UMass Amherst Campus Master Plan Executive Summary 2012

Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham
University of Massachusetts - Amherst, lpavlova@cp.umass.edu

Dennis Swinford
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, swinford@MIT.EDU

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UNDERSTAND THE LONG-TERM GROWTH POTENTIAL

BUILD A SERIES OF SYSTEMS AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH

CREATE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND FLEXIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE

RESPECT THE PLANNING AND BUILDING HERITAGE

SUSTAINABILITY — LIVE IT, LEARN IT, LEAD IT

EMBRACE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY
The vision for UMass Amherst is to become the best public research university in the country. The Master Plan enables this by synchronizing the physical development of the campus with its academic vision. It ensures that short-term facility decisions support the long-term vision. It does so through the following Guiding Principles:

UNDERSTAND THE LONG-TERM GROWTH POTENTIAL
The Master Plan is a blueprint of the campus’s vision for future growth and development. As academic plans are created, the Master Plan will guide the construction and renewal of buildings, the uses of the spaces outside buildings, transportation on the campus, utility needs, and all that is required to run and create a physical campus. The existing campus of 10.8 million gross square feet of facilities has the capacity to grow to 18.2 million gross square feet supporting 37,700 students, 11,790 faculty and staff, and have 19,000 residential beds. This capacity includes a mix of uses accomplished by increasing density within the campus core, while improving the campus open space, cultural and infrastructure assets. The Master Plan supports a world-class student experience.

BUILD A SERIES OF SYSTEMS AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH
To ensure a world class campus we must build a framework of systems into which buildings are placed. We need to build campus not just buildings.

BUILD AN OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK
The Master Plan open space framework is the mechanism for enabling a rich university life — it will serve as a nexus of meetings, recreation, relaxation and pleasure for all who live, work and visit the campus. To achieve this, the Master Plan connects existing open spaces with new courtyards, pedestrian spines and complete streets. This landscape for living and learning will support the overall beauty and health of the campus environment and will serve as a framework in which buildings are developed.

Through the development of Campus Guidelines as an extension of the Master Plan, each project will look at the surrounding area, consider circulation and connections, and the impacts on the viewsheds — all in an effort to build campus, not just buildings.

CREATE A CLEAR VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION SYSTEM
The Master Plan illustrates improvements to all modes of circulation (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and mass transit) and parking, with an emphasis on balancing the use of automobiles with other, more sustainable modes of transportation. The Master Plan outlines important street redesigns for Commonwealth Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, North Pleasant Street and Governor’s Drive in order to surround the campus core with “complete streets.” These projects will enhance multi-modal transport by maintaining vehicular access to the campus while strengthening two alternative modes to automobiles: bicycles and transit.

- The new Commonwealth Avenue improves traffic control and crossing locations and relieves pedestrian/vehicular traffic conflicts by narrowing the vehicular flow to two lanes and providing bicycle lanes, pedestrian sidewalks and street trees.
- At North Pleasant Street the plan provides improved accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclist and transit users, with improved pedestrian crossings, bike lanes and enhanced transit stops, while maintaining vehicular access for now. In future phases it could become a pedestrian, transit and service vehicles-only corridor.
- The proposed elimination of north barrel of traffic (westbound lanes) from Massachusetts Avenue will result in the development of a pedestrian-scale street and a true...
campus gateway at a new roundabout with North Pleasant Steet. The scale of the corridor would be more appropriate in relation to the surrounding neighborhoods and it would allow the development of new academic, residential, campus life and parking facilities along the south edge of the campus core where it interfaces with the town of Amherst.

The Master Plan capitalizes on the existing parking supply, removing surface parking from the core and planning for structured parking facilities to achieve a compact, walkable campus with clearly defined pedestrian routes. Together with the Mullins Way Extension and the completion of the bicycle network that connects the existing Norwottuck Rail Trail Connector, as well as the completion of the Stockbridge and Hicks Way pedestrian corridors, these projects will untangle vehicular and pedestrian circulation conflicts around the campus core and build living streets that support the campus community.

