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ODU asks:

Where do we grow from here ?

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED to number 28,000 soon. The campus needs more room, and tops on the wish list is a bigger Foreman Field.

By Harry Minium

The Virginian-Pilot

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY is exploding with growth. Its student body jumped from fewer than 20,000 a decade ago to more than 25,000 this year and is projected to approach 28,000 in five more years.

Buildings are sprouting to meet the demand for classrooms, research labs, housing, dining halls, recreational facilities and even green space. The past five years have brought more than \$225 million of construction, including \$28 million now under way.

And it's happening on a campus hemmed in by neighborhoods and the Elizabeth River.

ODU's football program has added to the land crunch. In May, as the school was preparing for its fourth season, officials announced that the Monarchs would join Conference USA and play major college football. That means Foreman Field, the university's 76-year-old, 20,068-seat stadium, needs to be expanded or replaced to meet conference standards.

Athletic Director Wood Selig said at least 35,000 seats are needed. All 26 home games have sold out, and Selig said there is a demand for at least 13,500 more season tickets.

Like ODU's campus, Foreman Field is surrounded by development. Expanding the stadium would be difficult from an engineering standpoint and could intrude into the Larchmont neighborhood.

In order to plan how the university will grow in the next 15 years, and how to accommodate major college football, ODU hired the firm of Perkins+Will to help update its campus master plan. Perkins+Will, which has done campus master plans for Texas Christian, Florida International and Harvard universities, will redo ODU's campus plan and, in the process, consider how or whether to expand Foreman Field.

While any makeover of a campus master plan is significant, the addition of Foreman Field and its effect on ODU's football program give this study a higher public profile than usual.

The study will involve architects, engineers, demographers, urban specialists and other experts, said David L. Harnage, ODU's chief operating officer. University officials said neighborhood leaders, city officials, students and faculty will be consulted and that ODU has budgeted \$675,000 for the project, which is expected to be completed in June.

School President John Broderick said the master plan process "forces us, in a good way, to have the kinds of discussions about where we see ourselves. Our hope is that, down the road, people will say we did a good job of managing the space Old Dominion has."

The group also will tackle whether it would be better to demolish Foreman Field and build anew. Although a portion of the stadium was renovated in 2009, much of it remains antiquated. The visitors' locker rooms, press facilities, restrooms and concession stands are inadequate. Some members of visiting teams dress in a makeshift tent outside the locker room.

"I think that's possible – the recommendation could be to tear down Foreman Field," Selig said. "But I hope that's not the end result. There's a lot of value to having a stadium on campus. We have more than 1,000 Larchmont residents who walk to our games. It's accessible for our 6,000 students who live on campus.

"It's a unique setup that I hope we can preserve."



Expanding ODU's academic facilities also is problematic. The school's growth already has pushed the 250-acre campus to the borders of residential areas.

Traditionally, ODU has embraced suburban-style development. A decade ago, it built three three-story dormitories in the University Village around surface parking lots. Officials now consider surface parking a luxury they probably can't afford. Two of ODU's largest surface lots recently were bulldozed to make way for new construction.

"Predominantly, our campus is built with two-story buildings," Harnage said. "The future may dictate that we consume vertical space rather than horizontal space."

That means ODU may have to embrace the kind of dense development occurring at schools such as Virginia Commonwealth University, where one of the newer dormitories rises 17 stories.

ODU's move toward higher density was evident a few years ago when private developers built The District at ODU, a four-story dormitory that houses nearly 1,000 students on just five acres and includes a parking deck.

Everything is on the table regarding the campus, Harnage said: How to expand student housing and classrooms; where to group facilities to bring programs with similar missions together; the quality and location of recreational facilities; how to enhance lighting; and even how to handle stormwater. Parking, pedestrian safety, and security in parking garages are other issues the study will examine.

The last time ODU did a campus master plan was 1995.

"It's time to step back and re-examine all of these issues," Harnage said.

Harnage acknowledged that the question of whether to tear down Foreman Field is as emotional as it is vital.

