

- JAMES A. GRAASKAMP COLLECTION OF TEACHING MATERIALS
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W1.SJ 7/22/83

Mayor wants to save rail depot

By Doug Mell
City government reporter

The city of Madison will use "every resource possible" to protect the 80-year-old Milwaukee Road depot from demolition, Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner said Thursday.

The bankrupt railroad has put the West Washington Avenue depot and 25 adjacent acres up for sale. And a railroad official said Thursday an offer that included demolition of the landmark would be accepted if the price was high enough.

"That is unacceptable to me and the city," Sensenbrenner said in an interview. "We intend to preclude it (the depot's demolition) by zoning (changes), which should be in place before any substantial activity could take place."

"This has got to be viewed as a business transaction," said William Bickley, the railroad's director of corporate relations, who was in Madison Thursday.

"We are aware of the significance of the depot," he said. "If it's to be torn down, that would be somebody else's decision."

However, there are indications the railroad is aware of the depot's potential value because of its historical significance and its location just outside the city's downtown business district.

Alderman Nicole Gotthelf, 9th District, had a telephone conversation with a railroad real estate official Thursday afternoon. She said the official said the depot "is what is going to sell that property."

Even if a developer wanted to buy the depot and tear it down, it appears unlikely that the necessary demoli-

tion and other permits would be easy to get.

The depot is on the National Register of Historic Places. More significantly for its preservation, the depot also has been designated a Madison landmark by the city Landmarks Commission.

Katherine Rankin, a city planner, said the landmark designation means the landmarks commission has the authority to approve or deny a demolition permit.

The national landmark designation means a developer would be eligible for sizable tax credits and other financial breaks if the depot was renovated, Ms. Rankin said.

The city Department of Planning and Development is about to propose a series of zoning changes for the rail land that is up for sale, said planner John Urich. The bulk of the land now is zoned for manufacturing, which is

one of the least restrictive designations.

Zoning changes being considered for the land will essentially conform to recommendations made by the consulting firm Landmark Research Inc., which the city hired to study the best uses for the land.

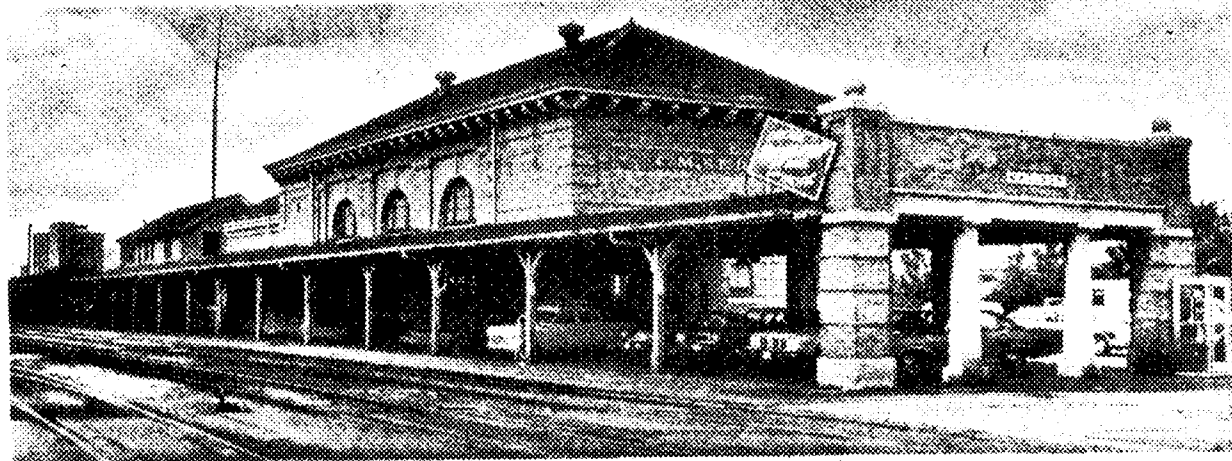
"In general, the 20 acres of development land in the West Washington corridor has multiple opportunities and more effective demand than most other development areas in Madison," the consultant said. "Moreover, the development potential is present despite the expectation of relative stagnant economic prospects" for the Madison area.

"It has always been the intent to make it (the railroad land) a mixed-use development," Ms. Gotthelf said. The development would include retail, commercial and apartment buildings, she said.

The consultant recommended a strong commercial development for 9.3 acres of land bounded by Regent Street, Murray Street and West Washington Avenue, an area that does not include the depot.

"To justify more housing in the isthmus, there must be more jobs," the consultant said. "The greatest unmet need in the isthmus is the availability of vacant, prepared building sites with which to attract and hold research and footloose professionals in the isthmus."

The consultant predicted the railroad would take bids for the restoration of the depot. The consultant emphasized the city tell the railroad about the parking needs of nearby businesses and recommended any development in the 3.9-acre area complement the 1890 "ambiance" of the Washington Hotel and the depot.



Mayor Sensenbrenner says Madison must protect the West Washington rail depot.

UW arena proposal is criticized

3/12/85

**By Peter Annin
Of The State Journal**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's proposal to build a 15,500-seat arena along Regent Street near West Washington Avenue was criticized by UW Professor James Graaskamp and Madison Alderman Nicole Gotthelf during a hearing at the Memorial Union Monday night.

The hearing, attended by about 25 people, was sponsored by the city policy group of the Madison Socialists of America. No one representing the

UW was at the hearing.

Graaskamp, who teaches a course on real estate and is a partner in a real estate research firm, said the arena is a bad idea for the city.

