



Campus Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 2020





Letter from the President

Dear NKU Campus Community:

I am excited to share Northern Kentucky University's 2020 Campus Master Plan with you. This bold and sustainable plan will guide future development of our beautiful campus, and is meant to inform us and the region we serve, including state officials, legislators, donors and friends.

With a foundational basis on *Success by Design* and our vision to become nationally recognized as a student-ready, regionally engaged university, the Campus Master Plan links the past to the future in ways we had not anticipated when the process began. The master planning team engaged with internal and external communities in a thoughtful conversation about the future.

This process of introspection, of sharing ideas and seeing the campus through a new lens, and then considering alternative ways to meet our needs resulted in lively discussions. Early in the process, we achieved consensus on the guiding principles for developing the plan:

- Support a more engaged university serving the northern Kentucky region
- Create a place of academic excellence and innovation to support a diversity of learners
- Design a welcoming and desirable NKU experience
- Leverage campus assets to create value

Due to COVID-19, the master plan team transitioned to virtually engaging stakeholders in evaluating design scenarios of specific campus areas. The scenarios included renovation of existing facilities, new construction, relocation of departments, campus space, pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, parking, campus entry and arrival, signage and infrastructure. Plans also included athletic and recreation facilities and edge-of-campus land uses.

The resulting plan provides a framework for the university to operationalize over a 10-to-20 year horizon. Projects outlined in the Master Plan focus on stewardship of assets and investments in the physical campus that add value through improving the student experience, advancing NKU's competitive advantage, supporting digital initiatives and growing strategic partnerships. While the primary focus of the recommendations are on the renovation of existing space, the plan also includes strategic additions and new buildings.

You will find that the 2020 Campus Master Plan positions NKU for great success. I truly appreciate the work of the Ayers Saint Gross team and all those on campus and in the community who shared their time and ideas. Together, we aspire to a future for NKU that is bright – let us look forward to working together to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ashish K. Vaidya". The signature is stylized with a large, bold "A" and a cursive "Vaidya".

Ashish K. Vaidya, Ph.D.
President

Alignment with *Success by Design*

Northern Kentucky University's vision is to be nationally recognized as a student-ready, regionally engaged university that empowers diverse learners for economic and social mobility. A robust and collaborative planning effort, the 2020 Campus Master Plan will guide future investments in the physical campus to support the goals outlined in the three pillars of the university's strategic framework, *Success by Design*, and advance the university's mission to deliver an innovative student-centered education. The Master Plan was developed through an 18-month consensus-driven process guided by a diverse steering committee and informed by the engagement of both campus and local community stakeholders.

MISSION

“Northern Kentucky University delivers innovative, student-centered education and engages in impactful scholarly and creative endeavors, all of which empower our graduates to have fulfilling careers and meaningful lives, while contributing to the economic, civic, and social vitality of the region.”

SUCCESS BY DESIGN IS BUILT UPON THREE PILLARS:

Access

NKU will expand programs, services, and delivery options to increase access and become a preferred destination for learners across the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the nation, and the world.

Completion

NKU will align the institution so more learners, particularly first-generation, post-traditional, low-income, and underrepresented individuals, earn highly valued degrees, certificates, and credentials.

Career & Community Engagement

NKU will increase its contributions to the economic, social, and civic prosperity of the region through talent development, research and innovation, and the stewardship of place.



Guiding Principles

Guiding principles were developed through a consensus-driven planning process with the campus community as a benchmark to inform planning for the physical campus and as a foundation for master plan implementation through articulation of shared goals. Four guiding principles will help guide future decisions as NKU continues to grow and serve the northern Kentucky region.

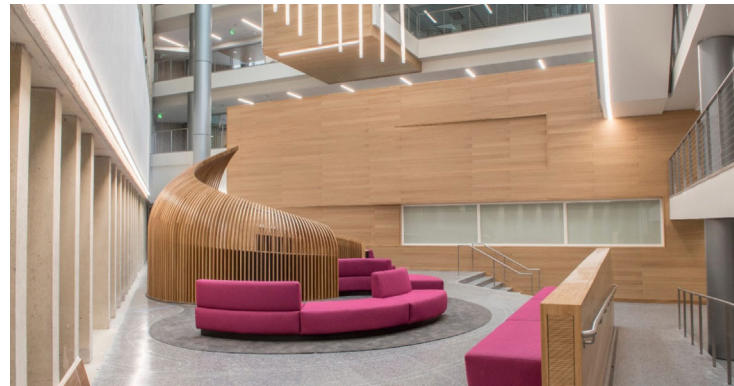


1 Support a more engaged university

- Catalyze a regional eco-system through economic development, talent development, and entrepreneurship
- Support the expansion of public-private partnerships to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship
- Serve the local community by expanding educational outreach and partnerships