Built in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration project during the Great Depression, the stadium evokes deep emotions among longtime area residents, he said. Yet, Harnage said, the consultant will be asked whether it would be smarter to build anew.

"To me, personally, playing at Foreman Field means something," Harnage said. "But no matter how I feel personally, you let the process play out."

Officials wouldn't speculate on where a new stadium might be built.

ODU spent \$24.9 million in 2008 and 2009 on a renovation of the stadium that included a four-story addition of luxury suites and a parking deck in the south end zone. There likely can be no further expansion at that end.

That appears to leave three options:

Build a deck behind or on top of the stadium's west side. However, the west side backs up to Bluestone Avenue, a residential street in Larchmont, and there may not be enough room.

Demolish the 4,800 seats in the north end zone and close in that portion of the stadium with a horseshoelike addition. This likely would require demolition of a small ROTC building and could force the demolition of an annex of the 76-year-old Rollins Hall, one of the original buildings of the Norfolk Division of the College of William and Mary, as ODU was once known.

Build a deck over the top of or behind the east stands. The area behind the east stands includes a parking lot, courtyard and site of Koch Hall, the university's administration building.

Broderick said that might require that Koch Hall, built in 1973, be demolished.

"If they decide the best place to grow the stadium is there, then that creates not only a problem, but an opportunity," Broderick said. "The question is, where do you put your main administration building and how do you make all of those things happen within the constraints of taxpayer dollars?"

"Of all of the needs we have, I'm sure the appetite for a new administrative building isn't at the top of anybody's list. But that's part of what this process needs to answer."

Harnage said he believes there are other, less-obvious options for expanding the stadium, but he declined to give details.

"We don't know the issues we're going to find until the experts get to work," he said. "We could find utility lines

that would cost \$5 million to move. We have to look at what's underneath the ground supporting the stadium. It's going to be a very technical, complicated process."

If Harnage's group recommends expansion of Foreman Field, it will recommend an ideal seating capacity today as well as the maximum expansion for the future .

Officials agree it would be a mistake to expand too much, too fast.

"Is our optimum seating level at 30,000 or 40,000 or 50,000?" Selig said. "I doubt it's the higher number."

The contract with Perkins+Will mentions 33,000 to 35,000 seats as a potential target for expansion and asks the firm to provide a rendering of what it might become.

The consultant won't address how much stadium expansion or construction would cost or how it should be financed. Those questions will be answered later by architects and ODU's governing Board of Visitors, Harnage said. Collegiate athletic facilities in Virginia are usually funded through a combination of student fees, debt is sued on anticipated revenue, and private donations.

Any option will be expensive. James Madison University spent \$62.5 million on an expansion and renovation of its stadium that was completed last season. Mississippi State is spending \$75 million to add 6,000 seats to its stadium. UNC Charlotte is building a stadium from scratch for its startup football program that will cost \$40 million and seat 15,306.

Selig was athletic director at Western Kentucky University when it spent \$37.5 million to expand its stadium from 19,307 seats to 25,000 to move to the Football Bowl Subdivision, the same move ODU is making. He said a stadium project would require ODU to raise millions from private donors, a process that has not begun.

Laurie Chapman, who heads the Larchmont Civic League and is a football season-ticket holder, said that, based on the demand for seats, "they should expand the stadium." The only concerns she hears from neighbors, she said, are about parking. ODU has 8,000 spaces on campus, enough to accommodate all of the cars generated by 20,068 people.

"We would like to know what they have in mind about where the extra people will park," Chapman said.

Harnage led the most ambitious expansion in ODU's history more than a decade ago, when the school acquired more than 70 acres east of Hampton Boulevard and built the University Village. The complex houses thousands of students, an 8,500-seat basketball arena, shops, parking decks, a hotel, a bookstore and research buildings.

The development helped fuel the school's growth. Ten years ago, ODU had 2,130 students on campus. That number has more than doubled to 4,600, with hundreds more living at the private District at ODU.

