



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

HATTIESBURG CAMPUS PLAN 2025



Forward from the President

I am delighted to share with you the updated Campus Master Plan for The University of Southern Mississippi Hattiesburg Campus. This plan was carefully developed to build upon the prior Campus Master Plan and is intended to guide the future of the campus while supporting the continued growth and success of the institution.

Developed with input from campus stakeholders and city partners, along with expert guidance from CCD Architects and Page, this updated Master Plan balances investment in existing and historic buildings and spaces with planning for future growth and new opportunities to enhance academic programs and student life. The plan addresses priorities for renovation, new construction, open spaces, mobility and infrastructure, as well as long-term goals for campus expansion.

Work on the revised Hattiesburg Campus Master Plan was informed by the following seven Planning Principles:

- 1. Protect historic open spaces and buildings**
- 2. Extend and enhance the character of campus through the contextual design of future buildings and open spaces**
- 3. Create and promote safe environments for learning, research and social engagement**
- 4. Promote sustainability, environmental design and energy conservation**
- 5. Develop an integrated circulation system**
- 6. Integrate modern technology**
- 7. Implement strategic growth practices**

As you explore the revised plan, keep in mind that this is a living document that reflects our current priorities and our bold hopes for the future as we understand them today. Institutional priorities will evolve over time as will the Campus Master Plan. We must remember that bringing this full vision to life will require many years and significant financial investment. We will begin by focusing on immediate needs and refine our plans for future development as resources permit.

I appreciate the campus committee members and the professionals with CCD/Page who devoted countless hours to considering the highest and best use of our campus grounds and facilities. Their careful thought and creativity give us something to look forward to that will certainly continue elevating Southern Miss...to the Top!

Joseph S. Paul, Ph.D.
President

Acknowledgments

Steering Committee

Chad Driskell

Vice President for External Affairs

Allyson Easterwood

Vice President for Finance and Administration

Kim Gallaspy

Chief of Staff and Strategic Advisor to the President

Brian Hauff

Senior AVP for Facilities Planning and Management

Dr. Kelly Lucas

Vice President for Research

Jeremy McClain

Director of Athletics

Dr. Kristi Motter

Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Dr. Lance Nail

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Nicole Ruhnke

Chief Communication Officer

Working Group

Terri Bell

Forrest County Board of Supervisors Representative

David Bounds

Director of Planning Design and Construction

Dr. David Cochran

Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, College of Arts and Sciences

Teresa Crum

Executive Director for Housing and Residence Life

Dr. Michael Davis

Faculty Senate Appointee by Faculty Senate President/Director and Professor, School of Biological, Environmental and Earth Sciences

Jerry DeFatta

Assistant to the President for Advancement and Special Projects

Dr. John Eye

Dean of University Libraries

Mac Forsyth

Assistant Teaching Professor, College of Business and Economic Development

Jeffrey George

Hattiesburg City Council Representative, Ward 1

Dr. Trent Gould

Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences

Dr. Julie Howdeshell

Design Space Review Committee Co-Chair Director, Quality Enhancement

Shawn Jones

Senior Deputy Athletics Director and Chief Operating Officer

Rusty Keyes

Assistant Vice President of Public Safety & Chief of Police, University Police Department

Stace Mercier

University Foundation Executive Director

Cameron Nuzzo

Operations Manager, Innovation and Commercialization Park

Maurine Pace

Staff Council Appointee by Staff Council President/Information Spec ORA

Greg Pierce

University Registrar

Chase Robbins

Director of Student Accessibility Services

Nathan Satcher

City of Hattiesburg City Planner

David Sliman

Chief Information Officer

Lachel Story

Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions

Dr. Brian Street

Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Nursing and Health Professions

Hunter White

City of Hattiesburg Deputy Director of Transportation & Engineering

Consulting Team

CCD Architects/ Consulting Team Lead

Jared Pierce

Principal-in-Charge, Architect

Kirk Oldenburg

Principal, Architect

Page/ Campus Planning Lead

Beth Foster

Principal-in-Charge, Director of Campus Planning

Philip Perlin

Project Manager, Lead Campus Planner

Jackie Longoria

Senior Campus Planner

Alex Lara

Senior Urban Designer

Lisa M. Keith

Academic Strategy Director

Catherine Tinkler

Capital Strategy Director

Sheri Offenhauser

Academic Strategy Specialist

Leslie Alexander

Planner

Alison Ecker

Senior Campus Planner

Neel-Schaffer/ Landscape, Open Space, and Mobility Lead

Russ Bryan

Landscape Architect

Geoffrey Crosby

Civil Engineer



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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Campus Plan (campus plan or plan) establishes a long-term vision and strategic framework to guide campus growth, renewal, and investment. While focused on the Hattiesburg campus, this plan contributes to a coordinated planning framework encompassing USM's three primary campuses—Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, and the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL). Developed through an 18-month process of analysis, engagement, and design exploration, the plan aligns with the University's mission of preparing students for life, supporting cutting-edge research, and strengthening community partnerships.

The planning process began with a comprehensive discovery phase that assessed existing facilities, campus systems, and programmatic distribution. Engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners surfaced clear themes: a strong sense of institutional resilience and identity, the need to modernize teaching and research facilities, opportunities to consolidate athletics and student life amenities, and the importance of activating underutilized open space. A detailed space needs analysis confirmed a significant shortfall in research, collaboration, and physical plant space, underscoring the urgency for both new investment and targeted renewal.

Building on these findings, the plan sets forth guiding principles and design narratives that prioritize academic and research excellence, student success, community connection, and stewardship of historic and natural assets. The plan envisions a campus of communities organized around distinct districts—including a

revitalized Science District anchored by a new Science Pavilion and research green, a renewed Historic District, and modernized athletics and recreation facilities along West 4th Street.

To address decades of deferred maintenance and aging facilities, the plan introduces a capital renewal strategy that categorizes buildings for reinvestment, repurposing, or divestment. This approach reduces problematic square footage, prioritizes high-performing assets, and creates capacity for future development. Early priorities include investment in science and research facilities, renovation of historic academic halls, and consolidation of intercollegiate athletics.

The implementation framework provides a phased roadmap that balances ambition with fiscal responsibility. Early initiatives focus on projects with immediate impact, such as the Science District renewal, revitalization of the Historic District, and open space activation. Priority capital investments advance signature projects in academics, research, and student life, while long-term initiatives preserve flexibility to respond to shifting enrollment, funding, and partnership opportunities.

Together, these strategies create a cohesive and adaptable plan for the University's future. By aligning physical development with strategic priorities, the campus plan ensures that USM continues to thrive as a leading public research university, one that honors its historic roots, strengthens its academic and research mission, and invests in spaces that foster student success and community impact.



Campus History

Founding

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) was established in 1910 as Mississippi Normal College, with the mission of training teachers for the state's rural schools. Although several locations across Mississippi were considered, the Board of Trustees ultimately accepted a bid from Hattiesburg and Forrest County, which offered a free site and financial support for construction.

Situated on the western edge of Hattiesburg in a former timberland area, the college's initial buildings and campus plan were designed by Chattanooga-based architect Reuben H. Hunt. A prominent regional architect, Hunt was known for his civic projects—including churches, courthouses, and educational buildings—over 30 of which are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

To prepare for the opening of Mississippi Normal College, five permanent buildings were constructed: College Hall, Forrest County Hall, Hattiesburg Hall, the Industrial Cottage (now the Honor House), and the President's Home (now the Alumni House). A temporary wooden dining hall was also built, along with other essential infrastructure to accommodate the inaugural campus population. On September 18, 1912, the college welcomed its first 200 students, led by President Joseph Anderson Cook and a faculty of 18.

Over the years, the institution underwent several name changes, each reflecting its evolving mission and scope. In 1924, it became State Teachers College; in 1940, Mississippi Southern

College; and in 1962, it was renamed The University of Southern Mississippi after achieving university status.

Transitions

In the mid-twentieth century, USM experienced various phases of growth and transition. The university expanded its academic offerings beyond baccalaureate degrees, introducing graduate programs in 1947 and doctoral programs in 1959.

Desegregation efforts at USM were catalyzed by civil rights activist Clyde Kennard, who made multiple attempts to enroll. While his efforts were defeated, the university was officially desegregated in 1965 when Raylawni Branch and Gwendolyn Elaine Armstrong became the first African American students to enroll.

USM also extended its geographic and academic reach by establishing the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs in 1947 and the Gulf Park Campus in 1972. Additionally, the university formed a partnership with the John C. Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, furthering its commitment to research and innovation.

Modern Era

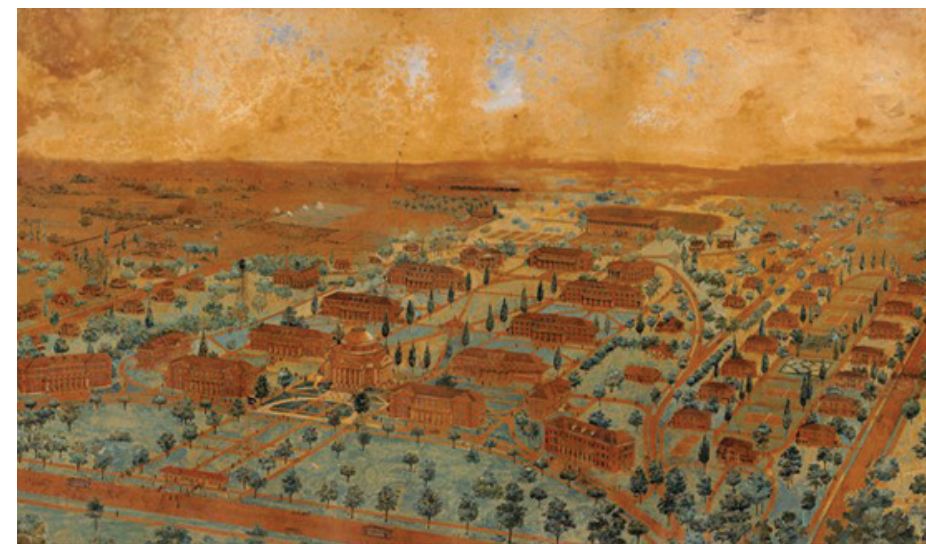
With a legacy spanning more than 115 years, USM today serves over 8,000 students on its Hattiesburg campus. It holds the designation of a Carnegie R1 research institution and has well-known programs in education, business, nursing, and oceans sciences.

The Hattiesburg campus features several iconic landmarks, including the Lucas Administration Building (fondly known as "The Dome"), a 20-foot-wide bronze eagle sculpture, Lake Byron, and the All-American Rose Garden. Brick-paved plazas, oak-shaded promenades, and traditional front porches give the campus its distinctive Southern charm.

All five of the original 1912 buildings remain in use today, anchoring the university's historic district. Beyond these, USM boasts a number of modern facilities, including a 93,000-square-foot business school, a nursing education center equipped with an advanced simulation laboratory, and a polymer science research facility.

Sources

- 2013-2014 Graduate Bulletin - Introduction (<https://catalog.usm.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=399>)
- 2022-2023 Undergraduate Bulletin - Gulf Coast History (<https://catalog.usm.edu/content.php?catoid=28&navoid=1694>)
- Back to School! - Proposed Future Development of Mississippi Normal College, 1911 (https://lib.usm.edu/spcol/exhibitions/item_of_the_month/iotm_aug_2014.html)
- Clyde Kennard: A Little-Known Civil Rights (<https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/clyde-kennard-a-little-known-civil-rights-pioneer>)
- "Southern Miss Rises in Rankings for Best Education Schools - U.S. News & World Report", Karlia Pitts, June 4, 2025 (<https://www.usm.edu/news/2025/release/us-news-and-world-report.php>)
- USM Academics and Research (<https://www.usm.edu/undergraduate-admissions/academics-research.php>)
- USM Center for Black Studies (<https://www.usm.edu/black-studies/index.php>)
- USM Hattiesburg Campus (<https://www.usm.edu/university/hattiesburg-campus.php>)
- USM Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usm.edu>)
- USM LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-southern-mississippi/?trk=public_post_feed-actor-name)
- USM Office of Institutional Research Enrollment Trends (<https://www.usm.edu/institutional-research/quick-facts.php>)



1911 architectural rendering of the Mississippi Normal College (now USM)



Aerial campus view (1970s)



All-American Rose Garden (1970s)



College Hall (1930s)

Campus Strategic Framework

Mission

The University of Southern Mississippi engages students at all levels in the exploration and creation of knowledge. USM's hallmark is a fully engaged lifelong learning approach integrating inspired teaching, collaborative research, creative activity, and service to society. Southern Miss produces graduates who are ready for life; ready to succeed professionally and as responsible citizens in a pluralistic society.

Vision

The University of Southern Mississippi is distinctive among national research universities in adding value to students' experience, uniquely preparing them to be ready for life.

Values

The mission of the institution is supported by the following values:

1. Research and instructional excellence focused on student success at all teaching sites and through campus-based and distance education.
2. Student engagement that fosters personal growth, professional development, and a lifelong commitment to growth and learning.
3. An inclusive community that embraces the diversity of people and ideas.
4. Institutional governance that respects academic freedom and faculty inclusion.
5. A campus culture characterized by warmth and mutually supportive connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
6. An approach to academics, research, and personal conduct based on integrity and civility.
7. An evolving curriculum that fosters lifelong curiosity and critical thinking, and prepares graduates to be Ready for Life.
8. Community participation that promotes social responsibility, citizenship, and economic development.

Institutional Strategic Goals

1. Increase total enrollment for undergraduate and graduate students through improved recruitment, retention, persistence, progression, and student success.
2. Cultivate an academic culture of curricular innovation and a positive teaching-learning environment.
3. Strengthen research productivity and innovation by enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration and creative activity, improving research infrastructure, and increasing community engagement aimed at addressing critical societal issues and driving economic development.
4. Enhance administrative efficiency to improve productivity throughout the institution by optimizing business processes and personnel deployment.
5. Engage the University's diverse community of alumni and friends in personalized, integrated, and coordinated ways to foster dynamic relationships, extend our reach, and enhance lifelong connections in support of the institution's strategic priorities.

Source

- Vision, Mission and Values (<https://www.usm.edu/president/vision-mission-values.php>)



Campus Plan Scope

The USM campus plan provides a comprehensive framework to guide the physical development of the Hattiesburg campus over the next decade and beyond. Rooted in USM's academic mission and strategic priorities, the plan addresses space needs, facility renewal, and modernization while elevating the student experience and advancing research excellence. The plan identifies opportunities to expand research capacity, modernize and consolidate athletic facilities, and enhance student life. It outlines strategies to preserve and adapt historic assets, optimize campus land use, improve mobility and access, and activate open space. The plan also provides a framework for phased implementation by aligning resources with priority investments. By honoring the university's culture and building on its strong sense of place, the plan charts a bold and pragmatic path to support institutional growth, foster community connection, and create a vibrant and resilient campus environment.



31st Ave Pedestrian Promenade

Process and Engagement

The plan was developed through a collaborative, multi-phase process designed to align planning recommendations with USM's mission and priorities. The process advanced in three stages—Discovery, Ideation, and Synthesis—each building on the last to ensure that analysis, visioning, and design exploration informed a cohesive long-term framework. Discovery established a shared understanding of existing conditions, space needs, and opportunities. Ideation tested planning scenarios, exploring alternatives for campus growth, facility renewal, and open space activation. Synthesis refined these concepts into a clear strategy for implementation.

Engagement was a cornerstone of the process, ensuring that the voices of students, faculty, and staff informed the plan. The Steering Committee and Working Group guided the effort, while focus groups and academic and administrative listening sessions provided detailed perspectives on academic, research, student life, and campus operations needs. This layered engagement built consensus around key priorities and helped shape a plan that is both visionary and practical, grounded in institutional values, and responsive to the future needs of the university community.



Planning Charrette



Stennis Space Center Tour



Steering Committee Workshop

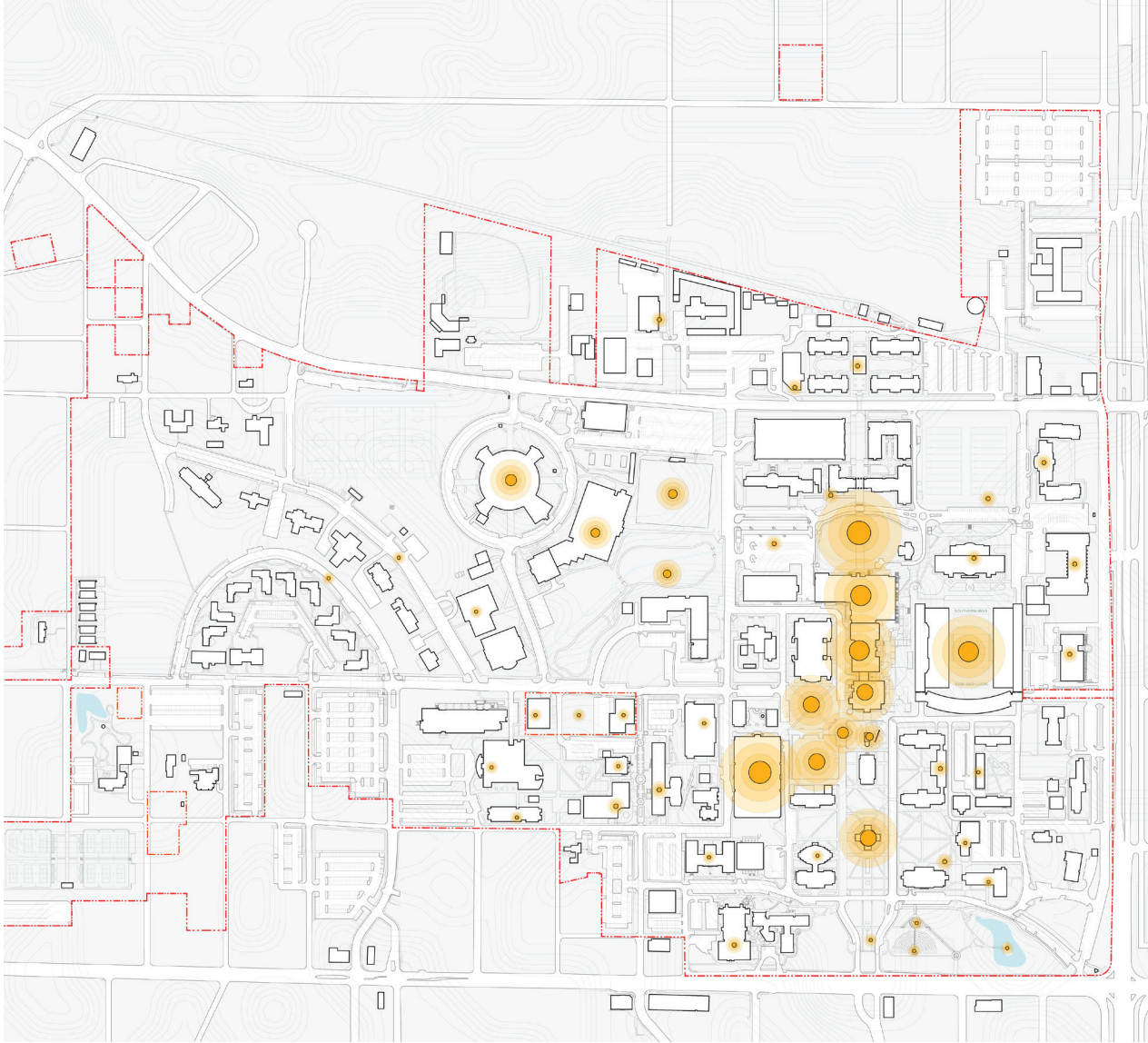
Discovery Survey

As part of the Discovery Phase, a campus-wide survey was distributed to students, faculty, staff, and alumni at the Hattiesburg campus. Open from April 22 to May 10, 2024, the survey provided an important opportunity to gather broad feedback from the USM community beyond committee and focus group discussions. More than 600 responses were collected, offering insight into how the campus is experienced daily and where improvements are most needed.

Survey questions focused on identifying the “heart of campus,” favorite outdoor spaces, social destinations, and memorable photo-op locations.

Key Takeaways

- ▶ The campus core and Eagle Walk are viewed as the symbolic and functional heart of campus
- ▶ Outdoor open spaces are underutilized and represent an opportunity for activation
- ▶ Social and academic hubs like Cook Library and the Thad Cochran Center remain central to campus life
- ▶ Pedestrian improvements and stronger campus connections are widely desired
- ▶ Iconic landmarks and traditions contribute significantly to campus identity and branding



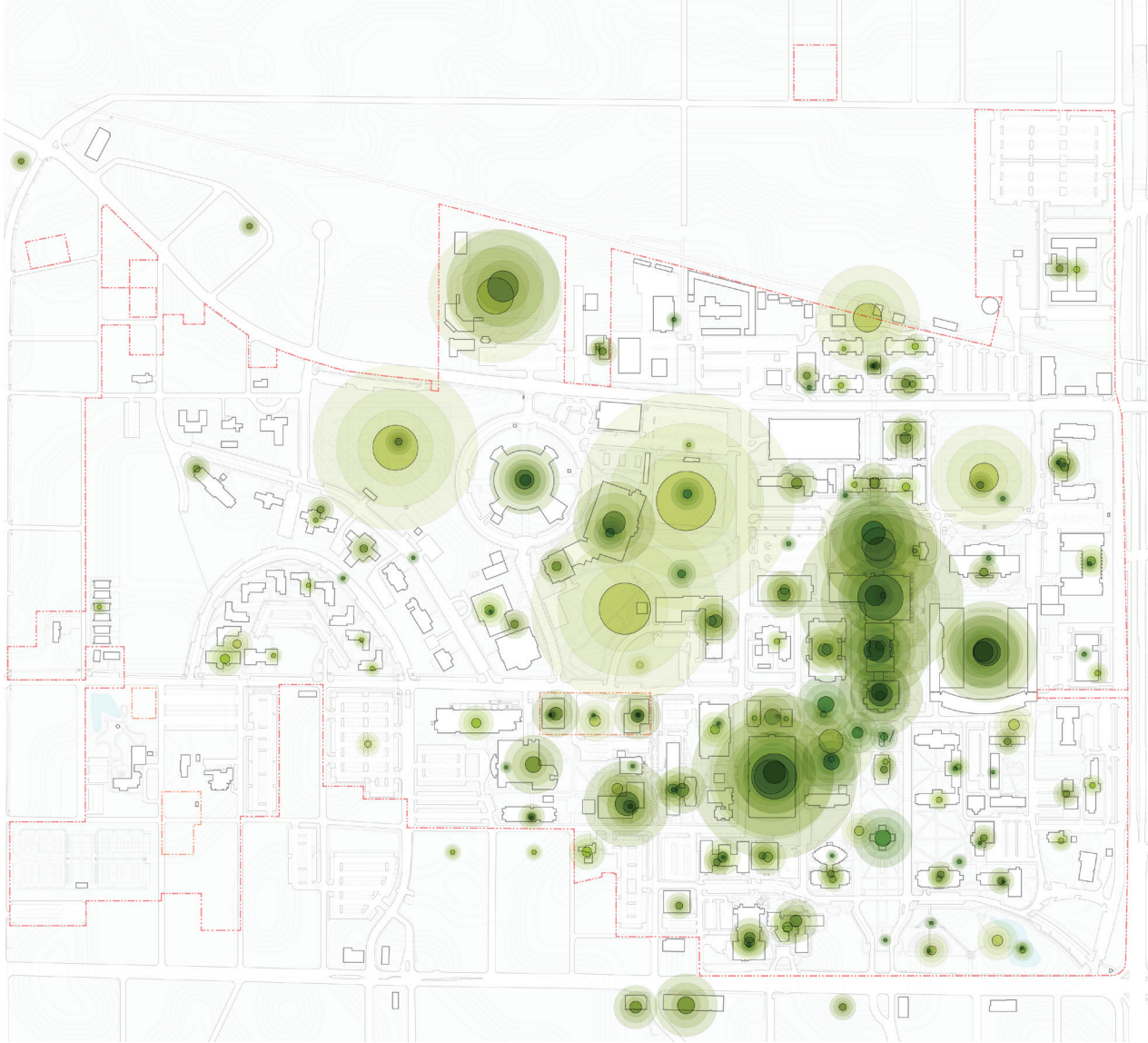
Heat map results of “heart of campus” survey question



Eagle Walk Tunnel



“You’re so Golden” USM Homecoming



Heat map results of “Zones of Activity” survey question



PLAN DRIVERS

Related Planning Efforts

The campus plan builds upon a strong foundation of existing studies, plans, and data sources. These resources provided essential insight into the physical condition, space utilization, and future needs of the Hattiesburg campus, and served as critical inputs in shaping the recommendations of this plan.

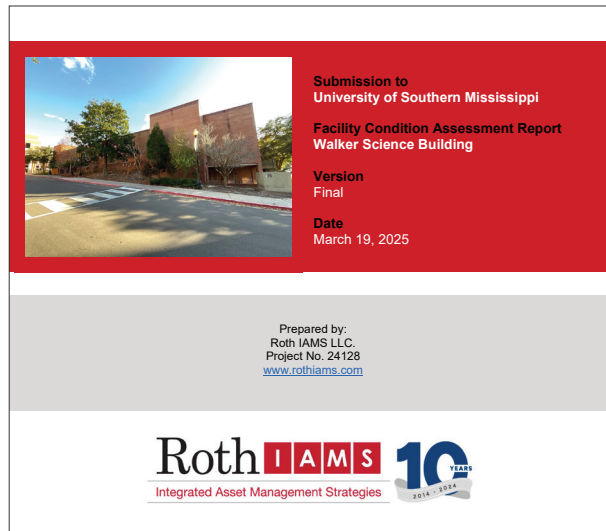
The following documents and studies were reviewed and integrated into the campus plan:

- ▶ **Tomorrow Southern Miss: Plan Update (2014)** - Previous campus planning framework and visioning effort
- ▶ **Southern Miss Athletics Facilities Master Plan** - Priorities and long-term goals for athletics facilities
- ▶ **Roth IAMS Facility Condition Assessment Reports (Phases 1 and 2)** - Data on the physical condition and lifecycle needs of existing buildings
- ▶ **Gordian FY24 Space Utilization Study** - Analysis of classroom and instructional space usage across campus
- ▶ **Page Field Audit, Space Inventory Verification, and PI Interactive Tool** - Comprehensive space verification and benchmarking tool for campus spaces

By leveraging these foundational materials, the campus plan ensures continuity with past efforts, alignment with current initiatives, and a data-informed basis for future investment and development.



