



# Campus Master Plan 2021-2031

Gensler

## Letter from President Caboni

Dear Campus Community:

For the past three years, we have worked to evolve our operations and aggressively pursue the goals in WKU's 10-year strategic plan, *Climbing to Greater Heights*. With student success paramount in everything we do, WKU has expanded access and opportunity to those seeking a college degree, and we have reshaped our student support services. These intentional and collaborative efforts have driven record-breaking successes and historical highs in WKU's recruitment, retention and graduation – validating the success of our work and solidifying our path forward.

As we build upon our positive momentum, we must ensure our physical spaces align with our student-centered initiatives. To that end, a key component of *Our Community & Beyond* in our strategic plan requires us to develop a new campus master plan to guide strategic campus growth, facility maintenance and upgrades during the next decade. For the last year, members of our community carefully researched, reviewed, reassessed and reimagined how our physical plant facilitates engagement with one another, with our students and with our communities. The result is the *WKU Campus Master Plan*, which spans 2021-2031.

Our campus is a competitive advantage for us. And within this plan, it's clear that we remain committed to investing in and enhancing our physical space in a way that attracts and retains students and employees, ensures that our Hill remains an unmatched point of pride and honors our rich 115-year history. We must take care of the physical assets of our institution, while carefully selecting new construction that addresses critical needs.

Now, as our strategic plan and campus master plan converge, we have an opportunity to advance our institutional mission in a powerful way. Thank you for your valuable input that led to the creation of the *WKU Campus Master Plan*, and thank you for your partnership as we engage in this important work together – for Our Hill, for Our Students, and for Our Community and Beyond. Go Tops!

Best,



Timothy C. Caboni  
President, Western Kentucky University



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## INTRODUCTION

How do we develop a bold vision for WKU's campus that reimagines the physical infrastructure in a way that bolsters recruitment, increases retention, promotes student success and positions WKU to expand its role as a regional lighthouse?

This question set the tone for the entire process, exploring the experiences of a broad variety of campus users, with a focus on uncovering opportunities through observation of unmet needs.



## INTRODUCTION

In January of 2020, Western Kentucky University engaged Gensler, a global architecture, design and planning firm, to develop a new Campus Master Plan. Building on previous planning and the momentum of recent capital improvements, the Campus Master Plan frames a future for the campus guided by the Strategic Plan, *Climbing To Greater Heights*.

Focused on the student experience, the new Campus Master Plan will guide investment decisions and enhancements to existing campus facilities, new construction, parking and road networks and landscape improvements that will support a more flexible, adaptable, responsible and sustainable campus.

Created with the input from stakeholders across WKU and the Bowling Green/Warren County community, this Campus Master Plan is a visionary roadmap that builds on WKU's momentum in completing projects such as The First Year Village, The WKU Commons At Helm Library, and Hilltop Planning Study, with opportunities to reinforce the university's identity, build on its history and traditions, and support student success.

With a focus on student experience, this Campus Master Plan explored topics including space and land utilization, program distribution across campus, potential upgrades to improve student learning, boosting student safety on campus and ways to enhance communication between colleges, faculty and students. While topics such as campus-wide infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainability are critical to the successful operation of

any campus, they are not explored in detail in this report. Additional studies referenced in this Campus Master Plan are included in the Appendix.

Taking place against the backdrop of the global events of 2020 including the COVID19 pandemic which forced WKU, along with higher education institutions around the United States, to convert all classes to virtual instruction to complete the Spring term highlighted the value and importance of face-to-face instruction on a college campus. Creating physical space for students to interact with their professors, formally and informally, promotes student success and reinforces the purpose of this planning study and the need for stewardship of WKU's resources to plan for the future.

Now more than ever, the Campus Master Plan serves as a critical vehicle to lift WKU to greater heights - providing pathways to opportunity and a space of possibility for traditional and non-traditional students, recruiting and retaining world-class faculty, and shaping a thriving place and community for learning and teaching.

Above: Aerial rendering showing proposed South Lawn enhancements and new College of Business

## ENGAGEMENT & RESEARCH

Beginning with immersive research, the planning and design team spent time on campus conducting workshops and interviews, observations and walk-throughs. Combined with a campus-wide survey and secondary research with various groups, this comprehensive and generative research helped to uncover unmet needs. Complemented with site, facility and building analysis and scheduling data, this information was synthesized to gain insights.

Research has shown a strong correlation between rates of engagement, retention, and ultimately, graduation. A support group of peers to rely upon for academic, social, and other needs is instrumental in helping students successfully navigate the campus experience.

As part of the research process, a campus experience survey was circulated to all students, faculty and staff and alumni who graduated from WKU within the past five years. The response rate was significant with almost 1,400 responses received and more than half of those from students. The majority of respondents primarily used the main campus.

The intent of the survey was to gain qualitative insight into how a broad variety of users experience campus today, where they go for various tasks and events, their typical cycles and journeys through campus throughout

the day, and how they view WKU.

Campus safety is an important issue for all campus users, and often a deciding factor for a potential student and their parents. The majority of survey respondents feel safe on WKU's campus, while parking lots and some street intersections are sometimes perceived as unsafe.

In the past several years WKU has completed the installation of over 1,000 security cameras on campus. Initially introduced to enhance campus safety, the centralized camera system has also proved beneficial in short and long term planning, supporting event operations and monitoring traffic.

Survey results showed that current students' top priority is to excel in their selected course of study followed by the desire to have a memorable college experience. Alumni

cited their memorable experience while also recalling the experience for finding friends and their community while at WKU. When asked about desired changes on campus, respondents overwhelmingly asked for easier navigation through campus.

In addition to the research and engagement activities on campus, a program questionnaire was circulated among deans and department heads to understand program needs in more detail, and phone interviews were conducted with alumni, campus partners and administrative leaders, including the Center for Research and Development, Parking and Transportation, and Housing & Residence Life.

The process engaged external members of the Bowling Green/Warren County community affiliated with WKU, addressing issues such as the university's connecting

with the City of Bowling Green, potential partnerships with industry, connection with the local Chamber of Commerce, WKU's impact on the local economy, and the long term future of WKU as an education institution in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Defining Guiding Principles set the table for design exploration, with multiple Campus Master Plan scenarios developed for consideration. The Steering Committee and Master Plan Committee provided input and feedback at regular intervals throughout the design process. Their perspective provided a diverse and holistic understanding of WKU, both from an internal and external standpoint.



Workshop exercise exploring the dimensions of student life



Workshop exercise identifying skills necessary for student success



Varied Mobility Workshop "Day In Your Life" exercise



Workshop exercise mapping a typical day on campus

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles are unique to the WKU Campus Master Plan and are directly informed by the analysis and synthesis of research and data. The Guiding Principles guide qualitative aspects of the design of the Campus Master Plan and are integral in responding to the bigger question of how we reimagine the campus experience to increase student enrollment, boost student retention, and promote student success.



### 1 Reimagine thresholds to reveal hidden experiences

Designing to broaden visibility, build empathy and prioritize support locations.

This is achieved by creating a deliberate entry experience to consider visitors' first impression and how we invite prospective students and visitors to our campus.

### 2 Accelerate community building on campus

Designing to trigger conversations, enable personal expression and seasonal celebrations.

This is achieved by drawing and holding communities together through green spaces and signature plazas.

### 3 Focus student success toward tangible outcomes

Designing to co-work with alumni, showcase student journeys, and work with non-traditional students.

This is achieved by clustering building programs to shift the center of gravity on campus, promoting visibility of key programs, and specifically student services and those that support student success.

### 4 Exhibit a culture of holistic thinking

Designing to boost unexpected connections, encourage opinion-sharing, and invite industry in.

This is achieved by energizing pedestrian experience through clear and continuous circulation to overcome the obstacle that the Hill presents, improving the culture and overall experience of campus.

### 5 Unite teams around our common purposes

Designing to co-locate for purpose, intermingle diverse stakeholders, and narrate stories of our goals.

This is achieved by connecting buildings to make them work better together and considering the location of new programs with respect to existing program locations, helping to unite teams around a common goal or objective.

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN PRIORITIES

### Reinforce and celebrate the strengths of campus today

In addition to the rich history and legacy of WKU, the Campus Master Plan will build upon the numerous initiatives currently in progress, such as the First Year Village, The WKU Commons at Helm Library, and Hilltop Planning Study.

### Accelerate campus community through open spaces

University campuses are defined by their open spaces, and the Campus Master Plan will utilize the campus landscape to amplify the sense of place and community at WKU.

### Manage program growth through optimized space

Overall, the Campus Master Plan will not propose the addition of buildings, parking or resources without a clear need and will consider the removal of existing facilities that are no longer fit for purpose or are at the end of their usable life.





# WKU CAMPUS 2021



**BUILDING KEY:**

- (A) VAN METER HALL
- (B) GRISE HALL
- (C) CHERRY HALL
- (D) IVAN WILSON FINE ARTS CENTER
- (E) KELLY THOMPSON HALL
- (F) RANDELL HALL
- (G) OGDEN HALL
- (H) ACADEMIC COMPLEX
- (I) DIDDLE ARENA
- (J) DOWNING STUDENT UNION
- (K) PRESTON HEALTH CENTER
- (L) AUGENSTEIN ALUMNI CENTER

# CAMPUS MASTER PLAN 2021 - 2031

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN INTERVENTIONS

The diagram, right, illustrates a collection of proposed campus improvements, many of which were already underway or in advanced planning stages at the outset of this Campus Master Plan.

They include projects that can be accomplished with minimal capital investment and prioritize strategic learning infrastructure investments. Other projects include the removal of Garrett Conference Center along with parking and vehicular streets as part of the Hilltop Planning Study, completion of the WKU Commons at Helm Library, removal of Tate Page Hall and South Lawn enhancements.

### LEGEND:

- 1. LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES
- 2. THE WKU COMMONS AT HELM LIBRARY
- 3. FIRST YEAR VILLAGE
- 4. BUILDING REMOVAL
- 5. HILLTOP PLANNING STUDY
- 6. SOUTH LAWN ENHANCEMENTS

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY



## LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Making strategic investments in learning infrastructure is the single most important short-term opportunity for this Campus Master Plan. These investments are focused on improving student experience and success, and address the immediate impacts of the pandemic holistically. Investments are recommended in buildings with the poorest conditions and the most scheduled class minutes.

Space utilization analysis revealed that over half of all classroom learning minutes occur in just five buildings across campus. Moreover, facility condition analysis identified that many of the most highly utilized buildings have facility ratings of Fair or Poor. Upgrading learning infrastructure in select classrooms in these buildings offers the most tangible benefit to the broadest student population.

This improvement is even more critical at a time when the global population is trying to find ways to work remotely and social distance. Presented with the global pandemic, WKU installed almost 400 web and document cameras in classrooms to allow for online and hybrid methodologies and distance learning, dedicated nearly 50 classrooms,

labs and public spaces for student Zoom connectivity, and expanded WiFi connectivity on campus.

WKU serves more than 5,000 students at three regional campuses in Elizabethtown/Fort Knox, Glasgow and Owensboro, with a goal of providing convenient access to higher education opportunities and improving the quality of life in the region.

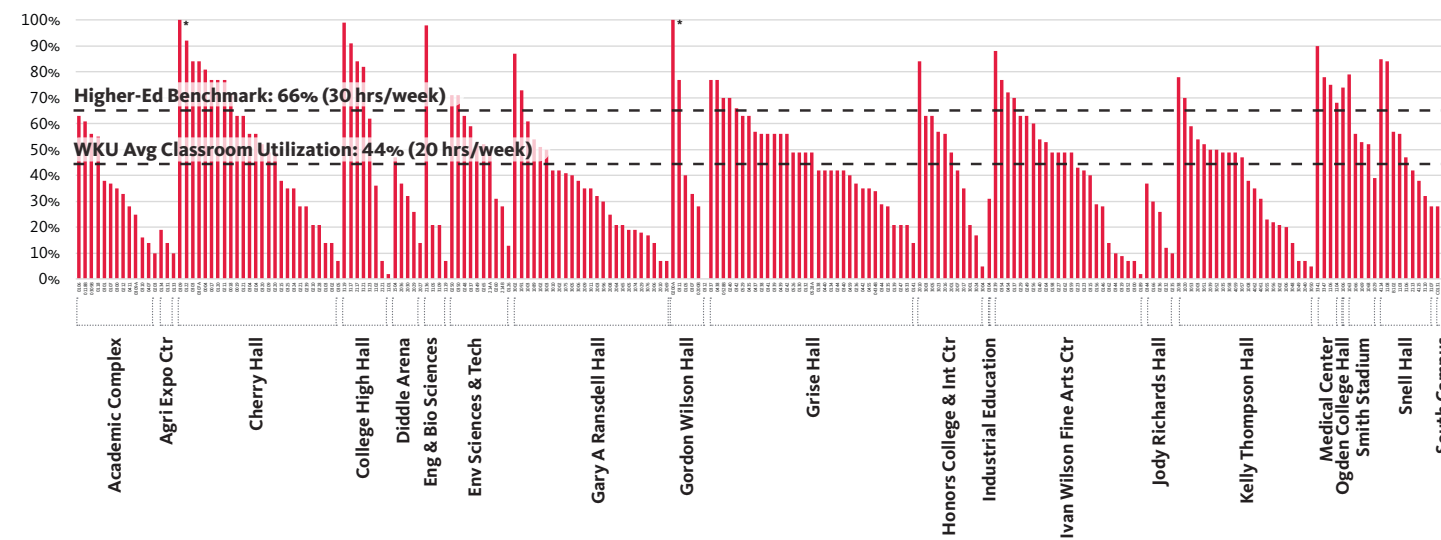
When paired with strategic infrastructure upgrades in regional campuses, the University is better positioned to support a hybrid environment in communicating across colleges and campuses to serve the region and connect globally.

