



TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: II.

MEETING DATE: May 11, 2023

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee, Knoxville Master Plan

ITEM TYPE: Action

ACTION RECOMMENDATION: Approval

BACKGROUND

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 requires institutions to produce a master plan every ten years that addresses short-, 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

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT Knoxville) Master Plan provides a vision for the dynamic physical transformation of the institution's Knoxville- and Tullahoma-based campuses. The development of the Master Plan was informed by the University's three-fold mission, strategic vision, and robust campus engagement. Its goals include providing high quality educational opportunities for learners at all stages; creating a more just and sustainable world through research, scholarship, and creative work; and supporting local, state, and national communities through the University's land grant mission. The plan was guided by five planning principles:

- **CONNECTIVITY:** Support the land-grant mission by providing strong internal and external campus connections.
- **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:** Create a welcoming, vibrant, and mixed-use campus setting.
- **INTERDISCIPLINARITY & RESEARCH:** Create interdisciplinary research communities supported by core facilities that catalyze innovation and leverage partnerships.
- **SUSTAINABILITY & NATURAL SYSTEMS:** Prioritize resource conservation and environmental practices that promote an equitable campus and mitigate the social impacts of climate change.
- **GROWTH:** Support growth to fulfill the UT Knoxville mission and vision and transform the campus.

The planning framework and recommendations are organized around three key strategies to implement the five planning principles and support the overall Volunteer experience:

- **INTERDISCIPLINARY HUBS:** Create interdisciplinary learning and research communities supported by shared facilities that catalyze innovation.
- **STUDENT LIFE CLUSTERS:** Create welcoming, vibrant, and mixed-use campus settings supporting student success and wellness.
- **CAMPUS CONNECTIONS:** Strengthen connectivity between campus hubs, to the river, and downtown Knoxville through a cohesive network of landscapes and gateways. Leverage the UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm as a centerpiece for innovation and increased partnerships throughout greater Knoxville and Tennessee.

Since the 2011 Long Range Master Plan, the University has completed over 40 projects and constructed 4.3 million gross square feet (GSF) of new space. Of the 4.3 million GSF, 3 million GSF was non-residential space supporting music, engineering, science, research, student life and wellness. For the 2023 Master Plan, the University aims to enroll approximately 46,000 traditional and online students by 2030, an increase of 14,500 students from Fall 2021. Projections for Fall 2030 include increases of 35% (2,155) in-person graduate and 25% (6,200) in-person undergraduate growth and significant growth across online graduate and undergraduate students. While growth is anticipated in every college, most of the growth is forecasted in the Haslam College of Business, the Herbert College of Agriculture, the College of Nursing, and the Tickle College of Engineering. Key areas driving space needs include the expansion of research activity, growth in residential student population, campus-wide need for collaboration, study and recreation space, and STEM instructional labs and maker spaces.

Renewal of campus facilities is also a key space driver. Outdated facilities limit programs and negatively impact the student and faculty experience. Currently, 265,000 GSF are scheduled or identified for demolition related to funded or in-construction projects. Based on Facility Condition Assessments, 4.2 million GSF of space, or 25% of space overall is identified as in poor condition. Upgrading and renovating existing space is critical to providing high quality, functional spaces and addressing space needs.

The master plan provides a long-term vision for the physical campus identifying renovation, new development, open space, and infrastructure projects. In the 10-year horizon, the plan identifies 2.9 million GSF of renewal through major renovation and demolition that addresses more than half of the 4.2 million poor condition space on campus. 3.3 million GSF of non-residential space is planned to support modern instruction, STEM and research growth, and the overall student experience. This new development provides infill throughout campus strengthening key adjacencies like the arts and humanities. Additionally, the planning accommodates 1 million GSF of housing to meet immediate needs for students.

In the near term, five interdisciplinary academic and research buildings renew aging facilities and address space deficiencies in the basic, behavioral, and health sciences, humanities, arts and architecture on the Hill and at interdisciplinary learning hubs.

1. Chemistry Building (Panhellenic Site)
2. Interdisciplinary Classroom/Humanities Building
3. Interdisciplinary Health, Research & Clinic (Jessie Harris Site)
4. Interdisciplinary Research (Dabney-Buehler Site)
5. Interdisciplinary Academic Building (Temple Site)

Immediate housing needs are addressed with construction and leasing of 5,000 beds and additional capacity for Greek and affinity housing along Caledonia Avenue. Athletics facility renewal and expansion competitively position UT Knoxville for the future and enhance the spectator experience. The proposed UT

Drive Garage achieves 1,000 additional parking spaces. A new innovation and research building is also planned at UTSI.

Finally, the University is in a period of transformational growth, fueled by increasing student enrollment, robust academic programs, and research expansion. In Knoxville, the institution's campuses are bordered by the Tennessee River and its tributaries, bisected by train yards, and bounded to the north by the Cumberland Avenue corridor. Land for expansion is limited. Partnerships within greater Knoxville, particularly downtown, are an opportunity to support the campus' strategic goals and stewardship of land within the campus core. The master plan defines its Knoxville-based boundary by identifying a circular zone of influence with a radius of 1.5 miles centered on Andy Holt and UT Drives. This approach positions the University to consider the strategic acquisition of properties that support partnerships and collaborative initiatives aligned with its mission and strategic plan. While the Ft. Sanders neighborhood to the north and Maplehurst Park to the east of campus do fall within the proposed radius, the University does not intend to acquire historic houses in these districts.

RECOMMENDATION

The 2023 Master Plan is a comprehensive 10-year plan, within a long-term vision of campus development. The plan includes analysis of space needs, enrollment, site considerations, facility conditions and renewal plans, land acquisition, infrastructure, student life/services, and implementation and capital plan. THEC staff recommends it for approval.