2 Create a place of academic excellence

- Serve multiple student constituencies
- Support co-curricular learning
- Increase flexible, experiential, and modular learning pathways



3

Design a welcoming and desirable NKU experience

- Create a sense of belonging
- Improve campus edge identity and arrival
- Enhance internal and perimeter open space
- Improve connectivity between campus districts and to surrounding community

4

Leverage campus assets to create value

- Reinvest in existing facilities through renewal and stewardship
- Capitalize on shared facilities and maximize utilization
- Prioritize projects at a variety of scales that have the greatest impact
- Create a more sustainable NKU to ensure growth and longevity

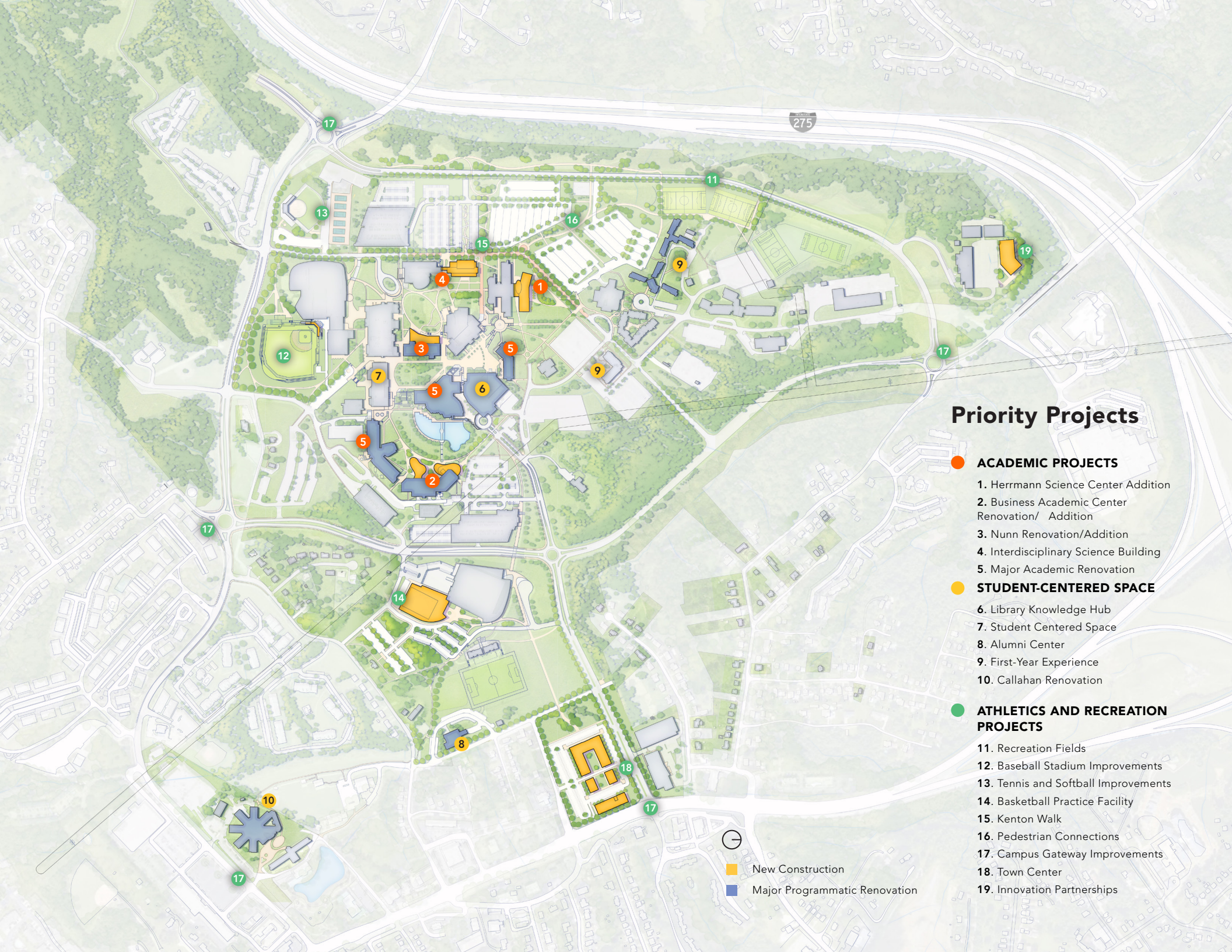
Campus Master Plan

An initial phase of the master planning process included a space-needs assessment to evaluate existing campus space qualitatively and quantitatively. The space-needs assessment identified academic space needs in the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Informatics, Business, and Health and Human Services as well as significant space deficits for academic affairs, student services, administration, and athletics.

