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Vision evolves for MCC Downtown Campus

Advanced technology and workforce development to be focus

Advanced technology and workforce development are the recommended areas of focus for Mesa Community College's (MCC) Downtown Campus according to a report released by Concord Eastridge. The report comes as a follow-up to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) Governing Board and the Mesa City Council in August, 2004, to create a downtown campus of MCC. Concord Eastridge, a firm that specializes in unique funding approaches to develop education facilities, was retained jointly by MCC and the City of Mesa to build a "Vision Map" of the campus buildings and to test its feasibility. The "Vision Map" features two "zones" - Advanced Technology/Community Learning and Health & Wellness/Public Safety. The result is a partnership-driven campus that will give educational access to thousands of students and contribute to the economic revitalization of a Digital Downtown for Mesa.

"The Mesa Downtown Campus is a perfect example of the type of partnership-driven initiatives the Maricopa Community Colleges are undertaking. With emphasis on technology education and workforce development, and with the help of public and private partners, the downtown campus will provide new opportunities for our students and for the City of Mesa," said Dr. Rufus Glasper, Chancellor of the MCCCD.

The campus will be developed through public and private partnerships, leveraging an original \$10 million in MCCCD bond dollars, along with a proposed \$9 million in bond dollars slated for nursing facilities, with city capital and private investment to create a \$90 million+ project. The next step will be to hire a Master Plan Coordinator, a private firm that will be selected through a competitive RFP process, to identify the private sector investors (local and national) and bring them to the table to develop the downtown campus.

"As MCC celebrates its 40th anniversary of providing higher education to the citizens of Mesa, it is fitting that we are implementing this visionary partnership to build a downtown campus, to serve Mesa residents and to assist in revitalizing this important section of the community," stated Dr. Larry Christiansen, President of MCC. For the project to move forward, however, plans need to be reviewed by several groups within the MCCCD: the Governing Board and Chancellor, the Bond Counsel, Facilities Planning, and Business Services, which includes Purchasing.

The Vision Map, Fact Sheet with detailed descriptions of each zone, answers to Frequently Asked Questions, and the Concord Eastridge Report are available to the left. Please contact Bernie Ronan, Director for MCC's Center for Public Policy and Center for Civic Participation, at 480-461-6123 for additional information.

Additional information about the Memorandum of Understanding adopted by the Maricopa Community College District Governing Board and the Mesa City Council in August 2004 is available in the September 9, 2004 Bulletin



FACT SHEET

MCC DOWNTOWN CAMPUS -- IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

Background

- The Maricopa Community College District (MCCCD) Governing Board and the Mesa City Council in August, 2004 adopted a Memorandum of Understanding to create a downtown campus of Mesa Community College (MCC).
- The partners retained Concord Eastridge, a firm that specializes in unique funding approaches to develop educational facilities, to build a “Vision Map” of the campus buildings and to test its feasibility.
- The result is found on the back of this sheet, a partnership-driven, program-specific campus that will give educational access to thousands of students and contribute to the economic revitalization of a Digital Downtown for Mesa.
- Programs at this campus have a dual focus: advanced technology and workforce development, and comprise two “zones” - Advanced Technology/Community Learning, and Health Wellness/Public Safety.
- The campus will be developed through public private partnerships, leveraging \$10m in MCCD bond dollars with city capital and private investment into a \$90m project.
- An RFP will be issued to secure a Master Plan Coordinator that will develop the partnerships and funding to implement the individual construction projects outlined on the attached map.

Advanced Technology/Community Learning Zone

- An Advanced Technology Center built with IT partners of the college’s Business and Industry Institute to offer new programs such as cyber forensics, bioinformatics, and gaming, as well as MCC Online
- Upgraded state-of-the-art conferencing technology in the city’s Convention Center to enable campus programs to offer seminars, workshops and conferences
- A Community Learning Zone that includes a jointly operated city library to offers services to the campus programs; an addition to the library of a Community Technology Learning Center to bridge the “digital divide”; a restored Irving School offering high school programs by Mesa Public Schools as well as the Mesa Life Options program; and the consolidation of the college’s thousands of Extended Campus students in the Carousel View Building

Health & Wellness/Public Safety Zone

- A Nursing/Paramedic/Allied Health building to house the college’s Nursing program, expanded paramedic and fire science training programs, and “allied health” programs to provide workforce development for the region
- A regional Emergency Operations Center and administration facility for the City’s Fire Department
- An outdoor Aquatic Center that combines public recreation, competitive venue, wellness and public safety training capabilities

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Mesa Community College and the City of Mesa signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) August 2004 to create a framework for a permanent MCC campus in downtown Mesa. What exactly does that mean?