"It makes sense for the university to buy it," he said. "It's a good buy. . . . But it's not such a good thing for the city."

Graaskamp, who said his company spent six months researching development possibilities for the railroad corridor, said he is a "pro-downtown developer.

"If we have land that has the

glamour of being close to the university and the Capitol . . . then we ought to use that resource to advance the city of Madison's economic base."

Ms. Gotthelf, who represents the area of the proposed development (the 9th District), said, "The university did not look at alternatives. It said, 'I want a convocation center. Where can I put it?' and plopped it on the railroad corridor.

"I really don't think the university looked at its own existing land."

Part of the land was bought for \$1.8 million late in February by the

University of Wisconsin Foundation, a private, non-profit university fundraising organization, which will hold the land until university officials decide whether to build the arena, which would cost an estimated \$16 million to \$20 million.

Ms. Gotthelf said the city must still approve a zoning change before any construction on a convocation center could begin.

She also said she will ask the City Council to "express concern" over the university's current arena proposal and to propose a joint university-city committee to explore alternative sites.

She will propose that the council ask for building plans, a transportation study, an environmental impact statement and a site plan.

The ideal development for the area, Ms. Gotthelf said, would be creative use of the existing depot and office and residential development for the rest of the corridor.

Graaskamp said his research came up with a developer interested in the depot.

"The first people we got a call from was McDonald's," he said. "They want that restaurant so bad they can taste it."

He also said, "We resent very much that the university said there was no out of town demand for the land."

MADISON METRO/

Edited by Marc Eisen

New UW Arena Site Revives Corridor Plan

BY BETSY WING

A study released by the UW Foundation this week recommends linking the city's plans for developing the West Rail Corridor to construction of a UW arena and convocation center nearby.

"We're talking about that whole area for development," said UW Foundation Vice President Joel Skornicka.

The study by Flad & Associates ranked a site in the 600 block of West Dayton Street above the original proposed location in the rail corridor at Regent Street and West Washington Avenue.



BRENT NICASTRO

Rail land planner James Graaskamp.

However, Flad said both sites are viable, as are two others near the Natatorium on the western end of the campus.

City officials had opposed the rail corridor site because it would scotch plans set forth in a 1983 study for the city by Landmark Research Associates.

The study called for developing some housing as well as an office/research park on the land.

It also urged the city to act quickly to buy the land from the railroad for a land bank, which could then sell parcels to developers who would conform with city plans for land use.

The city did not buy the land. Instead, an option on it was sold to a Minneapolis man, who in turn sold his option to the UW Foundation.

UW Real Estate Prof. James Graaskamp, whose firm did the 1983 study, said in an interview this week that its recommendations were just as viable today as they were two years ago.

"The city should go ahead and make it an office/research park to compete with the west side," Graaskamp said. "The city can block the university because it would have to change the zoning [to allow a convocation center]. If the city stands firm, the university will have to make the rail corridor a commercial development."

Graaskamp said he also opposes construction of a convocation center on the nearby Dayton Street site.

"I don't think it should be in that area at all," Graaskamp said. "I think everybody is missing the point. Does a state as poor as Wisconsin need to raise \$28 million from private sources to build a big barn that will be used two or three days a week, when \$2.8 million a year in endowment could support 30 or 40 new professors? I'm not willing to concede they need a convocation center."

Ald. Nicole Gotthelf (Dist. 9) was also skeptical about the merits of building a convocation center on either the rail corridor or West Dayton sites, both of which are in her district.

Several local officials said the Dayton Street site would be much better than the rail corridor location.

Ald. Anne Monks (Dist. 8) noted that she is not yet con-

vinced of the need for the center, but added, "I think the Dayton Street site is in the ballpark of what would be acceptable, although parking and open space are things we'll have to look at."

Skornicka's statement that the UW Foundation would probably develop the land—possibly through linking the Dayton Street location to the UW Foundation's development of the rail corridor land—got a favorable reaction from several city officials, including Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner, who called it "smart politicking."

Sensenbrenner said he'd be

delighted to see the UW or the UW Foundation develop the land "in the way the city wants." He said it's unlikely the city would try to buy the land from the foundation.

As for Graaskamp's continuing criticism of plans for the UW convocation center, Skornicka said that if the UW Foundation board approves the Dayton Street location, Graaskamp's "general concept" for land use in the rail corridor will probably be followed.

"We're almost coming full-circle to what he wanted," Skornicka said.

Convocation center idea draws fire

By Thomas M. Waller
Of The State Journal

A proposal to build a \$28- to \$35-million athletic and convocation center is "a poor piece of public relations" at a time when many of UW-Madison's best people are leaving for higher-paid jobs, a faculty member says.

"We could invest that much money and have a \$4-million per year endowment fund to help keep people here," said James Graaskamp, a land science professor. "What are our priorities?"

The comments by Graaskamp, who also operates Landmark Research Inc., a real estate development planning firm, came as he criticized a study of potential sites for the 15,500-seat center.

The University of Wisconsin Foundation hired Flad and Associates of Madison to do the \$50,000-study, which was completed in January. Flad collaborated with three Minneapolis consulting firms: Ellerbe Associates, consultants in arena and convocation center development and architecture; Barton-Aschman Associates, transportation and parking studies;

and Coopers and Lybrand, an accounting firm with expertise in economic impact research.

"The study is based on a presumed need," he said. "It is extremely slanted, subjective and loaded with so many statements of limiting conditions that the implied conclusion (of need) is invalid."