There's also a need to invest in technology to tackle the disparity that the pandemic has exposed across students with varying socio-economic backgrounds. The need to virtually learn from home has amplified the discrepancy that exists, so a return to a hybrid campus environment will require a heightened support network for students to ensure equitable access to technology. Now more than ever, there's an opportunity to serve remote learners, commuter students and non-traditional students alike.

Facility condition analysis also highlighted that many buildings remain with 2-pipe mechanical heating systems which should be monitored closely for occupant comfort and air quality, factors which greatly impact students' ability to focus in the classroom.

This Master Plan recommends the following technology upgrades for consideration:

- Increase speed to market by leveraging existing platforms, making updates as necessary.
- Reduce any bandwidth throttling within the organization.
- Champion the use of personal devices and give students, faculty, and administration the freedom to use them in the ways they want.
- Work to create simple interfaces that rely on three touchpoints or fewer to get users to the content or experience they want.



Classroom Utilization by Building, Source: Astra Space Utilization of Labs and Classrooms, Spring 2020  
Per WKU, 100% classroom utilization is based on a 45 hour week, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm.  
\*>100% utilization due to multiple courses scheduled for the same room.

Building Name	Total Minutes Used/Term	WKU DFM Facility Rating
Grise Hall	639,200	Poor
Cherry Hall	616,240	Poor
Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center	578,640	Fair
Kelly Thompson Hall*	340,560	Good
Gary A. Ransdell Hall	324,730	Good
Snell Hall	304,240	Good
Environmental Sciences and Technology Building	285,280	Fair
Academic Complex	256,720	Fair

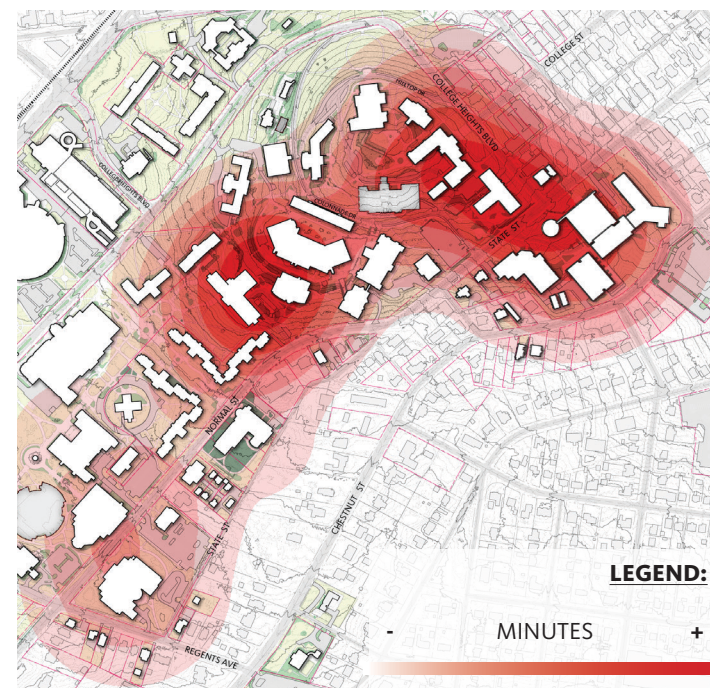
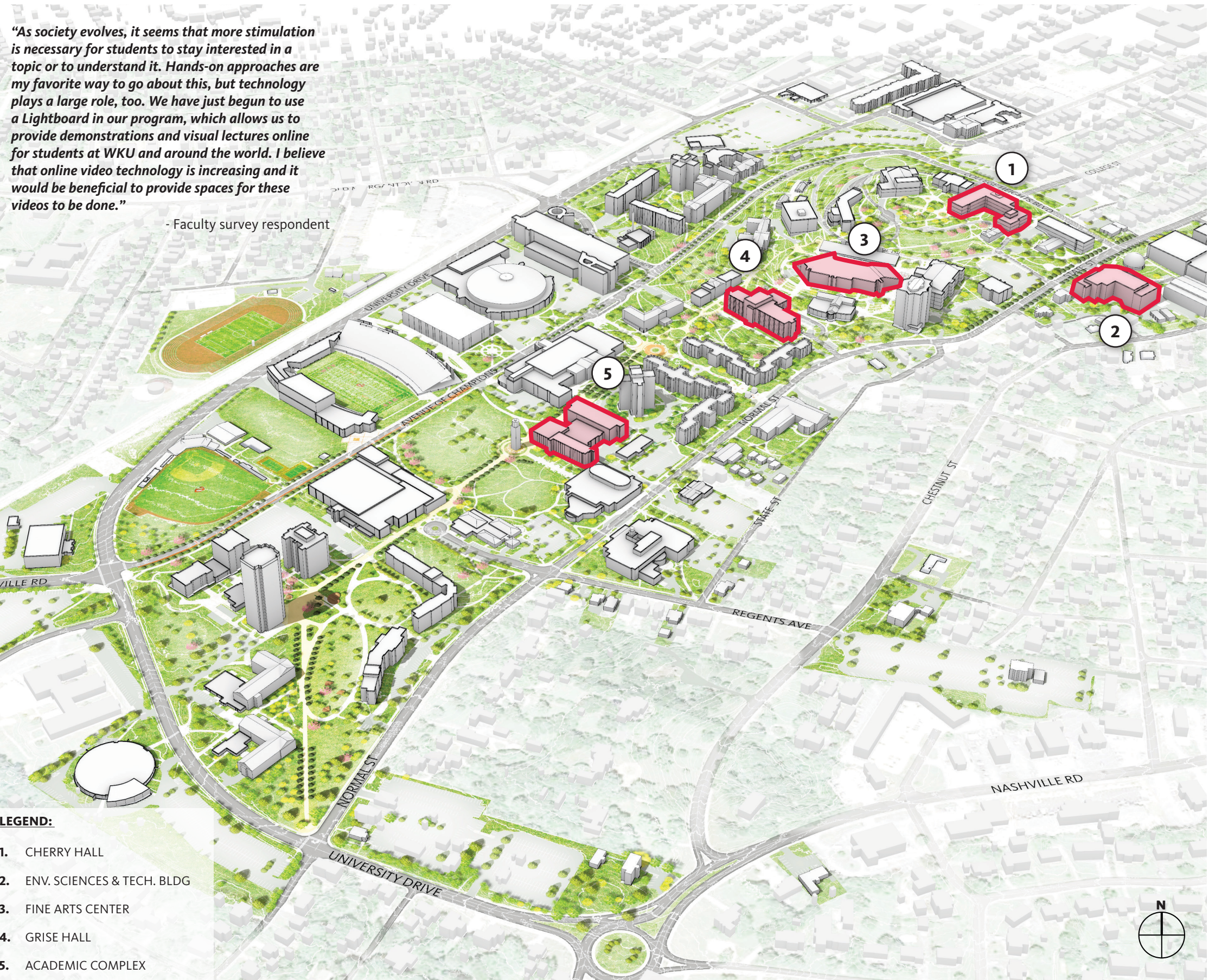
Source: Astra Space Utilization of Labs and Classrooms, Spring 2020

## LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

The diagram, right, identifies a number of buildings to prioritize for learning infrastructure upgrades based on space utilization analysis. Distributing investment across campus maximizes access to the new resources.

Upgrading learning infrastructure is the highest priority for academic buildings, as it directly impacts the student's learning experience, whether in the classroom or online.

Any investment in Grise Hall should be considered in the context of its long-term future.



Above: Heat map illustrating where learning minutes occur on campus  
Source: Astra Space Utilization of Labs and Classrooms, Spring 2020

## WKU COMMONS AT HELM LIBRARY

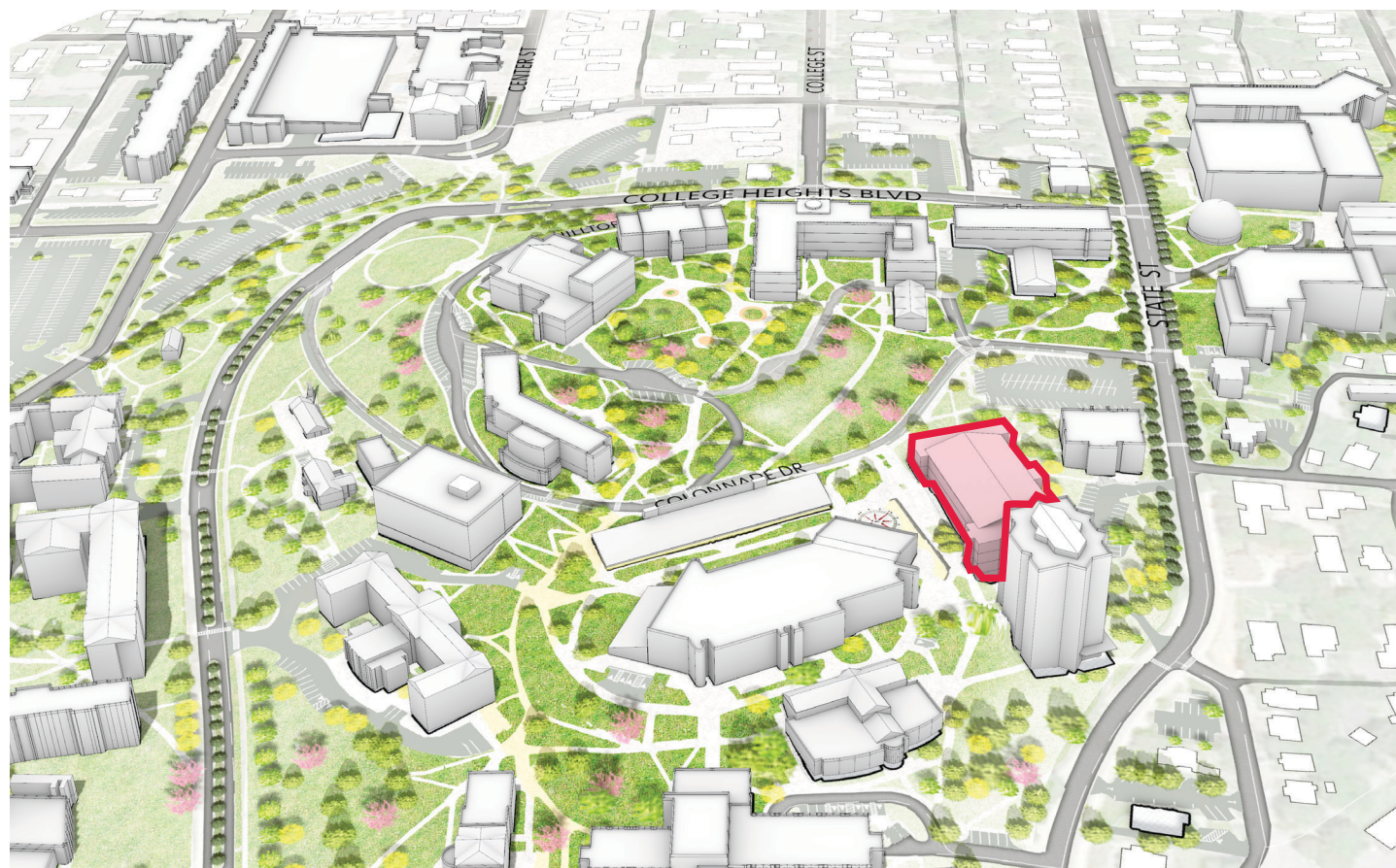
When completed in 2021, the WKU Commons at Helm Library will offer a space that connects students and faculty through a blend of individual and social learning spaces along with academic support and improved food service offerings.

The WKU Commons promotes learning in its many forms, offering places for students to study and to collaborate with others, triggering interactions with faculty and staff in a shared space that reinvigorates an historic building on campus.

The new transparent west facade works to eliminate thresholds by revealing the Commons' inner workings and offering gracious accessible entrances. The space

celebrates academic support services such as peer-to-peer tutoring, supporting growth through the power of community.

Food provides the fuel, while the adaptive reuse of this 1930's gym building provides inspiration to fully realize the library's purpose as a window to the world for students and community alike.



Above: Aerial rendering highlighting the location of the WKU Commons at Helm Library



Above: Rendering of the transparent new west facade and accessible entry to the WKU Commons at Helm Library (design by Gensler)



Above and right: The WKU Commons at Helm Library celebrates the historic campus hill by pulling it into the building to form a series of terraces. The terraces connect social and intellectual spaces with the outdoors, allowing students to see and be seen.



Left: Transforming a former gymnasium into modern day library, the WKU Commons at Helm Library builds on the idea of spectacle as a tool to inspire and connect the users.



## FIRST YEAR VILLAGE

The First Year Village and the associated 10-acre landscape focuses on community building on campus, a critical component of student success. The site extends the legacy of campus open space to create a highly visible southern gateway, with spaces programmed for student living, learning and play.

WKU's main campus houses nearly 5,000 students across its 15 residence halls in three distinct on-campus zones, and in two apartment buildings located on the northwest edge of campus in a fourth zone.

Each of these residential areas has been strengthened in the past decade with new facilities and renovations to meet current student demand and interests.

Student engagement and research revealed that many of today's students' most memorable learning experiences happen in residence halls. Resolving minor disputes over shared facilities and learning how to get along with others, despite differences, are valuable life skills.



Above Aerial photo of Bemis Lawrence and Barnes Campbell Residence Halls and parking lot, the site of the First Year Village.

Left: Aerial rendering of the proposed First Year Village (design by Mackey Mitchell Architects) and landscape (design by Meta Landscape Architecture & Gensler).



## BUILDING REMOVAL

The Campus Master Plan supports the recommendation to demolish Tate Page Hall and Garrett Conference Center. The College Heights Foundation building will also be removed in 2021.