To address campus space needs, key opportunities were identified through campus engagement sessions and analysis by the planning team. The following three goals were established to guide recommendations:

- Optimize the campus core for collaborative teaching and learning, and improve adjacencies and connectivity
- Enhance the student experience with improvements to Stealy Library, University Center, Votruba Student Union and student living spaces
- Define the campus perimeter to provide easier access to the academic core including improvements to parking, communications, signage, walkways, wayfinding, and campus entry points

Projects outlined in the Master Plan reflect the findings of the space-needs assessment and focus on the stewardship of assets and investments to the physical campus that add value through improving student engagement, advancing NKU's competitive advantage, supporting digital initiatives, and growing strategic partnerships. While the primary focus of the recommendations is on the renovation of existing space, the plan also includes strategic additions and new buildings. The Master Plan identifies priority projects that meet current needs while outlining bold goals and a long-term vision to meet the challenges of tomorrow.



Priority Projects

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

1. Herrmann Science Center Addition
2. Business Academic Center Renovation/ Addition
3. Nunn Renovation/Addition
4. Interdisciplinary Science Building
5. Major Academic Renovation

STUDENT-CENTERED SPACE

6. Library Knowledge Hub
7. Student Centered Space
8. Alumni Center
9. First-Year Experience
10. Callahan Renovation

ATHLETICS AND RECREATION PROJECTS

11. Recreation Fields
12. Baseball Stadium Improvements
13. Tennis and Softball Improvements
14. Basketball Practice Facility
15. Kenton Walk
16. Pedestrian Connections
17. Campus Gateway Improvements
18. Town Center
19. Innovation Partnerships



New Construction

Major Programmatic Renovation

Academic Core

The academic core is a compact intersection of academic disciplines. Arts and sciences, informatics, health and human services, law, business, and education are all located in close proximity providing opportunities for collaborative learning. Student-centered spaces including Steely Library, the Votruba Student Union, and the University Center are all located within a five-minute walk in the heart of the academic core and support the dynamic intersection of academic uses.

The Master Plan proposes projects that celebrate and build on the success of the academic core with enhanced co-location of disciplines, ensuring future flexibility in support of collaborative teaching and learning. The Master Plan identifies projects that leverage the existing campus by:

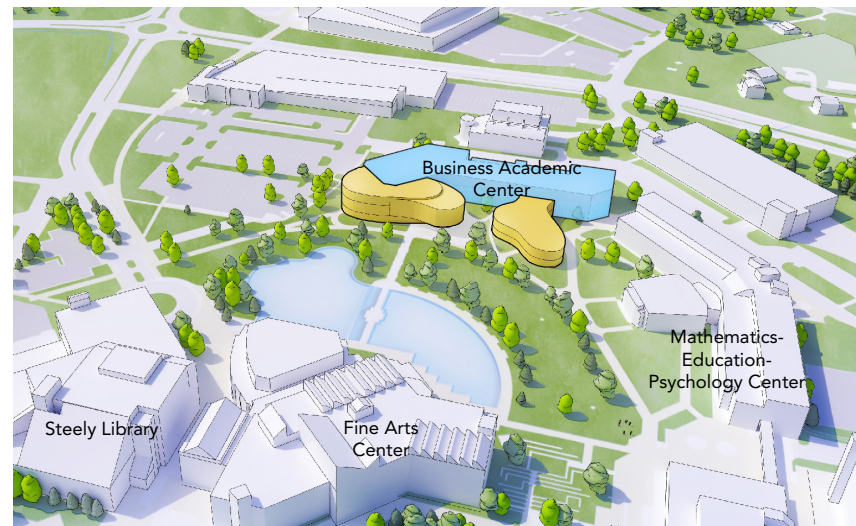
- Colocating disciplines to support collaboration and synergies
- Embracing the brutalist aesthetic while introducing transparency, new materials, and color
- Maximizing funding available for renovation and maintenance of existing buildings

The recommendations for the academic core are aimed at providing needed growth in strategic areas while modernizing key buildings for today's educational environment.