Officials acknowledged that any similar large-scale expansion of the campus like the University Village is no longer feasible under state law. The school used a complicated process involving its real estate foundation, which is a private group, and the city's housing authority to acquire the property through eminent domain. If owners were unwilling to sell, the housing authority went through the often-contentious process of forcing a sale at a price set by the Norfolk Circuit Court. Several property owners still are waging court battles over attempts to take their land.

The General Assembly has since outlawed that process unless the land is purely to be used for a public purpose.

The University Village is one of three areas, including Foreman Field, that officials have asked the consultant to study independently of the campus master plan and to address in separate reports.

Harnage said Perkins+Will will be asked to recommend how ODU can best use the remaining vacant land in the University Village area. The contract with the consultant indicates that ODU does not anticipate developing more commercial property in the University Village, including a long-planned grocery store.

"The market has changed since the University Village was developed," Harnage said. "The key is to make sure that where we have undeveloped land, that we use it correctly."

The third area of study is the Webb Student Center, which may be too small for 25,000 students. ODU has asked the consultant to recommend how to expand the center or whether to move some services there to other areas.

Harnage said the new campus plan will not determine what's to be built, but rather, 'if you build things, this is where you should build it, this is where things will be organized.' It really becomes the vision for the physical

presence for the institution.”

It will also provide ODU with an estimate on the maximum growth of the student body, including residential housing, on the campus.

Harnage has experience redoing campus master plans. After leaving ODU in 2000, he helped develop plans at Longwood, Towson and James Madison universities. A year ago, Broderick lured him back to ODU, putting him in charge of public safety, relations with the city of Norfolk and, now, redoing the campus plan.

Harnage said the master plan process will begin in earnest within weeks, with a series of meetings among ODU officials, faculty members, students, neighborhood leaders and city leaders.

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VIRGINIAN-PILOT FILE PHOTO

planning ahead

Old Dominion University has hired Perkins+Will to help update its campus master plan and lay out a course for the next 15 years. ODU has budgeted \$675,000 for the project, which is expected to be completed in June.

on the table

David L. Harnage, ODU's chief operating officer, says everything is on the table: how to expand student housing and classrooms; where to group facilities; the quality and location of recreational facilities; lighting; parking; pedestrian safety; and security.

about football

One task will be to decide whether it would be better to demolish Foreman Field and build anew. Although a portion of the stadium was renovated in 2009, much of it remains antiquated.

HIGHLAND PARK, LARCHMONT, LAMBERTS POINT
ODU is hemmed in on all sides. To the east lies the Highland Park neighborhood. At the northeast quadrant of the campus, Larchmont borders Foreman Field. And to the south of 43rd Street sits Lamberts Point. The school has made a commitment to plan for growth without intruding on those neighborhoods.

Graphic by ROBERT D. VORLOS, text by TOM WHITE and HARRY MINNUM, photos by BOSS KAYLOR, THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT
SOURCES: Old Dominion University www.odu.edu; Bing



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ODU is hemmed in on all sides. To the east lies the Highland Park neighborhood. At the northeast quadrant of the campus, Larchmont borders Foreman Field. And to the south of 43rd Street sits Lamberts Point. The school has made a commitment to plan for growth without intruding on those neighborhoods.

SURFACE PARKING

Officials now consider surface parking a luxury because of the space it consumes. Two of the university's largest surface lots were recently bulldozed for new construction.

THE UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

ODU wants the consultants to recommend how best to use the remaining vacant land in the University Village area. Most of that space surrounds The District at ODU, a private dormitory built in 2010. Officials say future growth in the village will be limited to academic and research buildings and student housing.

GREEN SPACE

The master plan will focus on where to construct buildings and add parking but also will recommend ways to preserve open space on the campus, as well as how to handle stormwater.