**LEGEND:**

- 1. GARRETT CONFERENCE CENTER
- 2. COLLEGE HEIGHTS FOUNDATION
- 3. TATE PAGE HALL

 BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED

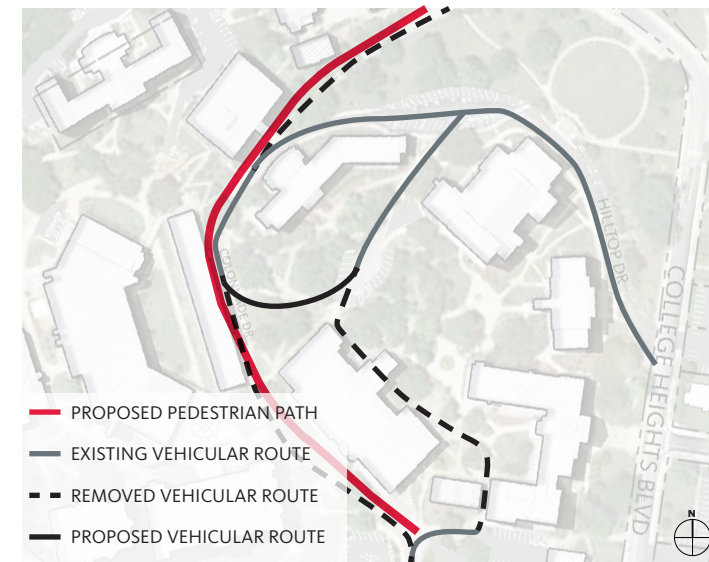
## HILLTOP PLANNING STUDY

The Hilltop Planning Study celebrates the history of the Hill and the original campus plan. By reconfiguring traffic flow, barriers to pedestrian circulation are removed, creating new and connected gathering spaces around the heart of academics.

The Hilltop Planning Study, completed by Lockett & Farley in 2019, sought to evaluate and assess pedestrian and vehicular circulation opportunities following the planned demolition of Garrett Conference Center. Combined with new landscaping to the west of the WKU Commons at Helm Library, accessible pathways to the hilltop will be improved and campus views enhanced.

The proposed solution removes all through traffic between College Heights Boulevard and State Street, developing a singular “loop” drive which will greatly reduce traffic flow on the hill. The solution maintains service areas at Van Meter Hall as well as accessible parking on the hill.

Refer to the Appendix for more information on the Hilltop Planning Study.



Above: Circulation paths today



Above: Proposed Hilltop Plan



Below: Aerial rendering illustrating the Hilltop



Above: Rendering illustrating new pedestrian plaza at the Hilltop

## ENHANCEMENTS TO SOUTH LAWN

Removing parking eliminates a barrier to this treasured student amenity off the Avenue of Champions. Already a successful gathering space nested between student life, academics and athletics, South Lawn can support seasonal celebrations while triggering conversations.

South lawn is a popular destination for students and the celebration of seasonal events including athletics, but convenient parking along the Avenue of Champions currently impinges upon it.

temporary seasonal stage - the South Lawn is available for more intentional programs that prioritize the student experience.

With just a couple of thoughtful interventions - relocating the parking and introducing a concrete pad for a

Refer to Mobility, Parking and Transportation for more information on relocated parking.




Above: Aerial photograph of South Lawn today, framed by parking along Avenue of Champions  
Left: Aerial rendering of an enhanced South Lawn more connected to Avenue of Champions and Smith Stadium

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN INTERVENTIONS - RECAP

The diagram, right, illustrates the proposed campus improvements presented thus far, many of which were already underway or in advanced planning stages at the outset of this Campus Master Plan.



**LEGEND:**

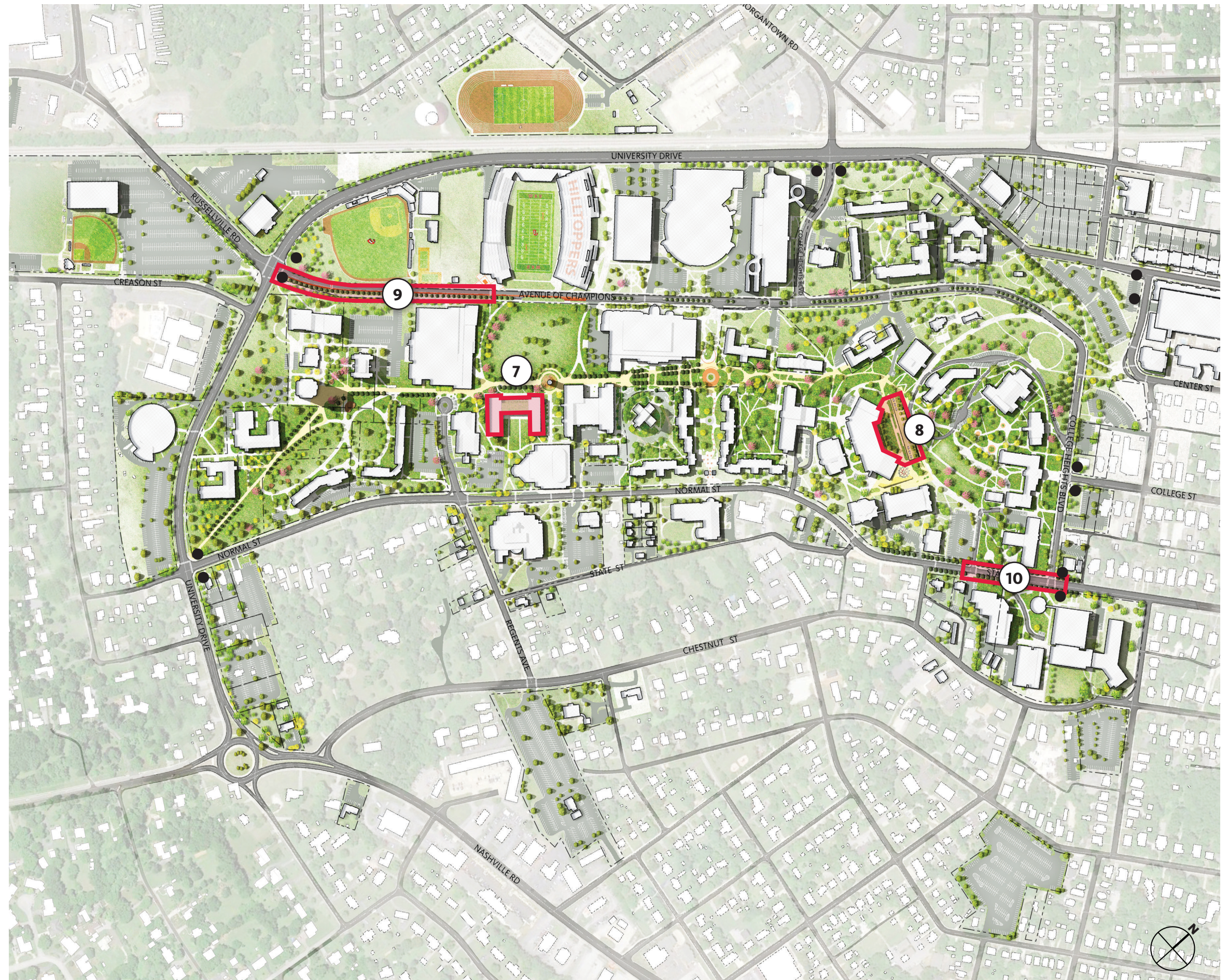
- 1. LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES
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- 4. BUILDING REMOVAL
- 5. HILLTOP PLANNING STUDY
- 6. SOUTH LAWN ENHANCEMENTS
-  BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED

  DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN INTERVENTIONS - CONTINUED

The diagram, right, describes additional campus improvements that require greater capital investment or additional study to complete.

These projects include the new College of Business building, landscape improvements surrounding the Colonnade, enhancements to the Avenue of Champions streetscape, and the conversion of a segment of State Street into a pedestrian plaza.



**LEGEND:**

- 7. NEW COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
- 8. COLONNADE IMPROVEMENTS
- 9. AVENUE OF CHAMPIONS STREETSCAPING
- 10. STATE STREET PLAZA

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY

## NEW COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

The removal of Tate Page Hall opens up a prime site overlooking South Lawn, with convenient access to Normal Street. Active programming will provide a vibrant backdrop to South Lawn and further engage students, faculty, staff and alumni.

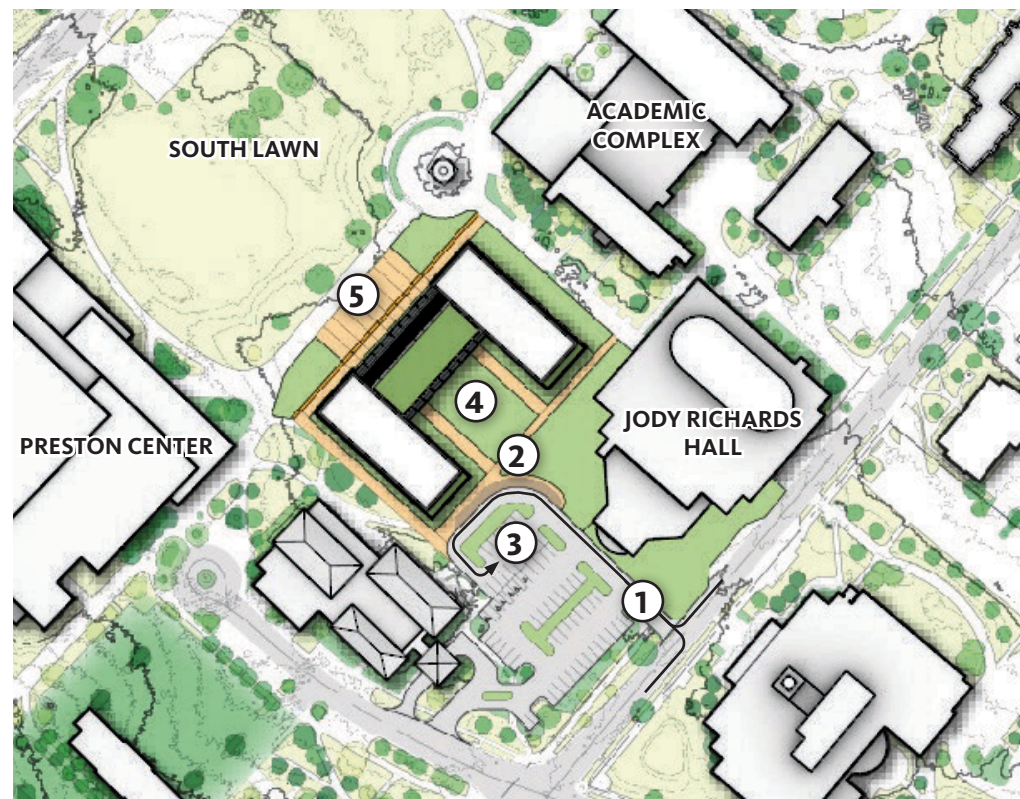
Gordon Ford College of Business is currently housed in Grise Hall, sharing space with a couple of other programs. Per the 2020 classroom schedule, Grise Hall has the highest utilization of classroom minutes yet has a “Poor” deferred maintenance rating, the lowest among teaching spaces on campus.

The need for a new College of Business building was identified as part of the 2010 Master Plan, and this Campus Master Plan’s findings confirm that Grise Hall has passed its useful life, offering sub-par learning environments.

While many sites were considered for the proposed

new College of Business during the design process, this site offers the College of Business two main frontages including a student face overlooking the South Lawn, with active programs at grade that define the east edge of South Lawn, surrounded by accessible pedestrian paths. Two-way traffic on Normal Street leads to a convenient drop-off for events, with an estimated fifteen parking spaces for visitors and ADA parking.

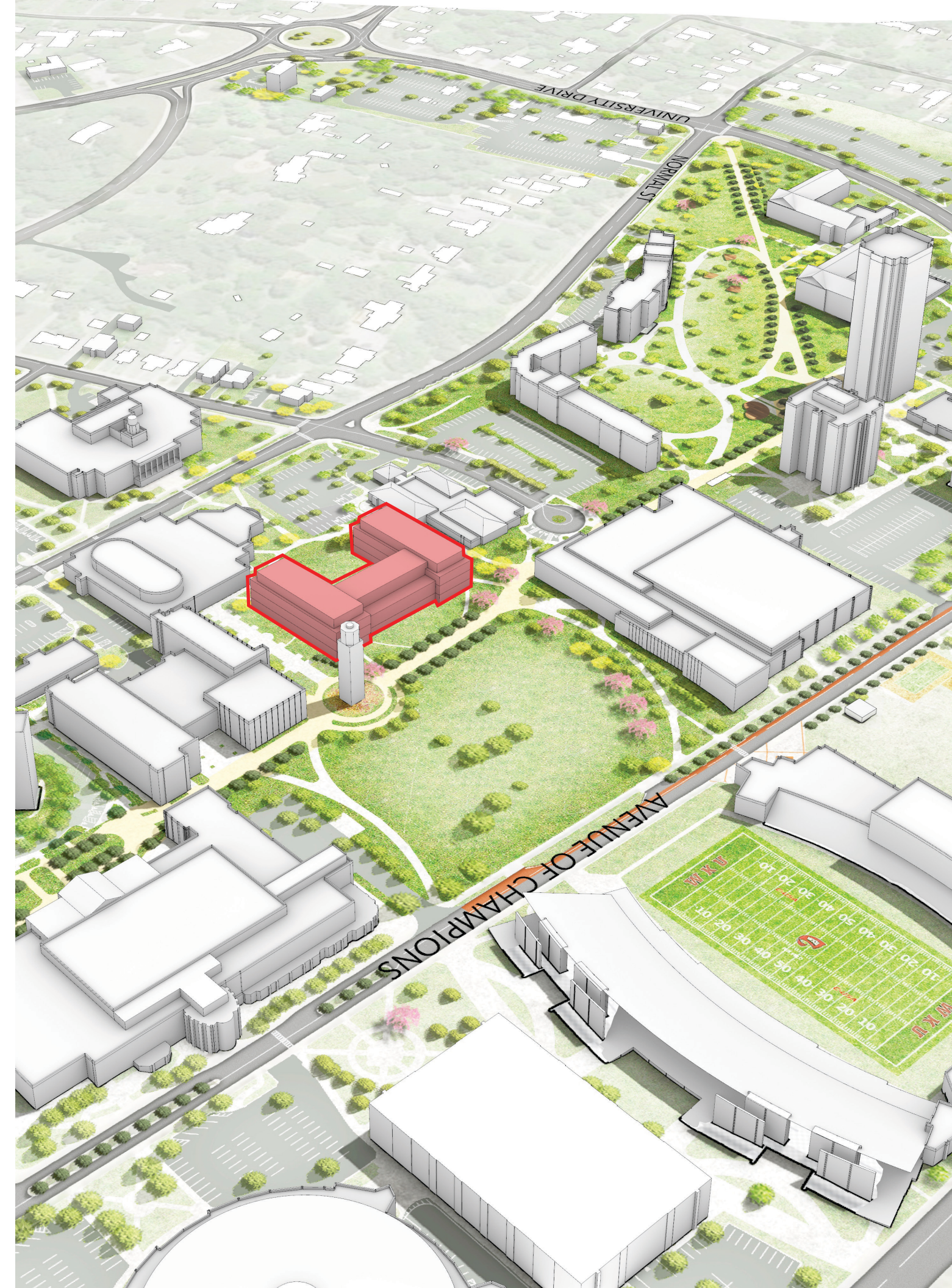
The new College of Business will be a popular destination on campus for students and visitors alike, with the ability to attract non-business school students through the building and connect to other academic programs on campus.



