

DATE: November 20, 2014

SUBJECT: ETSU Master Plan Update

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

Campus master plans are an essential element of higher education public policy by providing an opportunity for long range planning that incorporates the institution’s needs and ambitions, while also providing the public and state government a sense for how the institution might evolve over time. Whether the acquisition of strategic property, the need for and efficient use of facilities or how the campus footprint meshes with the surrounding community, master plans provide a method of anticipating and preparing for the future needs of the campus and the students it serves. THEC encourages institutions to produce a master plan approximately every five years that addresses near, mid and long-term needs of the campus with respect to building and land use, open space, vehicular circulation and parking, and land acquisition opportunities.

A doctoral granting university, East Tennessee State University (ETSU) serves nearly 15,000 students and graduates over 3,000 students a year from bachelor’s degrees to first professional degrees in medicine and pharmacy. The 2014 ETSU Master Plan Update builds upon elements in the 2010 Master Plan, while including new elements such as enhanced athletics facilities and a potential new site location for the Fine Arts Center, which is included in THEC’s capital outlay request in Agenda Item I.D.

Central to the Master Plan Update is the identification of two potential sites for the 130,000 square foot Fine Arts Center. One location places the building on the north edge of campus adjacent to the Millennium Center and Carnegie Hotel, while the other site is on the east side of campus along the axis formed by Burgin Dossett and Gilbreath Halls. The Fine Arts Center will include a performance hall, theatre spaces and will serve as the home of several programs, including the music, theatre and bluegrass programs.

In addition, changes to the athletics facilities figure prominently into the Master Plan. Recently, ETSU re-established its football program, creating the need for a football stadium. Designed to be built in phases, the stadium will initially seat 6,500 to 10,000 people with future phases increasing capacity to 30,000, along with skyboxes and hospitality areas. As well, a new tennis center is envisioned, contingent on private funding or a business model that generates new revenues.

The Master Plan also reiterates several important facets of the 2010 Master Plan, including shifting traffic away from the campus interior and redevelopment of the west side campus housing.

The ETSU Campus Master Plan Update has been thoroughly reviewed and THEC staff recommends it for approval.