The study said it would cost no more to build a new center than to adapt either Camp Randall Stadium, the UW Field House or the Dane County Coliseum for use as a center. It said four sites are adequate and recommended one on Dayton Street.

In the "conclusion" section, the consultants said they were not asked to justify the need for a center, "but rather to determine how best the existing and proposed program of events of the university and the wider community might be housed in such a facility."

"Everybody says the chancellor (UW Chancellor Irving Shain) is pushing for this thing," said Graaskamp. "Joel Skornicka (UW Foundation senior vice president) is Shain's man."

Attempts to reach Shain and Skornicka for comment were unsuccessful.

UW Foundation President Robert Rennebohm said the foundation has received "very little flak" about the project, other than from Graaskamp and a few local government officials.

"We're very disappointed he has taken this position," he said. "He's a very able and learned guy."

Rennebohm said the foundation hired consultants with experience in

athletic arenas.

Harry Peterson, assistant to the chancellor, said the selection was designed to assure people that the study would be independent.

City and county officials objected after the foundation paid \$1.8 million for land in the West Washington railroad corridor, at Regent and Murray streets, and announced plans to build an arena there.

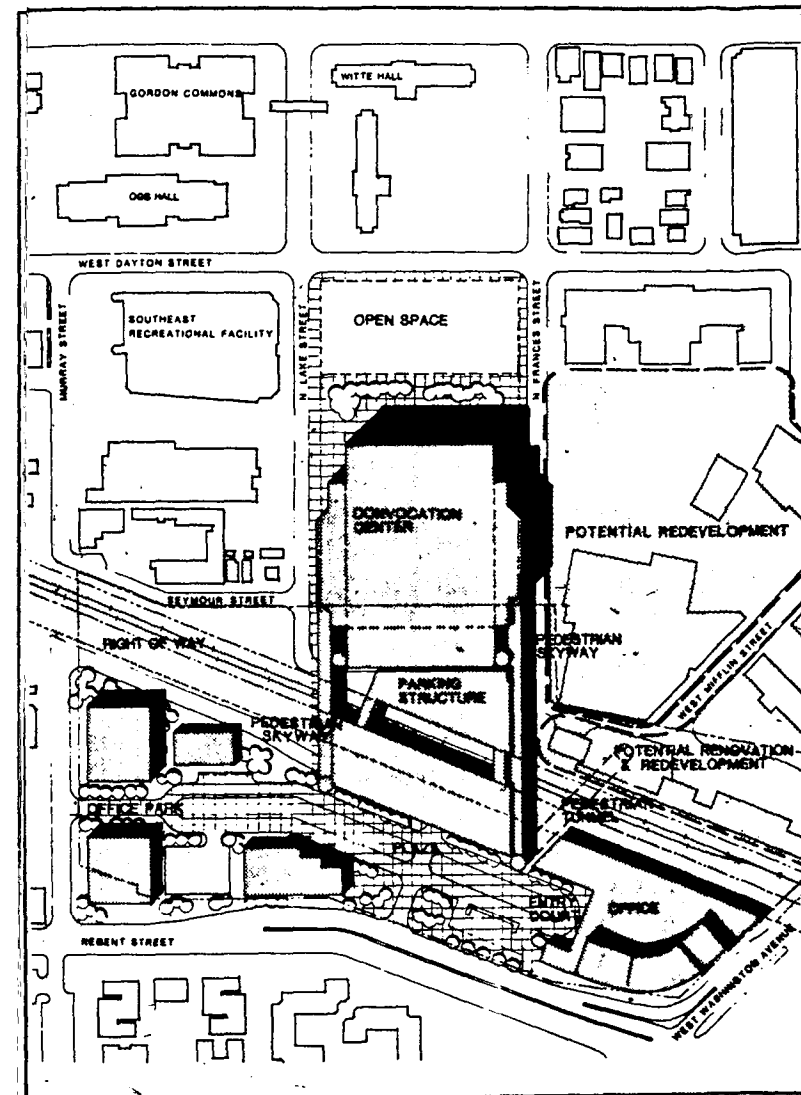
Their objections are based on a planning recommendation by Graaskamp that calls for redevelopment of the corridor.

Some officials also oppose the Dayton Street site, preferring to see more housing close to the campus. They favor two arena sites near the Natatorium on the west edge of the campus.

"The university would not have recommended purchase of the rail corridor land if we hadn't determined there is a need for a center," said Peterson. "Our current facility is inadequate for basketball, and we have to go off campus for hockey games. In addition, we have other needs which we believe can be met with a convocation center."

Peterson said academic priorities always come first at the university, but many people are more willing to give money for athletic facilities than for academic projects.

"We're interested in obtaining support for all programs," he said. "I regret that professor Graaskamp sees fit to impugn the motives of the people with whom he apparently disagrees."



Consultants have recommended this N. Lake Street site for a new UW arena and convocation center.

—Map by Flad & Associates

there are a lot of us who agree with you. No place to

Foundation fund-drive planned

The University of Wisconsin Foundation is planning a \$130-million fund-raising campaign.

"We're in the planning stages now," said Robert Rennebohm, president of the foundation. "It will probably start late this year or early in 1987."

Rennebohm said the campaign, which will feature an appeal to corporations as well as individuals, will last two years, but pledges made during that time could be paid over a longer period of time.

About \$100 million would go toward academic programs, Rennebohm said, and about \$30 million for an athletic and convocation center.

"Our first priority is to enhance the plight of professors," he said. "In the last six or seven years the foundation has been able to endow over 60 Bascom professorships. We've been able to keep some of our stars (from leaving for more money elsewhere)."