**LEGEND:**

- 1. NORMAL STREET ENTRY
- 2. PUBLIC DROP-OFF
- 3. VISITOR & ADA PARKING (15 SPACES)
- 4. INTERNAL COURTYARD
- 5. SOUTH LAWN PLAZA

Above: Plan detail showing proposed parking and drop-off  
 Right: Aerial rendering showing proposed College of Business framing the enhanced South Lawn





## COLONNADE LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The Colonnade is a unique and iconic reminder of the original campus plan. Thoughtful interventions and landscape improvements draw people in, provide places to gather and offer a new interpretation to the historic Hill.

The Colonnade once served as the entryway to the athletic stadium, where the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center now stands. The amphitheater style seating offers a significant opportunity to improve upon this unique and iconic reminder of the original campus plan.

Thoughtful improvements shift this Classic Revival landmark from a hard concrete landscape, blasted by sun all day, to a softer and shaded place to gather and extend

WKU's culture outdoors. Small terraces offer a place for a couple or small group to gather or collaborate, with accessible areas off Colonnade Drive or at the lower plaza level.

Offset with a temporary stage venue opposite, at the lower plaza north of Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center, this treasured landmark offers an extension to and a new interpretation to the Historic Hill.



Above: Photo of the Colonnade today, an iconic but inaccessible amenity

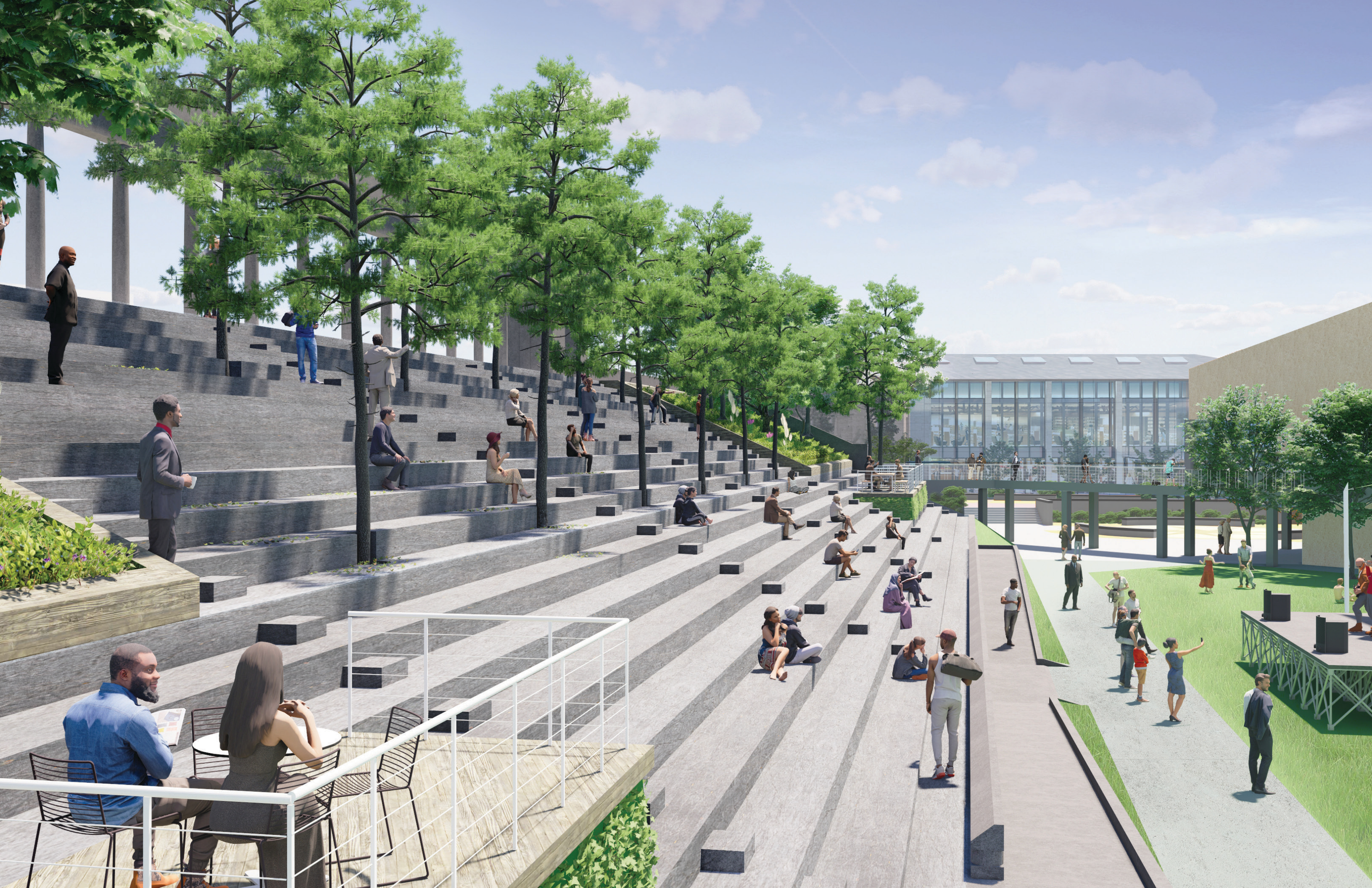


Above: Aerial rendering highlighting the Colonnade's proximity to the improved Hilltop pedestrian pathways



Above: Photo of the Colonnade today, looking west past the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center





## AVENUE OF CHAMPIONS STREETSCAPING

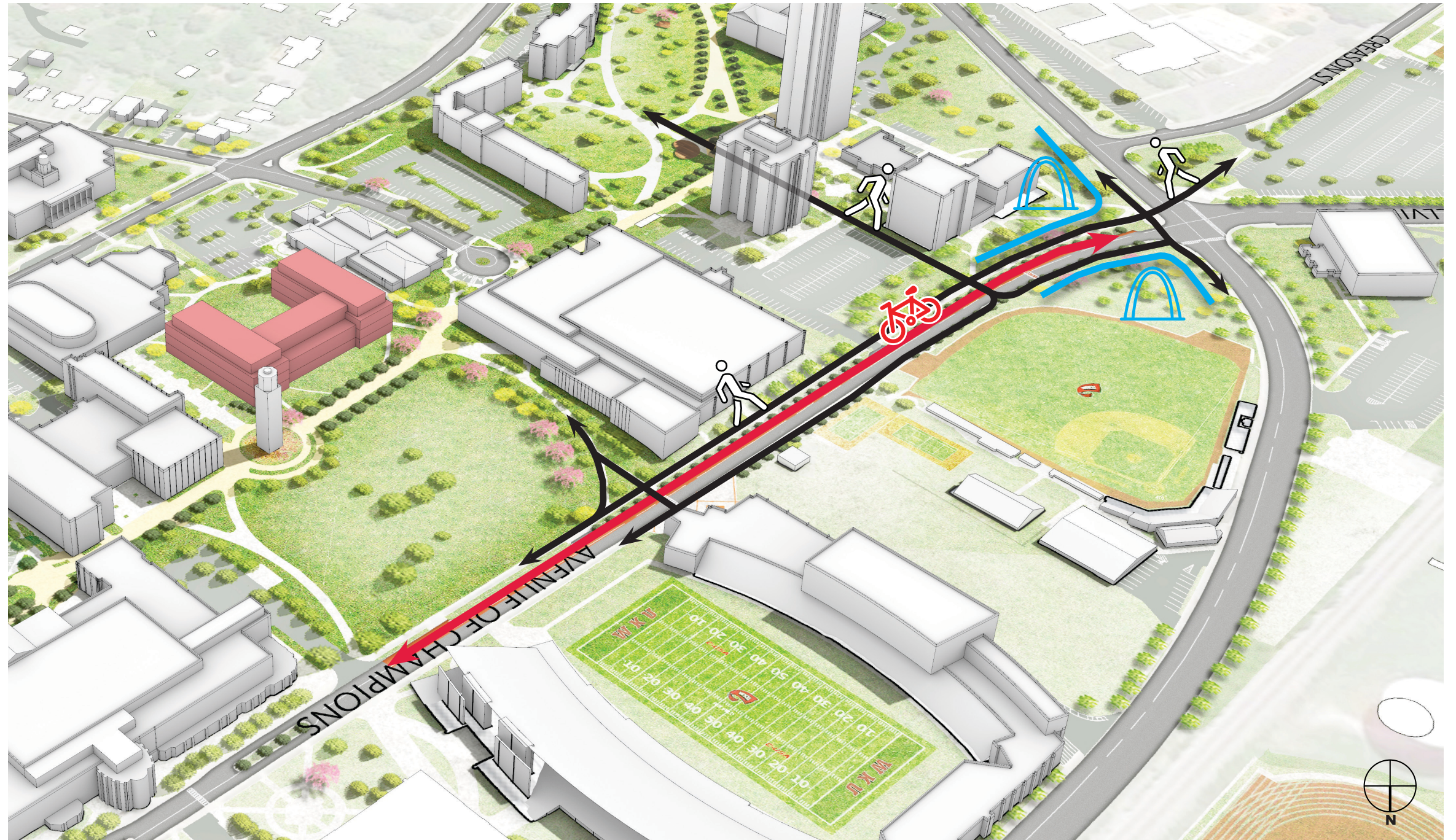
The proposed streetscaping improves the human experience and brings a sense of place to the bottom of the Hill.

Thoughtful landscaping, pedestrian amenities, cycle lanes and removal of parking enhances both the everyday and game day experience.

The introduction of trees and planting, soft landscaping as well as potential for new gateway building at this southern edge considers the entry experience for those entering campus from the south.

Extending the Bowling Green Greenway all the way through campus, the improvements strive to slow traffic exiting campus and improve pedestrian safety.

Refer to Mobility, Parking and Transportation for more details on relocated parking.



### ENHANCED CROSSINGS



### PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES



### CAMPUS GATEWAY



### 2 WAY CYCLE LANE



## AVENUE OF CHAMPIONS STREETSCAPING



Above: Photo of Avenue of Champions today



Above: Rendering showing how thoughtful use of graphics, signage and icons could help to create a unified pedestrian experience and project the culture of WKU beyond its boundaries

## STATE STREET PLAZA

Redirecting the flow of traffic from State Street connects the Ogden College of Science & Engineering with the Hill, both of which are centers of gravity in terms of learning minutes and class or lab utilization on campus. Prioritizing pedestrian safety invigorates the campus experience at the top of the Hill while creating a new signature open space.

Continuing the mission of creating a pedestrian centric Hilltop, this intervention has the potential to strengthen the connection between the Ogden College of Science & Engineering and other colleges located at the top of the Hill.