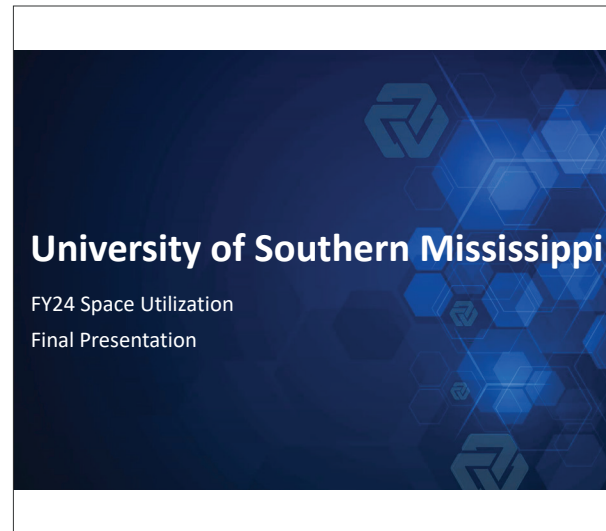
Tomorrow Southern Miss: Plan Update 2014



Roth IAMS Facilities Condition Assessment Report



Southern Miss Athletics Facilities Master Plan



Gordian FY24 Space Utilization Study

Stakeholder and Analysis Themes

The plan reflects a set of clear themes that emerged consistently throughout the planning process. To better understand these themes, the following pages summarize the major findings across key categories, weaving together stakeholder perspectives and technical analysis. These summaries highlight how the campus is experienced today, where gaps exist, and what opportunities hold the greatest promise for the future.

Through listening sessions, workshops, focus groups, and surveys, a representative picture came into focus of how the campus functions today and where opportunities exist for improvement. These insights point to where investments will have the greatest impact and how the physical environment can best support USM's mission, student experience, and research enterprise.

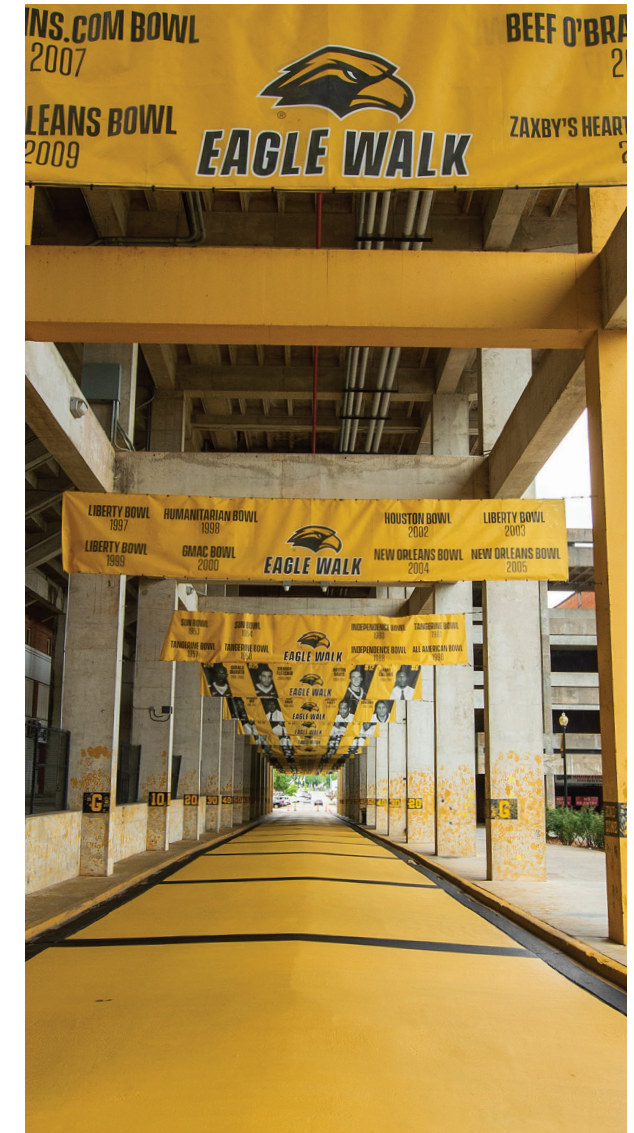
Stakeholders described a campus in need of modern facilities that match the quality of its programs. New science and research buildings, improved student life amenities, and technology-rich learning environments were emphasized as priorities. At the same time, preserving the character of historic assets while addressing deferred maintenance was seen as essential. Housing, wellness, and community spaces were highlighted as key to belonging and success, while athletics and recreation remain central to campus identity and traditions, calling for consolidation and modernization.

The analysis reinforced these perspectives, revealing widespread renewal needs, open spaces

that are valued but underused, and infrastructure systems that must be reinvested in. Mobility challenges, particularly pedestrian safety, parking, and gateways, along with opportunities to better align development with program priorities, frame the choices ahead. Together, these themes establish the foundation for a plan that unites community aspirations with physical realities and sets a clear path for the future.

Institutional Values and Identity

- ▶ **Connected to the Community Culture**
Stakeholders emphasized the importance of capitalizing on USM's "scrappy, resilient" culture and strong ties to the Hattiesburg community.
- ▶ **Balance of Tradition and Progress**
Preserving traditions while modernizing facilities is essential to strengthening campus identity.
- ▶ **Strategic Resource Management**
The plan must align limited resources with high-priority investments, balance renewal and new construction, and ensure long-term stewardship of facilities.
- ▶ **Future-Ready Vision**
There is a shared aspiration to create a more inviting, connected, and resilient campus environment that supports student success, research growth, and community partnerships.



Eagle Walk Tunnel

Academics and Research

► Space Needs and Modernization

Many academic buildings are outdated or burdened with deferred maintenance. There is a strong need for flexible classrooms, upgraded technology, and purpose-built research and lab spaces.

► Science and Research Facilities

Construction of a new Science Research Facility and the replacement of the Johnson Science Tower are top priorities. Polymer and biotechnology programs are poised for growth, with expansion needs for core labs.

► Program Growth Opportunities

College-identified growth areas including biology, computer science, cybersecurity, nursing and health professions, social work, and business. Graduate and online program expansion was also emphasized to meet enrollment and workforce demands.

► Research Mission and R1 Imperative

To maintain research classification, USM requires annual growth in research expenditures and expanded infrastructure, particularly in labs, core facilities, research computing, and secure environments (e.g., cybersecurity).

► Collaboration and Partnerships

Faculty desire more interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as stronger ties with private industry, government, and regional partners. The Innovation and Commercialization Park (ICP) is positioned as a hub for commercialization, light manufacturing, and incubator space.



Liberal Arts Building Classroom



Chain Technology Center Lab

Athletics and Recreation

► Modernization Needs

There is strong desire to consolidate athletic facilities on campus to foster a true “championship environment.” Upgrades to Reed Green Coliseum and golf facilities, along with the relocation of softball and track facilities, are identified as priorities.

► Student Recreation and Spirit

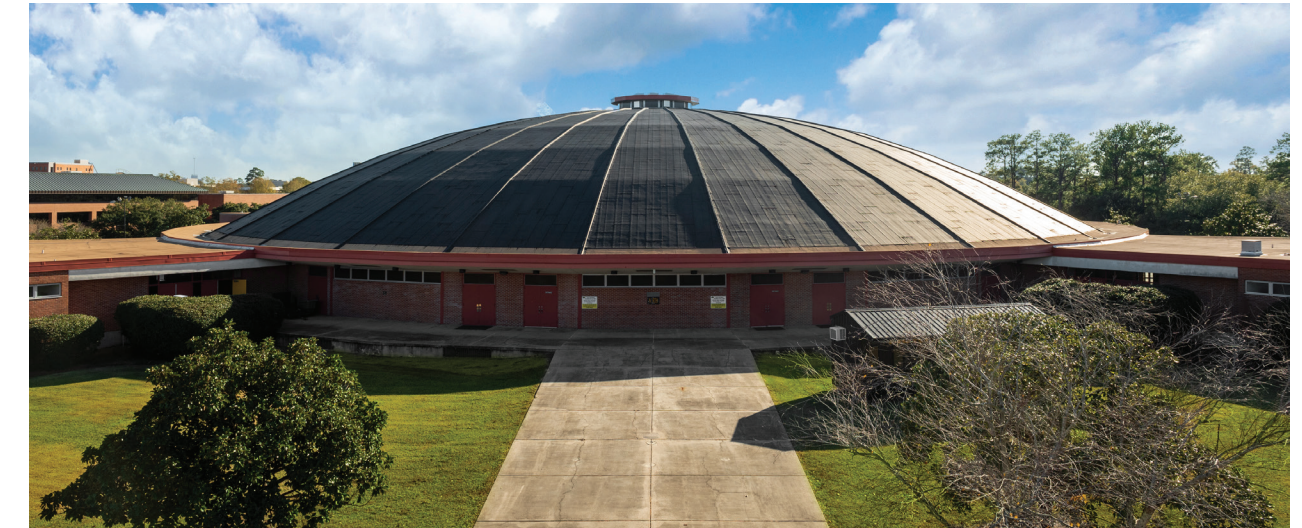
Spirit Park, Eagle Walk, and intramural fields are essential for student engagement and traditions. Improvements to lighting, seating, and stormwater management would enhance these areas.

► Community Partnerships

Athletics is seen as a driver of visibility and partnership opportunities, particularly with Hattiesburg and regional communities.



Southern Miss Track and Field Complex



Reed Green Coliseum

Open Space, Landscape, and Campus Character

► Underutilized Green Space

The campus has abundant but underactivated green space. Students expressed a desire for more usable lawns, shaded seating, and gathering areas.

► Iconic Places and Identity

Centennial Green, Eagle Walk, and the Dome emerged as beloved landmarks and identity anchors.

► Event and Social Spaces

Outdoor quads and plazas support traditions like Eagle Walk, tailgating, and festivals, but need investment in lighting, infrastructure, and amenities.

► Campus Edges and Gateways

Key arrival points, especially along Highway 49 and 4th Street, feel uninviting and disconnected from USM's identity. Gateway improvements and better wayfinding are widely requested.

► Student Amenities and Services

There is strong desire for more student community spaces, study areas, and informal gathering spots. Stakeholders called for expanding student support services, career advising, and wellness facilities.

► Sense of Belonging

Students and stakeholders emphasized the importance of making campus more inviting and encourage people to stay through enhancements to facilities, outdoor spaces, and shared social hubs.



M. M. Roberts Stadium



Union Plaza

Infrastructure and Mobility

► Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks

Stakeholders want safer pedestrian crossings (especially along 4th Street) and expanded bike and pedestrian pathways. Some elements of the 2018 pedestrian plan were implemented but need reinforcement and expansion.

► Vehicular Access and Parking

With 72% of students commuting, parking access is a major issue. Demand exists for more accessible and better distributed parking as well as improved arrival points.

► Infrastructure Reliability

Modernization of MEP and IT systems is urgently needed to support academic and research growth. Flood-prone areas pose ongoing challenges.

► Resiliency

Stakeholders called for investment in resilient utilities, energy efficiency, and adaptation strategies for stormwater and flooding challenges.



Hickman Central Plant



Inaccessible street crossing



4th Street crossing

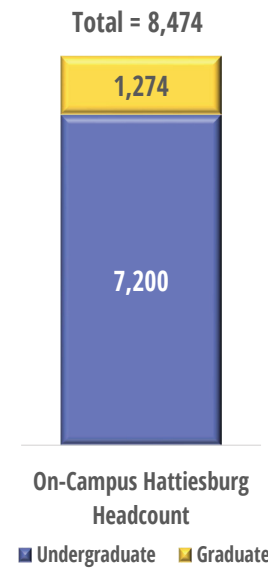
Space Needs

To support the campus planning efforts, a Space Needs Assessment was conducted. The assessment quantifies existing and current space need. Current space needs are based on proposed metrics and do not take into account existing conditions. The assessment identifies the space types and units experiencing shortages to inform the campus plan. It also identifies space inefficiencies. For research, in particular, some of the shortages can only be met through new construction. The Fall 2023 term was used as the baseline for the analysis.

Enrollment

Only Fall 2023 on-campus enrollment was used to determine space needs. Neither enrollment increases nor shifts between programs were considered.

Fall 2023 Campus Enrollment



Facilities

For this analysis, data provided by The University of Southern Mississippi was used in conjunction with data gathered on-site during a subsequent space audit. The space audit included all academic, research, and administrative spaces. Residential, athletic, and clinic facilities were excluded from the audit. As anomalies were found, the team made the space use classification adjustments. Additionally, the planning team designated each assignable space to departments.

Existing Conditions

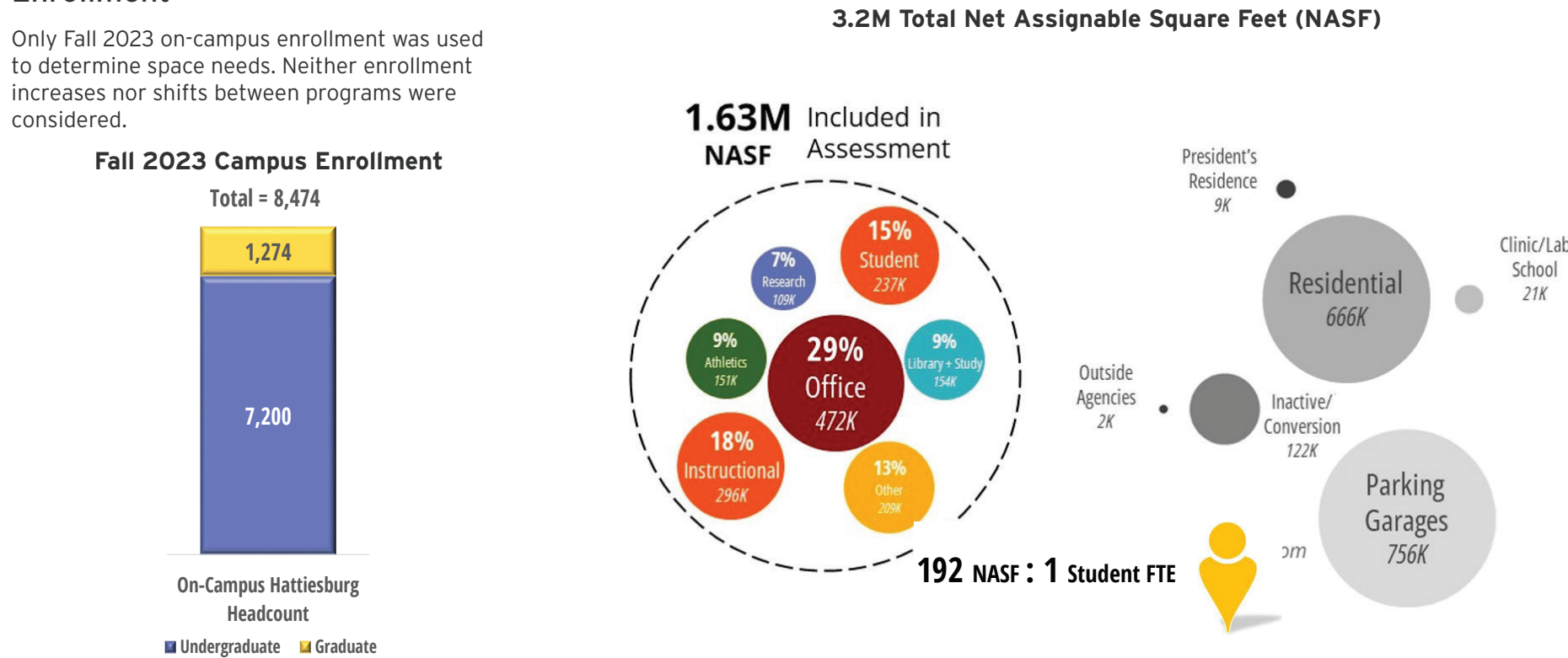
The University has slightly over 1.6M net assignable square feet (NASF), equating to approximately 192 NASF per student full-time equivalent (FTE). This excludes residential space, parking garages, clinic/lab school space, inactive/conversion space, outside agency space, and the President's residence. In total, the space excluded from the assessment is approximately 1.6M NASF (see graphic below).

Utilization & Demand

A utilization and demand study was also conducted as part of the assessment to establish the classroom and instructional laboratory needs. **The utilization findings are consistent with the Roth/Gordian report.**

The graphic below shows that, of the 134 classrooms on the Southern Miss. campus, at most 92 (or 69%) of the total rooms are in use. This percentage is even lower in the late afternoon/evenings and on Friday.

A good indicator of classroom need is when 80% or more of the classrooms are consistently in use

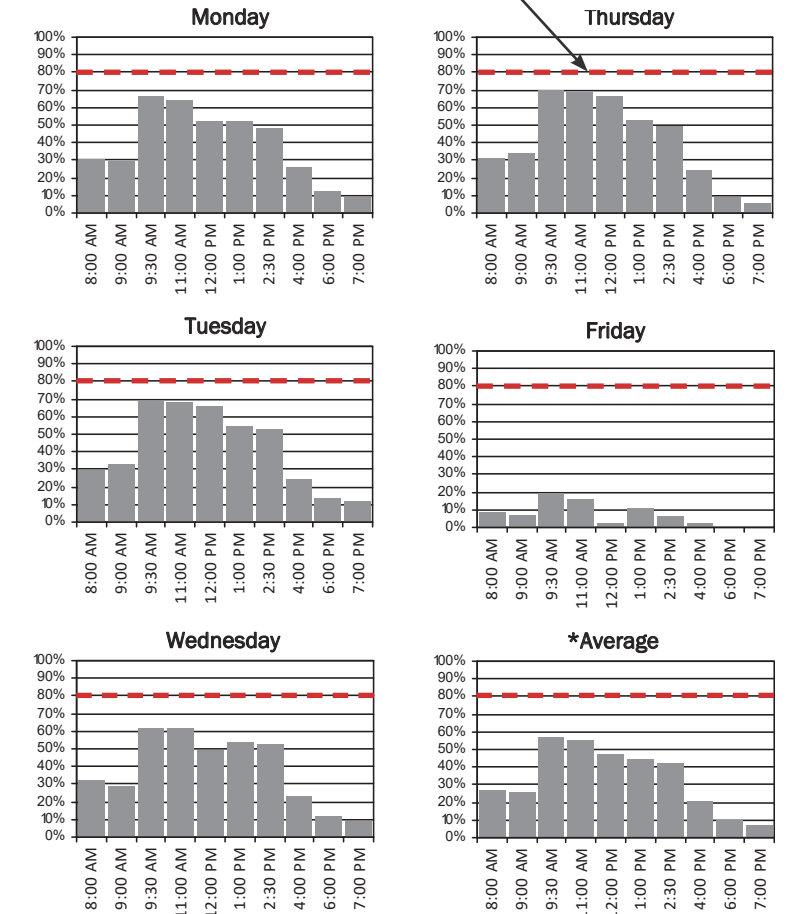


Scheduled Use by Day and Hour - Hattiesburg Campus

(Darker colors indicate a large percentage of rooms are scheduled.)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	*Average
8:00 AM	31% 41 Rooms	30% 40 Rooms	32% 43 Rooms	31% 42 Rooms	9% 12 Rooms	27% 36 Rooms
9:00 AM	30% 40 Rooms	33% 44 Rooms	28% 38 Rooms	34% 46 Rooms	7% 9 Rooms	26% 35 Rooms
9:30 AM	66% 89 Rooms	69% 92 Rooms	61% 82 Rooms	69% 93 Rooms	19% 26 Rooms	57% 76 Rooms
11:00 AM	64% 86 Rooms	68% 91 Rooms	61% 82 Rooms	69% 92 Rooms	16% 21 Rooms	55% 74 Rooms
12:00 PM	51% 69 Rooms	66% 88 Rooms	49% 66 Rooms	66% 88 Rooms	3% 4 Rooms	47% 63 Rooms
1:00 PM	51% 69 Rooms	54% 73 Rooms	54% 72 Rooms	53% 71 Rooms	10% 14 Rooms	45% 60 Rooms
2:30 PM	49% 65 Rooms	53% 71 Rooms	52% 70 Rooms	49% 66 Rooms	6% 8 Rooms	42% 56 Rooms
4:00 PM	26% 35 Rooms	24% 32 Rooms	23% 31 Rooms	24% 32 Rooms	3% 4 Rooms	20% 27 Rooms
6:00 PM	13% 17 Rooms	13% 18 Rooms	12% 16 Rooms	9% 12 Rooms	0% 0 Rooms	10% 13 Rooms
7:00 PM	9% 12 Rooms	12% 16 Rooms	9% 12 Rooms	5% 7 Rooms	0% 0 Rooms	7% 9 Rooms

Total classrooms = 134



* The average is calculated on Monday through Friday use.

Definitions

- ▶ **Weekly Room Hours:** The number of hours per week a room is scheduled
- ▶ **Seat Fill Rate:** When the room is scheduled, the percentage of seats in use (Gordian's Position Utilization)
- ▶ **Weekly Seat Hours:** The weighted average that combines weekly room hours and seat fill rate

Overview

- ▶ 25 buildings contain classrooms
- ▶ The Liberal Arts Building, Scianna Hall, and Asbury Hall contain 32% of the total number of classrooms
- ▶ 21 (or 16%) of the 134 classrooms do not have any scheduled use
- ▶ 16 classrooms exceed the weekly room hour Target
- ▶ 10 classrooms exceed the weekly seat hour target
- ▶ 29 classrooms exceed the seat fill rate target

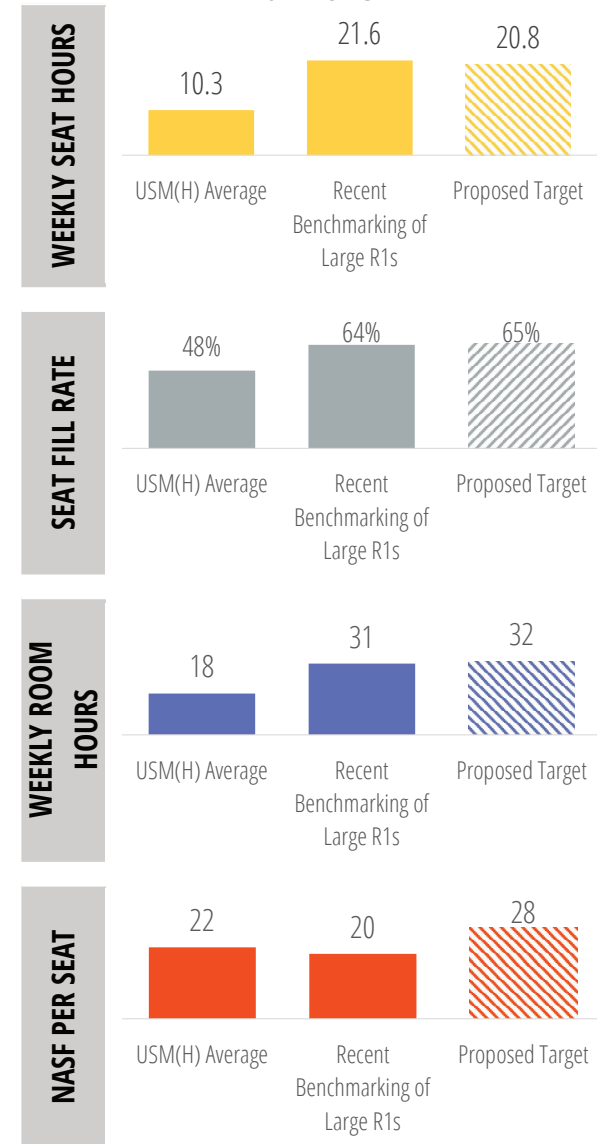
The University has 134 classrooms. These classrooms average 18 weekly room hours of scheduled use per week, verified through the official course data. The current published utilization target is 32 weekly room hours. When these rooms are scheduled, on average approximately 48% of the seats are filled. This is lower than the 65% target set for this study. Combined, these utilization statistics equal to about 10.3 weekly seat hours, which is also lower than the combined utilization target of 20.8 weekly seat hours. The heaviest scheduled times of use are between 9:30AM and 1:00PM, Monday through Thursday.

Overall, the average space per seat is about 22 NASF, which is lower than what flexible, active learning classrooms require (30-35 NASF per seat). A target of 28 NASF per seat was set for Southern Miss. Should on-campus enrollment exceed 10,000 students, the target could be reduced to 25 NASF per seat.



Classroom in Owings-McQuagge

Overall Classroom Utilization Fall 2023



Classroom Demand

The classroom demand analysis found that the University has an excess of 39 classrooms based upon the proposed utilization targets established for this study. Note: Departmentally assigned classrooms are not analyzed separately from the registrar-controlled rooms, but should be meeting the same targets.

