

ORI study to take weeks

A review of an alternative building site already is finding available parking spaces to be a major hurdle

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Details about numbers of parking spaces and the size of setbacks needed for an office building may determine whether a years-long dispute over the proposed Oregon Research Institute building ends amicably.

The question building experts are evaluating is whether the proposed 80,000-square-foot ORI building, parking spaces and landscaping can be accommodated on two parcels totaling 3.6 acres that are set far back from the Willamette River, as opposed to the long-proposed site of 4.3 acres right alongside the river.

University of Oregon President Richard Lariviere announced Monday that the UO is asking ORI and its developer, Trammell Crow Co., to evaluate the smaller site.

However, it's still unclear whether the smaller property, at 1700 Millrace Drive, could accommodate the ORI project.

Trammell Crow said it will be weeks before it concludes its investigations and will be able to say whether the ORI project can be placed on the two smaller parcels.

Those two smaller parcels are on either side of Millrace Drive, about a half-mile southeast of the 4.3-acre site at 855 Riverfront Parkway.

"We just don't know yet," said Steve Wells, senior managing director of Trammell Crow Portland office. "We are just wading into this."

However, Wells added his team already has determined that parking will be a major hurdle. The ORI project, as planned for the Riverfront Parkway parcel, had 180 parking spaces.

At this point, Wells said he believes the proposed four-story ORI building, as

"I've gotten exactly one e-mail on the topic," Lariviere said this week.

"That e-mail said congratulations, nice compromise."

Lariviere said the e-mail wasn't from a name he recognized or even descriptive enough to reveal how the sender felt about the original location planned for ORI.

Lariviere said it was the community's vocal opposition to Riverfront Parkway location that led him and his staff to push for a review of the alternative site.

Lariviere has instructed Trammell Crow to explore the feasibility of the Millrace Drive site while still moving forward with planning for the Riverfront Parkway site.