A. The MOU puts in place an unprecedented, long term public-private partnership between the College and the City of Mesa to move forward with discussions and negotiations on one or more Intergovernmental Agreements to create a MCC downtown Campus.

Q. Why doesn't MCC build a new campus with bond monies as it has done in the past?

A. The campus project will utilize the \$10 million set aside in the bond package for this downtown campus, along with a proposed \$9 million in bond dollars slated for Nursing facilities. However, the city and college also plan to undertake a public private partnership that will leverage this \$10 million with additional public investment from the city as well as private investment to enable a \$90 million project to be constructed in downtown Mesa. This unique approach is a win win for the College and the City because public dollars will be used for dual purposes. The overarching vision of the MOU is to create a downtown campus that would enable MCC to offer greater access to higher education for Mesa residents, and to assist in the revitalization and economic development of downtown Mesa. The fact that this partnership will use public dollars for dual purposes is a tremendous benefit for Mesa residents.

Q. Is the MOU a binding agreement?

A. No, it is not a legal agreement. However, both MCC and the City are committed to - and excited about - this partnership, and this MOU is a way for both bodies to formally acknowledge the depth of their commitment to this long term partnership. The subsequent Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) entered into by the two partners to implement specific construction projects as part of this campus will be legally binding.

Q. What is the total cost of the proposed MCC Downtown Campus?

A. Concord Eastridge, a firm that specializes in unique funding approaches to developing educational facilities, was hired by the partners to develop a public private partnership model for building this campus. Their estimate is that the total cost of the project will be approximately \$90 million in remodeling and new construction, using a mix of MCCCCD bond funds, city bond funds, and private sector investment.

Q. Who will bring the new investors to the table? Are these local investors?

A. It will be the responsibility of the Master Plan Coordinator, a private firm that will be hired through a competitive process, to identify the private sector investors (local and national) and bring them to the table. Concord Eastridge has been in conversation with investors about this project, and has assured the partners of the economic viability of this partnership, given their track record of doing similar projects across the country.

Q. What exactly is this new Concord Eastridge report in terms of progress on the MCC Downtown Campus project?

A. This project has unfolded over the past three years. The college first convened a task force to study the feasibility and they recommended that the partners move forward. The partners then retained Hunter Interests, an economic development firm that had previously done a study of the downtown area, to update their previous study by reviewing the feasibility of a college campus in the sector. This report resulted in the MOU that the parties entered into last August. As a next step, the partners retained Concord Eastridge to develop a "vision map" of what building projects might be feasible at this proposed campus. This report essentially outlines in greater detail the vision for the MCC Downtown Campus ("the downtown will be the campus") and takes the MOU to the next step by calling for a RFP to be issued for selecting a long-term project manager.

Q. So, the next step is issuing an RFP for a managing partner?

A. Yes. The RFP process is typically 60-90 days.

Q. Where are the start-up operational funds coming from?

A. The college is seeking a new campus start-up budget of \$500K from the Maricopa District, consistent with funding that has been put in place each time a new campus was started by the district. Much of the original operating funds for the new campus are already budgeted in conjunction with the programs that will be relocated to the downtown campus. For example, the Extended Campus programs that are operating in the Country Club and Brown facility will relocate to the Carousel View Building, which will enable the college to redirect rental revenue to operating new programs at the campus.

Q. How soon will the first phase begin?

A. Plans are underway to transfer the Irving School to Mesa Public Schools (MPS) within the very near future, so programs by both MPS and MCC will be operating out of that facility in Fall, 2005. The Mesa Life Options program and the Center for Community Education are the MCC programs proposed to be housed in the Irving School. The expansion of the main library and the relocation of Extended Campus are both slated for taking place in the next twelve months. The construction of new buildings such as the Advanced Technology Center and the Nursing/Paramedic/Public Safety facility will take place in the next 2-5 years.

Q. How long will it take to build the MCC Downtown Campus as it is described in the MOU and this report?

A. It is difficult to say exactly as we expect new partners to be continuously coming to the table. However, we do anticipate that ground will be broken for the first building construction in late 2005 or early 2006.

Vison Map