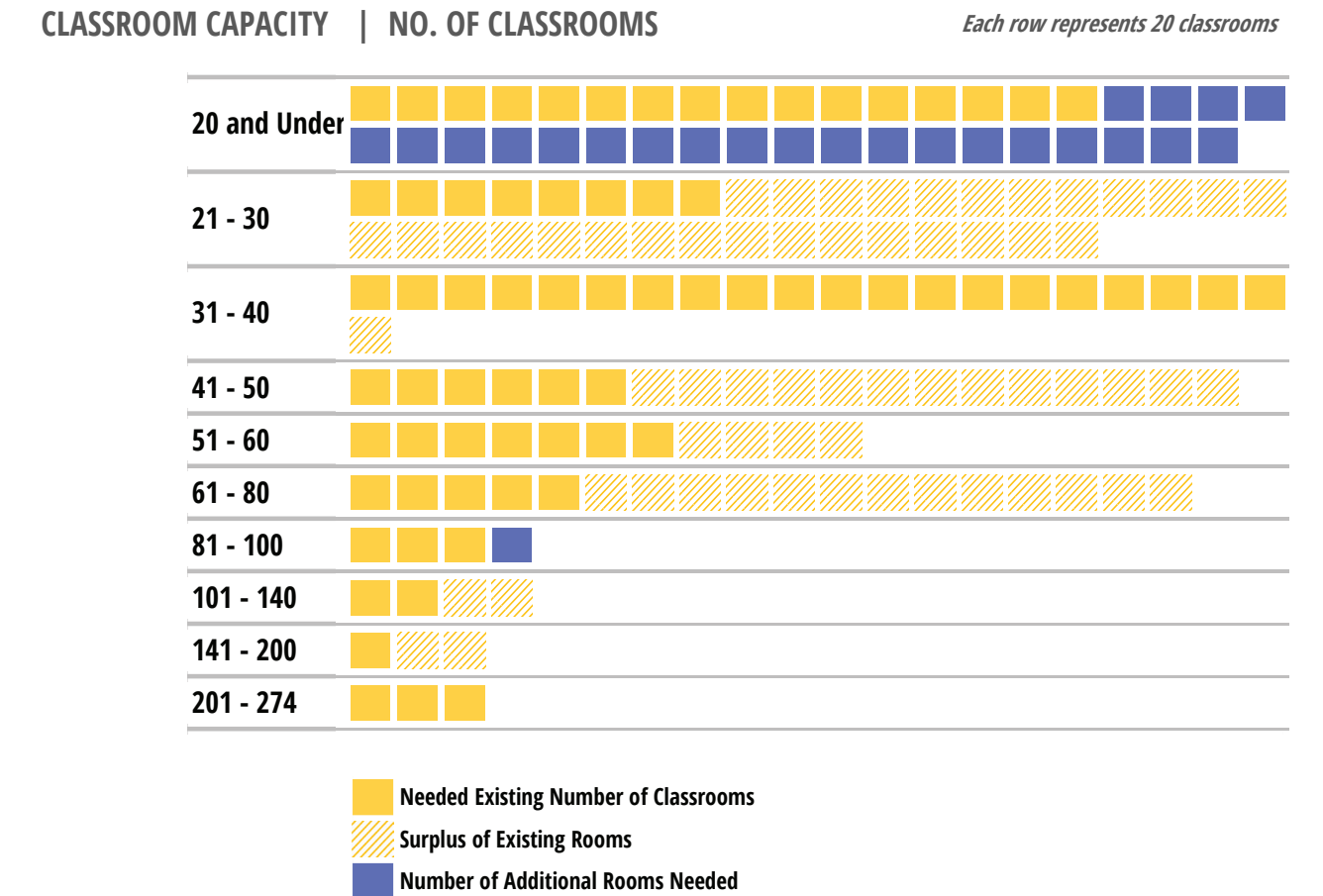
While most capacity groupings show an excess number of rooms (see graphic to the right), USM has a significant need for classrooms in the "20 and Under" capacity grouping. These needs are likely met by the overage of classrooms in larger capacity groupings. Similarly, the needed classroom in the 81-100 seat group can be met by the excess rooms with higher capacities.

Through these classroom overages, the University is able to strategically reduce capacity in its classrooms. This allows for both flexible furniture styles and group learning, and increases the average square footage per student. Classrooms that seat under 200 students can be taken off-line for renovation with minimal inconvenience, and rooms that are adjacent to one another provide the opportunity to create larger, flexible classroom spaces.

In summary:

- ▶ There is a surplus of 39 classrooms
- ▶ Additional classroom needs can be met through flexible rearrangement within existing room footprints

Class Demand by Classroom Capacity



Classroom Lab Utilization

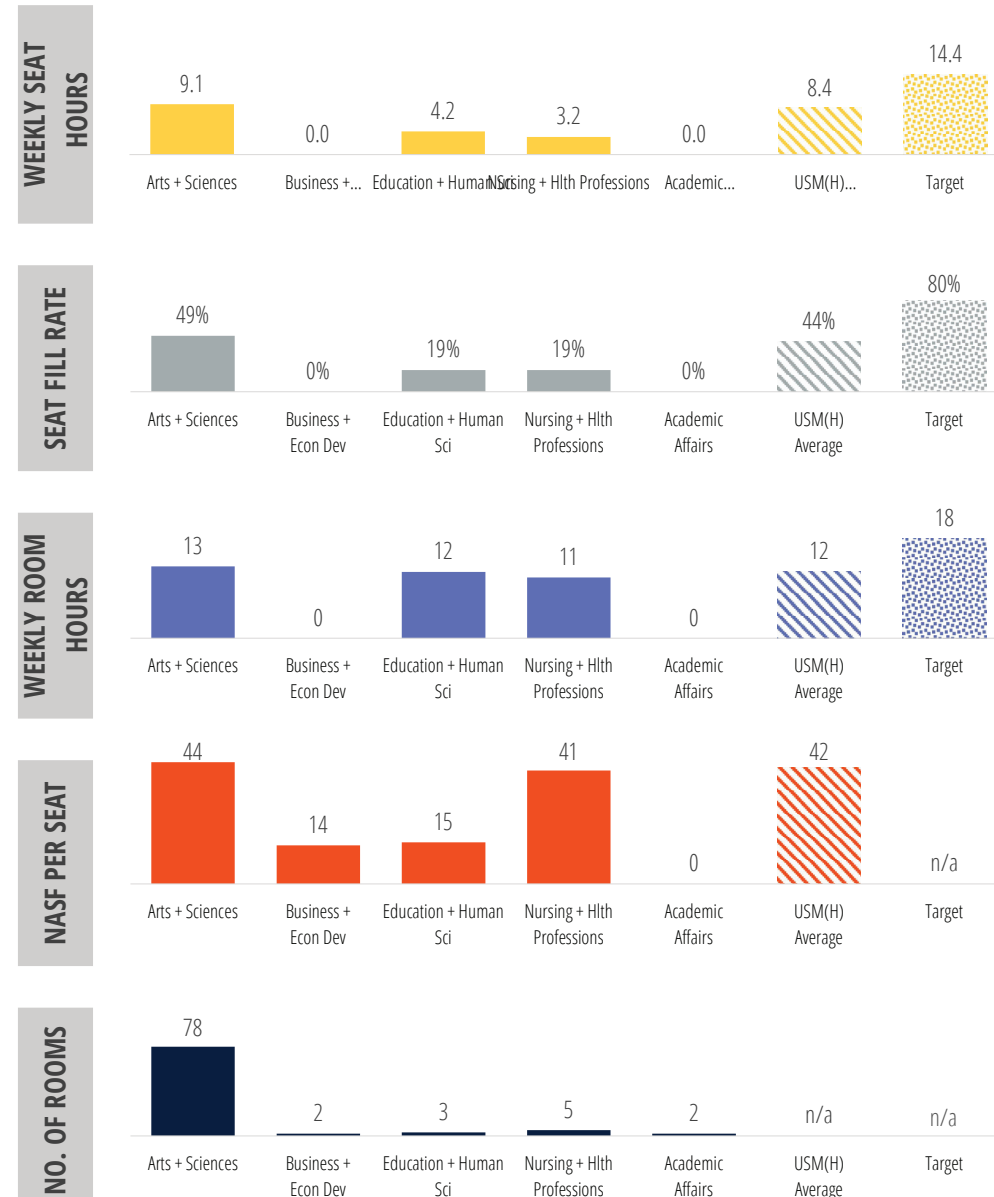
The Hattiesburg Campus has 90 class laboratories (space use code 210), 46 of which have no scheduled use. The utilization targets set for class laboratories in this study are 18 weekly room-hours at an 80% seat fill rate, for a combined average of 14.4 weekly seat-hours.

These spaces are scheduled, on average, 12 weekly room hours at a 44% seat fill rate, which equates to 8.4 weekly seat hours.

Unlike classrooms, class laboratories are discipline-specific, and reviewing utilization is not straightforward. Consideration is given to the level of the students that the lab serves – lower division, upper division, or graduate level. Upper division and graduate level labs cannot be scheduled as often as lower division labs.

Additionally, labs that have open access times for practice (such as art studios, music practice rooms, or computer labs) cannot be scheduled as frequently in order to preserve student success. If these class laboratories are over-scheduled, they are unable to provide students time needed to practice as required by the course or discipline. It is also worth noting that some disciplines require a specialized laboratory that cannot accommodate other disciplines. For those labs, utilization will always be low.

Class Laboratory Utilization by Unit



Space Needs Outcomes

The analysis identified an overall need for approximately 19,000 NASF of additional space.

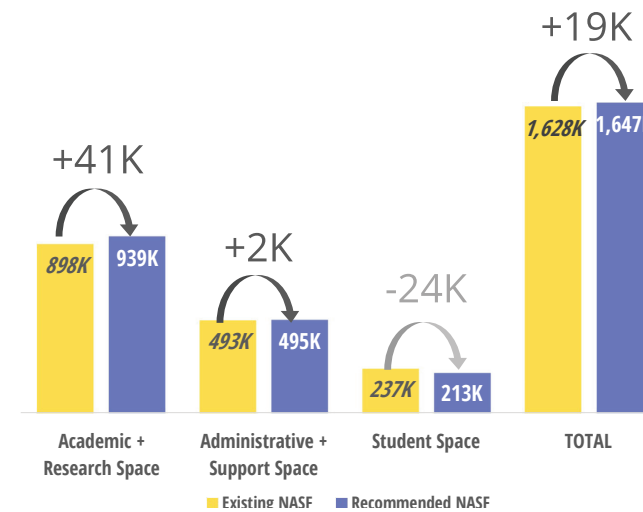
The major areas of need are:

- ▶ Research Space (~66,000 NASF)
- ▶ Collaboration Space (~33,000 NASF)
- ▶ Physical Plant Space (~37,000 NASF)

The overage of space in particular categories offsets the net space need, but cannot necessarily fill the University's space deficits without thoughtful planning and renovation.

The space categories with the greatest overage of space are:

- ▶ Classrooms (~42,000 NASF)
- ▶ Administrative Offices (~27,000 NASF)
- ▶ Student-Centered Space (~22,000 NASF).

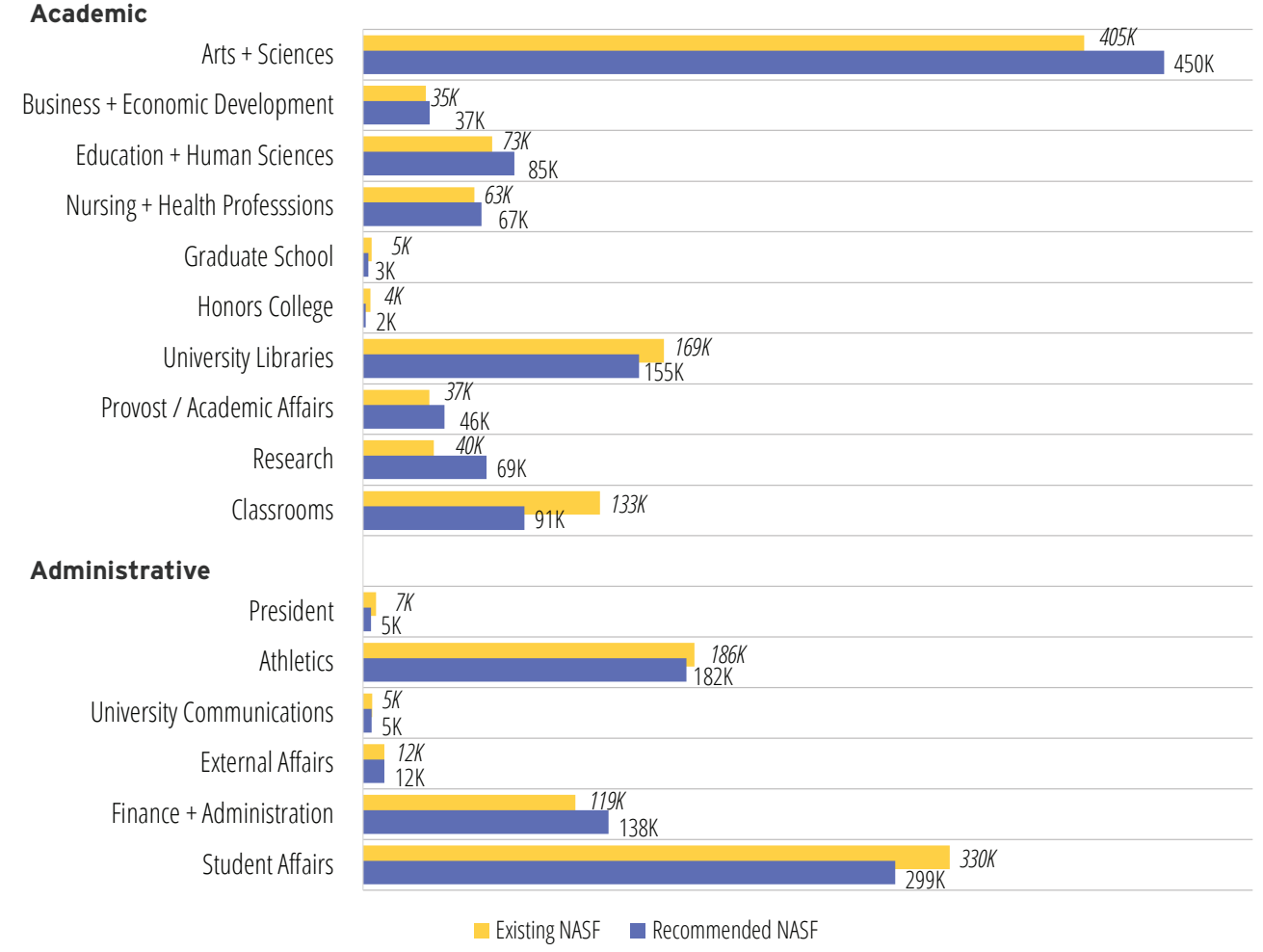


Space Category	Existing NASF	Recommended NASF	Overage / (Need)
Academic + Research Space	897,823	938,689	(40,866)
Classrooms	133,233	90,804	42,429
Laboratories	162,974	151,434	11,540
Class Laboratories	92,093	100,588	(8,495)
Open Laboratories	70,881	50,846	20,035
Research Space	108,665	174,351	(65,686)
Research Laboratories	104,278	144,180	(39,902)
Core Labs	0	21,627	(21,627)
Vivaria Space	4,387	8,544	(4,157)
Academic + Research Offices	296,189	292,992	3,197
Library + Collaboration Space	154,072	186,740	(32,668)
Library Space	143,855	142,921	934
Collaborative Space	10,217	43,819	(33,602)
Other Academic Space	42,690	42,368	322
Administrative + Support Space	493,013	495,432	(2,419)
Administrative Offices	175,892	148,993	26,899
Other Administrative Space	40,982	38,133	2,849
Assembly + Exhibit Space	67,350	63,167	4,183
Intercollegiate Athletics	151,084	150,000	1,084
Physical Plant	57,705	95,139	(37,434)
Student Space	236,977	213,100	23,877
Student-Centered Space	141,086	118,635	22,451
Student Health Care	5,405	4,237	1,168
Recreation	90,486	90,228	258
TOTAL	1,627,813	1,647,222	(19,409)

Certain Academic and Administrative Units additionally demonstrate specific space needs, including:

- ▶ Arts & Sciences (~45K NASF) and Education & Human Sciences(~12K NASF) need:
 - **Class laboratories**
 - **Research space**
 - **More collaboration spaces**
- ▶ Provost (~9K NASF) needs:
 - **Office space**
 - **More collaboration spaces**
- ▶ VP for Research (~29K NASF) needs:
 - **Core facilities**
 - **Potentially more vivaria space**
- ▶ Finance & Administration (~19K NASF) needs:
 - **Physical plant space (shops, storage, central service type spaces)**

Space Needs by Academic and Administrative Unit (NASF)



Renewal Assessment

Like many institutions, the university faces the challenge of managing a diverse portfolio of facilities with limited financial resources. Decades of growth, coupled with deferred maintenance and evolving program demands, have created a wide range of building conditions and levels of suitability. To fully support student success, academic innovation, and research growth, the university must align its physical environment with its mission while ensuring that resources are deployed strategically.

The planning team's evaluation drew on Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) data provided by the university from the Roth IAMS Facility Condition Assessment Reports. This dataset measures the physical state of buildings and was paired with a Facility Suitability Assessment (FSA) conducted by the planning team to evaluate how well facilities align with academic and programmatic needs. Together, these tools provide a comprehensive understanding of which facilities are in good shape, which require renewal, and which no longer serve the institution effectively.

This analysis informs a capital renewal strategy that prioritizes reinvestment in high-value assets, targeted renovation of adaptable spaces, and divestment of underperforming facilities. It also highlights opportunities to optimize program locations, repurpose historic assets, and reduce costly square footage that does not advance institutional priorities.

By combining data-driven insights with stakeholder input, USM leadership is positioned to make informed decisions about reinvestment, renewal, adaptation, or retirement of campus assets. This strategic approach ensures that future resources are directed where they will have the greatest impact, creating a more efficient, sustainable, and mission-driven campus environment.

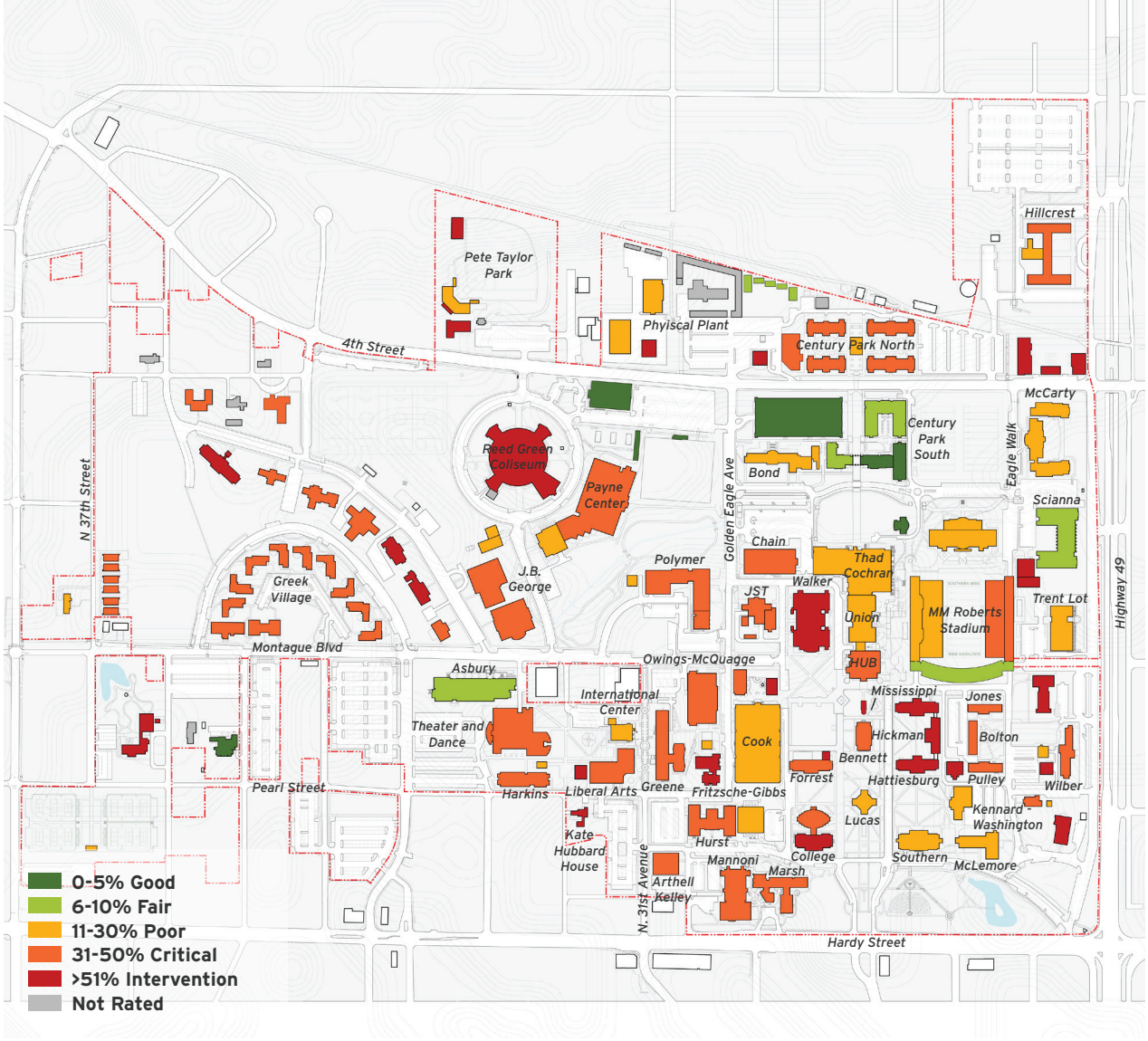


Johnson Science Tower

Facility Condition

The university provided the planning team with facility condition assessment (FCA) data prepared by Roth IAMS in 2024-2025 to inform the campus master planning effort. The FCA reports documented system categories and names, the physical condition of buildings, and included system records with recommended action years and associated costs, all organized by building and portfolio type. Using the current replacement value (CRV) of each asset, the FCA calculated a facility condition index (FCI), which is determined by dividing deferred maintenance deficiency costs by the CRV. This metric provides a clear picture of the relative condition of each facility and its long-term capital needs.

When analyzed over time, the FCA data forecast a trend of declining conditions if no major reinvestments are made. This reinforces the need for a targeted renewal strategy that prioritizes reinvestment in high-value assets, major renovation where appropriate, and divestment of underperforming facilities.



Ten-Year FCI Projection

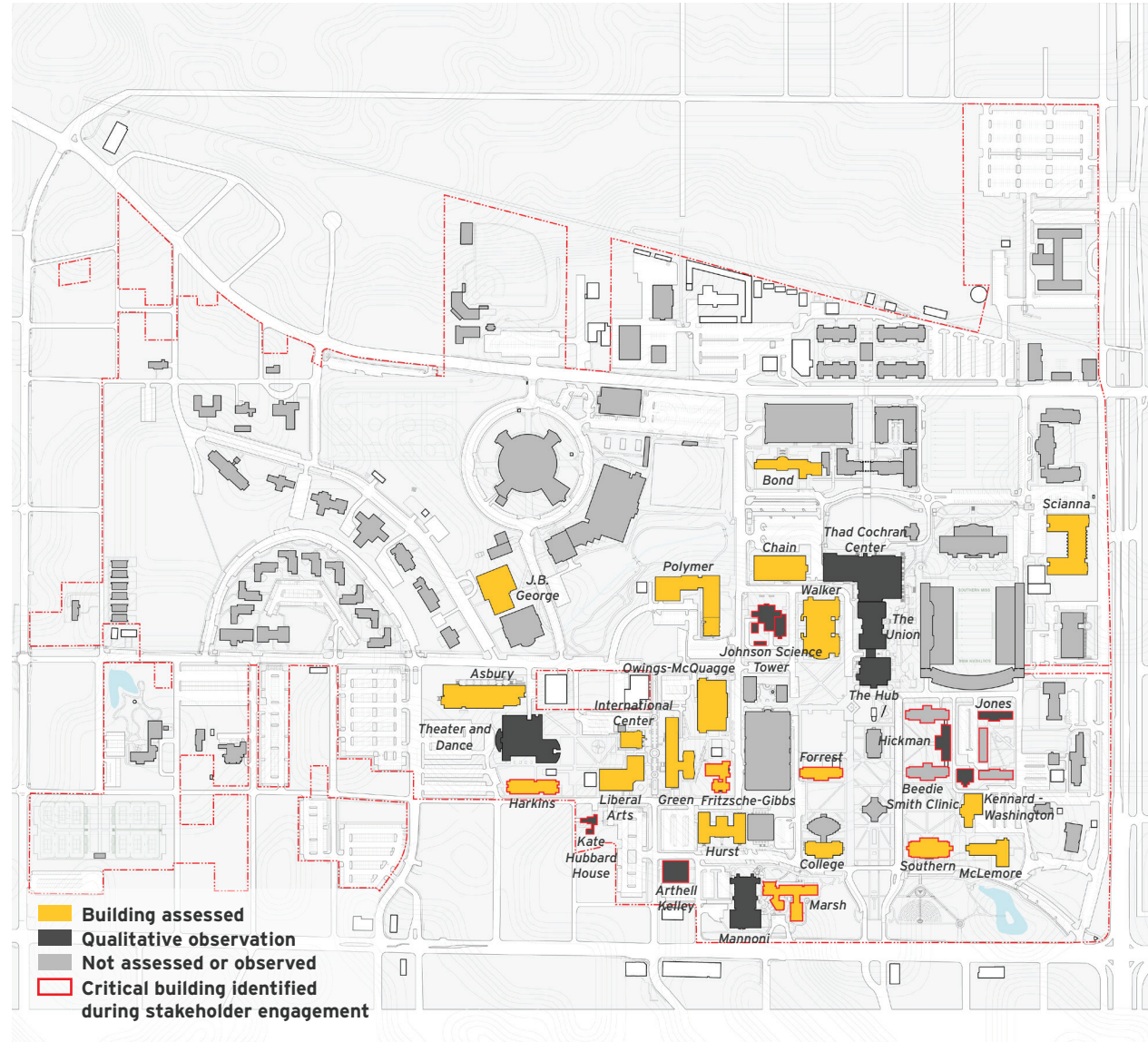
Facility Suitability

Alongside the FCI, the planning team conducted a facility suitability assessment (FSA) to measure how well existing spaces support USM's academic, research, student life, and administrative functions. Together, these analyses form a data-driven basis for renewal and space optimization decisions aligned with University priorities.