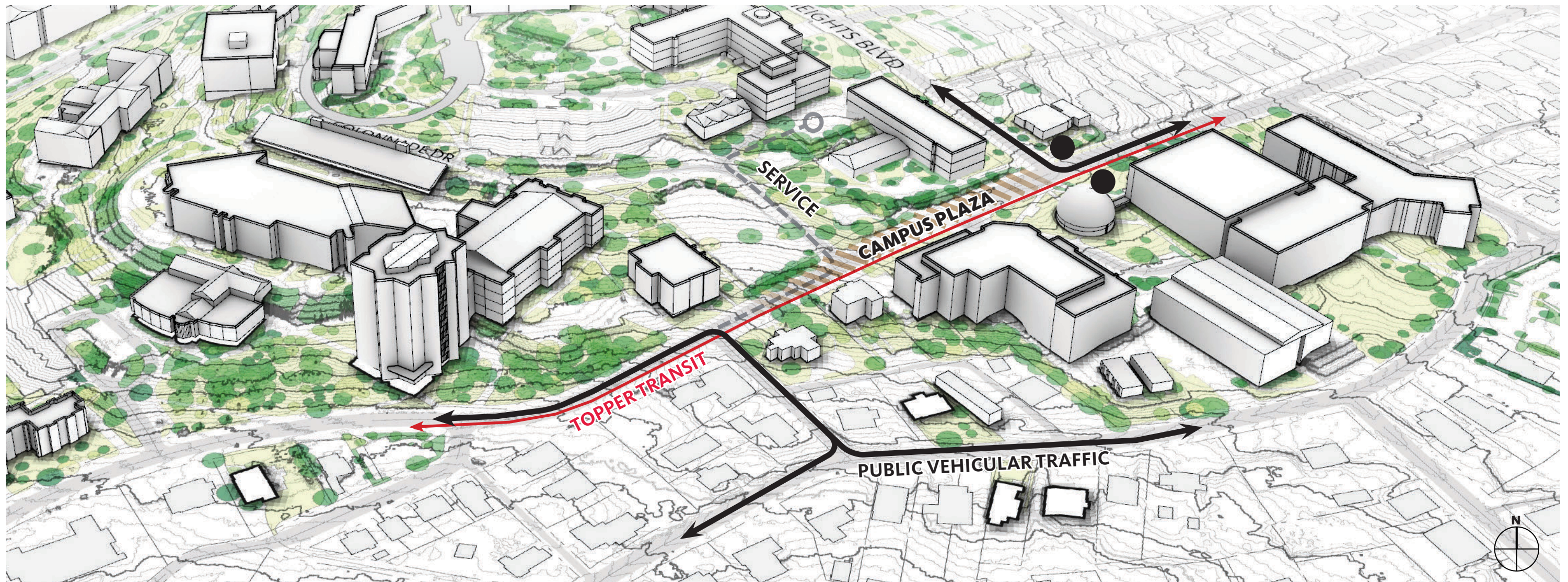
Tactical and incremental steps, such as using graphics to paint portions of the road and sidewalk, can introduce this improvement gradually over time.



Above: Photo of how simple bollards and paint can transform a crosswalk



Above: Photo of an active campus pedestrian plaza



## STATE STREET PLAZA



Above: Photo of State Street today



Above: Rendering showing a reimagined State Street Pedestrian Plaza with the potential to accelerate community building on campus, while improving the Ogden College of Science & Engineering's connection to the Hilltop

## MOBILITY, PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

WKU's unique sense of scale – not too big, not too small - is central to its success in drawing students from large cities to rural areas alike. However, similar to how one forms a new relationship with an individual, it can take time to learn how to navigate the campus, whether by foot, bike, bus or car. The campus wide survey revealed that easier navigation is the most highly-desired change on campus.

The spirit of WKU is palpable throughout the campus. Even though WKU has more than 13,000 undergraduate students, it feels small enough that it's practically impossible to walk across campus without running into a familiar face.

However, many research participants cited difficulty in finding convenient or available parking. Site analysis revealed that while ample parking is provided, the user sometimes considers the lot is too remote from campus.

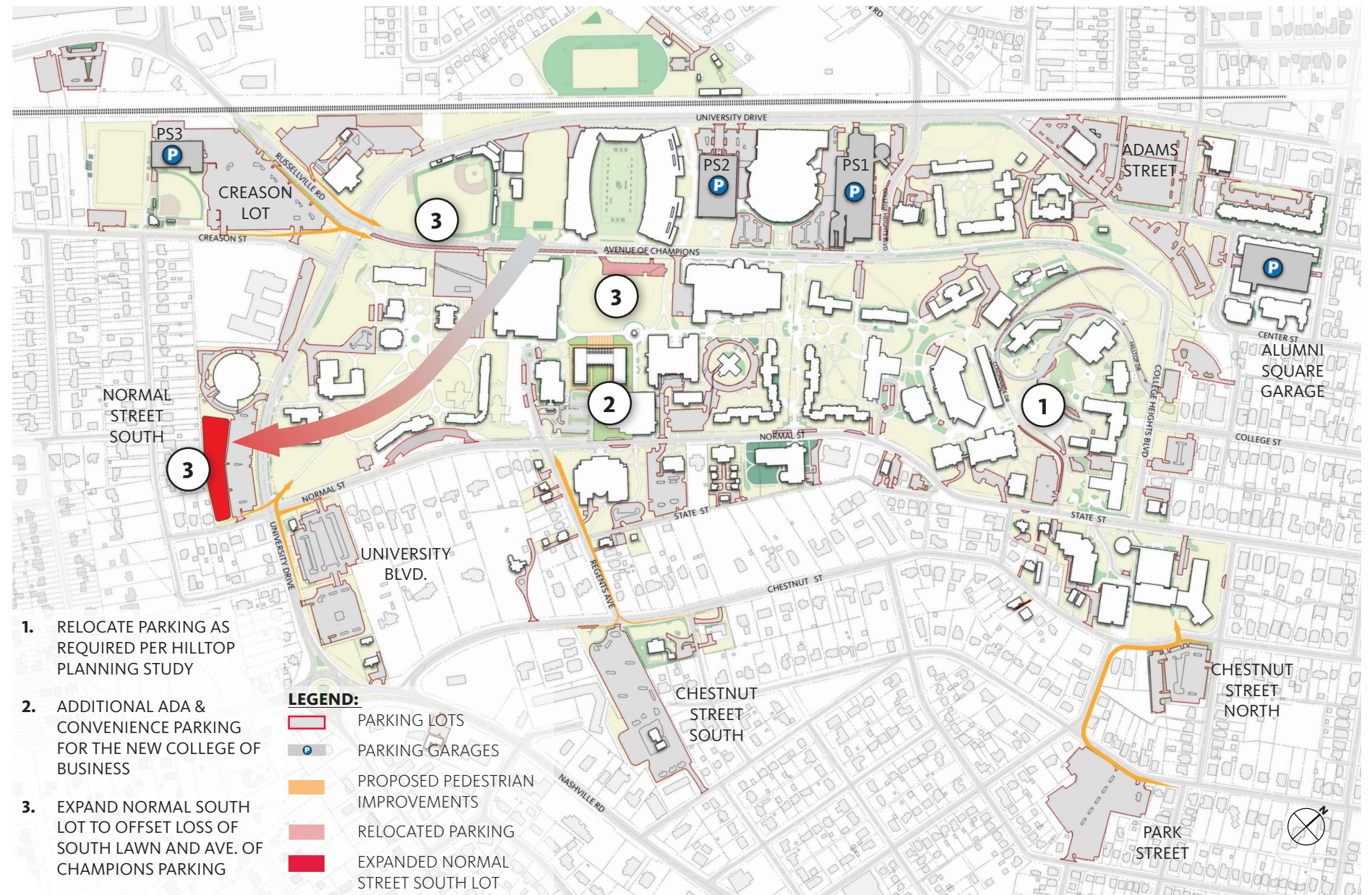
A campaign to remove parking from the core of campus and to improve pedestrian campus routes began in the 1980s by removing cross streets and core campus parking. This continued through the early 2000's with the establishment of Centennial Mall, the pedestrian spine to campus that runs from Pearce Ford Tower to Grise Hall. Today, parking is mostly distributed around the edges of campus, with few exceptions.

This Campus Master Plan proposes projects that reduce or eliminate centrally located parking spaces, including the Hilltop Study, South Lawn Enhancements and Avenue of Champions Streetscaping. As these projects move forward, the location of replacement parking close to campus will need to be determined.

This Master Plan recommends the following items for consideration:

- Continue to relocate parking away from the core of campus to create a more pedestrian-centered campus
- Improve connectivity of perimeter parking lots through the use of pedestrian amenities such as street trees, enhanced crossings and public art
- Extend cycling infrastructure throughout campus to encourage an alternative to driving, while offering the user a healthier and more sustainable mode of transportation
- Create incentives to promote usage of Topper Transit

By providing alternative transportation options to get to and around campus, demand on parking lots can be greatly reduced.



The design of proposed future parking lots must also consider the pedestrian route from parking lots to the center of campus, to ensure that the campus experience extends beyond its edges. This work will require close collaboration between WKU's Parking & Transportation group and the

City of Bowling Green. Moving through and around campus is critical to the campus experiences, and obstacles to way-finding and accessibility should be recognized as barriers to many students and visitors.

## MOBILITY & ACCESSIBILITY

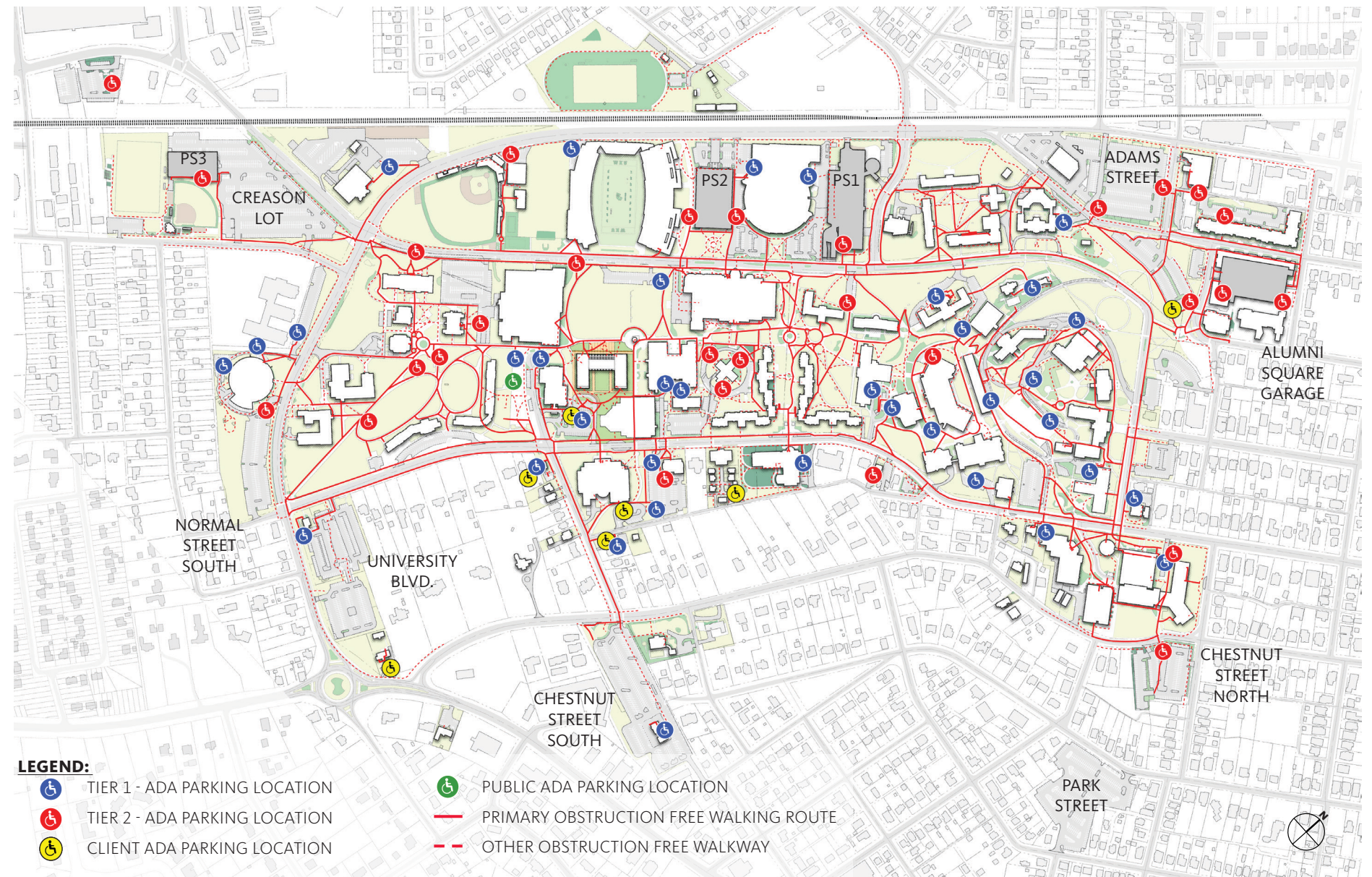
WKU's Hill defines the institution in many ways and is home to many of its most important landmarks like Cherry Hall and Van Meter Hall. The Hill is both a physical location and symbolic representation of the people that are the lifeblood of the University as captured in the slogan *Climbing Higher*.

WKU's prominent site overlooking Bowling Green was, according to the WKU Strategic Plan, an intentional decision by President Cherry to symbolize WKU caring for its community by caring for its citizens. Student engagement and research often brought up the subject of the Hill and revealed that most prefer routes around, rather than up and over the Hill, to avoid some of the climb.

While the steep grades present accessibility challenges the university continues to make site improvements - eliminating steps and creating ramps, widening sidewalks and providing more obstruction free walkways - wherever possible. Gordon Wilson Hall remains inaccessible above the first floor until an elevator can be introduced.

Together, the topography and campus landscape combine to give WKU its unique character and sense of place. The Campus Master Plan will build on these features by proposing a series of additional improvements and enhancements, each carefully considering ADA access in their siting and design:

- The WKU Commons at Helm Library is designed to be fully accessible throughout, complete with new accessible entrances on two levels with electrified entry door hardware.
- The First Year Village and landscape offers generous pedestrian pathways, graded to be free of steps and barriers to access.
- The Hilltop Planning Study, combined with the proposed landscaping west of the WKU Commons at Helm Library and the Colonnade, seeks to improve accessible pathways to the hilltop, energizing the journey with new programs and experiences along the way, while maintaining ADA parking on the Hill.
- The South Lawn was identified in the research as a friendly location for those with physical disabilities, especially when celebrating on game day. Integrating hardscaped pathways as part of the proposed enhancements will promote equity among all campus users.
- The new College of Business is surrounded by accessible pedestrian paths while two-way traffic on Normal Street leads to a convenient drop-off for events, with an estimated fifteen parking spaces for visitors and ADA parking.
- The proposed Avenue of Champions Streetscaping seeks to widen sidewalks and calm traffic, with regular crossing locations for pedestrians.
- State Street Plaza continues the mission of creating a pedestrian centric Hilltop with generous, barrier-free, circulation.