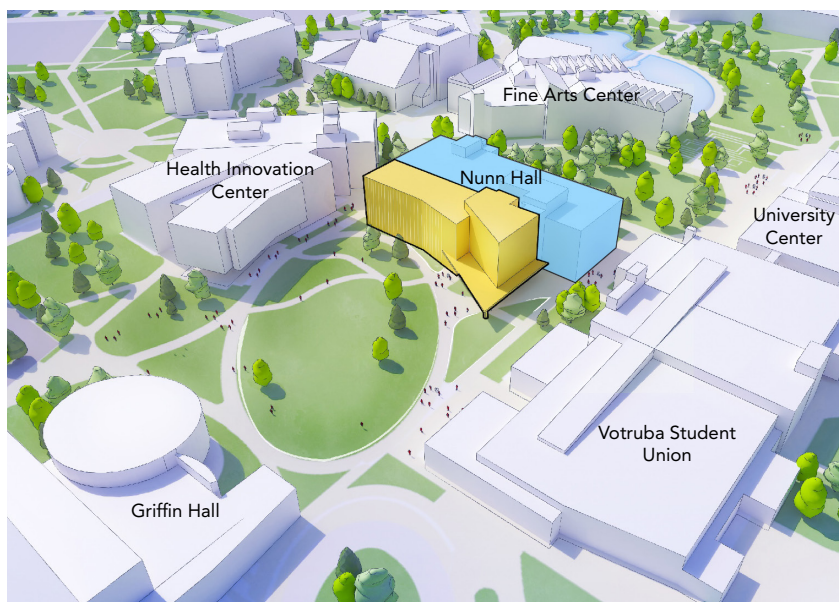
- Expansion of the Herrmann Science Center will provide much needed class lab and research space as well as space for engineering technology, thus freeing up space in the Business Academic Center (BC) to allow renovation and expansion to house Chase College of Law and the Haile College of Business.
- Following the relocation of law to BC, Nunn Hall will be renovated, and an addition constructed to house the engineering technology and art disciplines, creating opportunities for STEAM collaborations. The relocation of art will enable renovation and modernization of the Fine Arts Center, providing expansion space for music and theater. Space vacated by engineering technology in the Herrmann Science Center will support growth in the sciences.
- An Integrated Science Building is planned on the site between Herrmann Science Center and Griffin Hall, completing NKU's STEM quad. Since there are no enabling projects, funding and space needs will determine the timing of this project.
- The Master Plan anticipates incremental renovations of Landrum Academic Center and the Mathematics-Education-Psychology Center. Major renovations are expected following completion of the Nunn Hall renovation.



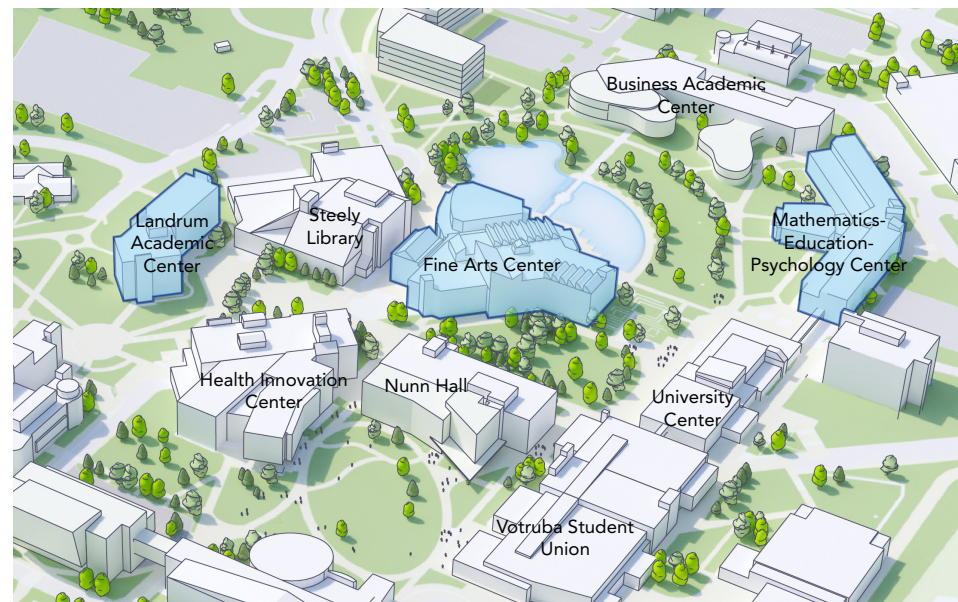
Proposed STEM Quad



Proposed Business Academic Center Renovation and Additions



Proposed Nunn Hall Renovation and Addition



Proposed Building Renovations

Student-Centered Space

Improving space for student engagement and increasing the sense of belonging are priorities identified in the Master Plan. This goal will be achieved through the transformation of Steely Library to an academic knowledge hub that supports the academic needs of all students in one location. Surplus space in the existing library will allow academic services currently located in the University Center and the Votruba Student Union to relocate to the library, thus freeing up space for a Center for Student Inclusiveness as well as other student services, organizations and activities. This strategy closely aligns with *Success by Design* and is identified for early phase implementation.