Grounded in the themes of student success, research growth, campus community, and stewardship of resources, the FSA evaluated facilities with instructional, research, administrative, and student-facing uses. Each building was scored using key performance indicators derived from site observations and best practices.

Facilities were assessed across four categories:

- ▶ **Academic Spaces** - classrooms, labs, and learning environments
- ▶ **Administrative Spaces** - offices and support areas
- ▶ **Building Qualities** - flexibility, technology, accessibility, and overall condition
- ▶ **Campus Context** - location, visibility, and contribution to campus character



Facility Suitability Assessment Inventory

Interpretation of Ratings

Facilities were scored on a 0-5 scale to reflect their overall suitability for current and future university needs. The rating ranges shown define the qualitative performance levels used in the assessment, ranging from high-performing, adaptable buildings to those requiring significant renewal or replacement. This framework provides a consistent basis for comparing facilities and guiding capital investment decisions across the campus.

Rating Range	Performance Level	General Characteristics
90 - 100%	Excellent	Strong alignment with current needs; modern, flexible spaces with high functionality and strong campus presence
70 - 89%	Good	Adequate to support core functions; moderate flexibility; upgrades would enhance quality and efficiency
45 - 69%	Average and Below Average	Limited adaptability; outdated systems and layouts; functional constraints hinder daily use
< 45%	Poor	Facilities no longer suited for current programs; major renovation or replacement required

Facility Suitability Rating Scale and Performance Definitions



Scianna Hall



Owings-McQuagge



Marsh Hall

Findings and Key Takeaways

The facility suitability assessment revealed a broad range of performance across the Hattiesburg campus, underscoring both areas of strength and buildings in need of significant reinvestment.

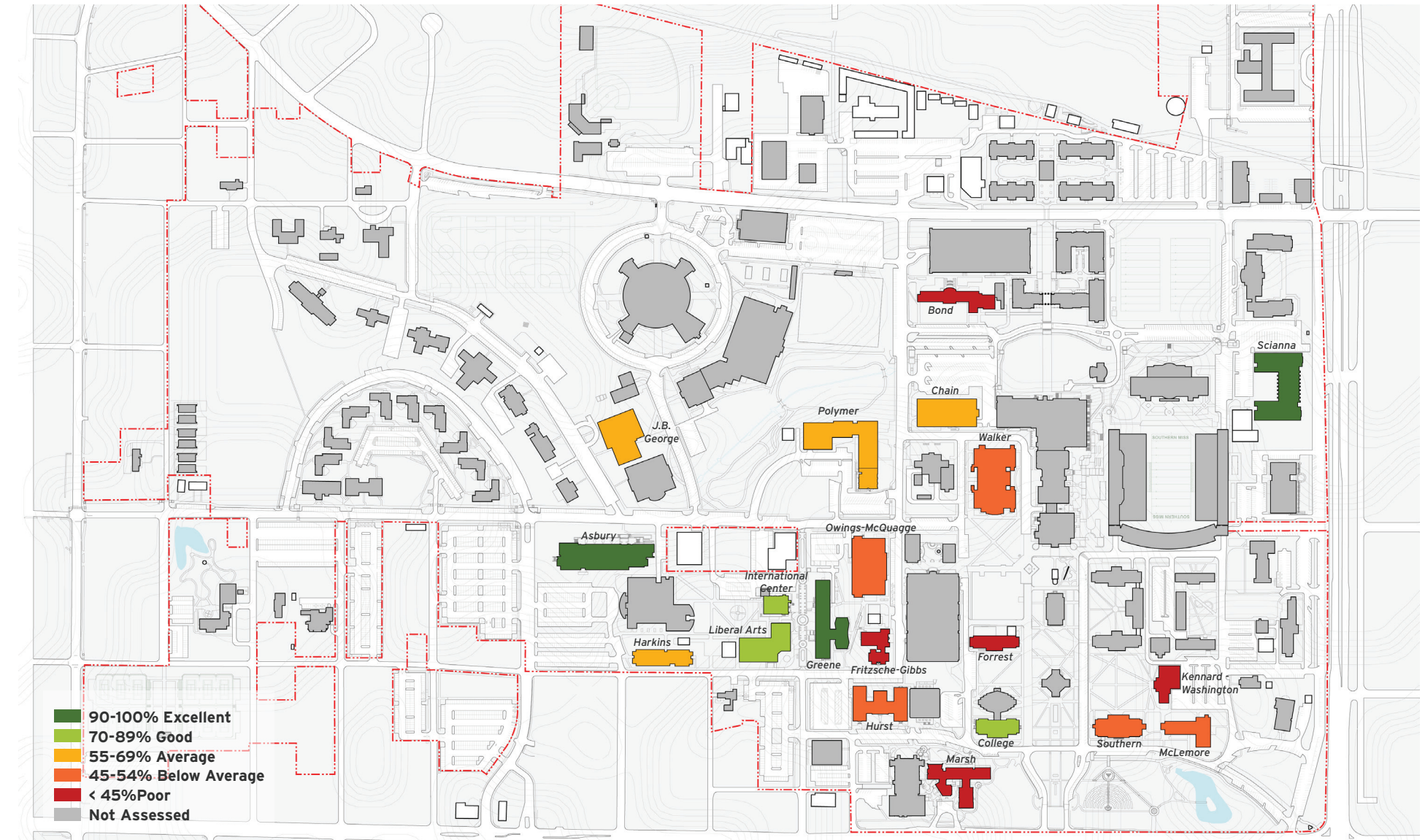
Higher-scoring facilities, including Asbury Hall, Scianna Hall, and Joseph Greene Hall, demonstrate strong alignment with USM's priorities for modern learning, student engagement, and collaborative environments. These buildings exhibit contemporary design qualities, flexible interiors, and integrated technology that directly support teaching, research, and campus life.

Most campus buildings, particularly those within the historic and academic core, such as Southern Hall, McLemore Hall, Walker Science, Owings-McQuagge, and Hurst Hall scored in the average range. These facilities maintain a strong campus identity and architectural character but would benefit from modernization to improve accessibility, interior flexibility, and building systems. Their central locations and symbolic value make them key candidates for targeted renewal.

In contrast, Bond Hall, Forrest County Hall, Kennard-Washington Hall, Marsh Hall, and Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall, which scored in the poor category, remain important contributors to the University's historic fabric. Many of these legacy dormitories, early academic buildings, and historic houses no longer meet modern expectations for teaching, research, or accessibility. While several present opportunities for modernization and adaptive reuse that will require significant investment, others will ultimately warrant divestment or replacement due to their age, condition, and limited long-term functionality.

Several mid-century residence halls and aging academic facilities, including Bolton Hall, Pulley Hall, Beedie Smith Clinic, Jones Hall, and Johnson Science Tower were not formally assessed due to vacancy or prior determinations that they have exceeded their useful life. However, because they occupy prominent sites within the historic campus core, recommendations for their divestment or replacement are critical to shaping future redevelopment and reinvestment.

Overall, the assessment highlights an imbalance between newer, high-performing buildings and older facilities with limited adaptability. The results, when paired with the facility condition index, provided a clear basis for prioritizing major renovations in the academic core, strategic reinvestment in science and research facilities, and divestment of buildings that no longer meet the University's academic or operational standards.



Facility Suitability Assessment Ranking

Capital Renewal Strategy

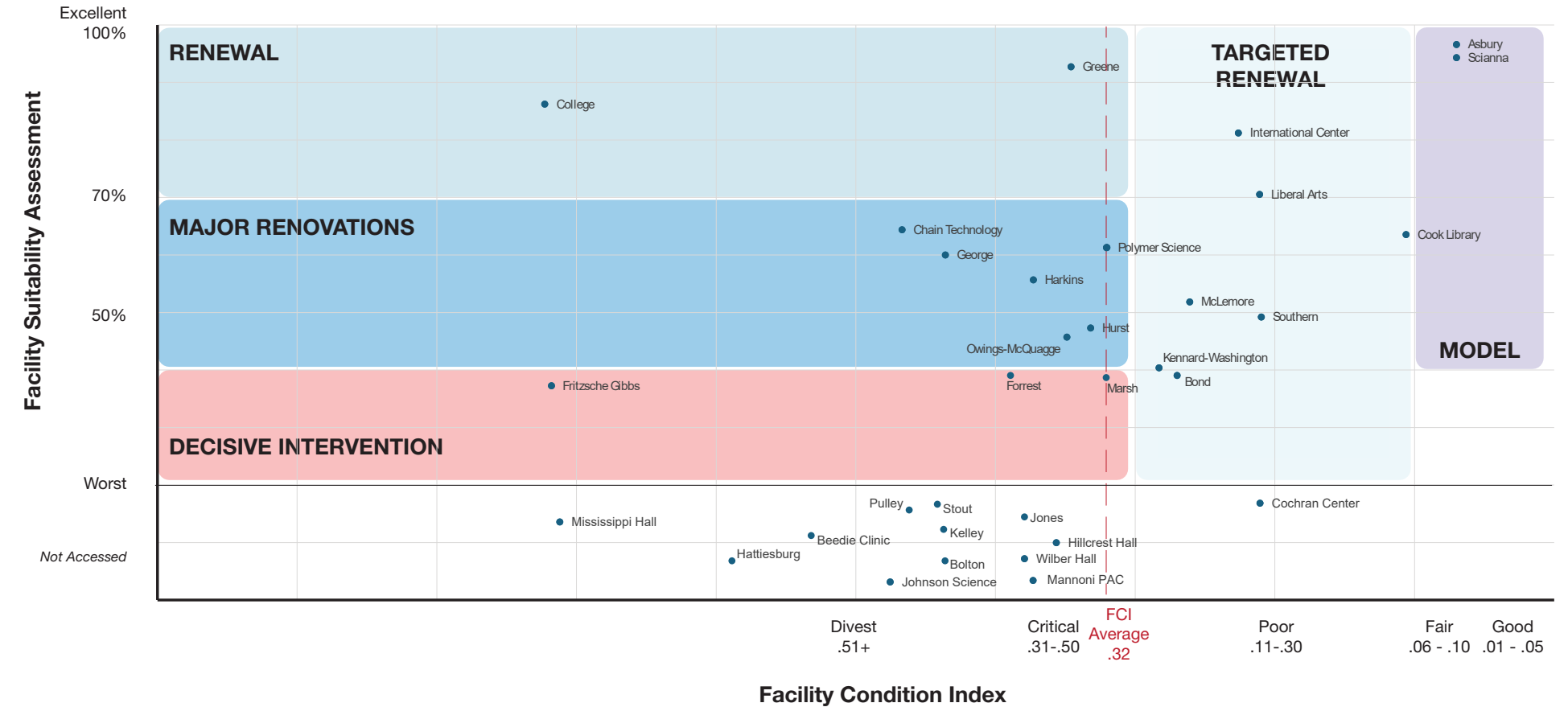
By linking the results of the FCI and FSA, clear patterns emerged in how buildings perform relative to both physical condition and program alignment. This integrated analysis informed the development of a capital renewal framework to determine the most effective path forward for each facility. The strategies balance reinvestment with program priorities, ensuring that renewal projects not only improve building systems but also enhance their suitability for assigned academic or administrative functions.

To guide implementation, all buildings were organized into five categories that define their recommended renewal or divestment strategy.

- ▶ **Model** - Ongoing maintenance of facilities and equipment to sustain “good” condition and “excellent” suitability
- ▶ **Renewal** - Projects that return the building FCI to a “good” or “fair” rating across multiple systems
- ▶ **Targeted Renewal** - Focused projects, often limited to a single building system (such as a roof or HVAC replacement), to restore the facility to “good” or “fair” condition without requiring major renovation
- ▶ **Major Renovation** - Renovations aimed at addressing critical condition deficiencies while also improving program suitability. These projects move buildings out of “critical” condition and provide a more functional environment for academic or support uses.

- ▶ **Decisive Intervention** - Significant investment to both remedy severe condition issues and realign program suitability, effectively repositioning the building for long-term success.

This strategy provides a flexible but data-driven roadmap for reinvestment, enabling USM to focus capital resources on the facilities that will deliver the greatest institutional impact.



Capital Renewal Strategies Matrix



VISION AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

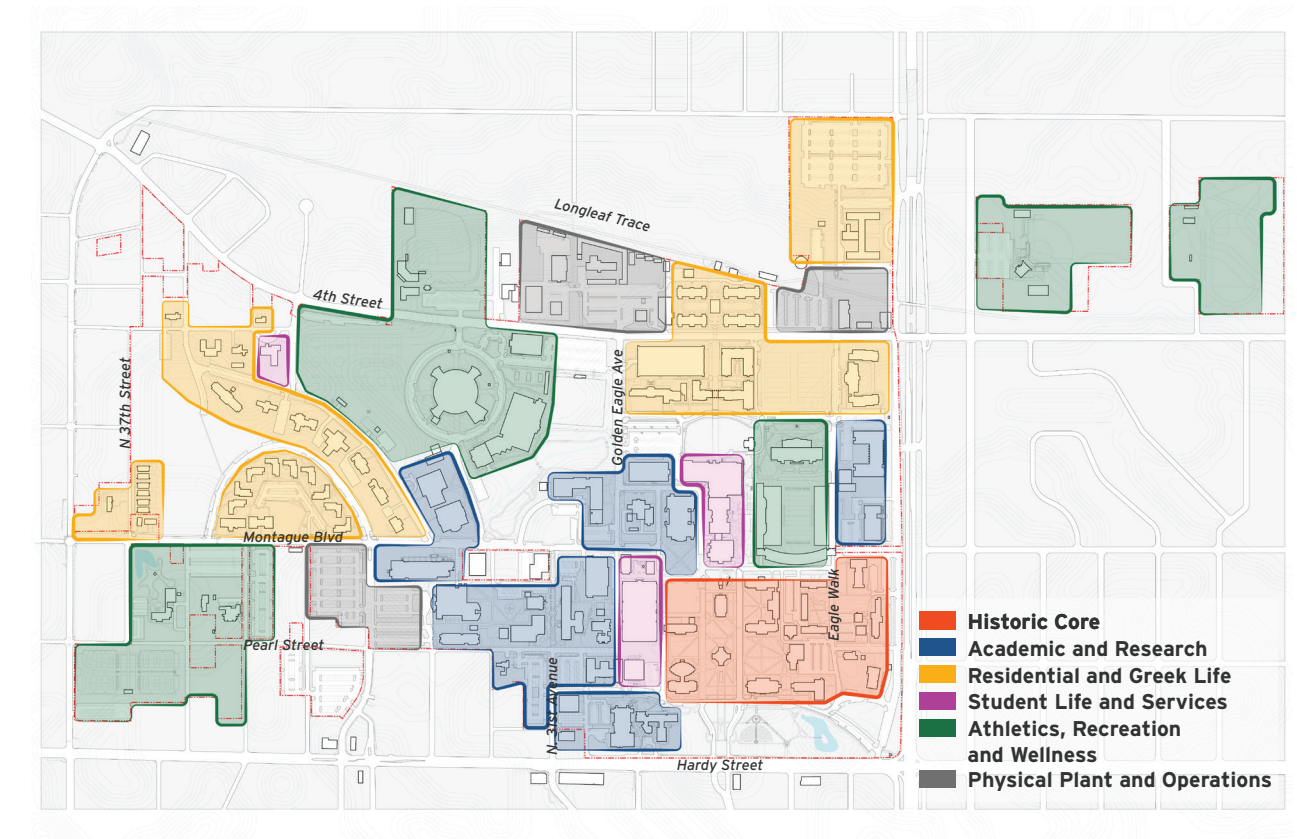


Campus Framework

Existing Campus Organization

The Hattiesburg campus today can be understood as a collection of overlapping campus uses, each contributing to the university's character and daily life:

- ▶ **Historic Core** - the symbolic and functional heart of campus, containing the oldest buildings, main greens, and high-profile traditions
- ▶ **Academic and Research** - clustered south and west of the core, with new growth along Montague Boulevard and toward the eastern edge
- ▶ **Residential and Greek Life** - located primarily to the west and north, forming a band of student-focused neighborhoods that require stronger connections back to the core
- ▶ **Student Life and Services** - Focused in the campus core, spaces that support engagement, belonging, and access to key resources that strengthen the student experience.
- ▶ **Athletics, Recreation and Wellness** - a dominant presence along the northern edge, from "The Rock" (M.M. Roberts Stadium) to Reed Green Coliseum and Pete Taylor Park, reinforcing campus identity but creating physical and perceptual barriers
- ▶ **Physical Plant and Operations** - Supporting the functional backbone of the campus through facilities and infrastructure located along the northern edge of campus.



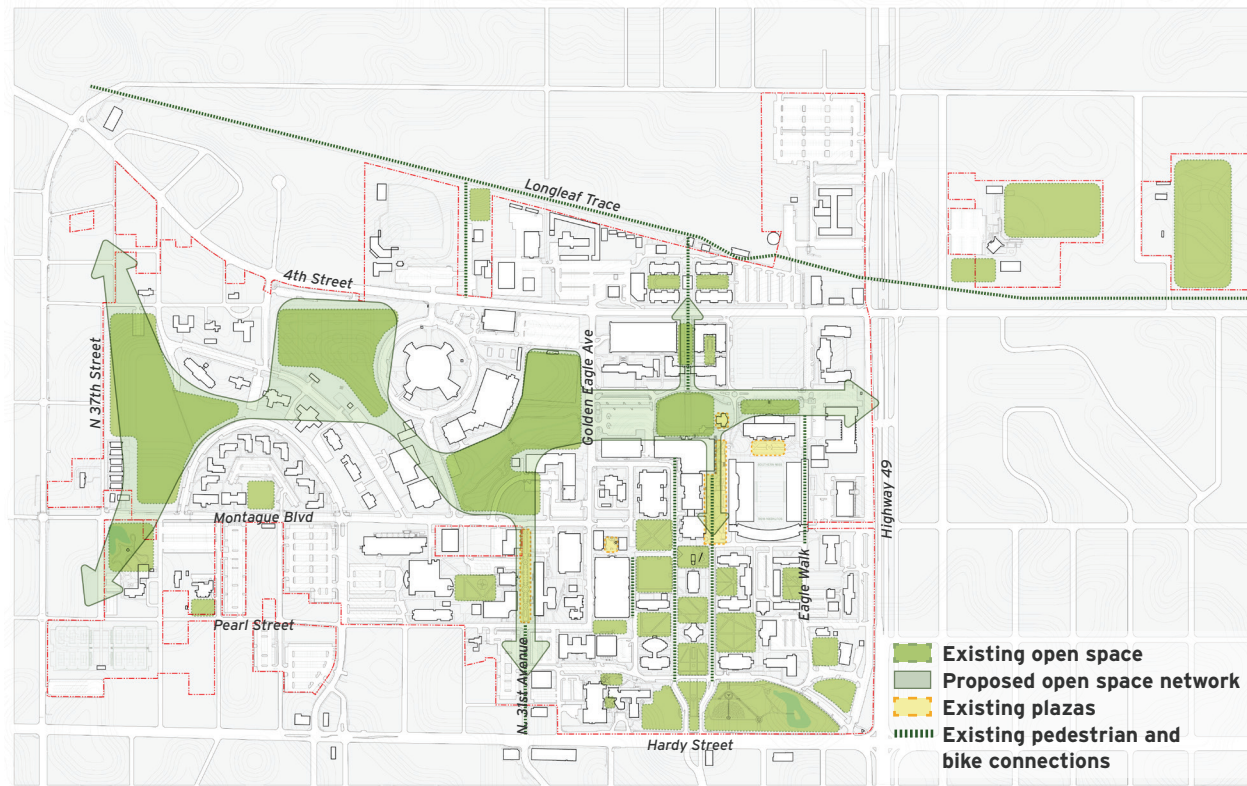
Existing Open Space Network

The scale and arrangement of the historic district established a successful pattern of interconnected greens, plazas, and pedestrian corridors that define the character of Southern Miss's core. This framework demonstrates how open spaces, when planned at a human scale and layered with daily activity, can become enduring assets for identity and community life.

As the campus invests in areas beyond the historic core, this same pattern should be applied to create a broader, more connected open space network. Enhancing Centennial Green to support greater daily use, investing in the Arts Green, and extending open space connections westward would establish a continuous east-west green spine unifying academic, residential, and athletic precincts.

The newly pedestrianized section of North 31st Avenue further introduces the opportunity for a strong north-south connection, linking Midtown directly to the campus core and the emerging green spine. Building on this corridor reinforces a walkable, people-centered campus edge while enhancing the relationship between the university and community.

Looking forward, the campus should continue to identify opportunities to create or enhance open spaces as connective links. Together, these investments will transform scattered landscapes into a comprehensive open space network—one that organizes movement, strengthens identity, and amplifies the sense of place at Southern Miss.



Planning Principles

Building on the understanding of the campus's organizational framework and open space potential, the planning effort defines a set of guiding principles that translate vision into action. The campus planning principles provide a foundation for decision-making, ensuring that growth, renewal, and design initiatives are consistently aligned with the USM's mission and values. These principles are not prescriptive solutions but enduring touchstones that frame choices, prioritize investments, and reinforce the university's identity across all future development.

As the campus evolves, these principles connect immediate needs with long-term aspirations, balancing stewardship of the historic core with opportunities for new academic, research, and student life initiatives. They also serve as a bridge to the broader campus strategic framework—an integrated vision that articulates how facilities, open spaces, mobility networks, and partnerships can work together to shape a cohesive, forward-looking Southern Miss campus.



Celebrate USM's identity and history
Preserve USM's unique character while planning for its future



Foster community, connection, and campus experience
Strengthen the university community and improve how people move, interact, and collaborate



Ensure a sustainable and resilient future
Create a sustainable strategy for effective resource management



Create a campus landscape that inspires and connects
Use open space as a defining feature that connects people, places, and programs

Strategic Vision

The strategic vision for the Hattiesburg campus emerged from the plan drivers, an understanding of the existing campus organization and open space potential, and the planning principles that guided this effort. Together, these elements shaped a long-term vision that balances the renovation of existing facilities with selective new development to advance academics, research, student life, and community engagement. Designed as a flexible roadmap, the vision provides clarity for decision-making as funding and priorities evolve, ensuring that each project—whether preservation, modernization, or new construction—strengthens the campus as a cohesive, connected, and future-ready environment.

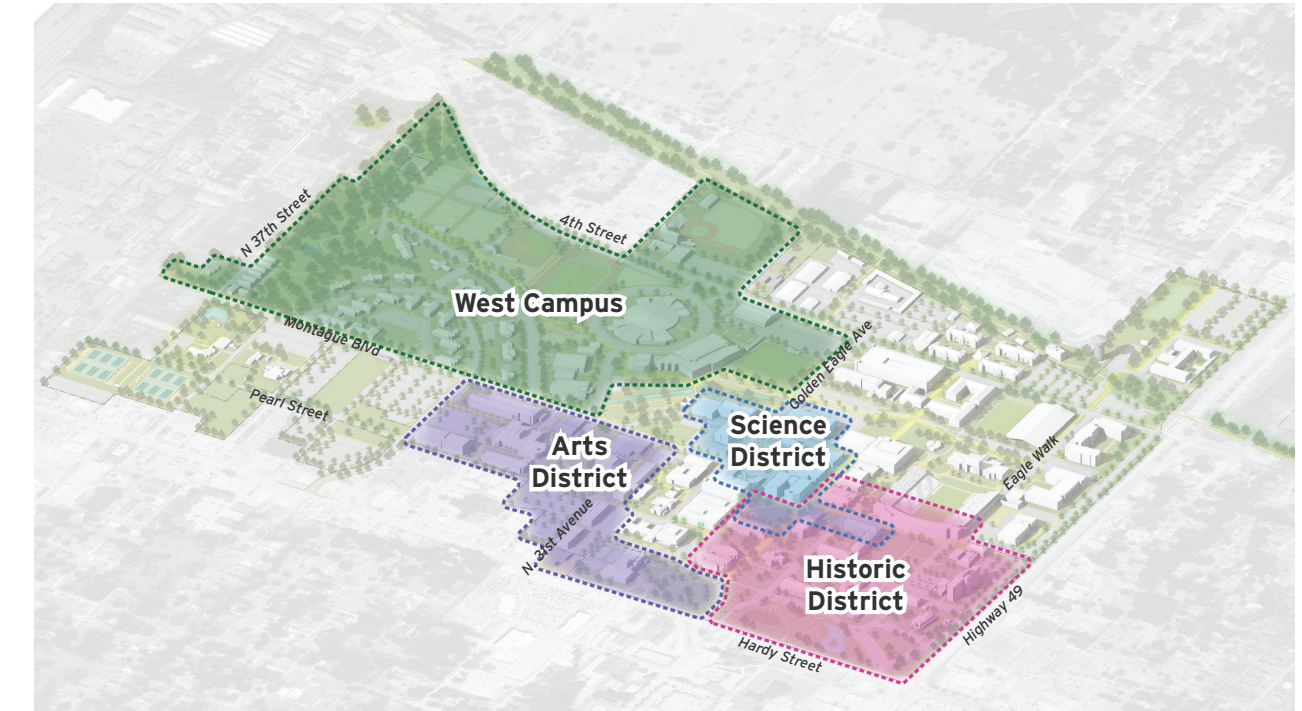


Proposed District Framework

The vision and design strategies are centered around a proposed district plan that builds upon the existing organization of the campus while establishing a clearer structure for future growth and reinvestment. It refines the campus into four primary districts—the Historic District, the Science District, the Arts District, and the West Campus District—each with a distinct role in advancing the university’s mission.

The Historic District, centered on the Eagle Walk and the traditional core, remains the symbolic and functional heart of campus. The new Science District concentrates academic and research investment around Centennial Green, anchored by the proposed Science Research Building and surrounding facilities. The Arts District creates a defined home for performance, exhibition, and creative activity, strengthening Southern Miss’s cultural identity. The West Campus District unifies athletics, recreation, and residential life while improving connections to the broader campus.