Showing kindness has a lot to do with knowing about struggles. The challenges that people with physical disabilities face may be invisible to the larger community today. This Campus Master Plan recommends the following items for consideration to promote awareness of accessibility hurdles:

- Add way-finding signage and/or an accessibility app to alert and redirect those with physical disabilities if a given path has unavoidable obstacles

- Promote awareness of the ADA shuttle service offered by WKU, and consider increased availability during rainy seasons
- Enforce parking rules to prohibit drivers from idling in ADA assigned parking spaces
- Ensure that ADA push-plates for electrified door hardware are located along the accessible path and that vestibule doors operate in tandem (user preferred)

## WKU CAMPUS 2031 OVERVIEW

The diagram, right, illustrates the proposed Campus Master Plan improvements.

Distributed across campus the interventions focus on the student experience, accelerating community building through energized pedestrian circulation and open spaces while reinforcing and celebrating the strengths of campus today.

Improved connectivity unites various campus groups and the creation of a deliberate entry experience at multiple gateways invites prospective students and visitors to campus.

### LEGEND:

1. LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES
2. WKU COMMONS AT HELM LIBRARY
3. FIRST YEAR VILLAGE
4. BUILDING REMOVAL
5. HILLTOP PLANNING STUDY
6. SOUTH LAWN ENHANCEMENTS
7. NEW COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
8. COLONNADE IMPROVEMENTS
9. AVENUE OF CHAMPIONS STREETSCAPING
10. STATE STREET PLAZA

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY





## **CAMPUS MASTER PLAN BEYOND 2031**

Several recommendations were identified during the process that were more appropriate for implementation beyond the ten-year outlook. Identifying these future steps is critical in guiding actions that occur within the period of the Campus Master Plan, especially as it informs investment in existing buildings.

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN BEYOND 2031

Any of the projects that follow could potentially be implemented earlier. These projects include the removal of Minton Hall and Douglas Keen Hall, and the creation of a new Student Housing Development, the removal of Grise Hall and replacement with a new One Stop, and a new Athletics Practice Facility.



**LEGEND:**

- 1. RESIDENCE HALL REMOVAL
- 2. NEW RESIDENCE HALL
- 3. NEW ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES
- 4. NEW ATHLETIC PRACTICE FACILITY

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY

## FUTURE CAMPUS HOUSING & GREEN SPACE

Minton Hall and Douglas Keen Hall are both 60s era residence halls with comfort and air quality issues related to 2-pipe HVAC systems. Decommissioning and removing Minton Hall opens up a gracious campus quad, building on the sequence of open green spaces throughout campus, while rebuilding on the Douglas Keen Hall site reinforces the southern gateway to campus.

Much of WKU's original housing stock built in the 50s and 60s exists today. These buildings, while quality built at the time, can be difficult to retrofit to meet today's student expectations. 2-pipe HVAC systems are the largest offender to the student experience, specifically related to comfort and air quality, particularly during shoulder seasons.

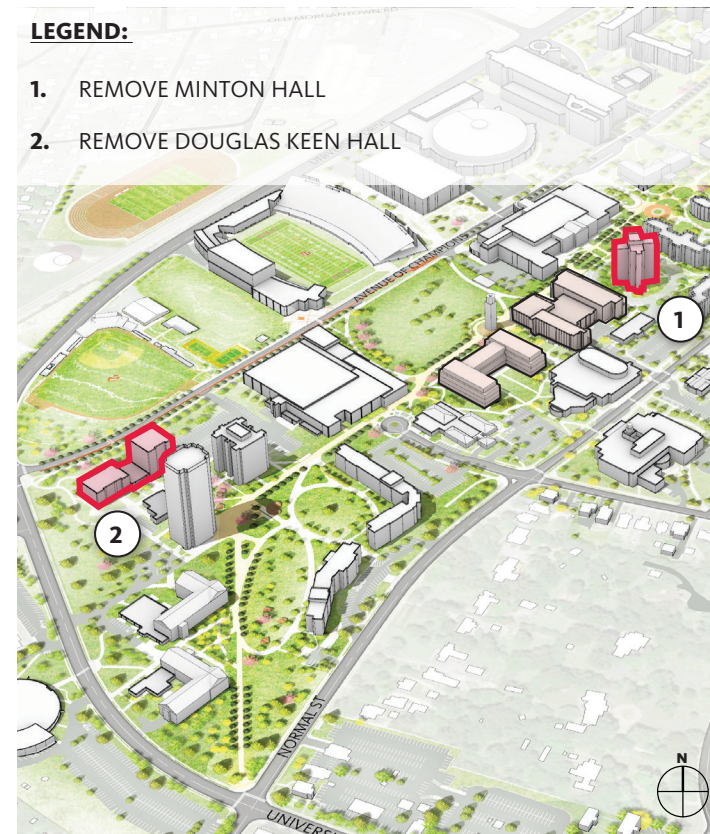
Although both buildings underwent major renovations in 2004 and 2008 respectively, significant investment would

be required to address HVAC improvements and deferred maintenance. A new residential development improves the quality of housing options on campus, a key factor in student recruitment, while reinforcing the southern gateway to WKU.

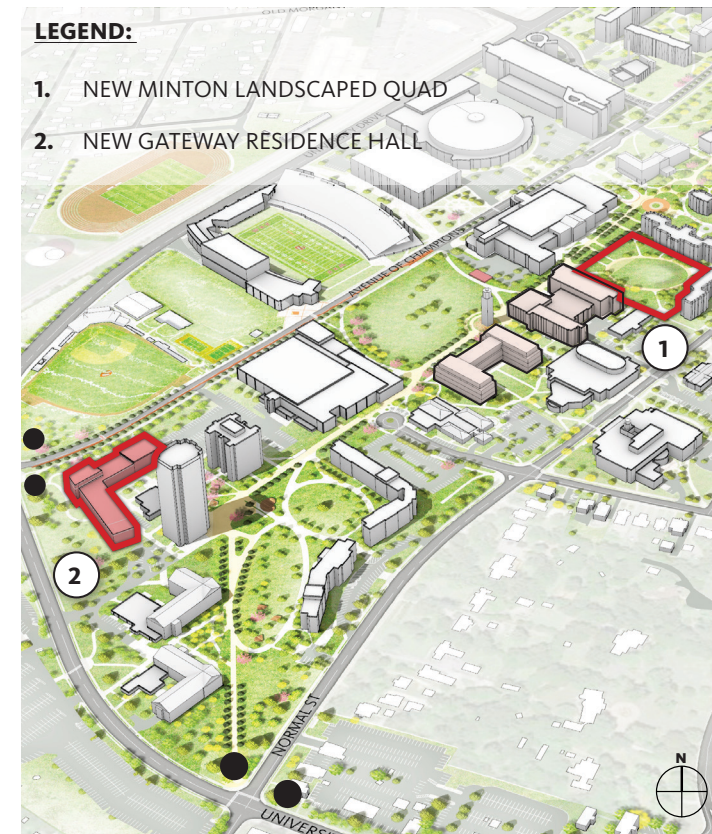
Once Minton is removed, a gracious green space opens up between Academic Complex, Downing Student Union and Southwest Hall, offering a student-focused quad for students to enjoy.



Above: Rendering of new Minton Quad



Above: Aerial rendering of proposed building removal



Above: Aerial rendering of proposed new gateway residence hall and Minton Quad



Above: Aerial rendering of new Minton Quad

## PROPOSED BUILDING REMOVAL

Long term, the Campus Master Plan recommends the potential decommissioning of facilities considering the following criteria:

- No longer fit for purpose and/or at the end of their usable life
- Outdated adaptations/renovations that present barriers to accessing learning or support services
- Buildings with significant deferred maintenance and poor utilization/limited need or use

Any building decommissioning will require that suitable locations are first identified for relocated programs.

Research and analysis identified the following:

- Day Care, currently housed in Jones Jagers, would be better located at the South Campus.
- TRIO and other support services, currently in Jones Jagers, would be more visible and accessible to students and those they serve within the main campus.
- Potter Hall, while housing the majority of student services, offers limited accessibility and parking options. This Master Plan recommends that Student Services are relocated to a One Stop.
- Remaining programs currently housed in Grise can be absorbed by increasing utilization within other nearby buildings.
- IEB has a low utilization rate, and scheduled classes can be absorbed by increasing utilization within other nearby buildings.



**LEGEND:**

1. JONES JAGGERS HALL
2. POTTER HALL
3. GRISE HALL
4. INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION BUILDING

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY

## POTENTIAL BUILDING SITES

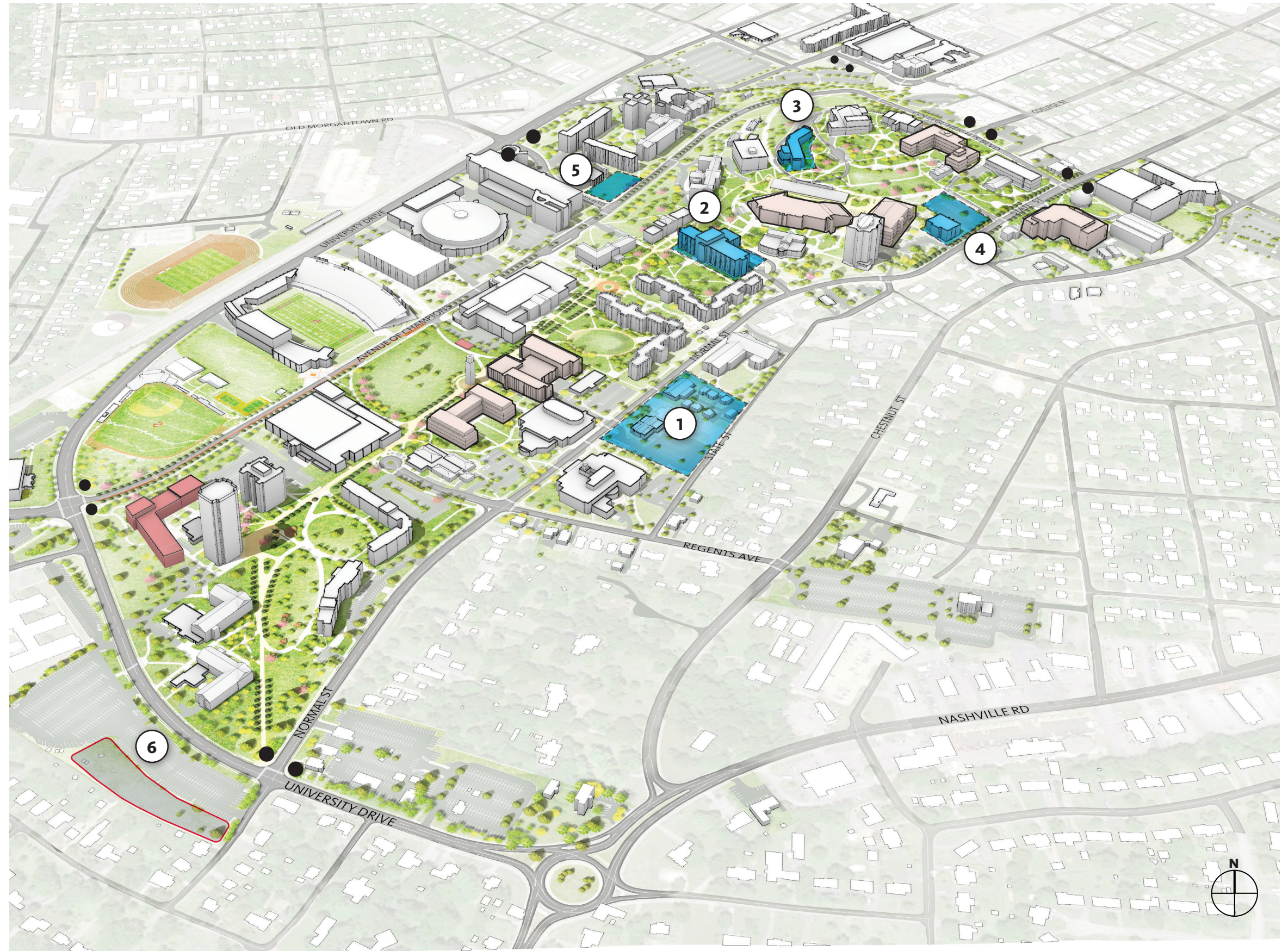
Long term, potential new building sites and opportunities for existing building redevelopment were identified that will further reinforce the goals and objectives of this Campus Master Plan.

