

Providence City Plan Commission

November 15, 2022



AGENDA ITEM 5 ■ JOHNSON AND WALES INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN



Downcity Campus Plan



FIGURE 2. ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN FOR THE HARBORSIDE CAMPUS

Harborside Campus Plan

OVERVIEW

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:**

Johnson and Wales

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Institutional Master Plan (IMP) Amendment

**CASE NO./
PROJECT TYPE:**

Institutional Master Plan

**PROJECT
LOCATION:**

Multiple Blocks on the Johnson and Wales Campus

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the Institutional Master Plan subject to the findings and conditions noted in this report.

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Downtown and Washington Park

PROJECT PLANNER:

Choyon Manjrekar

IMP Purpose

Section 1910 of the Zoning Ordinance requires all higher education institutions to file an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) with the City Plan Commission (CPC) that describes the institution's proposed development over the next five years or more. The Master Plan must be updated every five years and may be amended during that period. The CPC reviews master plans and amendments for compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Summary

The IMP submitted by Johnson and Wales University (JWU) includes the school's mission statement, its planning strategies, traffic summary and goals and objectives for the future. The plan describes changes on campus, new construction and development, campus infrastructure, implementation of previously identified plan initiatives and the campus design framework. JWU maintains a Downtown campus and in the harborside area in Washington Park. The plan builds on initiatives identified in the plan submitted in 2017 and aims to continue them into the next IMP period.

The plan identifies Powered by Purpose: 2024, the university's strategic plan as the source of planning principles that will guide campus planning through this IMP cycle.

Campus planning initiatives

The Centennial Plan initiative identified developing the identity of the DOWNCITY campus, consolidation of academic programs and use of I-195 land as principal issues for that campus. Issues identified for the Harborside Campus include developing its image and identity, renewal and development of student housing, better connectivity between sections of the

campus and increasing activity on the harborside campus. The plan's goals which include encouraging movement between both campuses, maintaining student enrollment and owning property instead of leasing, reducing crowding in student housing and operating an efficient transportation system follow from the planning initiatives.

Notable projects with a horizon between 3-10 years on the DOWNCITY campus include construction of a future administration building and an academic building at Friendship and Claverick Street.

Major initiatives on the Harborside Campus include construction of a Controlled Environment Agricultural (CEA) facility for research and development, and athletic facilities.

Other changes on both campuses include streetscape improvements and building maintenance.

The plan contains a summary of property holdings on each campus including acquisitions, sales and non renewals of leases.

Parking and Traffic

With 1,048 spaces in DOWNCITY and 1,099 spaces on the Harborside campus, Johnson and Wales has a total of 3,047 parking spaces. Parking for the university is calculated for both campuses simultaneously and a shuttle system is used to run between both campuses. The ordinance requires one parking space for every two commuter students, eight residential students and three employees respectively. Based on their analysis, JWU currently requires 3,174 spaces to address current demand and 3,321 spaces for future demand. That figure is reduced as 1,781 spaces for commuter students and 52 spaces for non commuters have been grandfathered. JWU will meet the parking requirement upon factoring in the grandfathered spaces with 1,082 spaces required for current enrollment and 1,177 spaces required for future enrollment.

Lease with Provport

JWU is proposing to enter into a lease with Provport where Provport will lease land to the east of Shipyard Street to park vehicles that are currently parked in the port, southeast of the Harborside campus. The area vacated by the vehicles in the port, will be used for assembly of offshore wind turbines. Parking lots are permitted by right in the I-2 zone and are required to conform to the design and landscaping requirements for parking lots in sections 14 and 15 of the ordinance. This includes proper striping, provision of adequate drive aisle widths and installation of appropriate landscaping buffers.

Landscaping

JWU has 865,779 SF of land area in the D-1 zone, which requires 15 percent of canopy coverage for lot area not occupied by a structure. Per JWU, the total lot area of this campus is 865,779 SF with 332,351 SF not occupied by structures. Approximately 123,800 SF or 37% of canopy coverage has been provided. Although new buildings are proposed, their footprint will be offset by new open spaces. A number of sites targeted for redevelopment will provide further opportunities to increase canopy coverage.

JWU maintains approximately 106 acres of its harborside campus in the I-2 zone, which requires 30% of canopy coverage. Approximately 1 million SF of canopy coverage or 21.7% is provided. The plan notes that approximately 14 acres of this campus are vacant and planting is difficult due to prior industrial use. The plan notes that there are opportunities for additional plantings, particularly in vacant areas. It is the DPD's opinion that the applicant should work with the City Forester to increase the amount of canopy coverage to bring it into conformance with the ordinance.

Public Outreach

JWU put out a press release and posted the plan to their website and social media to solicit public comment.

FINDINGS

Providence Tomorrow

Strategy F of Objective LU-7 of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan requires educational institutions to provide five year IMPs to ensure that there is limited growth and negative impacts on neighborhoods. In addition, IMPs are expected to be updated with any new developments between plans. JWU has satisfactorily described growth that has occurred since the plan was last presented. By addressing how new development will fit into the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the amendment is consistent with Strategies A and B of Objective LU-7. A statement about the provision of parking and its effect on traffic management is consistent with Objectives M-1 and M-6, which promote provision of varied transportation options and parking.

Zoning Ordinance

This amendment to the IMP follows the format prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance, including all required elements outlined in Section 1910. The DPD finds that JWU meets the requirements of the ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis and findings contained in this report, the City Plan Commission should approve Johnson and Wales Institutional Master Plan subject to the following condition:

The applicant shall consult with the City Forester to determine a planting schedule to meet the canopy coverage requirement on the Harborside campus. JWU shall present their progress on meeting the planting schedule in future iterations of the plan.