By establishing this new district framework, the plan provides a roadmap for prioritizing investments, ensuring that future projects reinforce the unique character of each district while contributing to a cohesive and connected campus as a whole. This clarity allows Southern Miss to align renewal and new construction with strategic priorities, guiding incremental improvements within a long-term vision.



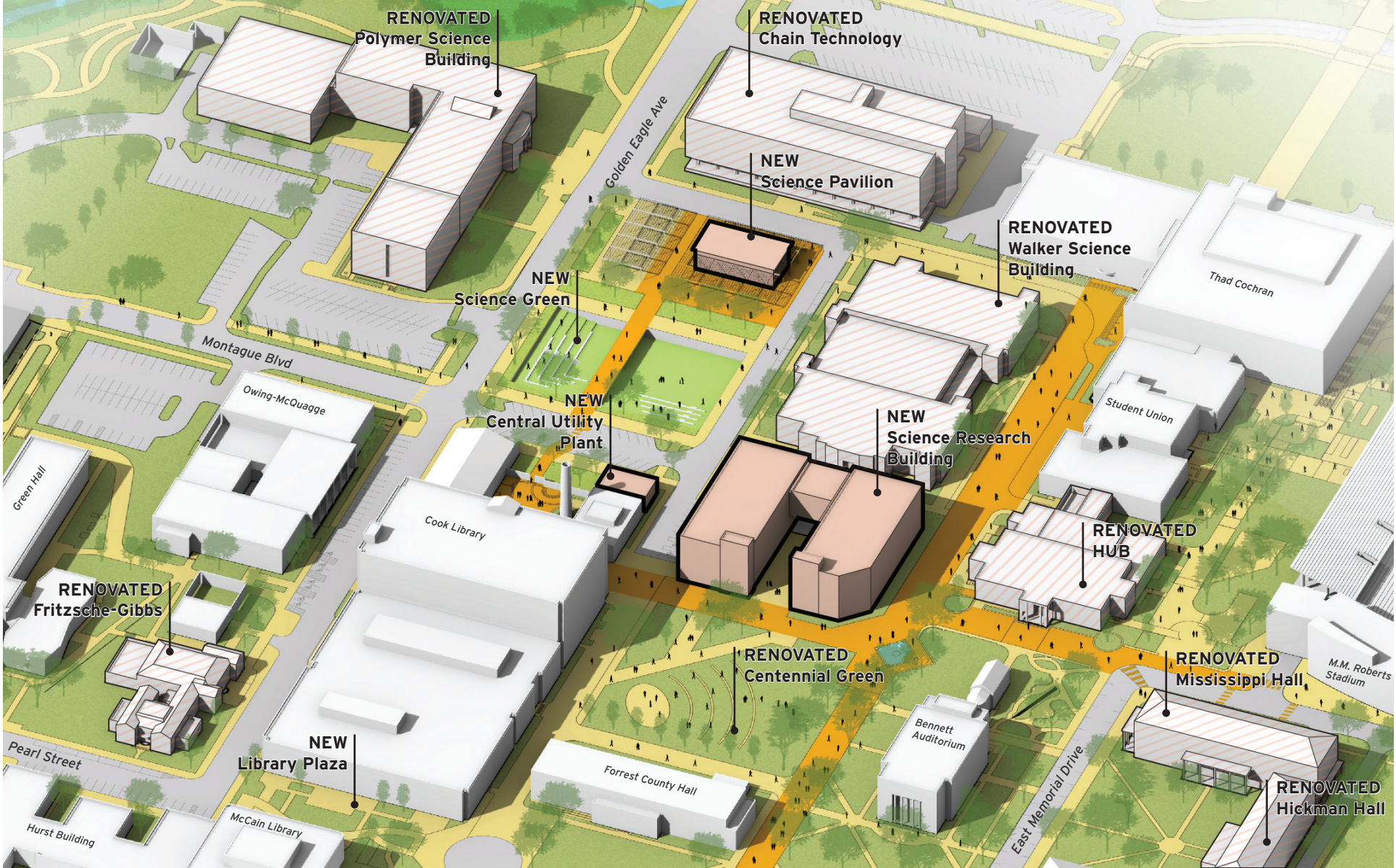
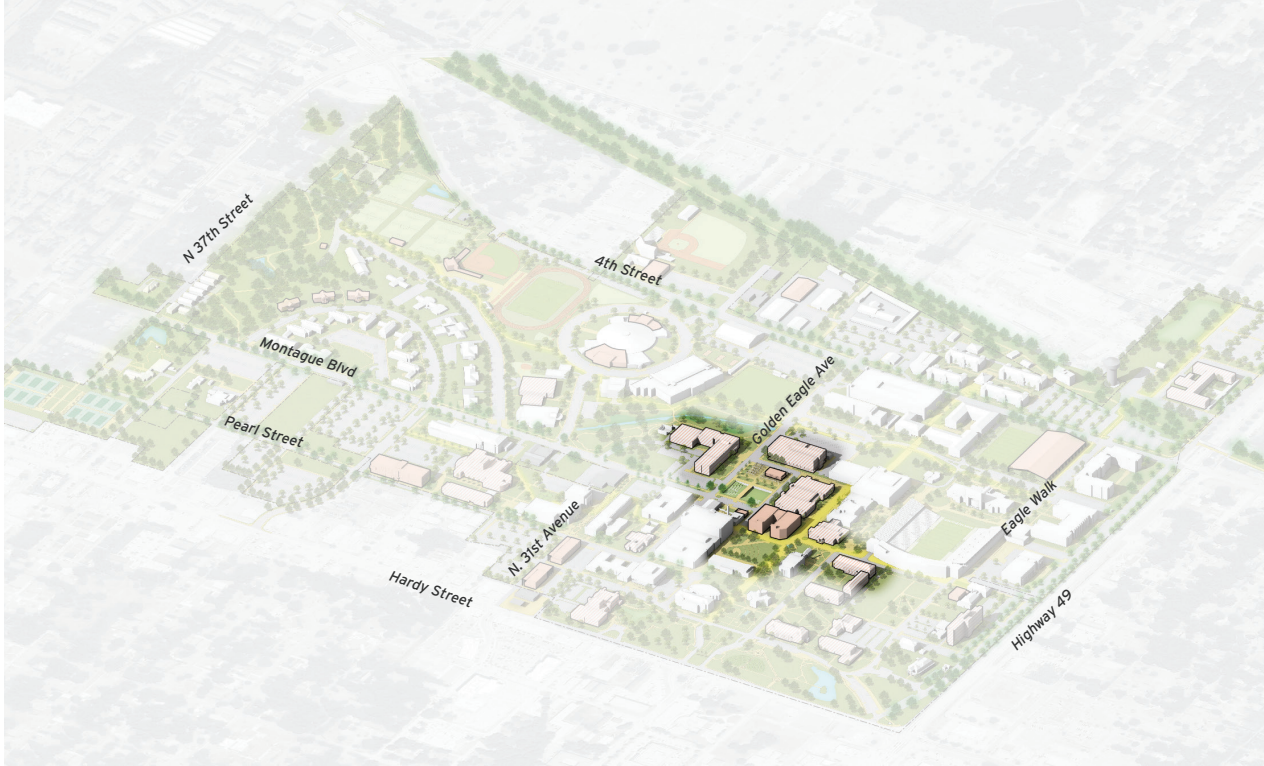
Science District

The plan reimagines the Science District as a vibrant, high-performing academic precinct that elevates USM's research and STEM programs. Anchored by the transformation of the Johnson Science Tower site, the district will serve as a central hub for innovation, learning, and collaboration.

Key investments include the construction of a new Science Pavilion and a new Science Research Building, both strategically located to enhance visibility and support interdisciplinary activity. Existing facilities such as Walker Science, Chain Technology, Polymer, Hickman, and Mississippi Halls will undergo targeted renovations to modernize infrastructure and improve functionality.

These core improvements are complemented by the creation of a new Science Green and the reactivation of Centennial Green—open spaces that foster campus connectivity and offer opportunities for outdoor learning and gathering.

By concentrating STEM-related facilities and investments within this district, the campus plan strengthens the university's academic mission and reinforces the physical and programmatic identity of the sciences.



Science Green

The Science Green is envisioned as a central open space within the reimagined Science District, designed to serve as both a functional and symbolic heart of STEM activity on campus. Framed by key academic and research facilities—including the new Science Pavilion and renovated science halls—the green will provide a dynamic environment for informal gathering, outdoor learning, and campus events. As a key link in the broader open space network, the Science Green will foster connectivity between buildings, activate the district's public realm, and enhance the visibility and identity of the sciences at USM.



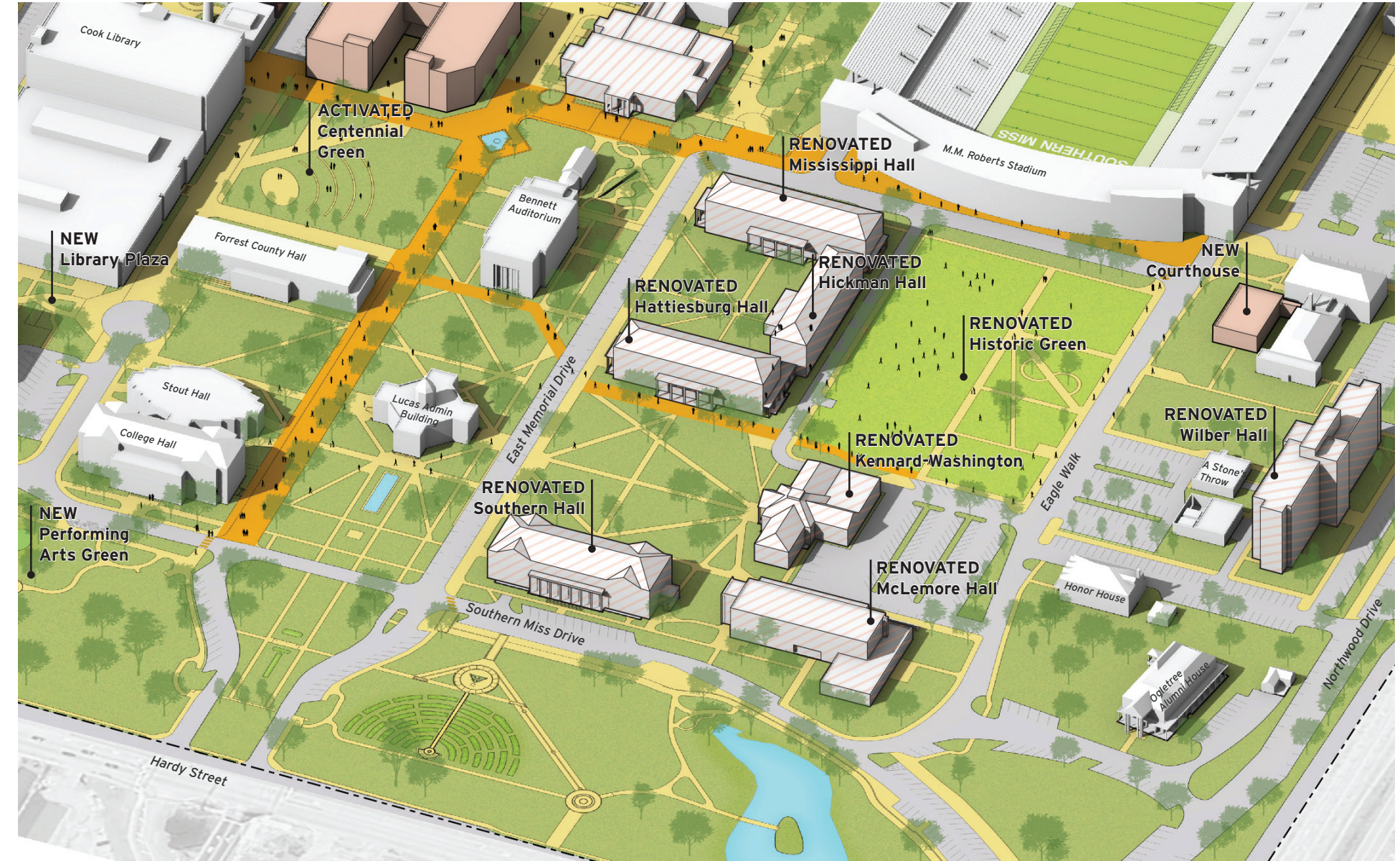
Historic District

The campus plan revitalizes the Historic District by preserving its architectural legacy while reactivating underutilized buildings to support modern academic and student life needs. This district—home to some of USM’s most iconic structures—will continue to serve as a symbolic and functional heart of the campus.

Key renovations and reactivations—such as Mississippi and Hickman Halls—will modernize learning environments while preserving their historic character. Kennard-Washington, McLemore, and Southern Halls will be renovated to consolidate student-focused administrative functions, creating a student-oriented hub within the district. Wilber Hall will receive short-term investment until future housing projects allow for its eventual divestment. A new Courthouse facility is also introduced to further activate the district.

A major opportunity in the Historic District is the near-term divestment of Pulley Hall, the Bedie Smith Clinic, and potentially Bolton Hall—along with long-term divestment from Jones Hall—to create space for a new Historic Green. This signature open space will connect district buildings and support outdoor gatherings, events, and campus life. Alternatively, the Historic Green’s periphery could accommodate future development. The Historic Green will be complemented by the reactivation of Centennial Green, further enhancing the student life experience within the district.

Through these efforts, the Historic District will be reestablished as a vibrant, integrated part of daily campus life—preserving institutional heritage while supporting USM’s long-term strategic goals.



Historic Green Activation

The Historic Green Activation reclaims the center of the Historic District to create a signature open space that strengthens the identity and functionality of this core campus area. Framed by renovated academic and student-focused buildings—including Kennard-Washington, Hattiesburg, Hickman and Mississippi Halls—the green will provide a flexible setting for outdoor learning, events, and daily campus life. The new space is enabled by the planned divestment of aging facilities such as Pulley Hall, Bedie Smith Clinic, and potentially Bolton and Jones Halls, allowing the Historic Green to emerge as a central gathering space that honors the district's legacy while supporting a vibrant, student-oriented future.



Historic Green Potential Development

While the Historic Green is envisioned primarily as a signature open space within the Historic District, the campus plan also identifies its periphery as potential sites for future development. These areas could accommodate new academic or student-focused buildings that complement the surrounding historic fabric and activate the green with daily campus activity. Any future development in this zone would be carefully sited and scaled to preserve the integrity of the green and reinforce its role as a central gathering space. This flexible approach ensures the Historic Green can evolve over time to meet emerging campus needs while maintaining its value as a connective and symbolic landscape.



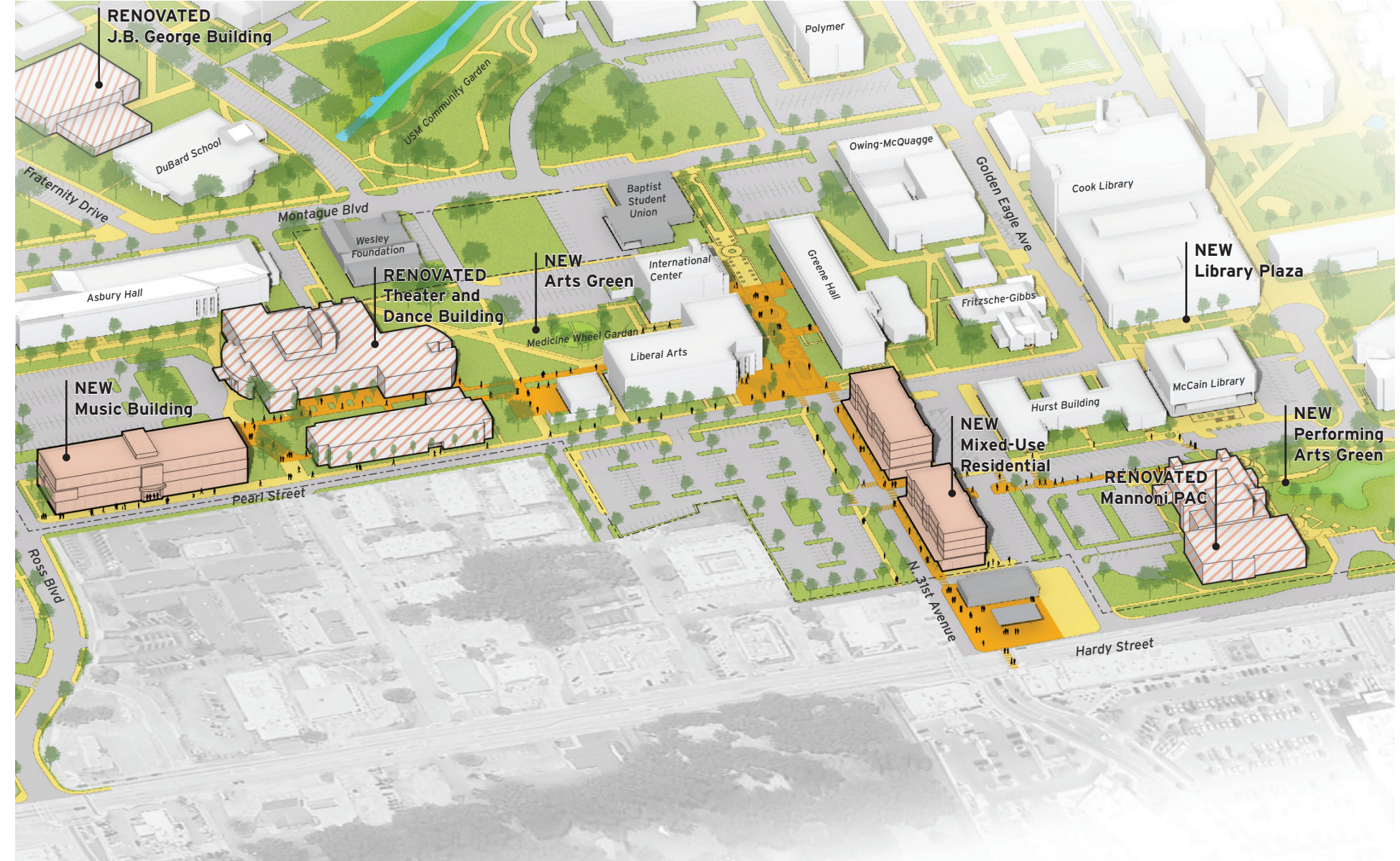
Arts District

The campus plan enhances the Arts District as a welcoming and expressive gateway to campus, reinforcing USM's identity as a cultural and creative hub. The district will serve as a focal point for the performing and visual arts while improving campus arrival experiences and strengthening connections with the surrounding community.

Key investments in this district include the renovation of the Mannoni Performing Arts Center, Theater and Dance Building, and Harkins Hall. The planned divestment from the Marsh Building will allow for the development of a new Music Building. A series of new open spaces—including the Arts Green, Performing Arts Green, and Library Plaza—will provide enhanced opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle circulation, gathering, and performance.

The new Midtown Pedestrian Corridor along North 31st Avenue will improve safety, access, and the public realm at the Hardy Street gateway, while also connecting the Arts District to nearby academic, residential, and community destinations. Adjacent to this corridor, the planned divestment of Arthell Kelley Hall will allow for a new mixed-use residential development. Over time, the university will consider acquiring adjacent parcels as funding becomes available to strengthen USM's presence along Hardy Street and capitalize on nearby apartment complexes.

Together, these improvements position the Arts District as a dynamic front door to the university—celebrating creativity and enriching the campus experience for both the USM and Hattiesburg communities.



North 31st Avenue Midtown Connector

The North 31st Avenue Midtown Connector is envisioned as a key pedestrian-oriented corridor that strengthens the connection between the Arts District and the surrounding Midtown Hattiesburg neighborhood. As part of this transformation, the campus plan proposes a new mixed-use building activated by ground-floor student-serving amenities and providing upper-level apartment-style housing. Located adjacent to Hardy Street along a prominent campus gateway, this development will enhance campus arrival, provide new housing options, and introduce a vibrant, street-facing presence that engages both the campus and community. Streetscape enhancements—including wider sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, landscaping, and traffic calming—will further support a safe, welcoming environment, making North 31st Avenue a dynamic, mixed-use spine that connects academic, residential, and cultural life at USM.

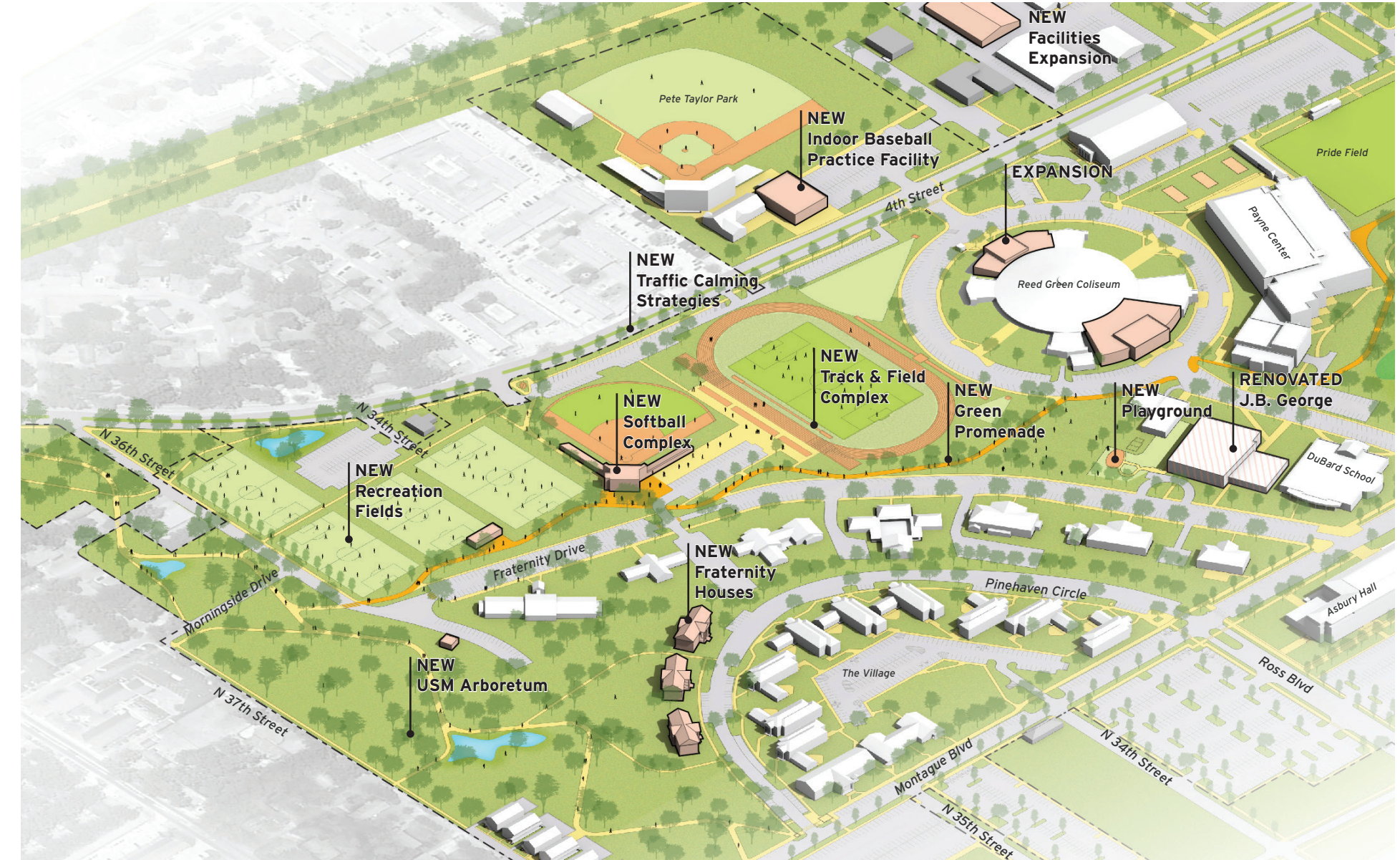


West Campus District

The campus plan positions the West Campus District as an opportunity area to support campus life, recreation, infrastructure, and long-term expansion.

Planned improvements in this district span facilities, open space, and infrastructure. These include the renovation of J.B. George and the expansion of Greek Village with a series of new fraternity houses. Major athletics projects from the athletics master plan will also be realized in this area, including the expansion of Reed Green Coliseum and the development of a new softball complex, track and field complex, indoor baseball practice facility, playground, and recreation fields. Traffic calming enhancements along West 4th Street will improve pedestrian safety and connectivity across this active zone. Key new open spaces will improve the campus environment within this district, including the Green Promenade along Faternity Drive to enhance the Greek Village and the USM Arboretum to provide an on-site high-quality and locally-distinct landscape for the campus community. All of these initiatives will be supported by investments in expanded campus infrastructure. As funding allows, the university will also consider acquiring adjacent parcels to support future campus expansion and enhance USM's visibility along West 4th Street.

Together, these projects will elevate the role of West Campus as a vibrant and active edge of the university—providing essential amenities, supporting student wellness, and accommodating future growth in alignment with USM's long-term vision.



West Campus

A dynamic vision for West Campus includes new and upgraded facilities to create a vibrant hub of student life, wellness, and athletics. Key features include the expansion of the Greek Village with new fraternity houses, enhanced recreation fields, a new playground, and the addition of the USM Arboretum—offering a unique, locally inspired landscape. Major athletics investments include the expanded Reed Green Coliseum and a new softball complex, indoor baseball practice facility, and track and field complex. Together, these elements reflect a holistic approach to student experience, blending competitive athletics, informal recreation, and community-building spaces in one cohesive, active district.





CAMPUS SYSTEMS



Campus Systems

The USM campus plan relies on a series of interconnected systems that will shape daily life, guide long-term growth, and define the overall campus experience. These building and open space systems form the foundation for how the university operates, grows, and welcomes its community.

