhoods and the businesses that serve them.

I'd like to point to several reasons that you should see this effort as both non-controversial and, you might say, shovel-ready:

1. The Planning Commission advised beginning this process in late 2013.
2. Both OSU and COCC are onboard. OSU has been ready to work on and help pay for this effort since 2014.
3. Putting this structure in place has been a priority for the Neighborhood Coalition, because it's an example of how the City can manage growth in a way that keeps Bend livable.
4. Establishing a university district was the highest-ranked of a dozen issues the Neighborhood Coalition asked council candidates about in a questionnaire before the fall election, and every councilor we've had an opportunity to discuss this with since the beginning of the year has been in favor of it.
5. The campus anchors one of the City's most important opportunity areas — one that doesn't need new infrastructure to begin fulfilling its economic promise.
6. And, finally, OSU and community volunteers have already done substantial research on models for a successful town/gown initiative, and OSU published a University-Community Partnership Agreement last fall as a first step.

We understand that it can be appealing to set aside work that may not pay off for a few years. But, OSU-Cascades may be the most important investment in the Bend region in a century — since the mills that drove Bend's economy for decades opened in 1916.

We believe that Bend really can't afford three more years of "wait and see" when it comes to addressing the reality of this campus. Opportunities will be lost. And, undesirable practices will take hold. We have a chance to do this one right. Please add a goal related to establishing a Town & Gown Committee and a University District.

Bill Bernardy
Chair, Steering Committee
Bend Neighborhood Coalition