

Agenda Item: I.D.

DATE: July 20, 2016

SUBJECT: Tennessee State University Master Plan Update

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Campus master plans are an essential element of higher education public policy. Master plans provide 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 an analysis of 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 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.

MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

Tennessee State University, the only historically-black, land-grant institution in Tennessee, was established in 1912 and has grown from a student body under 300 to a total headcount just over 9,000 in 2015. TSU awarded 1,508 degrees in 2014-15 across its eight colleges and schools. The institution operates on 760 acres in the middle Tennessee area across its two campuses, with the main campus comprising 65 buildings on 290 acres just west of downtown Nashville.

The 2016 Master Plan Update centers on three primary academic focal points identified by the campus community in the *Academic Master Plan* and by local supporters, including a strategic focus on health sciences education, STEM-related fields, and K-12 education. These focus areas guided the campus and planning firm, Woolpert, Inc., as they envisioned the next 15 years of TSU's development. Participants sought to reinforce existing campus strengths, employ data-driven decision making, and incorporate constituent recommendations, all while building upon the success of the campus's 2008 Master Plan. The master plan follows six main priorities: strengthening the main campus experience, reinforcing the academic core, investing in student life facilities, strategic land acquisition, enabling future campus growth, and increasing stability and safety on campus.

All master plans require an extensive assessment of campus facilities and space utilization. Presently, TSU's main campus covers 1,493,118 assignable square feet (ASF) across 65 buildings, many of which are in unsatisfactory or significantly deteriorating condition. Twenty three buildings are identified by the master plan to undergo demolition or renovation in the next ten years due to poor condition, with 12 recommended to be removed in the next five years.

Employing space utilization standards and projected needs set out by THEC and TSU's peer institutions, the main campus currently has a net surplus of 40,453 ASF. However, this surplus square footage will require repurposing to meet current campus needs. Utilizing an enrollment projection of 10,000 students, TSU will face a projected main campus shortfall of 149,907 ASF, with the highest deficits in science classrooms and labs. TSU will also face significant shortfall in recreation and athletic facilities. The master plan also addresses needs in campus residential facilities, identifying the best ways to meet the housing preferences of current and future students.

As an urban campus, TSU is situated between residential and commercial spaces, posing security concerns for the campus community, facilities, and visitors. During the master-planning process, TSU and James L. Johnson Associates, a campus safety and security consulting firm, underwent extensive reviews of the campus's security measures, recommending several additions and modifications to ensure campus safety. In response, the master plan recommends the construction of a physical perimeter around the campus to develop controlled access points to the institution, visitor management systems, closed-circuit TV refinements, and campus-wide emergency notification systems.

Lastly, the master plan addresses the Avon Williams campus, located in downtown Nashville. This satellite location has similar square footage repurposing needs as the main campus, most notably in the College of Health Sciences and College of Public and Urban Affairs. The master plan recommends expansion of instructional laboratories and parking options, acquisition of adjacent property, and demolition of the Incubation Center to meet campus needs.

The 2016 Master Plan Update exhibits flexibility and strategic thinking, allowing TSU to grow over the next three decades. Immediate changes to the campus include construction of the perimeter fence and controlled gateways, construction of a new Health Sciences building funded in the 2016-17 budget, and demolition or repurposing of on-campus spaces. Future improvements include new residence halls, acquisition of adjacent properties, and a new football stadium.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2016 TSU Master Plan Update provides a comprehensive, yet flexible plan to guide the university for the next three decades. It has been thoroughly reviewed, and THEC staff recommend it for approval.