The plan provides a coordinated framework for strengthening and modernizing these systems to align with institutional priorities. Building use and capital renewal strategies clarify how facilities can be renewed, repurposed, or divested to maximize value. Opportunities for new facilities and housing address emerging academic, research, athletic, and residential needs. Open space improvements enhance the character and usability of the campus, while infrastructure and stormwater strategies ensure resiliency. Finally, mobility systems, spanning vehicular, parking, pedestrian, and bicycle, networks, are designed to improve safety, connectivity, and efficiency across campus.

By addressing these interrelated systems in a comprehensive manner, the plan establishes a foundation for coordinated investment, enabling USM to create a campus environment that is functional, resilient, and supportive of its mission well into the future.

Buildings / Building Use

The campus plan establishes a strategic framework for building use that reinforces existing patterns while also further concentrating compatible functions within defined campus districts. This district-based approach reinforces academic identity, operational efficiency, and a stronger sense of place. By aligning uses and districts, the plan ensures new development complements the existing campus fabric, particularly in high-profile and historic areas.



William David McCain Library and Archives



Powerhouse



Oglethorpe House



McLemore Hall



Buildings / Capital Renewal Strategy

The campus plan establishes a comprehensive capital renewal strategy that balances building renovation, reactivation, and divestment. Guided by facility condition assessments, space utilization data, and academic planning, the strategy lays the foundation for a long-term, sustainable approach to capital investment.

The plan prioritizes the strategic renewal of core academic, student life, and administrative buildings—targeting facilities such as Walker, Hickman, and Mississippi Halls for renovation or reactivation. At the same time, key programs will be repositioned to allow for the eventual vacating and divestment of buildings that have exceeded their useful life, including Pulley, Bedie Smith Clinci, Bolton, and Johnson Science Tower. The university will consult with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) prior to the demolition of any building subject to MDAH jurisdiction.

This approach ensures that capital resources are directed toward facilities that align with USM's mission, improve operational efficiency, and enhance the campus experience, while also unlocking opportunities for open space investment and future development. Together, these strategies preserve institutional heritage, strengthen campus districts, and respond to the evolving needs of higher education.



Walker Science Hall (renovation proposed)



Kennard-Washington (renovation proposed)



Marsh Hall (disinvestment proposed)



Kate Hubbard House (disinvestment proposed)



Buildings / Housing Potential

The campus plan supports the continued evolution of USM's residential experience through a combination of renovation, infill development, and long-term repositioning. A key goal is to expand the availability of apartment- and suite-style housing to meet the expectations of current and future students.

Targeted renovations, such as the potential reconfiguration of Hillcrest Hall and the adaptive reuse of the Hattiesburg Hall ground floor, will increase housing capacity and diversify unit types. The plan also identifies opportunities for new residential development in strategic campus locations, including the expansion of Greek Village and a new mixed-use residential project along North 31st Street.

In the long term, the plan recommends divestment from outdated facilities such as Wilber Hall to support more efficient and desirable housing options. In addition, various sites across campus remain available for exploration and assessment as future housing development opportunities.

This housing strategy aims to strengthen the residential experience at USM by offering greater choice, improving quality, and fostering a stronger sense of community on campus.



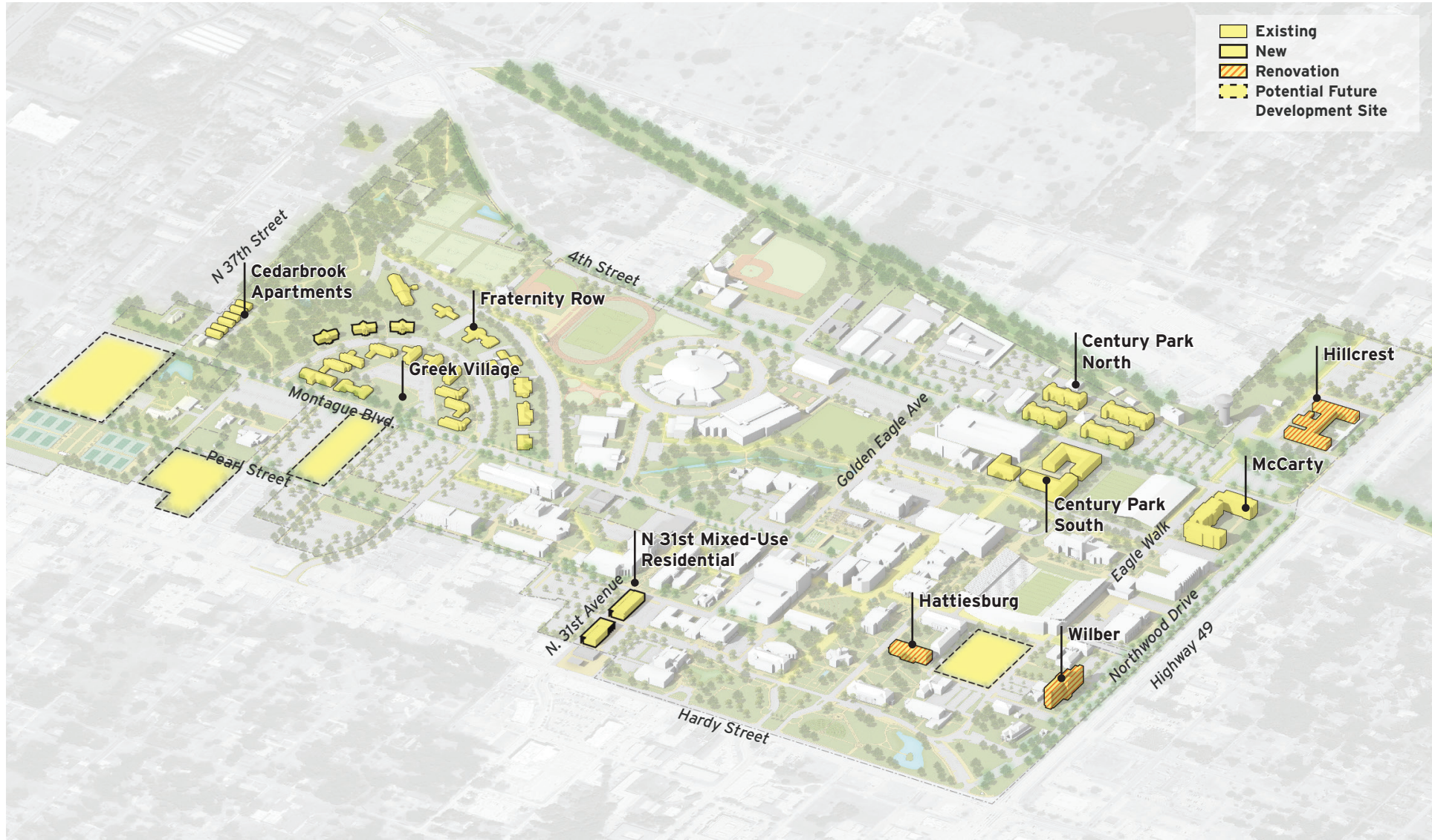
Hattiesburg Hall (renovation proposed)



Wilbur Hall (renovation proposed)



Century Park South



Buildings / New Facilities

The campus plan identifies a series of new facilities that will advance USM's academic, research, residential, athletic, and facilities priorities while strengthening the physical framework of the campus. These projects are carefully located to reinforce major campus districts and support long-term institutional goals.

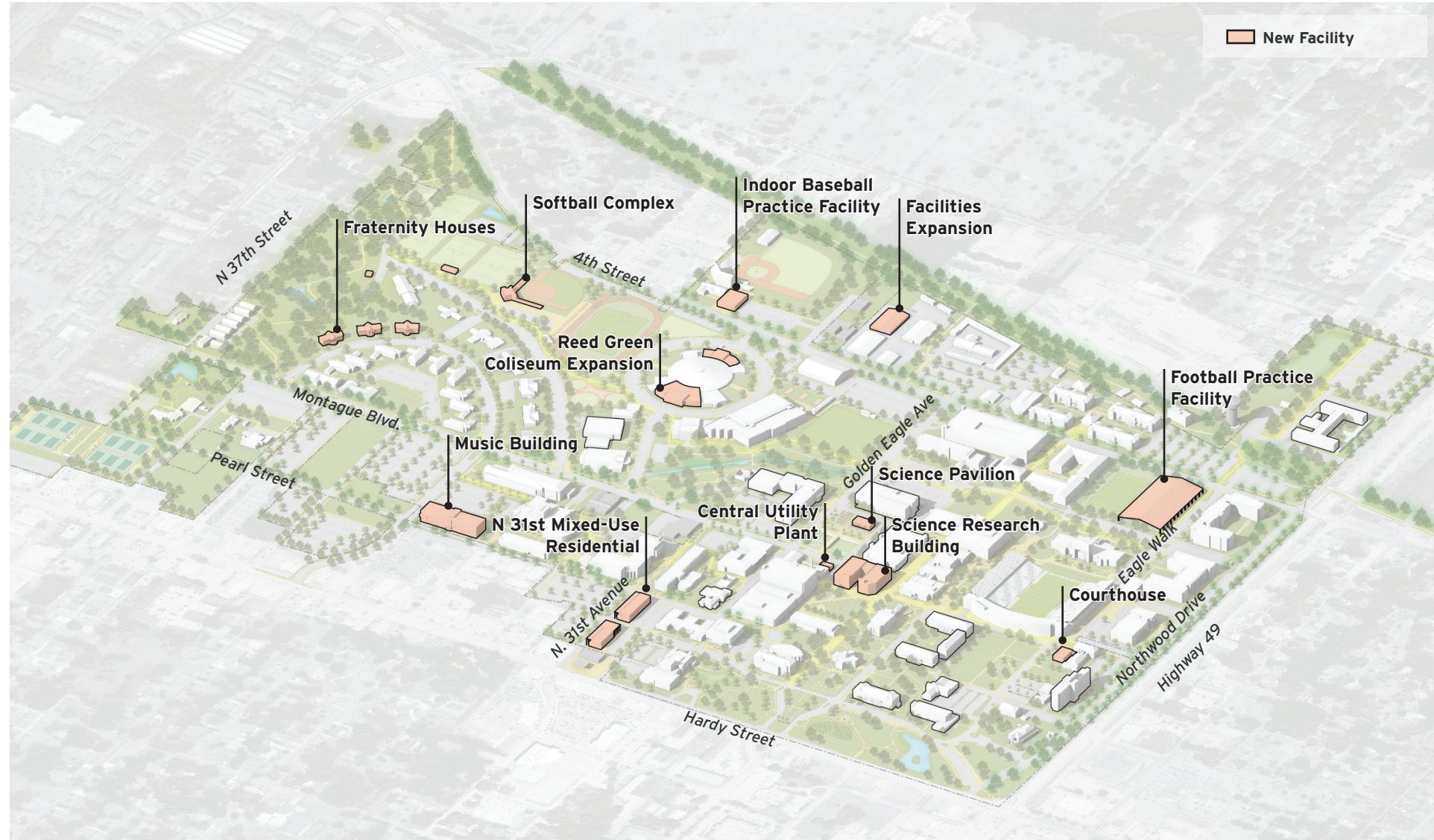
Key new facilities include a new Science Research Building, a Science Pavilion, and a new Music Building—each positioned to elevate program visibility and

support interdisciplinary collaboration. The plan also includes the expansion of Greek housing, a new mixed-use residential project on North 31st Street, and new athletics facilities, including indoor baseball and football practice facilities.

Together, these new facilities are intended to improve campus functionality, enrich student life, and ensure that the university's built environment evolves in alignment with its academic mission and long-term strategic vision.



Proposed N. 31st Avenue Mixed-Use Residential Rendering



Vehicular and Parking

The campus plan establishes a clear hierarchy for vehicular circulation that improves access while prioritizing pedestrian safety and campus identity. Primary and secondary routes will be reinforced along West 4th Street, Hardy Street, and Highway 49, while circulation in the core will be enhanced to elevate the pedestrian experience.

Enhanced gateways on Hardy Street, West 4th Street, and Highway 49 will strengthen campus identity and improve access. As new recreational amenities develop within the West Campus, traffic-calming along West 4th Street and the closure of North 34th Street will support safety and expansion.

Consolidating parking outside the core will create a safer, pedestrian-focused environment and improve accessibility.

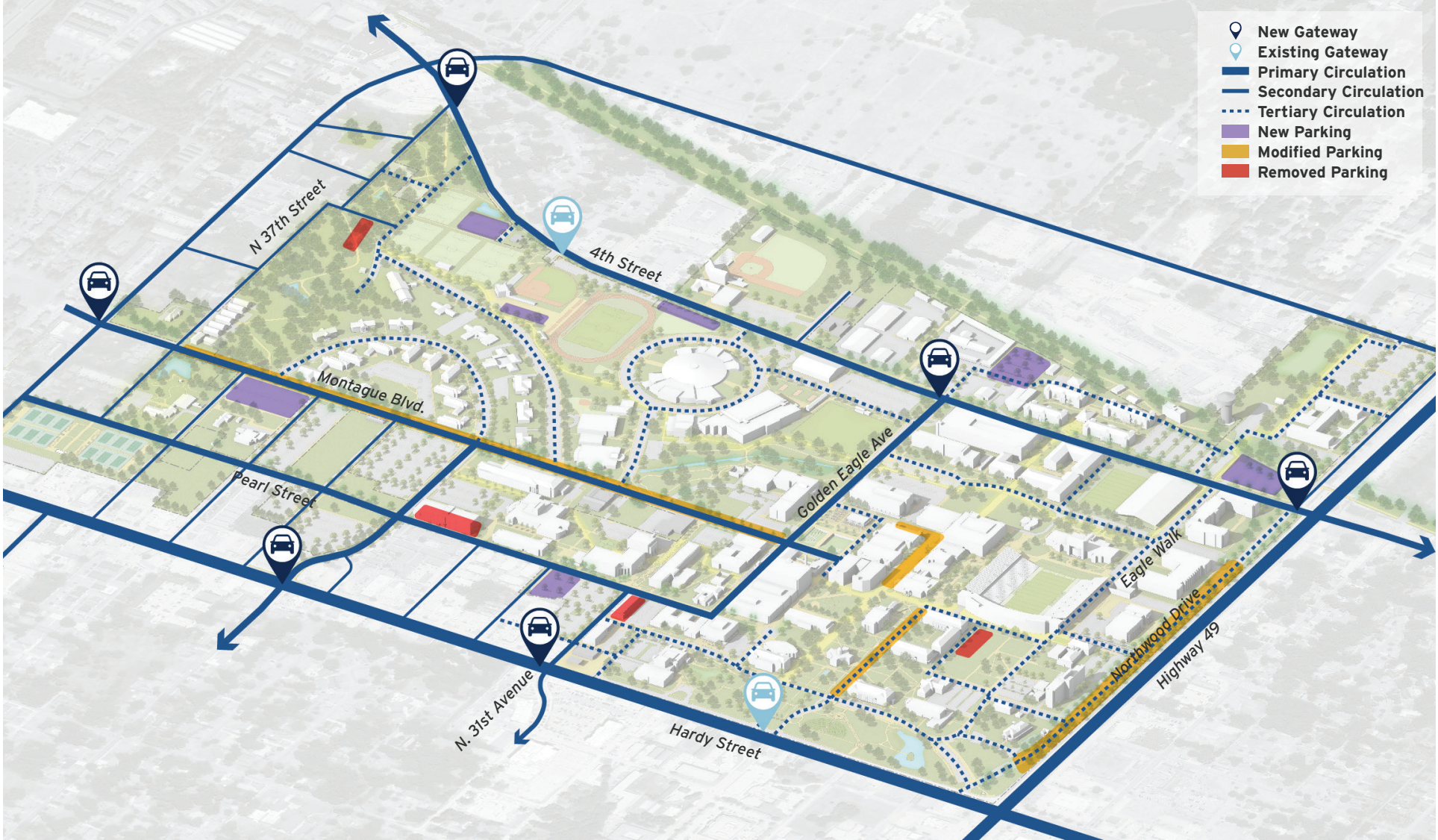
Together, these improvements make the campus more navigable, safer, and aligned with USM's vision for a connected, pedestrian-oriented environment.



Charles Lane Dead End



Montague Boulevard



Pedestrian and Bicycle

The plan places an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle mobility, reinforcing USM's commitment to create a connected campus environment. A clear, reinforced hierarchy of pathways—primary, secondary, and tertiary—ensures safe, direct, and comfortable access to key destinations across campus. Signature pathways—including the West Campus Promenade, Arts Corridor, Midtown Connector, and West Memorial Pedestrian Corridor—serve as major spines, linking academic, residential, and student life areas.

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements also account for increasing micromobility movements, particularly electric bicycles and scooters. Due to increased speed and a broader range of users, electric bicycles and scooters require slightly different infrastructure needs than traditional bicycles. Through further design and development of new bicycle infrastructure and multi-use pathways should address this need through elements to intentionally slow down users and safely accommodate faster speeds.



4th Street crosswalk



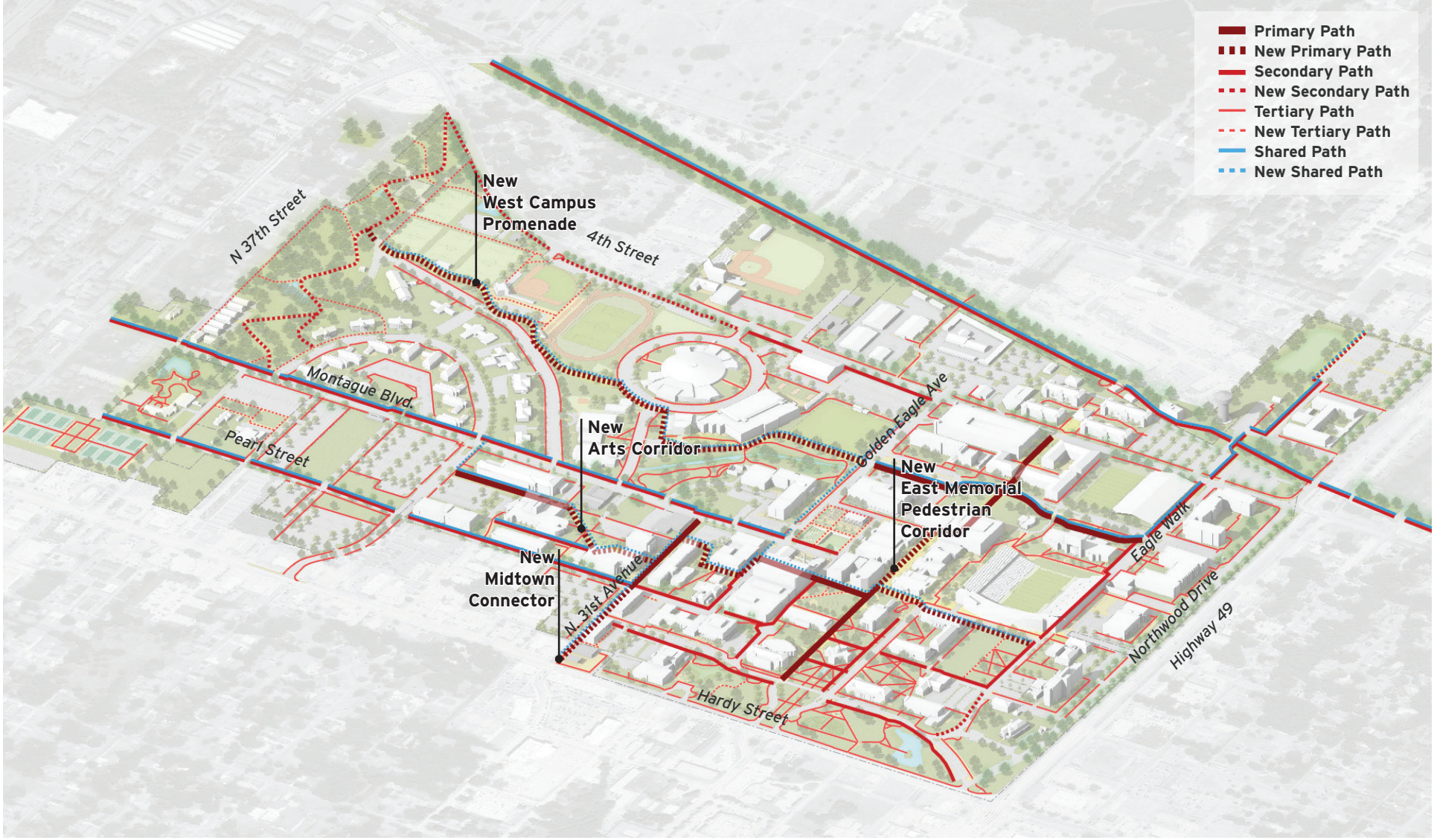
New bike path along Asbury Hall



Typical campus pedestrian pathway



Enhanced pedestrian crossing on Southern Miss Drive



Open Space

The campus plan envisions a cohesive and connected open space network that enriches the daily experience of students, faculty, staff, and visitors while celebrating USM's natural and cultural identity. Open spaces are positioned as central organizing elements within each campus district, shaping a landscape that not only beautifies the environment but also supports social, academic, and recreational life.

Signature greens—including Centennial Green, Historic Green, Arts Green, Performing Arts Green, and the new Science Green—define prominent areas of campus and serve as memorable, multifunctional gathering spaces. These greens are linked by enhanced pedestrian corridors that promote movement, connection, and campus cohesion.

The plan also introduces new open space features such as the Fraternity Drive Green Promenade, the West Memorial Drive Pedestrian Corridor, and the West Campus Arboretum. Streetscape investments along Montague Street, Pearl Street, and the Highway 49 frontage will strengthen campus edges and improve integration with the surrounding community.

By elevating the role of open space, the campus plan reinforces connections between people, programs, and places—creating a more vibrant and verdant campus environment.



Historic Quad in front of Kennard-Washington



Lake Byron



Pierce Picnic Area



Spirit Park



Infrastructure

USM's infrastructure systems face significant pressure from aging utilities, capacity constraints, and the demands of campus growth. Many underground utility lines are outdated and are being upgraded only incrementally. Electrical and IT systems are fragmented, with dual-feed and backfeed capacity not consistently available across the campus, and being serviced by outdated substations and fiber loops that are incomplete or poorly documented. The West Campus lacks the water, sewer, gas, and communications infrastructure needed to support planned academic and athletic expansion. Mechanical systems also present challenges: chillers require constant maintenance to meet temperature demands, boilers are outdated, and several plants, such as Forrest County, are at capacity. Investment in sustainability efforts, such as replacing older chillers and boilers with more efficient systems, are constrained by cost.

To address these issues, USM is planning a new central utility plant (CUP) to expand chilled water and mechanical capacity. Originally projected at a higher cost, the plant design is being reconsidered to deliver a more realistic solution for the institution. One option includes co-locating the CUP with the proposed Science Research Building, requiring trade-offs in available instructional space. The CUP will provide critical reliability, redundancy, and efficiency needed to support future campus development.



Hickman Central Plant



Montague Substation



Stormwater Management

The campus plan introduces an integrated stormwater management strategy that enhances both the environmental performance and visual quality of the campus.

Rather than relying solely on traditional infrastructure, the plan incorporates a range of natural and engineered solutions to improve drainage, reduce flooding, and create a more resilient landscape. New stormwater features—such as water-retaining landscapes, detention ponds, and underground retention systems—will be strategically located across campus to manage runoff more effectively.

These elements are designed to integrate seamlessly with the campus’s open space network. They support sustainable stormwater management, reduce infrastructure demands, and enrich the aesthetic and experiential quality of the landscape. This approach equips the campus to better manage extreme weather events and long-term climate change.



The creek adjacent to the Payne Center collects and directs stormwater



The pond at the Peck House provides a nature-based stormwater solution





PROJECT PHASING



Project Phasing

The University of Southern Mississippi maintains a diverse portfolio of facilities, many of which require renewal or reinvestment to continue meeting the needs of students, faculty, and staff. Like many public institutions, USM must balance ambitious goals for growth and modernization with limited resources and competing priorities. Thoughtful sequencing is essential: not every project can happen at once, and investments must reflect both urgency and opportunity.

The phasing framework establishes a strategic order for implementation that addresses critical needs first while preparing the campus for long-term transformation. Early efforts emphasize reactivating or modestly renovating select facilities for flexible swing space, while planning the divestment of buildings that no longer serve programmatic or operational goals. Priority capital projects, including new academic and research facilities, are sequenced in the near- and mid-term to address pressing needs in teaching and student life.

The approach also recognizes USM's historic core. Coordination with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) ensures preservation responsibilities are honored while allowing progress on critical facility improvements. Guided by principles that balance urgency, stewardship, and opportunity, the phasing strategy ensures near-term actions address pressing needs while laying the foundation for transformation. It provides a framework for thoughtful decisions about reinvestment, renewal, divestment, and new construction as resources allow, creating a

pragmatic roadmap toward a stronger, more resilient future.

The following pages outline project phasing that follows this structure—beginning with a five-year capital strategies plan, followed by long-term investments, funding-dependent projects, and site improvements. Together, these elements establish an adaptable framework for implementing the campus vision.

The following principles provide the foundation for how projects are prioritized and sequenced over time.