STADIUMS' CAPACITIES

How Foreman Field's seating capacity for football games compares to that of the other 13 Conference USA teams that will play in 2013:

RANK/SCHOOL	FOOTBALL STADIUM CAPACITY
1. Tulane	72,003
2. UAB	71,594
3. Texas-San Antonio	65,000
4. Texas-El Paso	51,500
5. East Carolina	50,000
6. Rice	47,000
7. Marshall	38,019
8. Southern Miss	36,500
9. Tulsa	35,542
10. North Texas	30,850
11. Louisiana Tech	30,600
12. Florida International	23,500
13. Old Dominion*	20,068
14. UNC-Charlotte*	15,300

* Will become Conference USA football members in 2015.

SOURCE: Conference USA

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

ODU CAMPUS: PREPARING FOR GROWTH

Key points around the Old Dominion campus that will factor into the school's updated master plan.

FOREMAN FIELD

The university's 76-year-old stadium needs to be expanded beyond its 20,068-seat capacity – or replaced – and its facilities modernized as ODU moves into the highest level of college football. Athletic director Wood Selig suggests a facility that could hold 35,000. The consultants will be challenged to meet that without knocking at least some of the structure down. The current site is also surrounded by campus buildings and neighborhoods.

ROLLINS HALL

One option for Foreman Field: Demolish the 4,800 seats in the north end zone and close in that portion of the stadium. The problem: This may require razing a small ROTC building and a portion of 76-year-old Rollins Hall – a scenario ODU does not prefer.

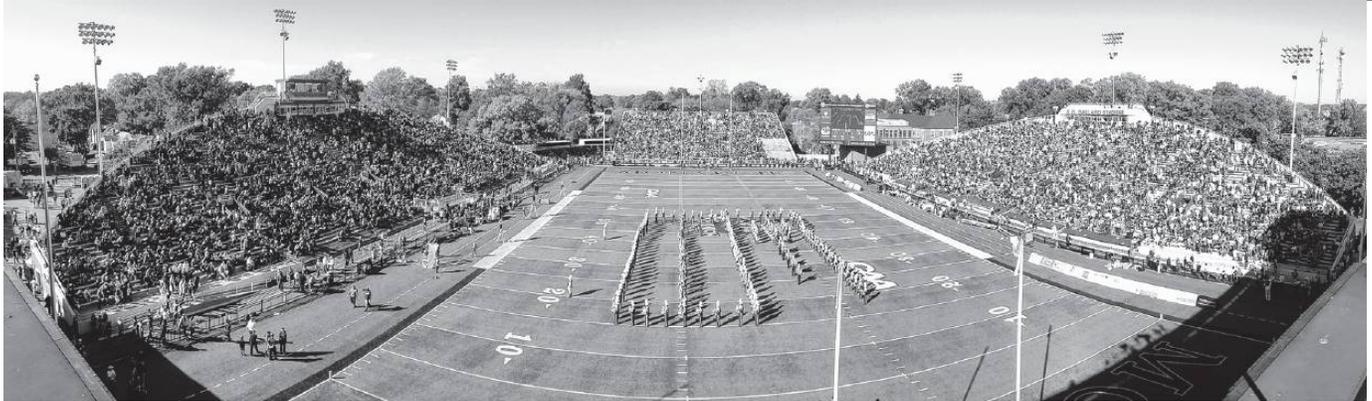
KOCH HALL

If Foreman Field expansion were to include the east side, this nearly 40-year-old administration building might have to be torn down. Although Koch Hall may be too small for a growing university, as school president John Broderick puts it: "Of all of the needs we have, I'm sure the appetite for a new administrative building isn't at the top of anybody's list."

STUDENT HOUSING

Long a commuter school, ODU is moving toward being more of a traditional residential university. Ten years ago,

2,130 students lived on campus. The number has more than doubled to 4,600, not including the 1,000 students living in a private dormitory. Officials have asked consultants to recommend where to build more housing like the Quad student complex pictured below.



Foreman Field, below, was built in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration project during the Great Depression. The stadium evokes deep emotions among longtime area residents, said David L. Harnage, ODU's chief operating officer.



ODU President John Broderick says the master-plan process is forcing the university to assess its goals and to use its limited space prudently.