Rennebohm said the foundation raises money for whatever the university says it wants, providing there is public acceptance.

"We won't try to raise money for the center unless the public supports the project," he said. "The early reading is that it does."

— By Thomas M. Waller

UW arena switch revives rail corridor project

By MARC EISEN
Capital Times Staff Writer

Plans for a major office and commercial development in the West Rail Corridor of the central city have been quietly revived in the wake of the probable location change of the proposed University of Wisconsin arena and convocation center.

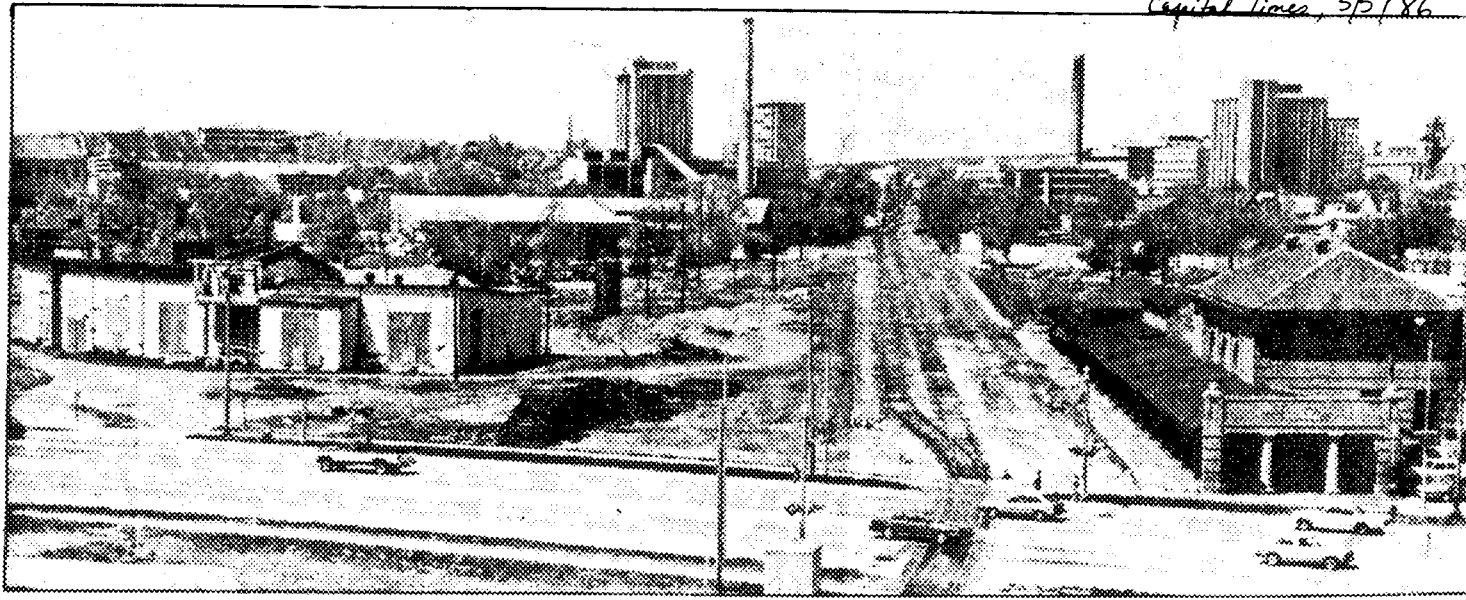
Moving the site to the 600 block of West Dayton Street should free up about 10 acres of the almost 14-acre rail tract for development, with the remainder of the land earmarked for a parking ramp attached to the arena, UW Foundation Vice President Joel Skornicka said last week.

"We would develop that land commercially I would hope within a year," Skornicka said. He added, "We're running a considerable cost, including taxes, in just holding that land. We'd like to have our investment generating money for scholarships, professorships and lecture-ships."

The decision to move ahead with the development has received scant attention, but potentially it could be more important to the city than building a new home for the UW basketball and hockey teams.

Owned by the bankrupt Milwaukee Road railroad, the corridor was the target of a major city planning effort that resulted in its rezoning along the lines recommended by UW real estate expert James Graaskamp in 1983. But the city's ambitious plans for the corridor were unexpectedly derailed in late 1984 when a key portion of the land was snapped up by the UW Foundation as a site for a \$16 million to \$20 million sports arena and convocation center.

(See CORRIDOR, Page 5)



Capital Times, 5/5/86

RICH RYGH/The Capital Times

The likely location change for the UW arena and convocation center has given new life to plans for office and commercial

development of the rail corridor north of West Washington Avenue.

Corridor

There was more than a little irony in this: Developing this underutilized land was vital to the city, Graaskamp had said in his four-volume report, because the UW's efforts to build suburban research parks had "devastating implications" for the downtown.

Graaskamp's plan was for a quasi-public land bank to make a bulk purchase of the entire rail corridor, develop the area north of West Washington Avenue for office and research centers, then use the new revenue from a special tax district to help relocate the older commercial tenants on the south side of Washington Avenue — J.H. Findorff & Son construction and A.J. Sweet produce, among others — so the land by Monona Bay could be converted to residential uses.

The catch was that while the city endorsed Graaskamp's development

plan, it balked at creating a land bank. The UW Foundation then stepped in to buy the land north of West Washington Avenue before a private developer could put a project together.

The purchase kicked up a storm of debate over the need for the arena and its siting, including some pointed jabs by Graaskamp, who denounced the arena plan as a squandering of UW resources and a major blow to the city's effort to create new jobs downtown and improve the housing stock.