- ▶ **Address critical needs first** - Prioritize projects that resolve urgent safety, functionality, and program gaps
- ▶ **Maximize interim reuse** - Reactivate or modestly renovate select facilities to serve as flexible swing space and reduce pressure on core academic areas
- ▶ **Divest strategically** - Retire facilities that no longer support institutional goals, helping reduce long-term maintenance obligations
- ▶ **Invest in priority capital projects** - Sequence new construction and major renovations that directly advance USM's mission in teaching, research, and student life
- ▶ **Honor preservation commitments** - Coordinate with MDAH to balance campus investments with stewardship of the historic core and Mississippi Landmark buildings

- ▶ **Align with financial capacity** - Sequence projects in a way that matches available funding sources and leverages opportunities for partnerships
- ▶ **Build momentum over time** - Ensure that each phase of implementation lays the groundwork for the next, steadily transforming the campus while maintaining flexibility

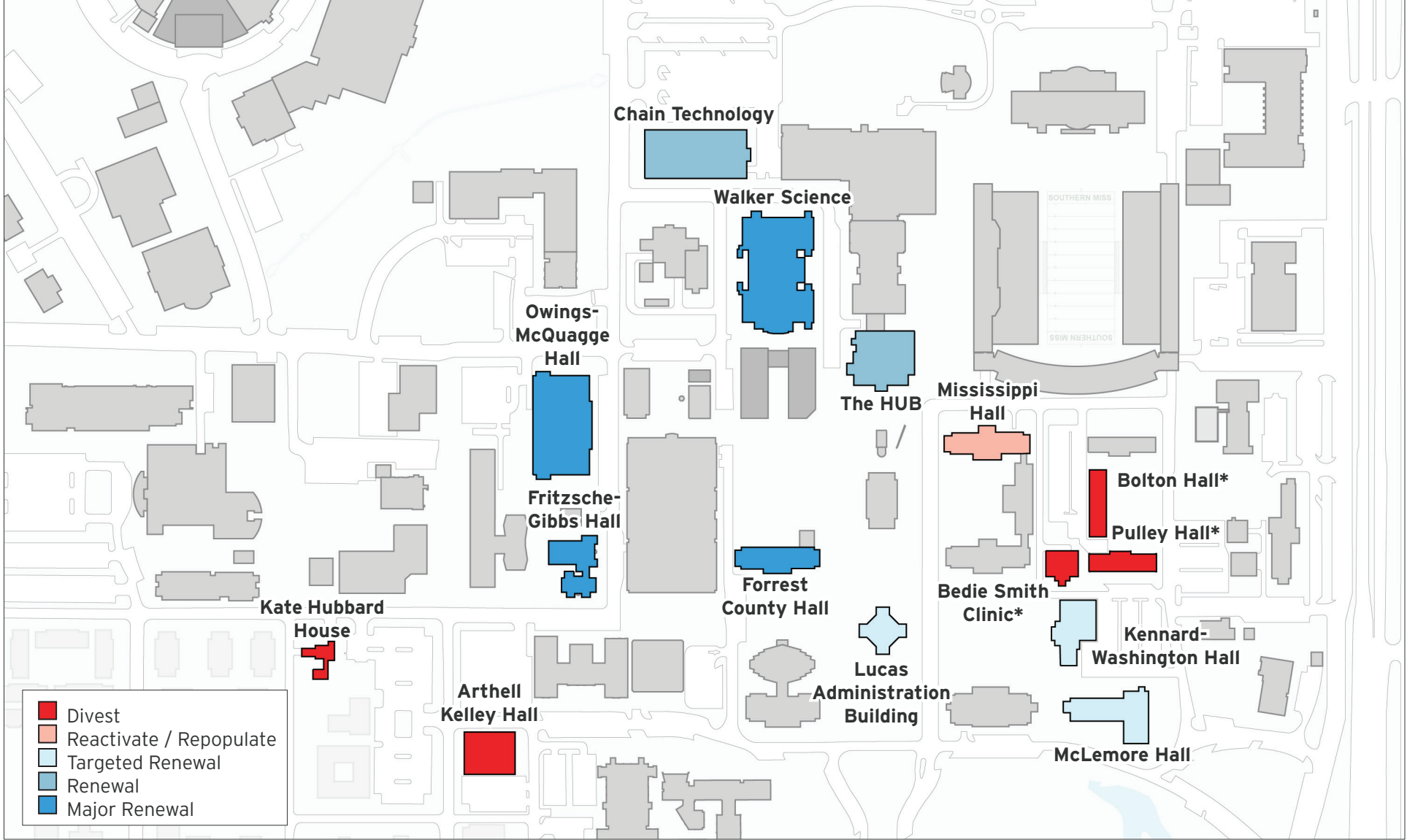
Five-Year Capital Strategies Plan

In its first five years, the plan emphasizes a focused set of strategies designed to strengthen the facilities most critical to USM's academic mission, student experience, and operational effectiveness. The approach centers on making the best use of existing space, tackling the most urgent renewal needs, and directing capital investments toward projects that align closely with institutional priorities.

These strategies are organized into five categories that range from reducing and reactivating vacant space to repositioning programs, undertaking minor renovations, and completing major renovations. Together, they provide a balanced, roadmap for early implementation, one that reduces inefficiencies, optimizes existing resources, and focuses limited funds where they will have the greatest impact.

- ▶ **Reduce Problematic Square Footage (Already Vacant)** - Remove or repurpose vacant space that carries ongoing maintenance costs but no longer contributes to program needs, reducing financial and operational burdens
- ▶ **Reactivate Select Vacant Buildings** - Where feasible, bring dormant facilities back into service through targeted improvements, creating swing space for relocations or meeting immediate program needs
- ▶ **Reposition Programs then Vacate and Divest** - Relocate academic or administrative units from inefficient or unsuitable buildings into higher-value spaces, allowing the university to divest of underperforming facilities

- ▶ **Renewal as Minor Renovation** - Undertake modest renovations, such as system replacements or accessibility upgrades, to extend the life of facilities that remain functional and strategically located
- ▶ **Renewal as Major Renovation** - Invest in large-scale renovations to modernize key academic or support facilities, improve suitability, and reposition them for long-term use

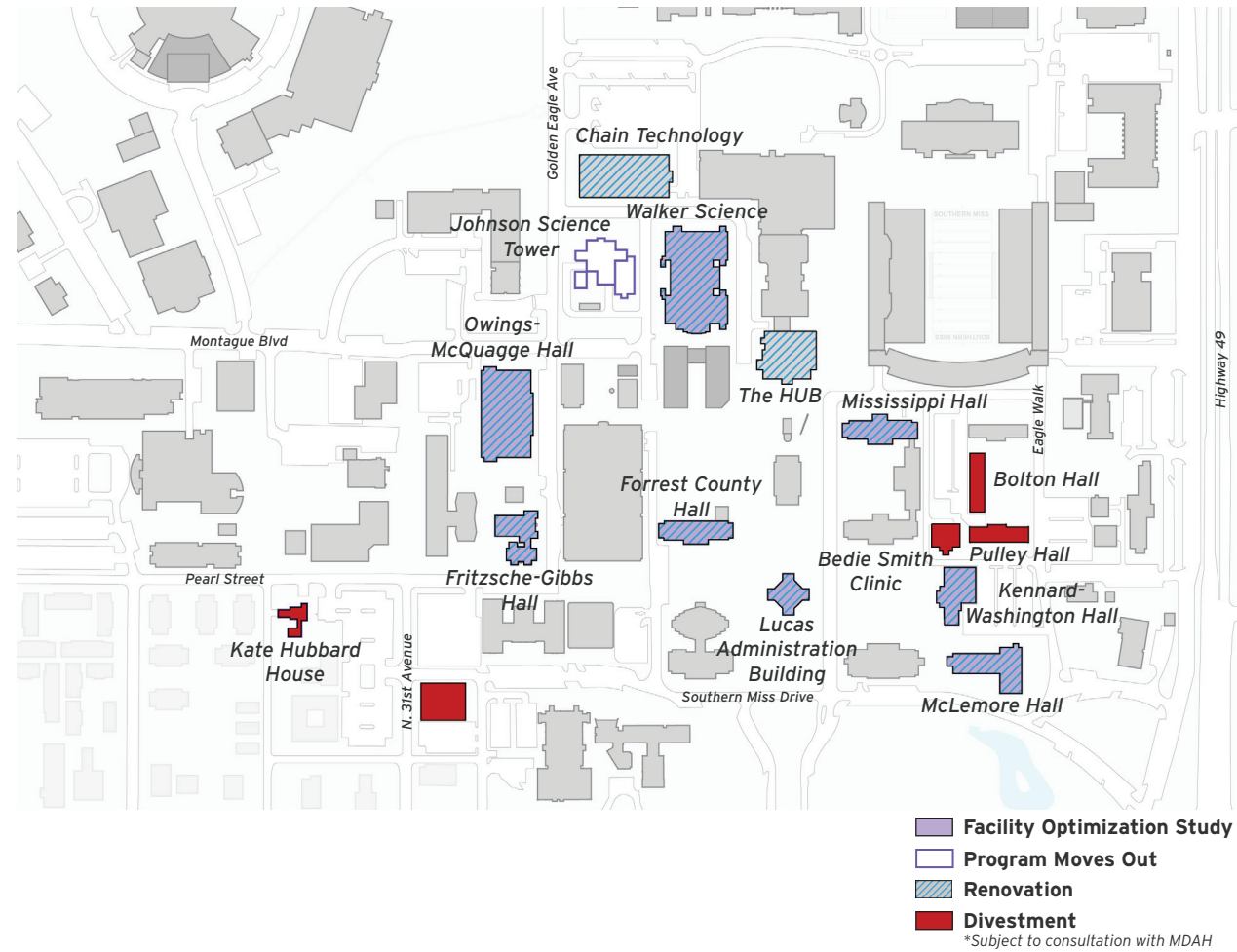


*Buildings that the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) has designated as potentially eligible for designation as Mississippi Landmark properties. Prior to undertaking work which may impact these buildings, USM shall submit a Notice of Intent and supplementary information to MDAH for review and approval.

Five-Year Capital Strategies Plan

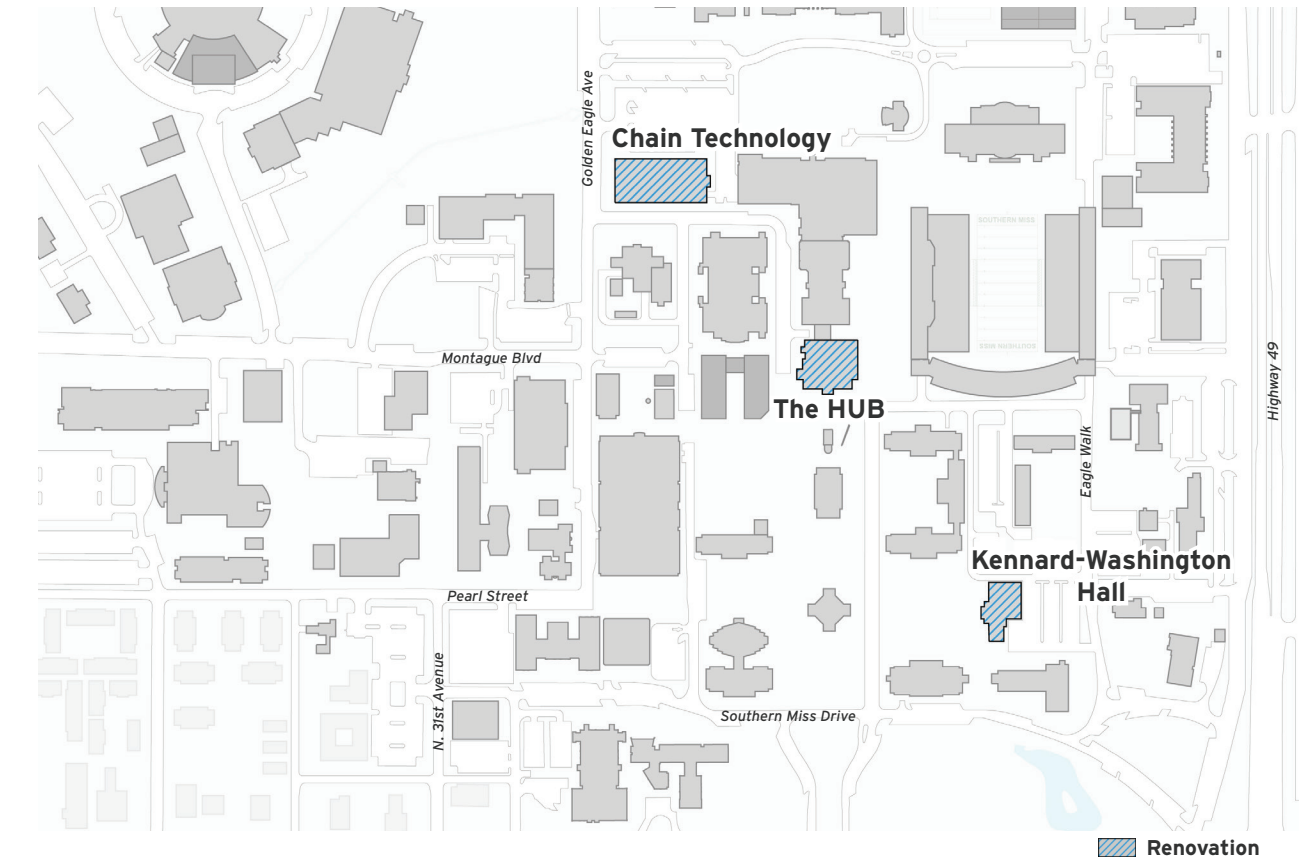
Phasing Summary

The first phase of implementation focuses on targeted actions that stabilize key facilities, create swing space, and reduce long-term liabilities. Minor renovations at Chain Technology, the Hub, and Kennard-Washington address immediate needs in accessibility, building systems, and preservation. Optimization studies for administrative, science, and education facilities guide future reinvestments. At the same time, selective divestments—including Pulley Hall, Bedie Smith Clinic, Bolton Hall, Arthell Kelley Hall, and Kate Hubbard House—reduce maintenance burdens and free sites for new opportunities. Major renovations to Mississippi Hall, Walker Science, and Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall modernize critical teaching and research spaces while honoring historic character. Collectively, these steps build momentum for the next phases of campus transformation. The following pages walk through the phasing sequence in greater detail.



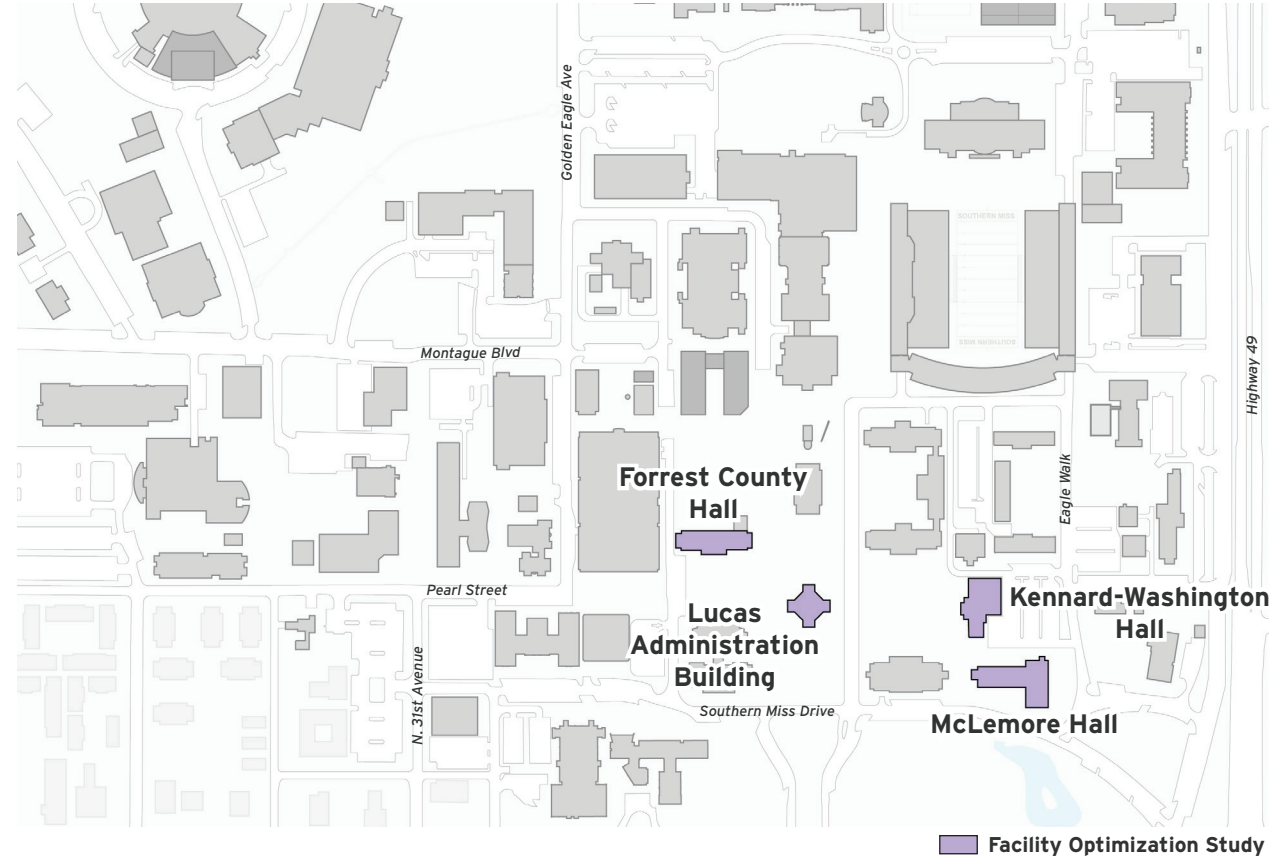
1. Minor Renovations

- ▶ Minor renovation to Chain Technology for Computer Science and Engineering
- ▶ Minor renovation to the Hub to address moisture infiltration
- ▶ Minor renovation to Kennard-Washington including the following:
 - a. Welcome Center renovation
 - b. Replace and upsize elevator
 - c. Upgrade restrooms to meet ADA standards
 - d. Relocate I-Tech Hub from Pulley Hall to Kennard-Washington
 - e. Update to Historic Preservation Standards



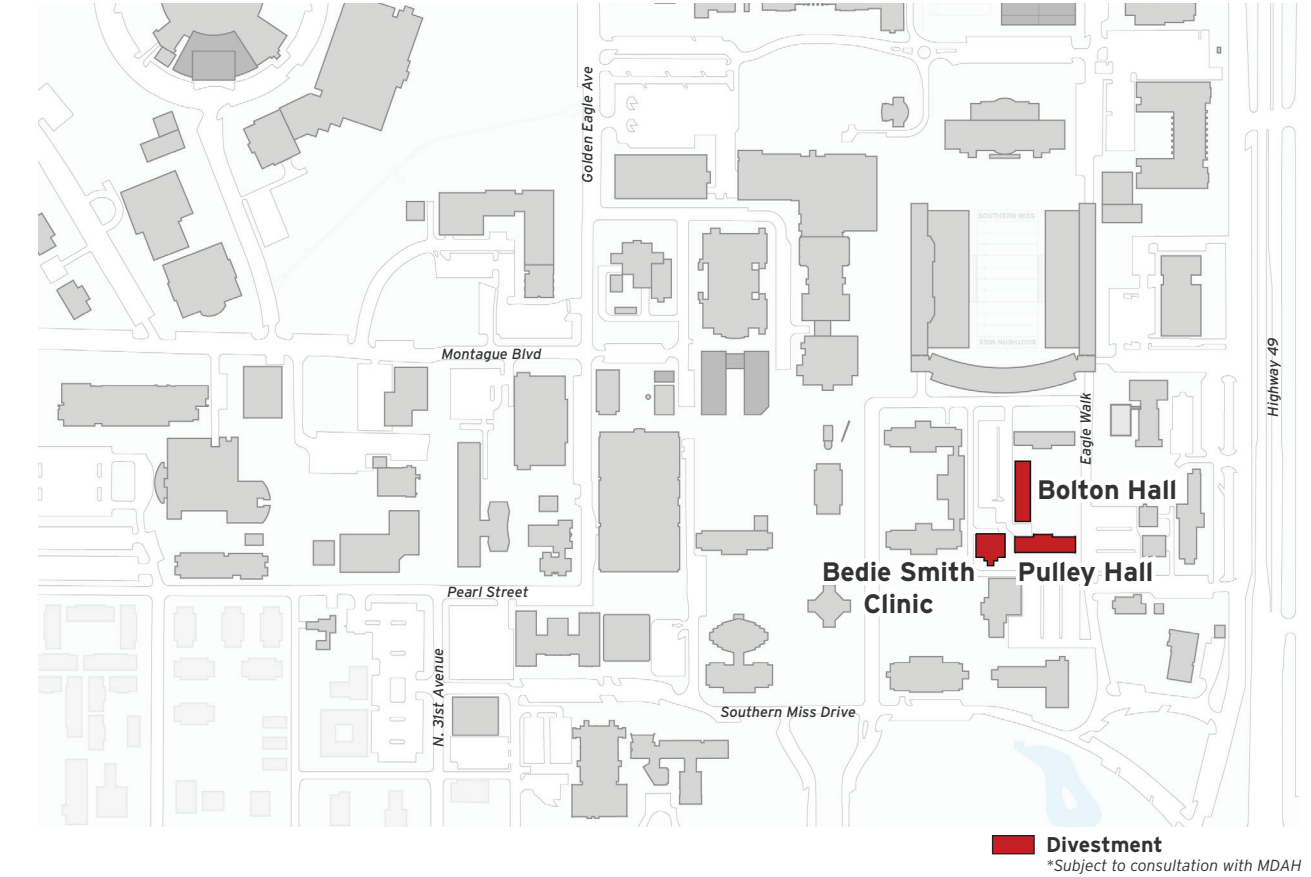
2. Administration Facility Optimization Study And Renovation Planning

- ▶ Evaluate functions of key administrative buildings, including Kennard-Washington, McLemore Hall, Lucas Administration Building, and Forrest County Hall and plan for future renovations if necessary



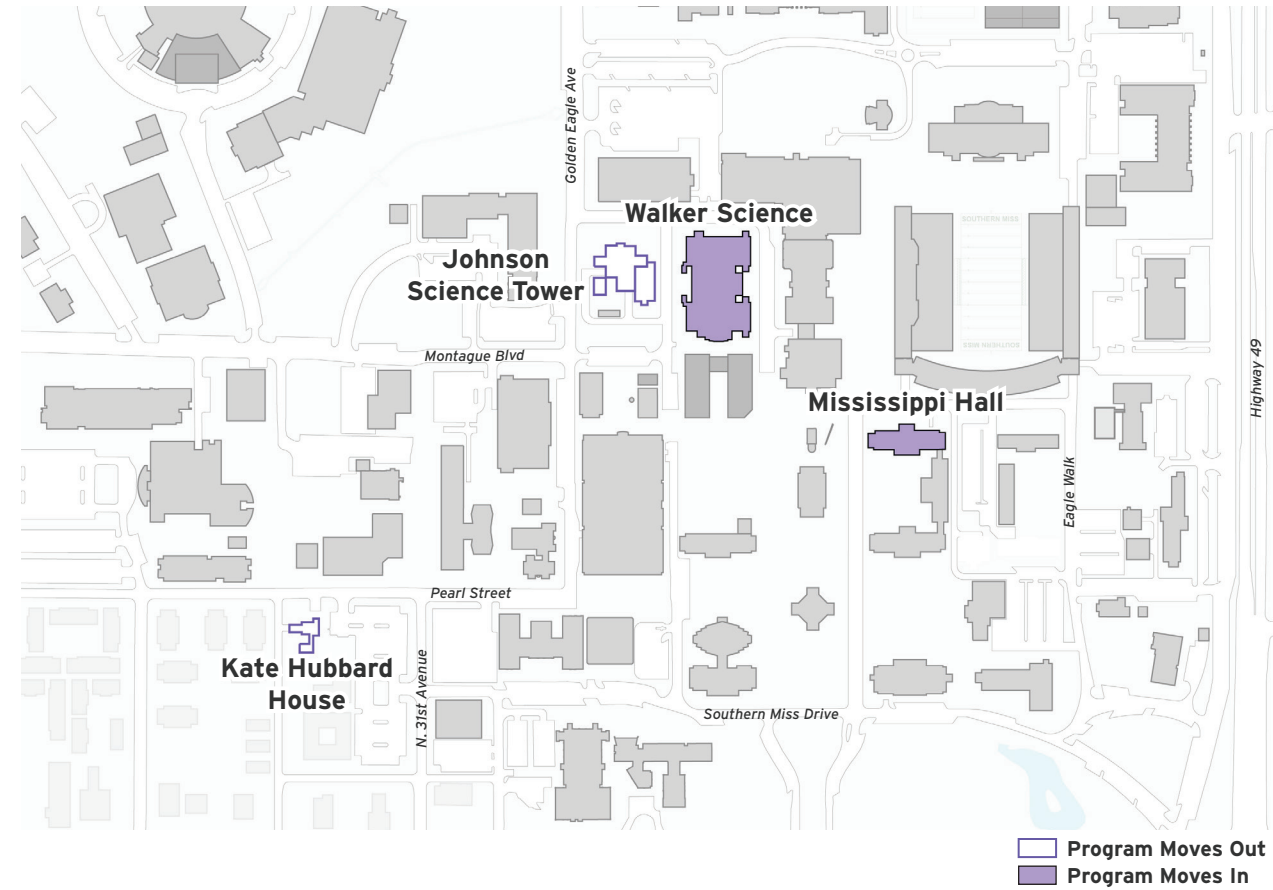
3. Divestment

- ▶ Divest of Pulley Hall
- ▶ Divest of Bedie Smith Clinic
- ▶ Divest of Bolton Hall