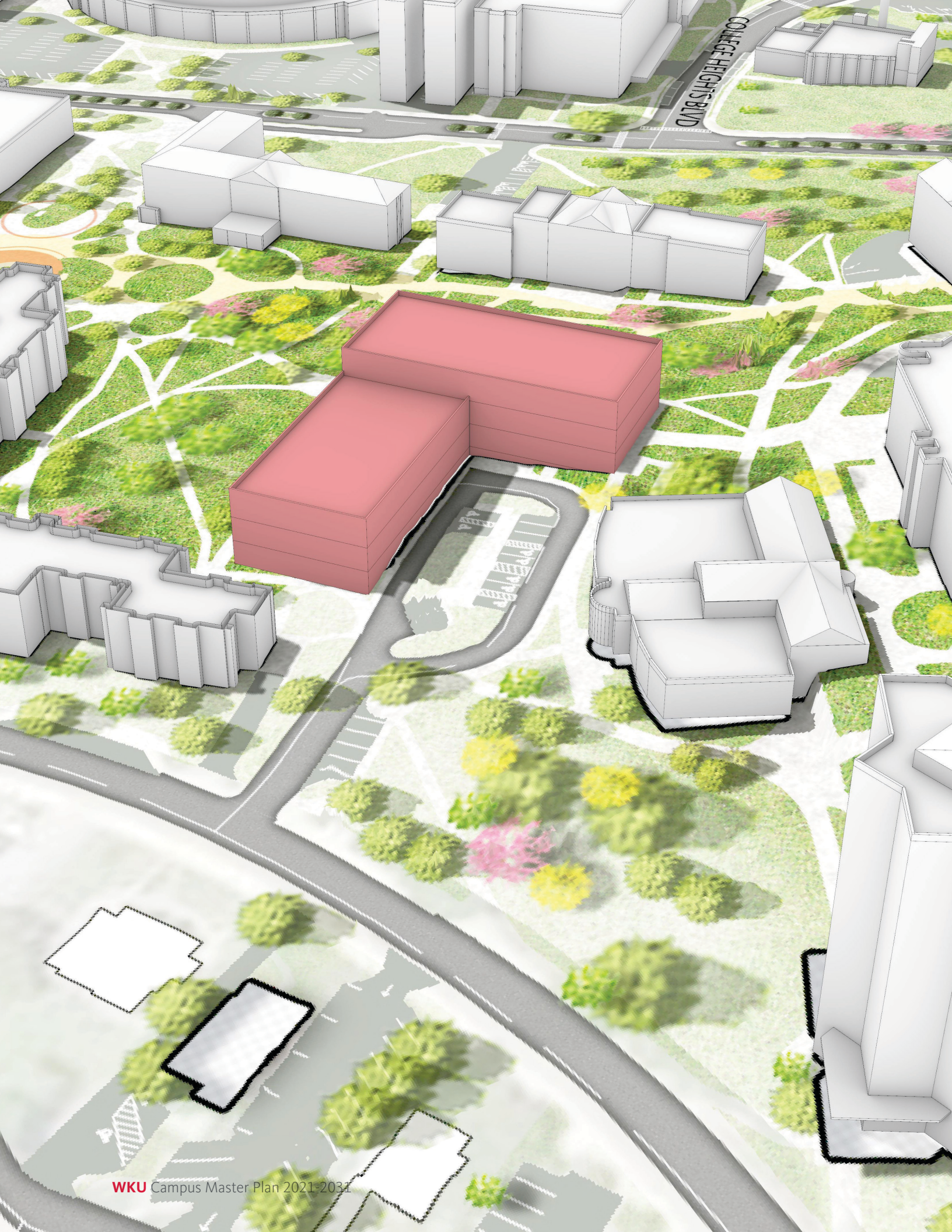
Options for use include relocated parking, future academic buildings, student services, student life buildings or open green spaces.

### LEGEND:

- 1. NORMAL STREET SITES
- 2. GRISE HALL
- 3. POTTER HALL
- 4. INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION BUILDING & GATED PARKING LOT
- 5. BOILER SITE
- 6. FUTURE PARKING EXPANSION

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY





## ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES

A new Campus One Stop would increase the visibility and accessibility of student services including admissions, advising, career development, counseling, financial assistance, registration, TRIO programs and more.

The One Stop was identified as an unmet need when examining research findings, as there currently isn't a wide awareness across the student body that these services are available.

Research participants and survey respondents relayed anecdotes about students being unaware that support services exist or encountering difficulties in accessing or finding them on campus. Often, students give up.

While the majority of student support services co-exist today in Potter Hall, Potter Hall was repeatedly identified as a challenging location for people with disabilities to access, with limited parking, and with no capacity for expansion. Moreover, it's clear from the research that Staff and Faculty are all committed to student success and that their first priority is to see students thrive.

A new One Stop recognizes that student success is defined by more than academic or athletic achievement, and the creation of a One Stop fulfills the Guiding Principles by prioritizing support locations, focusing on student success in all its forms, and uniting faculty and staff from various departments in ensuring that students thrive while at WKU.

Replacing Grise Hall, the One Stop could be centrally located, close to DSU and nested at the foot of the Hill along a convenient and accessible path across campus.

An alternative site option in front of the campus boiler has potential due to its proximity to parking, with the added benefit of celebrating this entry gateway to campus.

Refer to the Appendix for more details on the proposed program and square footage.



Left: Recommended location for new One Stop, replacing Grise Hall

Above: Alternate location for new One Stop, in front of the campus boiler site

\* Other sites were also identified as potential locations for the One Stop, which may be explored in more detail in the future.

## NEW ATHLETIC PRACTICE FACILITY

Included as part of the 2020 Athletics Feasibility Study, the facility will provide a competitive edge by allowing teams to train year round regardless of weather. The facility would be privately funded and extends the legacy and energy of WKU Athletics along Avenue of Champions, strengthening its role in student success and recruitment.

For more details, please refer to the Athletics Feasibility Study located in the Appendix.



Above: Rendering of proposed Athletic Practice Facility (design by Ross Tarrant Architects)

Right: Aerial rendering showing location of proposed Athletic Practice Facility, framing the Avenue of Champions

## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN BEYOND 2031 OVERVIEW

The diagram, right, illustrates the recommendations identified during the design process that were considered more appropriate for implementation beyond the ten-year outlook.

Identifying these future steps is critical in guiding actions that occur within the period of the Campus Master Plan, especially as it informs investment in existing buildings and potential property acquisitions.

These recommendations continue the legacy of the WKU campus and further the goals of this Campus Master Plan.

**LEGEND:**

- 1. NEW MINTON QUAD
- 2. NEW GATEWAY RESIDENCE HALL
- 3. NEW ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES
- 4. POTENTIAL NEW BUILDING SITES OR PARKING EXPANSION
- 5. NEW ATHLETIC PRACTICE FACILITY

● ● DENOTES CAMPUS GATEWAY



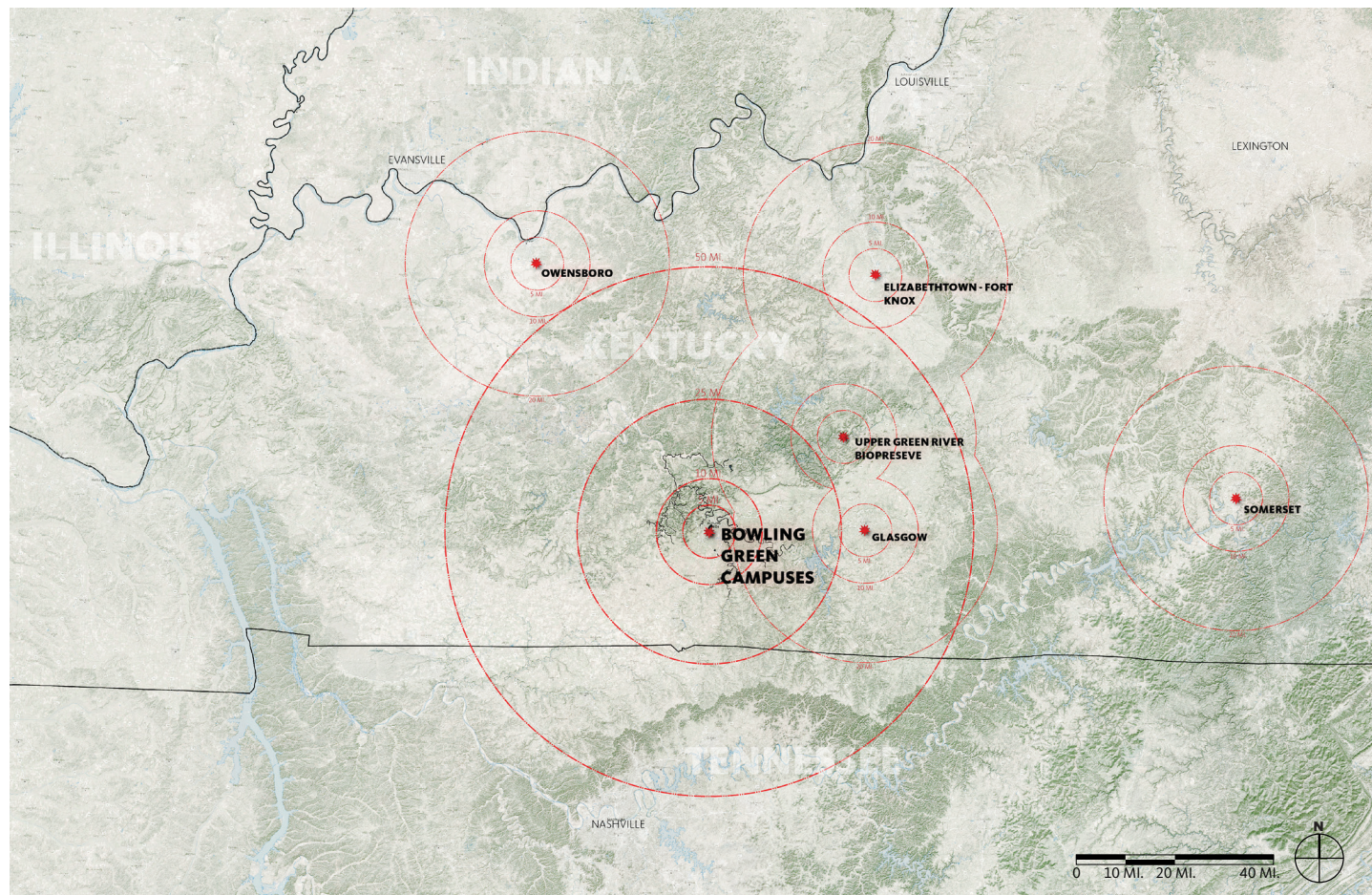


## **BUILDING & SITE ANALYSIS EXHIBITS**

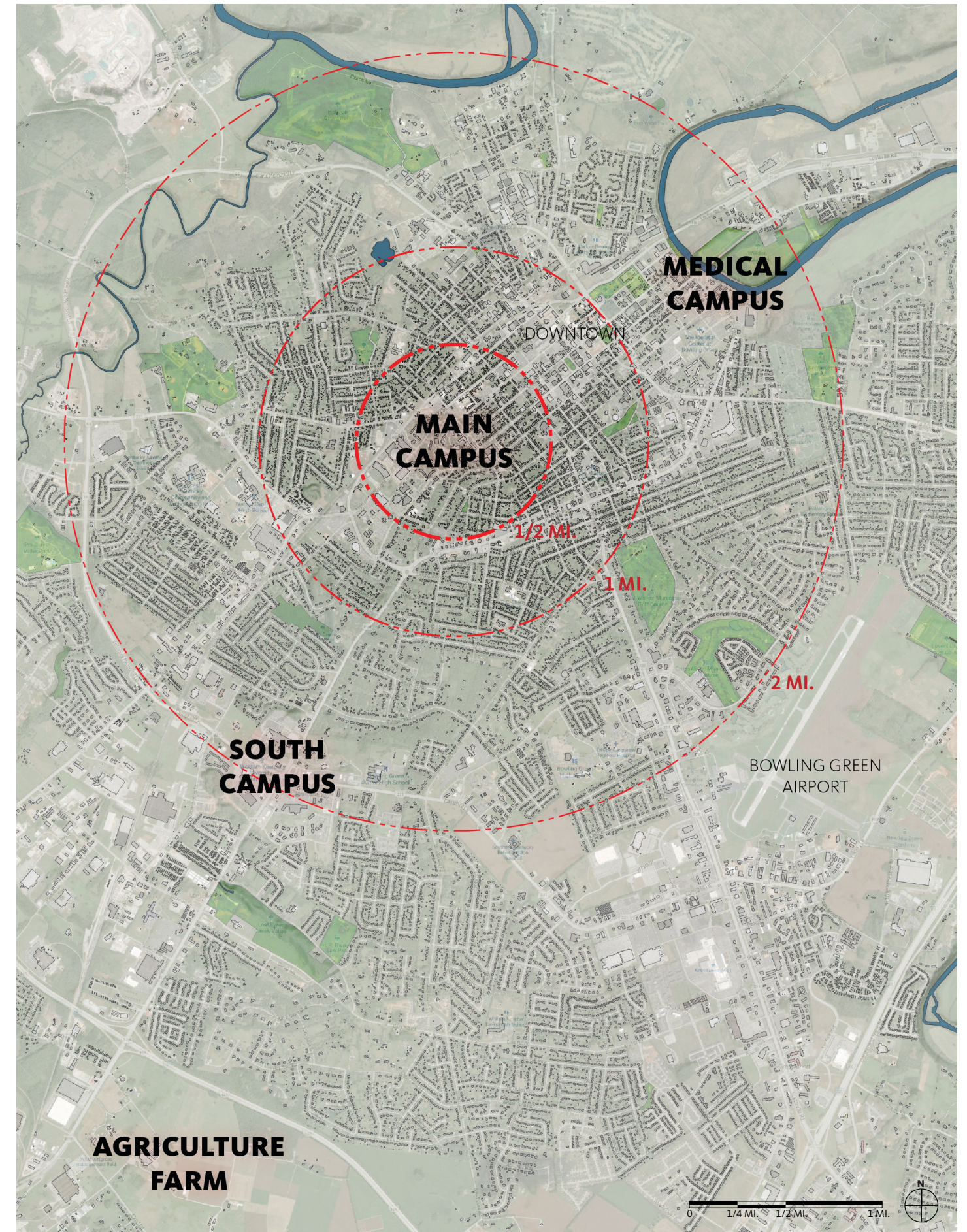
CAMPUS CONTEXT  
CAMPUS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT  
BUILDING CONDITIONS  
CAMPUS ZONES

## WKU CAMPUS CONTEXT

WKU is committed to being fully engaged in the region and the Commonwealth while providing a global context to the WKU Experience. The main, flagship campus serves over 13,000 undergraduate students, located in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a city with a population of more than 60,000 approximately 110 miles south of Louisville and 65 miles north of Nashville.



Above: The main campus in Bowling Green is located close to the Tennessee border. WKU extends in-state tuition for border states.  
Right: The main campus is close to downtown Bowling Green and in close proximity to the Medical Campus, South Campus and Agriculture Farm.