"We feel quite strongly, and not without some background, that within two years — three at the outside — the West Rail Corridor would have been a developed, landscaped and very attractive aspect of Madison," Graaskamp told a campus

group last March when the UW seemed intent on building on the corridor.

But now a special committee of city, county and UW officials has seemingly met many of the siting objections by recommending that the arena be built closer to campus on Dayton Street. The recommendation goes to the City Council on May 20 when it will be referred to committee. A favorable reception is expected, though there is still some city sentiment for the arena be built on campus near the Natatorium.

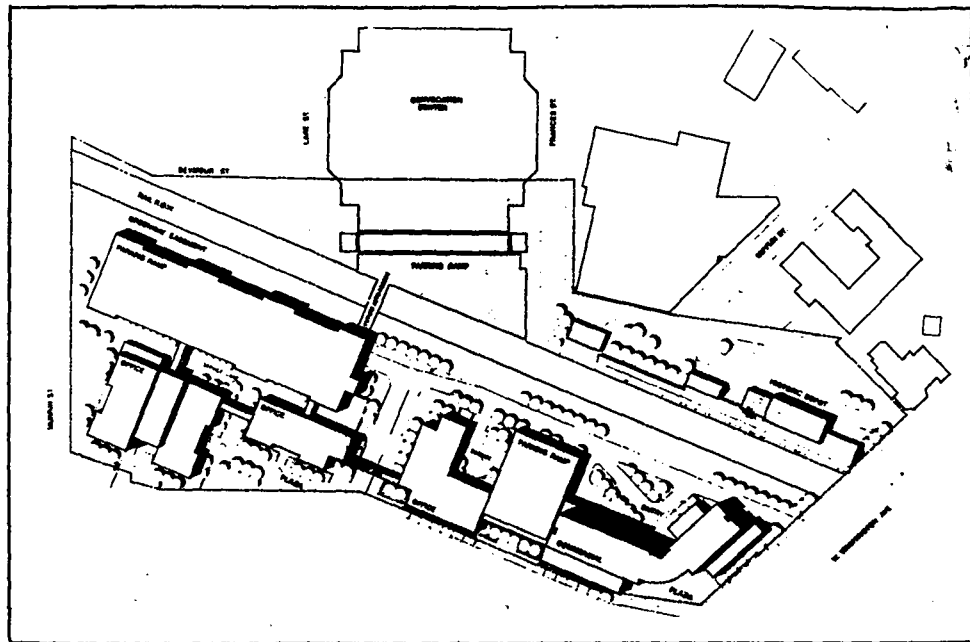
It may be slight consolation to Graaskamp, who still opposes building a arena, but the UW is picking up on his plan for developing the portion of the corridor it owns. Flad and Associates has worked up several preliminary plans, the most recent of which is reprinted here.

"In my own mind, it would be a prime site for development, possibly for offices and research associated with the university," said Craig Schiestl, a landscape architect with Flad. "The proximity is a good one. You're not too far removed from the Capitol. You're not too far removed from the university. And it's very accessible from major arterials. It's got high visibility."

Graaskamp also remains high on the site's potential, making the added point that its nearness to the medical facilities on the Triangle make it a good candidate for medical-related businesses.

Graaskamp had envisioned two-or-three story, suburban-style construction on the site, including surface parking, in order that the office space be priced competitively with space offered on the city's periphery.

"People can't afford \$14-a-foot space and up in high-rise offices that require heavy investment in parking ramps," he said. "What they want is surface parking and \$12- and \$14-a-foot office space in the low-rise construction we had proposed for there. That's what they're going to the suburbs for. If they had a suburban build-



This map shows the possible development (bottom) along the railroad corridor and the likely site (top) for the UW convocation center.

ing downtown, they would stay downtown."

Flad's preliminary plans call for higher density than Graaskamp had proposed — in particular, for two parking ramps, the larger of which (about 700 stalls) would be shared with the nearby arena.

Schiestl cautioned, though, that the development would be staged according to demand, and that his sketches showed the site at maximum use.

One potential snag — as well as an asset — in the redevelopment menu is the railroad depot complex, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and has the potential of offering lucrative tax breaks if rehabbed for a new use.

But the buildings, which were constructed in 1903, are in poor repair and in need of stabilization while their rehabbing is considered, said Flad architect Bill Bula.

City officials, meanwhile, are pleased with the foundation's plans. "That is a very important piece of land, and I'm very encouraged that the foundation is planning to develop it," Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner said Friday.

Ald Nicole Gotthelf, whose 9th Dis-

trict includes the property, was also supportive, saying it was "a very positive step."

Graaskamp's proposal for housing on the southern portion of the corridor hasn't been entirely forgotten either.

Findorff's has been looking into converting its two warehouses into townhouses and perhaps building condominiums on the southern tip of

its property, controller Dan Petersen said.

While the project was "on the backburner," Petersen added, the favorable financial market "makes everything more feasible."

"We're looking at this as a phased approach, doing the warehouses first," he said of the company's interest in building housing on its property.

Will new UW arena compete with county Exposition Center?

By MARC EISEN
Capital Times Staff Writer

A new convention center for the downtown?

How about a new arena and convocation center for the University of Wisconsin?

Roy Gumtaw, the man who manages the Dane County Exposition Center, isn't worried about any potential competition. Like Clayton Dunn, an aide to County Executive Jonathan Barry, Gumtaw figures the Coliseum and the Forum — the two main draws on the 160-acre Expo site — are in a strong position to dominate their respective markets.