The plan also supports the goal of enhancing the on-campus residential experience. The first-year experience will be supported with completion of the new residence hall as well as the renovation of Commonwealth and Kentucky Halls. Renovation of Callahan will provide a value option for upper division students as well as an opportunity for growth in the Honors College.

Renovation of the Civic Center as an alumni center will benefit both current students and alumni by providing opportunities for greater interaction and programming.

For athletics and recreation, the plan includes improvements to existing baseball, softball and tennis facilities and identifies a site for future construction of a basketball practice facility, an indoor multi-purpose center, and a track and field stadium. Recreation fields are envisioned on the current site of Woodcrest Apartments.

Campus Edge Opportunities

The Master Plan provides campus edge opportunities for industry/corporate partnerships, economic development, and innovation to serve the university as well as the broader northern Kentucky region. Various partnership sites are identified, with a goal to further NKU's integration with the community and to establish the university as a regional innovation hub providing opportunities for students and faculty to engage with private businesses. The Town Center development site is a near-term opportunity to establish a presence on U.S. 27 with a public-private partnership featuring a mixture of retail and housing. The plan also includes recommendations for gateways, branding, landscape, and wayfinding improvements to create a more welcoming campus.

Sustainability and Utility Infrastructure

The Master Plan includes a variety of recommendations building upon the university's commitment to sustainability and the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Notable among these is the decision to renovate and modernize rather than demolish existing buildings, a strategy similar to the HIC/Founders renovation project. A comprehensive infrastructure assessment is included in the plan and addresses the capacity of current systems as well as strategies aligned with the university's sustainability goals. Reaching carbon neutrality will also require policy development aimed at reducing travel and encouraging alternate modes of transportation.



Long-Term Vision

The Master Plan identifies long-term development sites, or sites beyond the 15-year time horizon of the plan. Agreement on these long-term development sites maintains future flexibility and ensures that campus improvements identified in the Master Plan are consistent with long-term goals and opportunities. The long-term vision includes opportunities for academic expansion within the academic core. Residential expansion is envisioned adjacent to existing housing neighborhoods. Future athletic and support facilities as well as innovation and partnership opportunities are identified at the campus perimeter.

Long-Term Vision

-  New Construction
-  1 Wellness Community
-  2 Academic Expansion
-  3 Innovation and Partnerships
-  4 Residential Expansion
-  5 Facilities Maintenance
-  6 Athletics
-  7 Parking





Adapting to Change

Northern Kentucky University's future will be shaped by a variety of factors including student demographics and academic market demand, changes in technology, political priorities, ability to secure funding, and the local and national economy. Partnership opportunities, course delivery methods, research initiatives, student life amenity and dining trends, housing demand, and deferred maintenance priorities will also inform implementation decisions during the tenure of the Master Plan.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional uncertainty about the future of work and gathering that reinforces the need for flexibility to adapt to changes in society and higher education.

As these forces spur change over the Master Plan's planning horizon, it is possible that new degree programs designed to meet changing educational and career trends will have space implications for the campus. The planning principles, concept plan, goals, and strategies identified in the Master Plan are designed for flexibility in anticipation of change. The plan provides a coherent vision that will allow the university to react to challenging

forces and respond to opportunities in the near and long-term. The Master Plan and the space assessment should be updated after three, five, and seven years to acknowledge completed projects and to review and realign critical assumptions. In conjunction with regular Master Plan updates, the university should consider periodic assessment of the need for additional residence hall beds as well as evaluation of the adequacy of campus parking.

The university's capital plan, which is updated biennially, will be shaped and informed by the Master Plan. The capital plan will outline funding priorities for near-to-mid-term projects and will be developed collaboratively with university stakeholders.



NKU

STUDENT UNION

James C. and Rachel M. Vitzthum

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**Photos courtesy of Scott Beseler and NKU Marketing and Communications*