DEVELOP AN ACTIVE MIXED-USE CAMPUS CORE
THE CAMPUS LAND USE supports a sustainable and vibrant campus community that is active all day every day of the year. The land-use component of the Master Plan reinforces a mixed-use environment and creates growth opportunities in the core of the campus through three main strategies: first, continuing to site community buildings around the edge of the pond and lawns to support 24-hour-a-day activity in the heart of the campus; second, illustrating how living facilities can be developed within the main campus core in a manner that will help generate activity throughout the day; and third, creating appropriate and visible sites for iconic public facilities like museums and the expansion of the library.

CREATE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND FLEXIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE
TO GROW THE STUDENT POPULATION and meet our vision the Master Plan provides attractive, logical and sustainable development opportunities within the campus core providing flexible future expansion. As an example, the demolition of the old power plant provides an opportunity to revitalize pedestrian connections and programs between the north and south portions of the campus that have historically been divided by the ravine and old power plant.

This enables the transformation of Hicks Way, which currently functions as a mixed-use corridor but is designed as a vehicular service road, into a pedestrian connector knitting the academic communities to the north and south with the campus life functions at the east and west core of the campus. The new Hicks Way is envisioned as a mixed-use corridor that is designed for pedestrians, bicyclists and low-speed motor vehicles, creating a street for living and connecting growth opportunities.

The Master Plan supports density by utilizing surface parking lots and carefully identifying other campus infill sites in the campus core for new construction opportunities. Also, by planning to remove non-essential administrative uses from within the campus core to peripheral locations, such as Tillson farm, the Master Plan provides for future endowment sites as a flexible means of accommodating future academic and residential growth.

RESPECT THE PLANNING AND BUILDING HERITAGE
ONE OF THE LEGACIES of our nearly 150 year history is a long list of buildings, landscapes and cultural resources that are over 50 years old and give our campus character, a sense of place and beauty. The Master Plan identifies 50 heritage buildings to remain on the campus into the future. The Campus Master Plan also pays respect to the planning and landscape heritage by recommending the campus pond and lawn are enhanced and restored as the campus’s landmark landscape and become the jewel of the campus open space system.

An historic form-giving element in the campus landscape is the defining arc of Ellis Drive, renamed “Ellis Way” in the Master Plan, as it will be pedestrian only, which includes a bridge across the pond, an element that was contained in five of seven previous plans for the campus. The north-west viewshed corridor, or feather, has also been an element in past plans and provides a permanent connection between the regional landscape and the center of campus. Together with other open space and building renovation projects, the Master Plan will help ensure that as the campus evolves to meet the ever-changing demands of the higher education environment, it will maintain its connection to the heritage and legacy of the institution.
SUSTAINABILITY — LIVE IT, LEARN IT, LEAD IT

THE MASTER PLAN EMBODIES sustainable development. The plan focuses on land use and location of sites within the campus core to achieve a compact, walkable campus with a wider variety of activities and facility types that are tightly knit and fully utilized. The Master Plan emphasizes building density, efficient utilities and district-level infrastructure solutions that reduce energy use, water use and storm water runoff, and produce other benefits, such as improving indoor air quality and supporting locally sourced materials. Site planning and development locations within the core support buildings that emphasize human scale and preserve landscape and cultural assets.

The Master Plan illustrates how strong, vibrant streetscapes can be designed to support many modes of transportation and reduce related carbon emissions. The campus street system is envisioned as a multi-modal network that extends its connections to the adjacent communities and the region.

EMBRACE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

MAKING THE CAMPUS WELCOMING and accessible to the public is supported in the Master Plan through land use, infrastructure improvement projects and program development, such as the future site of a signature cultural/community building at Haigis Mall. The residential development along Massachusetts Avenue and the south edge of the campus is scaled to serve as an appropriate connection to our neighbors to the south.

The Master Plan also supports community interface and connectivity by working with the town of Amherst on the development of the Gateway Corridor Project at the southeast campus. The plan includes a large-mixed use facility/parking structure at the east end of Massachusetts Avenue that would help foster a synergistic relationship with downtown Amherst and could help support adjacent businesses and services.