"Given the mission of the university, I don't think the convocation center will be competitive with us," Dunn said.

So is everything cool? Not quite. Despite what seems to be considerable support for a new and major round of public construction, a few people are beginning to see problems.

The most vocal is UW School of Business professor James Graaskamp, who says the county is kidding itself if it thinks the university won't go after its Coliseum business. And he adds that the downtown will suffer from construction of the proposed 15,500-seat UW facility as well.

Calling it foolhardy to believe there won't be competition, Graaskamp said recently, "I can't believe the degree of cooperation the university is

The Forum:

The Top 5 Grossing Events for the county in 1985*

1. Madison Area Builders Association Show: \$43,000.
2. Wisconsin Deer Classic Taxidermy Show: \$25,000.
3. Dane County RV Camper Show: \$19,500.
4. Marshall Cheese-Miles Laboratory Cheese Seminar: \$19,000.
5. Baraboo Syaco Food Show: \$18,600.

*Includes county revenue for rent, concessions and parking.

The Coliseum:

The Top 5 Grossing Events for the county in 1985*

1. UW Hockey (22 games): \$389,000.
2. Concerts (19 shows): \$271,500.
3. World Dairy Expo: \$168,000.
4. Wisconsin Arabian Horse Fair: \$83,000.
5. Wisconsin Farm Equipment Show: \$82,000.

*Includes county revenue for rent, concessions and parking.

getting from the city and the county when the convocation center is in neither of their interests."

Beside the estimated construction cost of \$28 million to \$35 million, the UW "will incur significant operating costs on that baby, and, therefore, it's

going to find every cash-paying event it can," Graaskamp warned.

Concerts, ice shows and political conventions are the sorts of events that the UW might try to pirate from

(See EXPO, Page 3)

Convo center irks expert Graaskamp

By MARC EISEN
Capital Times Staff Writer

A bur under the saddle?
A fly in the ointment?

A bull in the china shop?

No, it's only Jim Graaskamp sounding off about the University of Wisconsin's plans to build a new convocation center and sports arena.

Graaskamp, a nationally recognized expert in urban real estate and one of the UW business school's top professors, has been regularly ripping the UW for more than a year now for what he considers its bone-headed decision to build the convocation center.

Sports fans may roll their eyes at someone seriously opposing the UW Foundation raising money to build a new home for the Badger hockey and

(See GRAASKAMP, Page 3)

CAP TIMES
5/31/86

Graaskamp



Jim Graaskamp

basketball teams. After all, the money would be raised as part of a massive campaign by the foundation that may bring as much as \$135 million to the university, they point out.

But Graaskamp thinks it's a terrible misallocation of resources for the university to spend \$28 million to \$35 million — the most recent estimate — on a sports building at a time when the school's academic programs need to be bolstered.

A few months ago when the projected cost was lower, Graaskamp said that banking \$20 million as an endowment would produce between \$1.8 million and \$2 million in income a year. "That would increase the faculty budget available for the business school by 50 percent. That would allow us to increase the number of students who wanted to enroll but couldn't by at least a third. That's what we call effective use of endowment money."

The argument that the people who

give to the convocation center's building drive wouldn't contribute to academic programs doesn't cut it with Graaskamp.

"I think that's the university taking the easy way out rather than explaining to the friends of the university what our needs are and what our priorities are," he said.

Overlooked in the foundation's plans to raise the money are "the opportunity costs," Graaskamp said. By this, he means forgoing the yearly endowment income and tapping out contributors.

"They regard the capital as a free good because somebody gave it," he said of the university. "That's childish. There are no free lunches: \$30 million for free just doesn't exist. They will have exhausted the good will of many friends of the university to create that convocation center."

Graaskamp's ire with the convocation center is really double-barreled. The UW Foundation's purchase of the west rail corridor as a bulking site

KO'd a development plan Graaskamp's consulting company had drawn up for the city.

The UW has since moved the proposed site closer to campus, which frees up much of the corridor for the office and commercial uses Graaskamp had envisioned. But Graaskamp, who has attacked campus administration in the past as "bullheaded," still isn't satisfied.

He blasted the UW for considering the kind of high-density development that he says has little marketability in Madison.

Harry Peterson, an assistant to UW-Madison Chancellor Irving Shain who's frequently called upon to respond to Graaskamp's charges, contacted a reporter earlier this week to say that Shain was sending a note to Graaskamp suggesting the two men meet.

The topic? Jim Graaskamp's ideas on how the UW should proceed in developing the west rail corridor.

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Jobs in Want Ads

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Want ads

Page 3

Panel favors more study of UW project

By Amanda Todd
Of The State Journal

As befits a university project, the proposed UW-Madison convocation center is going to be studied some more.

This time it was the city Plan Commission, voting 7-2 Monday night after four hours of talk, deciding to do more research.

"There's so much we don't know about this project," Ald. David Wallner, 2nd District, said. "We need to consider this a lot more than we have done."

The 15,000-seat center is proposed for the 600 block of West Dayton Street.

The project, and proposed development of other university-owned land south of the site in the West Washington Avenue railroad corridor, needs a commission recommendation on rezoning, then approval by the City Council.

The center would cost the UW Foundation between \$28 million and \$36 million and would be used for basketball and hockey games, registration, large lectures, graduation ceremonies and entertainment events.

The UW Foundation plans to start a drive in September to raise \$150 million, part of which would pay for the convocation center, between 1,000 and 1,300 parking-ramp spaces, and a development project on the adjacent land, which would most likely be a small office building.

This site was recommended May 27 by the Convocation Center Committee, comprised of representatives

of the city and university.