## CAMPUS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Hill is the historic beginning of the campus as well as its defining feature. The growth of the campus down the Hill can be mapped by the age of buildings today. Many of the original buildings have been adapted for reuse, such as Potter Hall, Helm Library and College High Hall.

The Hill became home to WKU in 1910 starting with Van Meter Hall and a commitment to transforming the lives of students and serving the region and the Commonwealth.

For the next 50 years, WKU expanded its programs and facilities, but remained concentrated on and around the Hill. Beginning in the 1960s the campus began to expand to the Valley and across State Street to the Science Campus, gradually expanding through the 80s, 90s, and 2000s to its current footprint.

While expansion and growth is an important dimension of the historic development, equally important is the trend of campus stewardship and the continual landscape enhancements and greening of the campus environment.

Henry Wright's original plan for the campus in 1908 set the direction for the development of the WKU campus on the Hill. Though none of the buildings were realized exactly as depicted, many of the campus features such as the Van Meter Overlook, the Hilltop open space, Cherry

Hall, and traces of the Stadium and Colonnade remain today.

The building age map shows the progress of WKU's development over time. Since the founding on the campus with construction of Van Meter in 1910 and for the next 50 years, all of the academic facilities were concentrated on and around the Hill.

In the 60s and 70s new facilities for housing, athletics and academics extended down the Hill, in the Valley and the Science Campus, followed by an additional burst of development in the 80s, 90s and 2000s, bringing the campus to its current footprint.



Above: Henry Wright's original campus plan



Above: Building age map

## BUILDING CONDITIONS

The building age map on the previous page greatly informs the current building conditions. Among the five most utilized buildings for learning, three have a WKU deferred maintenance (DFM) facility rating of “Fair” or “Poor”, while Faculty rated all five most highly utilized buildings as “Fair” or “Poor” for teaching.

WKU maintains detailed data on building operational costs, deferred maintenance (DFM) and facility conditions assessment.

Research included an assessment of learning spaces with faculty, including discussion of criteria such as thermal comfort and technology, which offered a perceived rating to compare against the WKU DFM Facility Rating.

Building Name	Total Minutes Used/Term	Faculty Overall Rating	WKU DFM Facility Rating
Grise Hall	639,200	Poor	Poor
Cherry Hall	616,240	Fair	Poor
Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center	578,640	Fair	Fair
Kelly Thompson Hall*	340,560	Fair	Good
Gary A. Ransdell Hall	324,730	Fair	Good
Snell Hall	304,240		Good
Environmental Sciences and Technology Building	285,280	Poor	Fair
Academic Complex	256,720	Fair	Fair
Medical Center Health Complex	192,700		Excellent
Honors College & International Center	182,480	Good	Good
College High Hall	176,480	Poor	Fair
Engineering and Biological Sciences	158,400	Excellent	Good
Ogden College Hall	158,320		Excellent
Gordon Wilson Hall	128,560	Poor	Fair
Jody Richards Mass Media and Technology Hall	120,480	Excellent	Good
Industrial Education Building	46,080	Poor	Fair
Floral Design Training Center & Floral Shop	6,480		Good
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,736,570</b>		

\*Facility Overall Rating & Facility Conditions Index does not account for recent renovation.  
Source: WKU Facilities Management Department, 2020



## CAMPUS ZONES

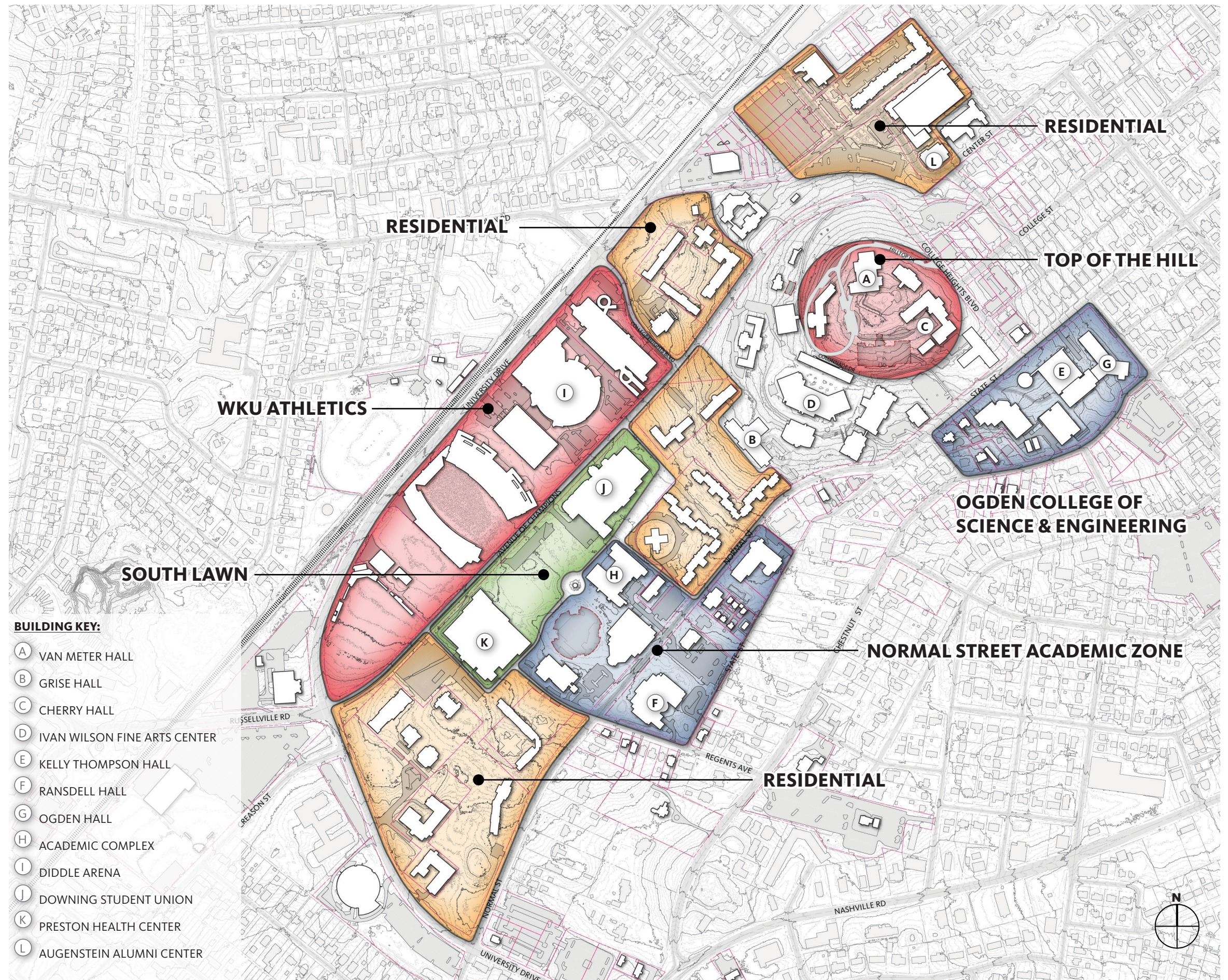
The insights of this analysis informed the Campus Master Plan direction to improve pedestrian crossing between the Ogden College of Science & Engineering and the Hilltop, and to further reinforce the lower campus with new or relocated academic facilities.

The Main Campus is comprised of several loosely defined zones or sub-districts, characterized both by their geographic characteristics (Hill vs. Valley) and function (academic/administration, athletic, housing, and student life).

The academic zones consist of the Hilltop which contains most of the historic campus buildings, such as Cherry Hall and Van Meter Hall, the Ogden College of Science & Engineering which includes the recently completed Ogden Hall, and the lower campus which includes the Honors College, Gary Ransdell Hall and the Academic Complex.

The primary focus of academic activity occurs on the Hill and Ogden College of Science & Engineering but has steadily expanded to the lower campus in recent decades with the addition of Ransdell Hall and the Honors College.

The First Year Village and landscape, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021, will create an important anchor to the lower campus residential zone. This project is described in more detail in the Campus Master Plan chapter.



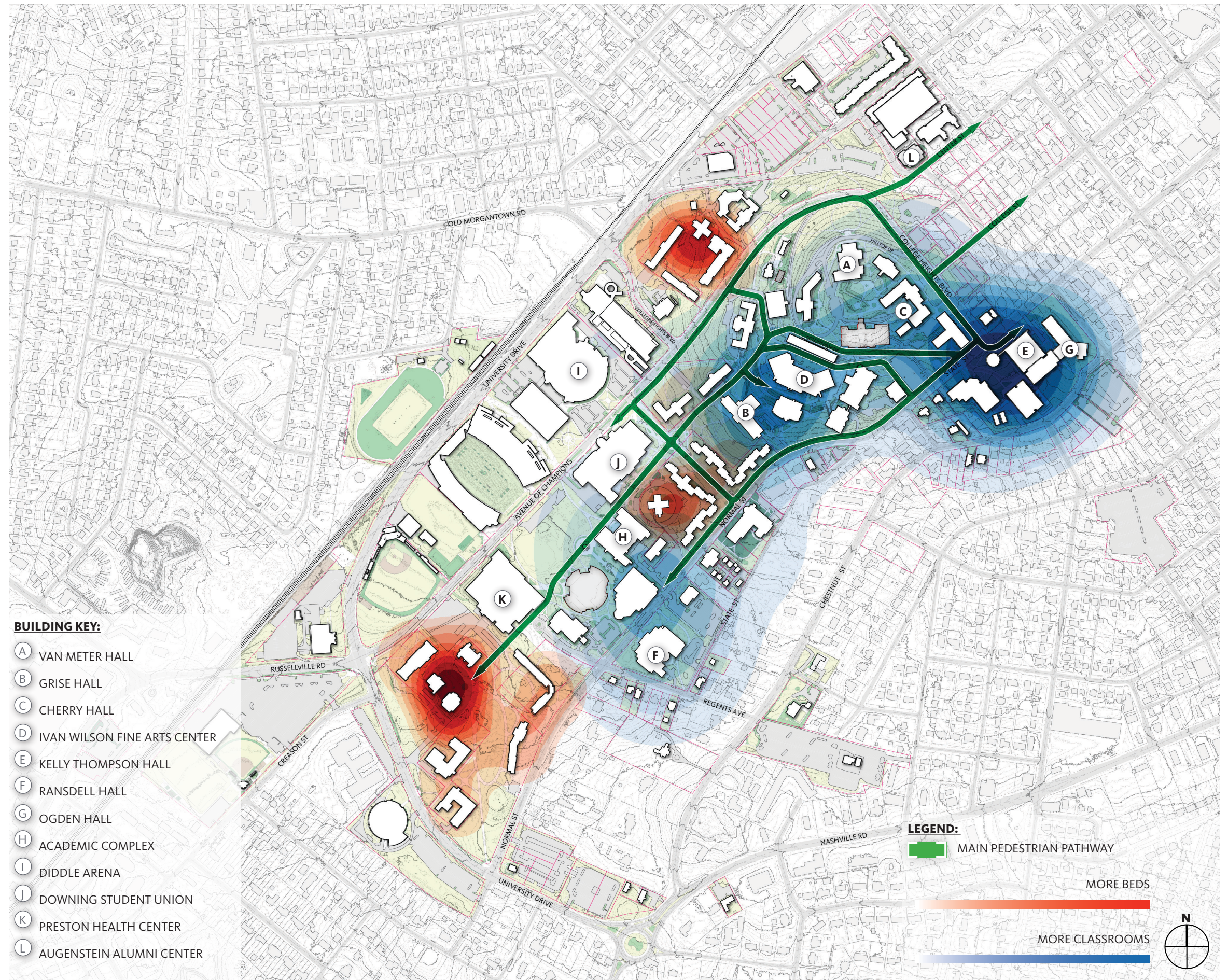
## CAMPUS USE & INTENSITY

The Campus Master Plan was informed by analysis of the spatial relationships between uses across campus.

An analysis of the intensity of use of classroom and lab facilities shows that the highest concentration of scheduled classroom activity falls almost equally between academic buildings on the Hilltop and in the Ogden College of Science & Engineering, with a secondary concentration in the lower campus.

WKU's main campus also houses nearly 5,000 students across its 15 residence halls in three distinct on-campus zones, and in two apartment buildings located on the northwest edge of campus in a fourth zone.

Each of these residential areas has been strengthened in the past decade with new facilities and renovations to meet current student demand and interests, including the 400-bed Hilltopper Hall located in the "Valley", the Northeast and Southwest renovations, and the Kentucky Street Apartments.



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Thanks to all who contributed to the research and guided the development of this report:

WKU Campus Master Plan Steering Committee

WKU Master Planning Committee

Workshop & Research Participants

1,395 Survey Participants

Special thanks to Bryan Russell, Chief Facilities Officer and Chair of the WKU Campus Master Plan Steering Committee for shepherding the process, to Doris Hayes at WKU's Department of Planning, Design & Construction and to Josh Montgomery, GIS Specialist at WKU's Department of Planning, Design & Construction for aerial photography used in this report.

This Campus Master Plan was completed by Gensler, in collaboration with CMTA Inc. and Lockett & Farley Landscape Design.

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Emma Rice, Student  
Cruz McClure, Student  
+1,395 survey participants



## APPENDIX

- i 2019 Hilltop Planning Study, Lockett & Farley
- ii 2020 Athletics Feasibility Study, Ross Tarrant Architects
- iii One Stop - Student Services - Program
- iv WKU Campus Master Plan Presentation 06/05/2020
- v WKU Campus Master Plan Presentation 05/28/2020
- vi WKU Campus Master Plan Presentation 05/01/2020
- vii WKU Campus Master Plan Presentation 04/03/2020



**WKU**

## Campus Master Plan 2021-2031

Gensler

