8 – Project Approval and Implementation

8.1 Introduction

Implementing a Master Plan and its capital, maintenance or other elements is a complicated process. Physical facilities and infrastructure on campus account for a large portion of an operating budget, and are one of the largest investments an institution will make. Buildings and infrastructure are becoming increasingly sophisticated in order for a campus to operate more efficiently and to be effective; and programmatic and financial commitments and approvals require careful, advance, and often complex planning and preparation. As a result, capital improvement decisions are one of the most difficult and expensive to reverse.

For these reasons, capital improvements are complex undertakings that require structured procedures to ensure appropriate levels of project information, participation, and approval at the appropriate stages of a project’s development. This chapter presents an overview of the Project Approval and Implementation processes that will be used for capital and maintenance investment decisions at the Raymond Walters College campus.

8.2 Project Approval and Development Process

Generally, capital and maintenance projects are developed and approved in the following sequence:

1. Academic Priorities
2. Campus Master Plan
3. Annual Capital Plan & Budget
4. Project Approval

The specific approval and development process for individual capital improvement projects will follow the processes established and maintained by the office of Planning+Design+Construction. Approval for a capital or maintenance project to proceed is contingent upon demonstration that the proposed project satisfies the goals and requirements of this Master Plan - including those identified in Strategic Investment, and Master Plan Implementation. Projects must be congruent with the Long Range Development Framework and the 10-Year Development Plan. These requirements apply to any projects that may be necessary to phase. Campus projects and maintenance strategies will be evaluated annually utilizing a review process established separately. Projects that have been initiated, regardless of scope of work and source of funds, shall be evaluated during their development utilizing reviews that require the proposed project to conform to Part 7 - Project Planning and Design Guidelines, or to state why an exception is warranted.
8.3 Project Participants

The development and implementation of a project requires the structured collaboration of many within the University. Among them include those with the responsibility for the academic programs that will use the completed project, those with responsibility for care and stewardship of the campus enterprise and the completed improvement, those with conceptual and fiscal responsibility, those responsible for life, safety and risk management, those responsible for maintenance and campus engineering, and University governance to name a few. Projects also require the engagement of many outside the institution who have legal, legislative, and fiscal authority for development or implementation, or who may have permanent oversight responsibilities for the completed improvement. Legislative, funding, certification, safety, bonding, insurance, design and building code oversight and approvals are routine during any number of steps in the capital improvement process before a project can begin or be completed and occupied.

The roles of participants in capital improvement projects are summarized separately and maintained by Planning+Design+Construction.

8.4 Project Budgeting and Financing

Preliminary cost estimates for the Project Priorities will be developed separately so that the institution can plan for and gauge funding needs and capacity and to further institutional prioritization and decision-making about the projects. In general, while cost estimating is an iterative process, project budget reviews are expected at each project review phase, and approval of a project budget will coincide with the project approval processes established. Inclusion of the scope of work of the project, and the programmatic assumptions, are required to accompany all project budget that are submitted for approval.

Financing for any project – regardless of the source of funding - must comply with University of Cincinnati financial policies and procedures.