Then, last Thursday, Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner gave his conditional support to the proposal.

But Monday night, UW-Madison business Professor James Graaskamp spoke to the commission, leaving doubts in the minds of several commission members who admittedly came to the meeting intending to support the convocation center.

Graaskamp argued the city is being too accommodating of the university and should take advantage of the negotiating chips it holds to force the university into some concessions.

"Take some time, figure out what you want, and make some counter-proposals," he said.

There are several points the commission members would like to investigate more fully before deciding on the proposal:

- ✓ They want a report from the traffic engineer on what effect cars and buses going to and from the proposed 15,000-seat center would have on the neighborhood.

- ✓ They want a concrete proposal on the re-use of the historic railroad depot on the site no later than Dec. 31 — a year earlier than the university had said it would deliver one.

- ✓ They want to take a closer look at three other sites initially considered for a convocation center.

- ✓ They want to hear opinions from more UW-Madison professors and students.

- ✓ They want more input from people who live in the neighborhood, from whom, Ald. Nicole Gotthelf said, she has received negative feedback on the proposal.



Lombardi-era Packers speak out on current troubled team

Rob Schultz: Sports Section



JERRY KRAMER
WILLIE DAVIS
MAX MCGEE
BART STARR
KEN BOWMAN

MADISON, Feb 7th 1987

THE CAPITAL TIMES

Prof: Regents helped kill convo center

By MARC EISEN -
and KAYE SCHULTZ
Capital Times Staff Writers

Plans for building a new University of Wisconsin convocation center-sports arena were killed due to opposition from the UW Board of Regents and the public, according to a leading critic of the proposal.

UW Business School professor James Graaskamp said Friday that

the announced reason of fund-raising problems "was a convenient way to save face" for the university.

"There was very definite resistance to the convocation center from among the regents," Graaskamp said.

He based this assertion, he said, upon conversations he had last summer with board members. While they were critical of the plan to build the 15,500-seat facility, "for protocol rea-

sons, their position was that they could not interfere directly at that time," Graaskamp said.

UW Acting Chancellor Bernard Cohen said he made the decision to cancel the fund-raising plans based on a negative report from a consultant studying a list of UW fund-raising projects totaling \$228.5 million.

He said he had "deep regrets" about the decision, but called it "a realistic assessment of the situation."

The regents shed no tears when they received the news at their monthly meeting Friday morning.

"Until the city and the university get their acts together as far as what's needed for convocation centers and convention halls, it (the convocation center) should be delayed," said Frank Nikolay, Abbottsford, chairman of the regents' physical planning committee.

If the city decides to go ahead with

plans for a convention center, Nikolay said, the UW "should take a hard look at" whether to build the convocation center at all.

"It would be better if the university did one of these major projects at a time," said regent Herbert Grover.

He cited other major fund-raisers for the athletic department currently in the works, including the McClain

(See CONVO CENTER, Page 4)

Capital Times, Feb. 7, 1987

From Page 1

Convo center

indoor practice facility and a UW golf course. Meanwhile, Irving Shain, former UW-Madison chancellor, said he was not surprised by the decision to drop plans for the new facility.

Shain, a major backer of the arena, said he was "beginning to see signs of lack of private donor support at the needed levels of funding" before he left the UW in December to take a research post with the Olin Corp. in Stamford, Conn.

Had he still been chancellor, Shain said, he would have made the same decision.

"I was beginning to get some signals (in December) that the size of the project and the dollar estimate had increased to where it might not be feasible to proceed," Shain said. "I think it's probably healthy that we just put it on the back burner for a decade or so."

The convocation center was originally estimated to cost \$20 million, but the figure had been revised to at least \$28 million to \$35 million.

Graaskamp said plans for building the facility on the 600 block of West Dayton Street were "grandiose."

"There's still a need for a basketball court — there's no doubt about it — but that wasn't the way to go about it," he said.

Students also criticized the proposal, saying they resented a large amount of funds being committed to a "sports palace" while they face tuition increases and closed classes.

Some city officials disliked the idea, claiming it would disrupt a residential neighborhood and contribute to parking and traffic problems.

But Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner and the City Council leadership struck a compromise with the UW last year linking construction of the facility with development of the West Rail Corridor and 250 units of new student housing being built in the south campus area.

Graaskamp, whose specialty is urban real estate, denounced that compromise as representing "a complete collapse of planning."

"(City) Traffic and Planning (departments) knew better, but they had the ground cut out from under them by self-serving council members and the mayor's office," he said.

District 4 Ald. Michael Blumenfeld, who fought the project, said the neighbors in the area would be pleased with the outcome.

"It was going to have a major negative impact on that downtown neighborhood," he said. "I hope the university will proceed with its plans for development of the rest of the land, which will be good for downtown."

The UW Foundation purchased 14 acres in the rail corridor in early 1984 for \$1.8 million as a home for the arena/convocation center.

Graaskamp's research company had earlier completed a four-volume study on how the city might develop the land for housing and office space.

Tree brings down high voltage wire

A falling tree brought down a high voltage power line in the 2600 block of Waunona Way early today, prompting firefighters to cordon off the area.

Madison firefighters responded to the scene at 1:58 a.m. and kept cars and pedestrians away from the live wire.

Repair trucks from Madison Gas and Electric arrived later and worked to restore the cable.

No injuries were reported. An MGE spokesman said there was no power blackout in the area.



