

Proposed designs to give UMC 'plaza look'

by Todd Copilevitz
staff writer

Plans for making UMC a pedestrian-oriented campus, including proposed designs for the Lowry Street Mall, will be presented to the University Board of Curators in March.

If the plans are approved, construction on the long-range project could begin as early as spring.

On Thursday, student leaders and various faculty members were given an opportunity to view and comment on proposed designs for the mall and its surrounding areas.

The plans will be finalized and

presented to the board at its March 20 meeting in St. Louis.

The plans include closing Ninth Street from its entrance to the Missouri Bookstore parking lot to the Arts and Science Mall; completely closing Lowry Street; closing Hitt Street from the north side of the Fine Arts Building to Conley Avenue; closing Conley Ave. from the rear entrance of Ellis Library to Missouri Avenue and building a bridge over Rollins Street to connect the Arts and Science Mall with the Lowry Street Mall.

Once the streets are closed, a series of plazas will be constructed, along with gathering areas.

The plans call for a large open area in

front of the Memorial Union with a mosaic "MU", as well as two connected plazas that will run from its entrance to the Fine Arts Building and the to the west side of McDonalds.

The plaza surrounding the Francis Monument will be enlarged along with the steps from Ninth Street to the East side of Jesse Hall.

Another plaza will be placed at the intersection of Ninth Street and Conley Avenue.

The plans also include kiosks (information centers), shaded areas, wooden benches, a sculpture or fountain on the Ninth Street side of the library, a "Big Mac Terrace" between the library and Jesse Hall

and McDonalds, and a turn-around area for traffic at the corner of Hitt Street and Conley Avenue.

Austin Tao of TAO and Associates, one of the firms responsible for the project, said efforts will be made to make a "subtle transition" between the red campus and white campus. He said he hopes this can be accomplished by varying the color composition of each area.

Tao said the architectural firms plan to reuse the bricks left when Lowry Street is torn up.

Comments from the student leaders and faculty members who attended the discussion session showed varying levels of support.

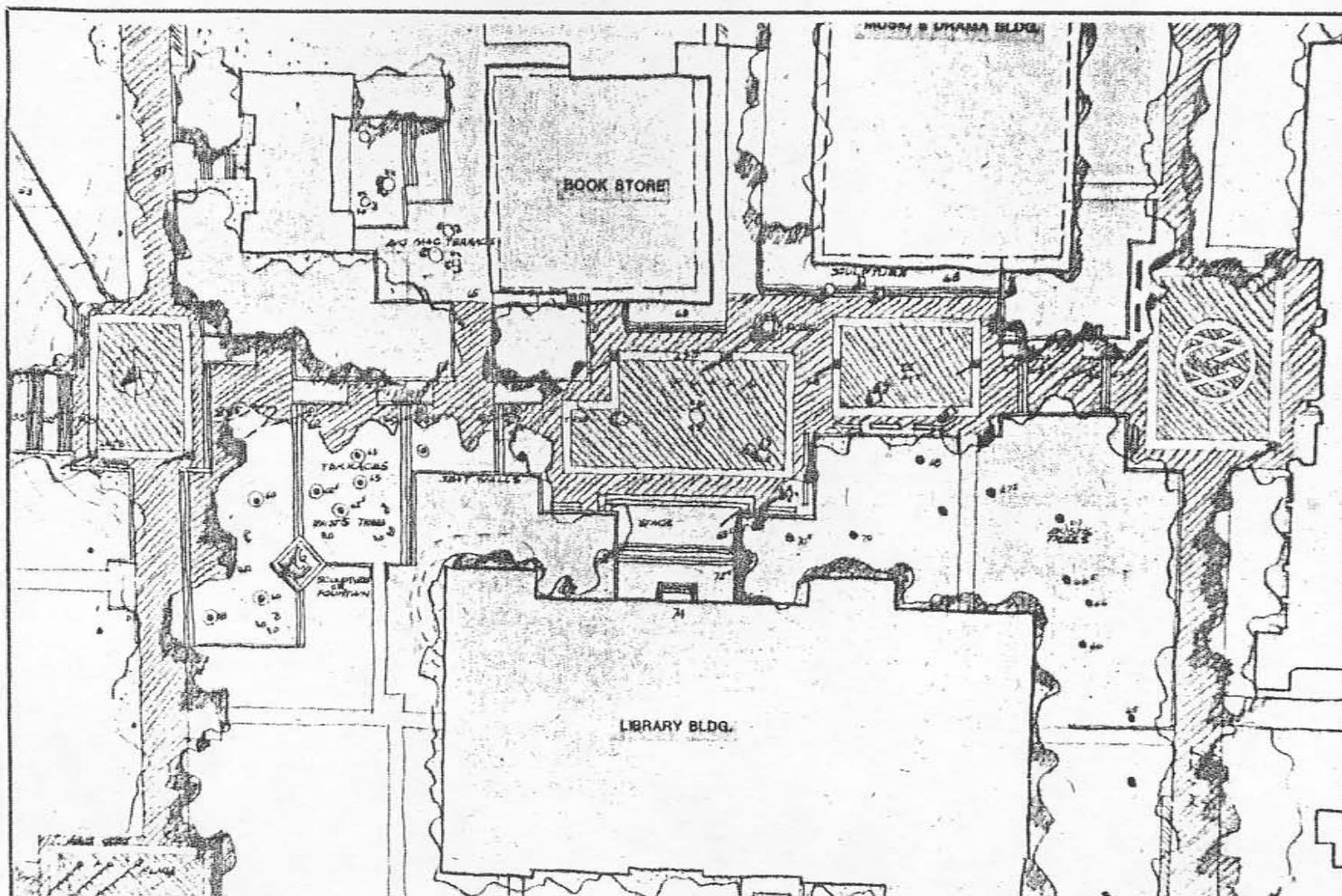
"I am just enthusiastic about the plan," UMC student Joe Wellman said. But others expressed more restraint in their comments. Several participants expressed hesitation at placing an amphitheater near the entrance of Ellis Library. One library worker said she is worried that people gathering in the area might create distractions for students studying in the library.

Bob Pugh, vice president of Missouri Store Co., said he is not concerned about the actual design of the project if Missouri Bookstore does not lose access to its back parking lot. He said the store has hired architects to evaluate the facilities and make recommendations for possible building renovations. "We're not going to be a sore thumb," he said.

The only complaint from Will Summers, landscape architect for the University Facilities Management, was, "the large paved areas need breaks in them (with trees) for shade."

Bill Ruppert, coordinator of special projects for UMC, said he is pleased with the comments from the Thursday meeting. He said he likes the plans but, he said, "The general concern I had was accommodating short-cut traffic around the library."

William Hull, of CHNMB and Associates of San Francisco, the other firm working on the project stressed the project will have a long time span because of its high price tag of \$1,000,000. "If you like what you see (the plans), you'll see it 10-14 years down the line," he said.



Lowry Mall
Buildings