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Odanaland



THE CAPITAL TIMES

Friday afternoon, February 6, 1987

Madison, Wisconsin

35¢

Convo center axed

By Capital Times Staff Writers

The University of Wisconsin is dropping its current plan to build a convocation center/sports arena beside West Dayton Avenue after a consultant reported doubts that the money to pay for it could be raised.

University of Wisconsin Acting Chancellor Bernard Cohen announced the pullback this morning to the UW Regents and in letters to UW System President Kenneth Shaw, Madison Mayor Joseph Sensenbrenner and City Council President Eve Galanter.

Cohen told them a private fundraising consultant has concluded that the UW Foundation — which an-

UW athletic department officials voice disappointment with the dropping of convocation center plans. Story on Page 6.

nounced plans for the 15,000-seat arena in 1984 — would find it difficult to raise the \$28 million to \$35 million needed to build the facility in its upcoming \$228 million fund-raising campaign.

Barring emergence of a major donor, there are no plans to move forward with the center in the next three to five years, he said.

The plan has stirred controversy

over the best use of the land on Dayton Street and in the rail corridor along West Washington Avenue.

The university — which owns most of the land — had pushed for the complex and opponents pulled for more housing, particularly student housing, and private sector development.

City officials and mayoral candidates — with the exception of Thomas Imhoff — welcomed the change in plans and said they hope the decision will lend impetus to develop the rail corridor along the lines of what was proposed in a 1983 land-use study.

Baum, who has made opposition to the convocation center/sports arena

a centerpiece of her campaign, said the UW's decision was good news for the city. "The convocation center would have really wrecked the neighborhood," she said.

"I think the city should make the effort to implement and update the plans that were carefully worked out in the past," Baum said. "Those plans are very exciting and really enhance the residential character of the neighborhood."

Sensenbrenner said that's what he's looking for. "With this clarified, the city is now prepared to work more vigorously with the UW Found-

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Convo

dation to develop that land consistent with our 1983 land use plan," he said.

The city can achieve its development goals for the area with or without the center, he said. The university had been planning to develop housing and office space on the southern section, as well as extra parking space.

"We would prefer a result where there's maximum development on the property for the property tax, but we have to look at a specific plan," he said.

District 9 Ald. Nicole Gotthelf, a major City Council opponent of the project, said she was "not surprised, frankly. It was like trying to pull something out of a hat. The university bought the property without really thinking it out."

Galanter noted that the city still has a commitment from the UW to raise \$1 million for a private housing facility in the area.

Imhoff, who supported the arena plan, said, "I think it's a little bit of a setback for developing the area. But I'm not faulting the university or the city for it. It's an unfortunate situation, and we have to work together."

University officials rejected suggestions that the decision was the result of growing political opposition to the proposal.

"It's not true," said Harry Peterson, an assistant to the UW-Madison chancellor.

"We had the opposition last fall. We could have chucked it then," he said. "We've worked on this for two years. We wouldn't have devoted that much time to it if we hadn't thought it was possible."

Cohen expressed "deep regret" at the decision, but emphasized that the project is merely down, not out. If major donors surface convocation center planning would move forward again, he said.

"If it should stimulate several angels to come forth, or down, and rescue the center, I would be most happy to change my mind," Cohen said.

"We have a terribly inadequate facility in the Fieldhouse, arguably the worst in the Big Ten," Cohen said.

The fund-raising consultants found that potential donors recognized the university's need for a convocation center, Cohen said, but did not display a sufficient level of enthusiasm or commitment to the project.

If the university moved ahead with the project now, Cohen said, much of the costs would fall to the operating budget of the athletic department, which he said would place too great a

long-term financial burden on it.

The center had been targeted for the 600 block of West Dayton Street, just east of the university's Southeast Recreational Facility. The center would be used for intercollegiate basketball and hockey as well as for academic programs such as commencement.

Capital Times reporters Mike Stamler, Barbara Mulhern, Kaye Schultz and Marc Eisen contributed to this story.

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EDITORIAL PAGE

Sports arena demise offers opportunity

ONE OF MADISON'S thorniest issues got clipped Friday.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison administration has decided to shelve its plans for a new sports arena and convocation center on West Dayton Street. The official reason was the potential difficulty in raising money. But there were many other good reasons to stop this project.

First of all, at a time when the university cannot provide enough classes to get undergraduates through the system in four years, at a time when the libraries are squeezed for funds, at a time when administrators are trying to convince the Legislature that the UW needs more money to maintain its academic excellence — at such a time, trying to raise money for a sports palace suggested a bad skewing of priorities.

Secondly, the UW System Board of Regents was skeptical of this project. Many city officials have serious questions about it. It faced tough sledding politically.

Thirdly, the proposed location for the project raised serious land-use issues for downtown Madison. This is an area that could be developed into housing and office space, bringing jobs and stability to another segment of the downtown. By putting the sports palace on the shelf, the city

can now start to move ahead with those plans.

One of the old ideas that ought to be resurrected is professor James Graaskamp's suggestion that this area be the base for a public/private land bank that could be used to nurture future development.

Right now, the UW Foundation owns the land where the convocation center was to be built. If the city were to buy that land from the university and create a land bank, then the city would be in a strong position to guide the development in this area in a way that would be consistent with city goals.

Such a land bank would also give private businesses an advantage. One of the tricky parts of any development is acquiring the land. The city would be in a position to quickly offer land to businesses whose plans met city expectations.

AS LONG AS the spectre of the sports palace loomed over the area, the visionary ideas for the land bank stayed locked up in file cabinets. Now there is an opportunity for the university, the city and the private sector to work together to unleash some truly creative development in this area.

They ought not let that opportunity slip away.