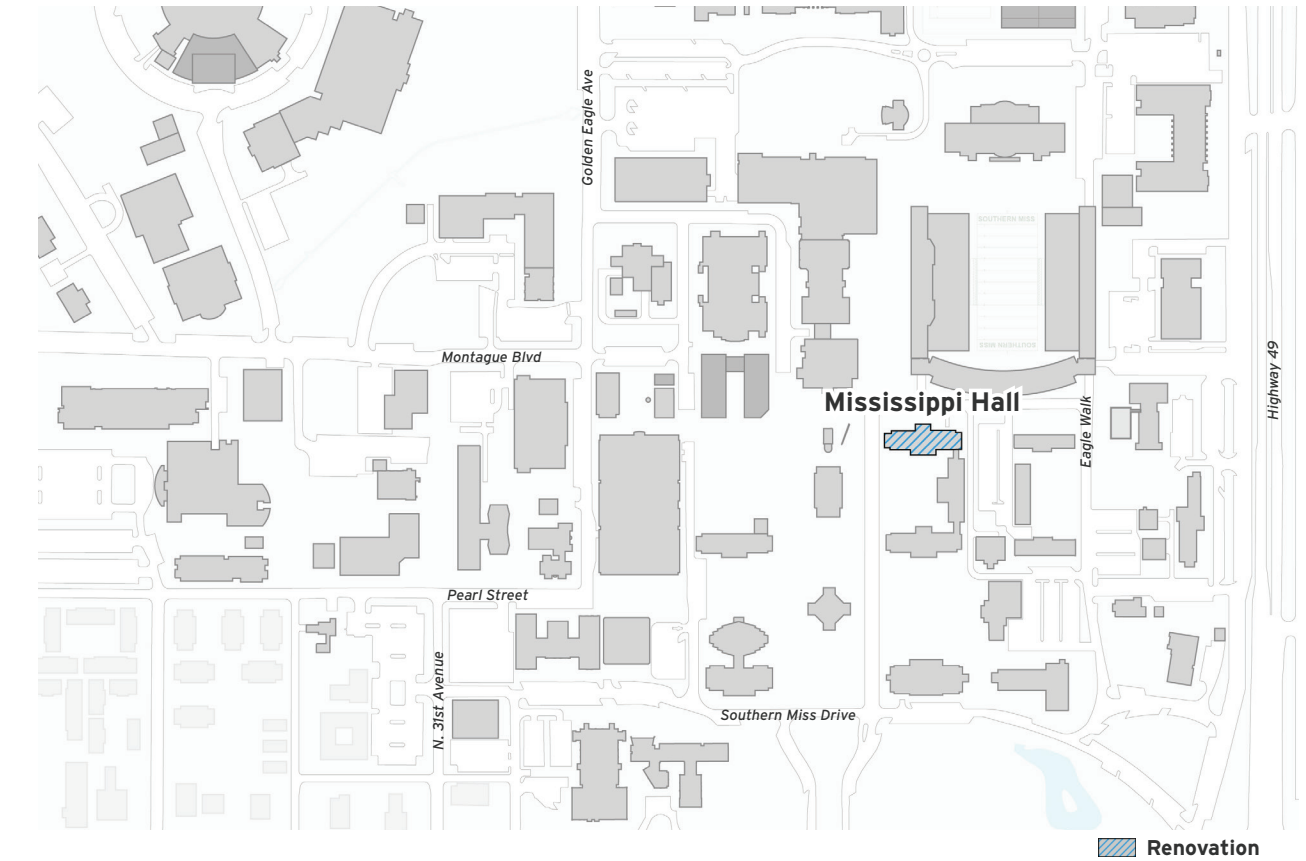
4. Science Facility Optimization Study And Renovation Planning

- ▶ Science Master Plan (part of the planning for Mississippi Hall and Walker Science)
 - a. Determine how to accommodate the program for a new Science Teaching Facility within existing facilities
 - b. Provide accommodation for the needs of the Interior Design Department from Kate Hubbard House to Walker Science to be closer to the rest of the School of Construction and Design in Chain Technology
 - c. Determine the viability of renovating Mississippi Hall from a dormitory to faculty offices and classrooms
 - d. Determine the renovation needed to Walker Science Building to accommodate the teaching functions in Johnson Science Tower



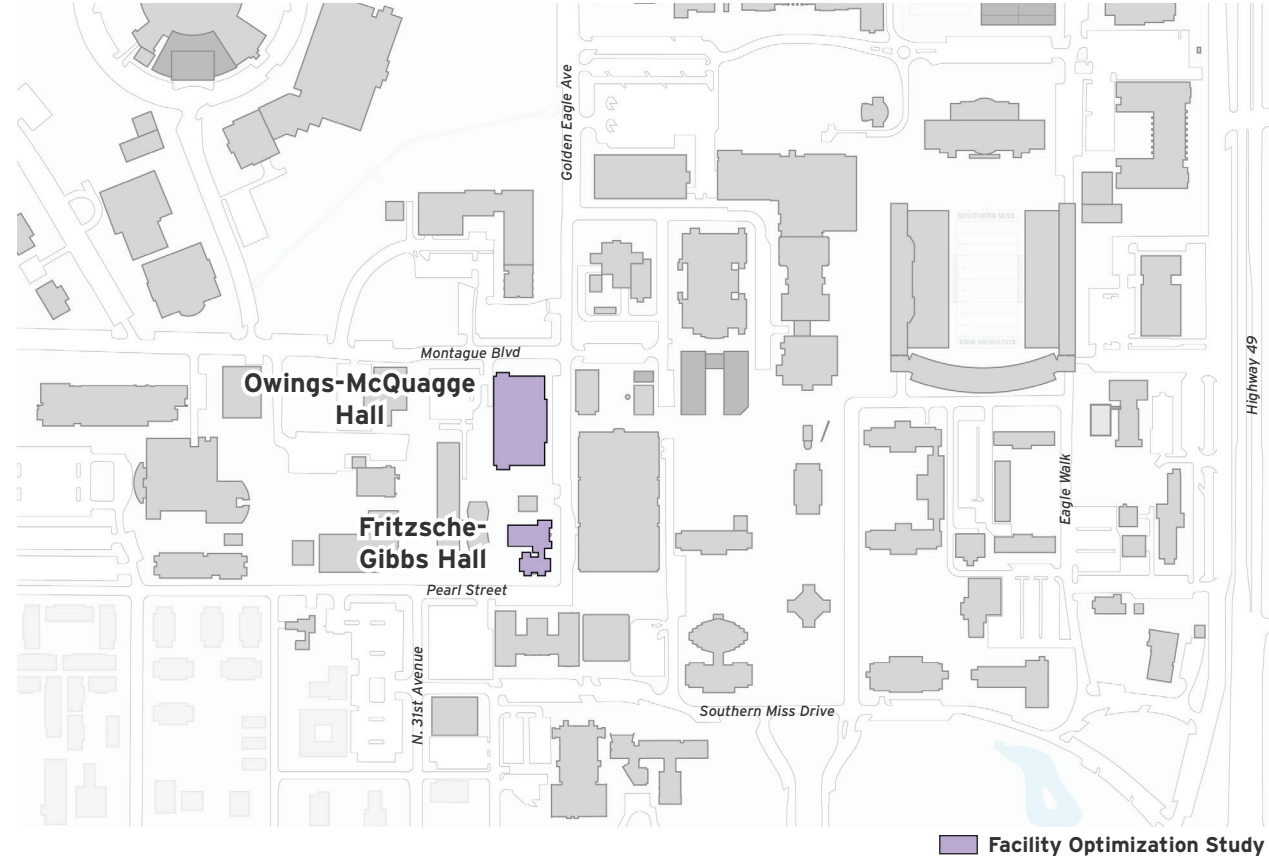
5. Renovation

- ▶ Renovate Mississippi Hall:
 - a. Review and update the Science Master Plan to confirm how the program for a Science Teaching Facility can be incorporated into the existing dormitory
 - b. Convert the existing historic dormitory into a 21st century Science Teaching Facility while also restoring the building per historic preservation standards



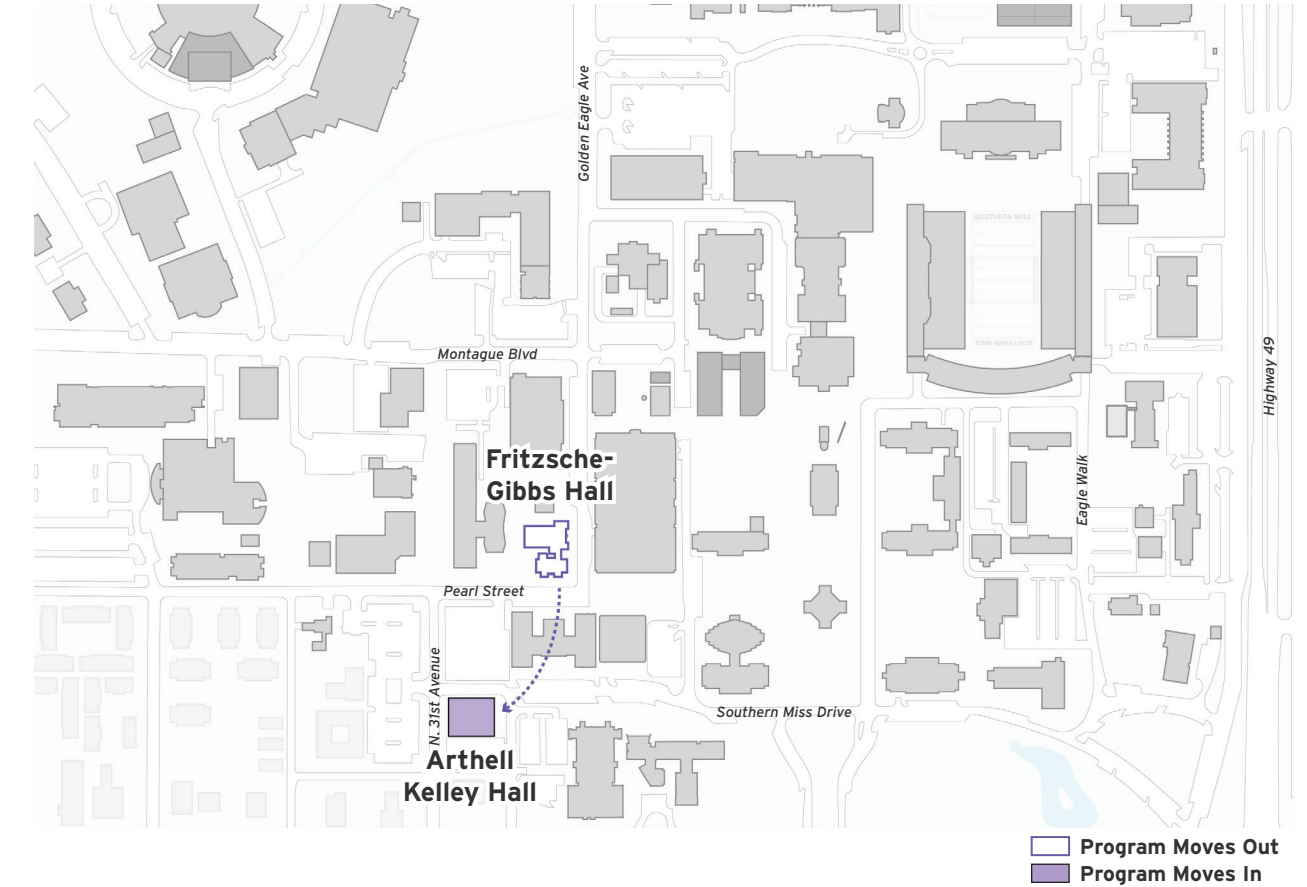
6. Education and Human Sciences Facility Optimization Study And Renovation Planning

- Evaluate functions of key Education and Human Sciences buildings, including Owings-McQuagge Hall, Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall and plan for future renovations if necessary



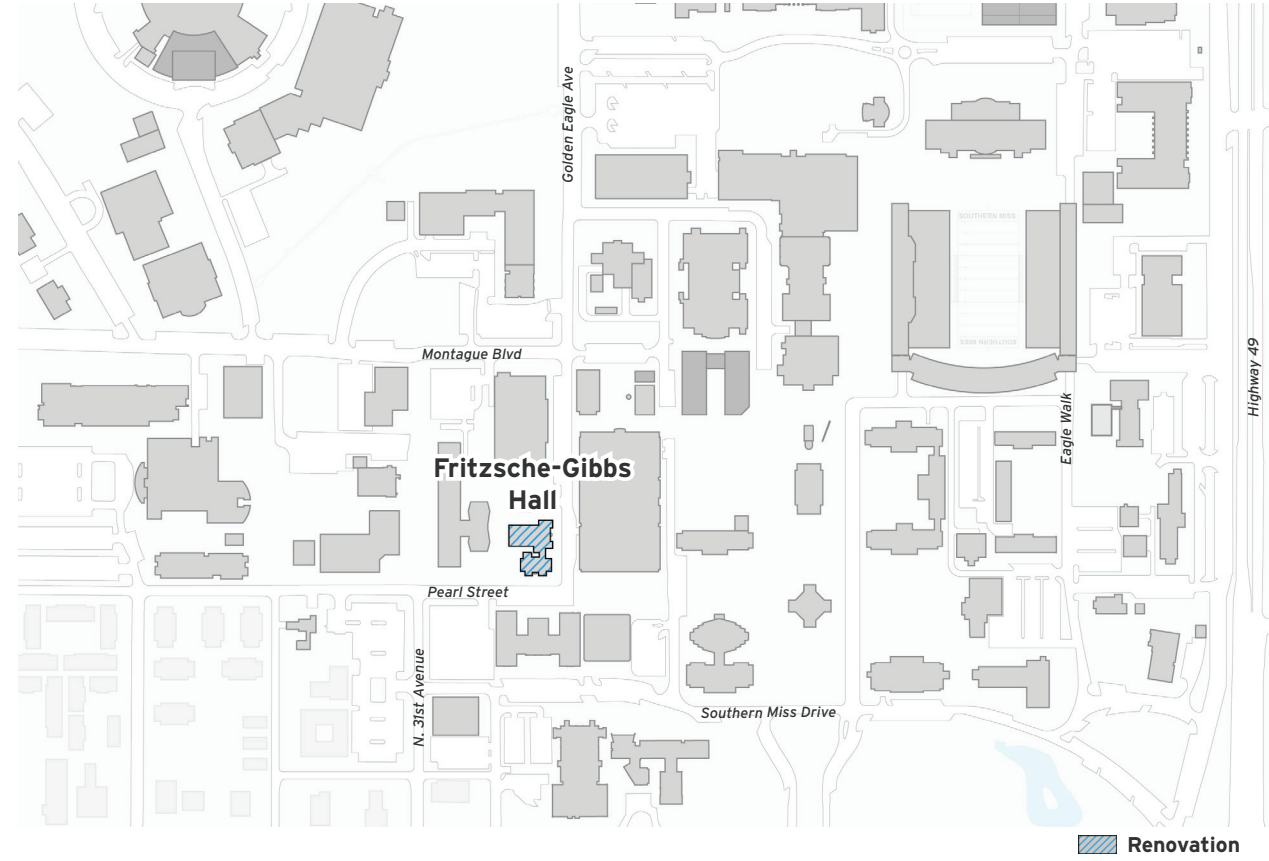
7. Minor Renovation For Swing Space

- Arthell Kelley Hall renovation and relocation swing space: minor Renovation & Relocation for FGH
 - 10,722 SF to receive FGH program in two phases, one per floor
 - Once Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall Renovation is complete, then divest of Arthell Kelley Hall



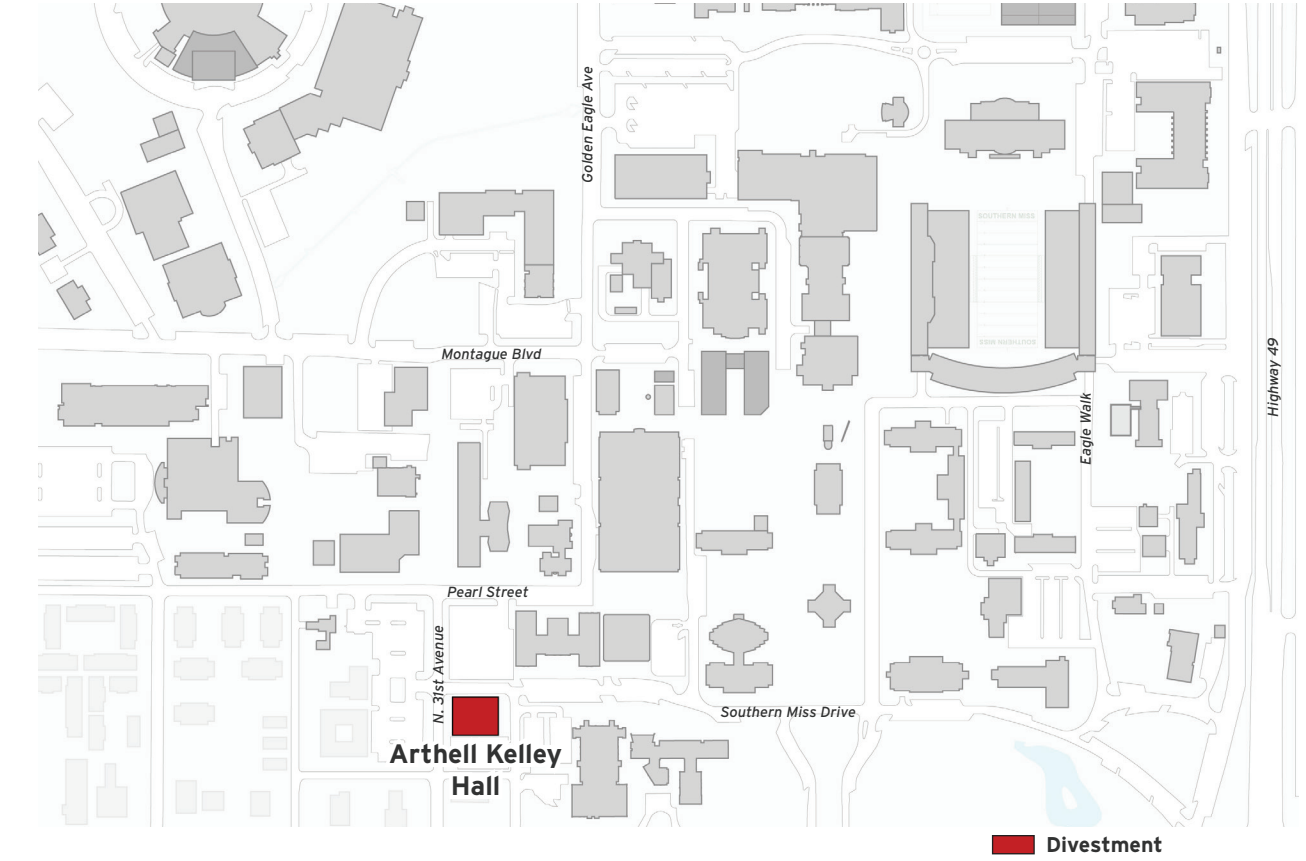
8. Renovation

- ▶ Renovate Fritzsche-Gibbs Hall (FGH) in two phases:
 - a. Update to Historic Preservation Standards
 - b. Phase 1: Renovation by Department (first half)
 - c. Phase 2: Renovation by Department (second half)



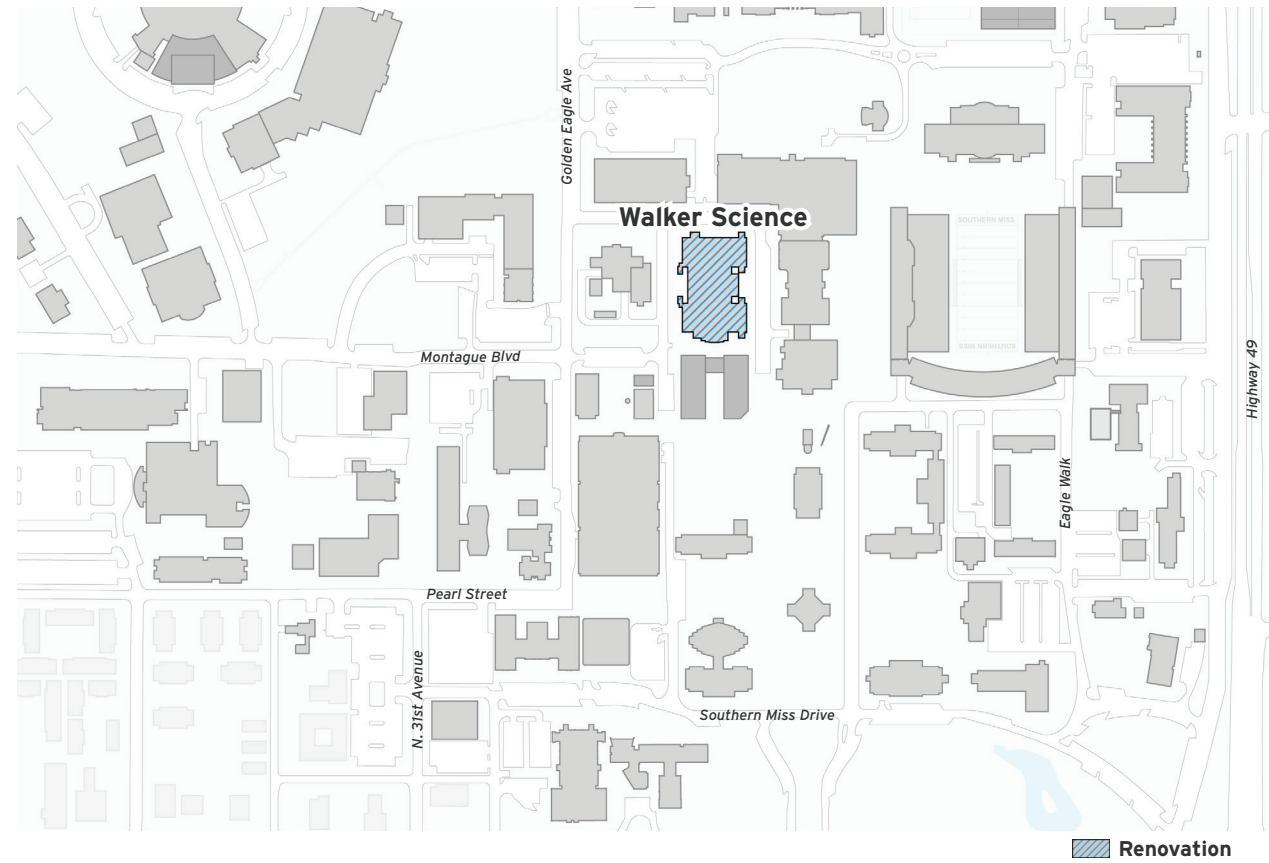
9. Divestment

- ▶ Divest of Arthell Kelley



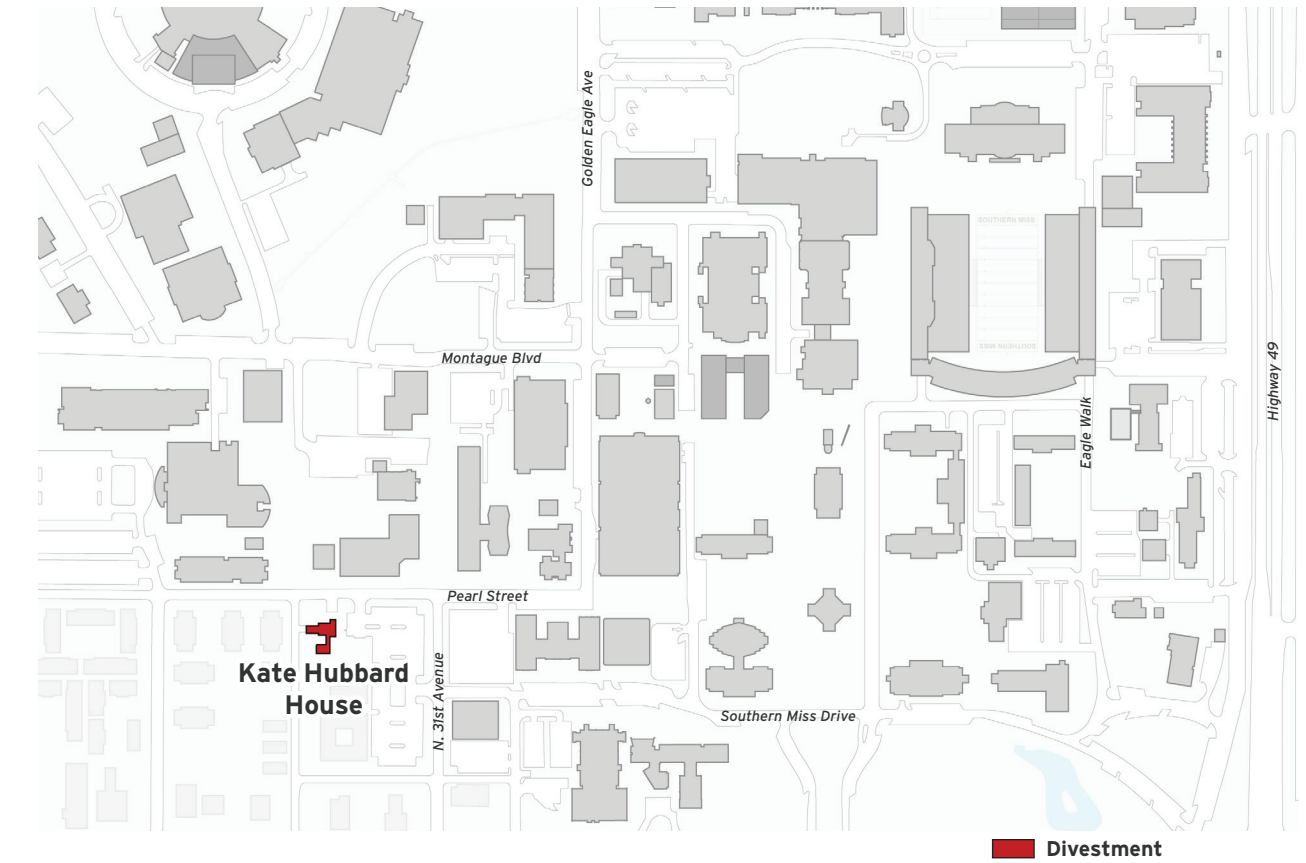
10. Renovation

- ▶ Renovate Walker Science Building:
 - a. Review and update the Science Master Plan to confirm how much of the remaining program for a Science Teaching Facility can be incorporated into the existing Science Academic building
 - b. Renovate spaces to meet current science teaching needs
 - c. Renovate spaces to accommodate Interior Design



11. Divestment

- ▶ Divest of Kate Hubbard House



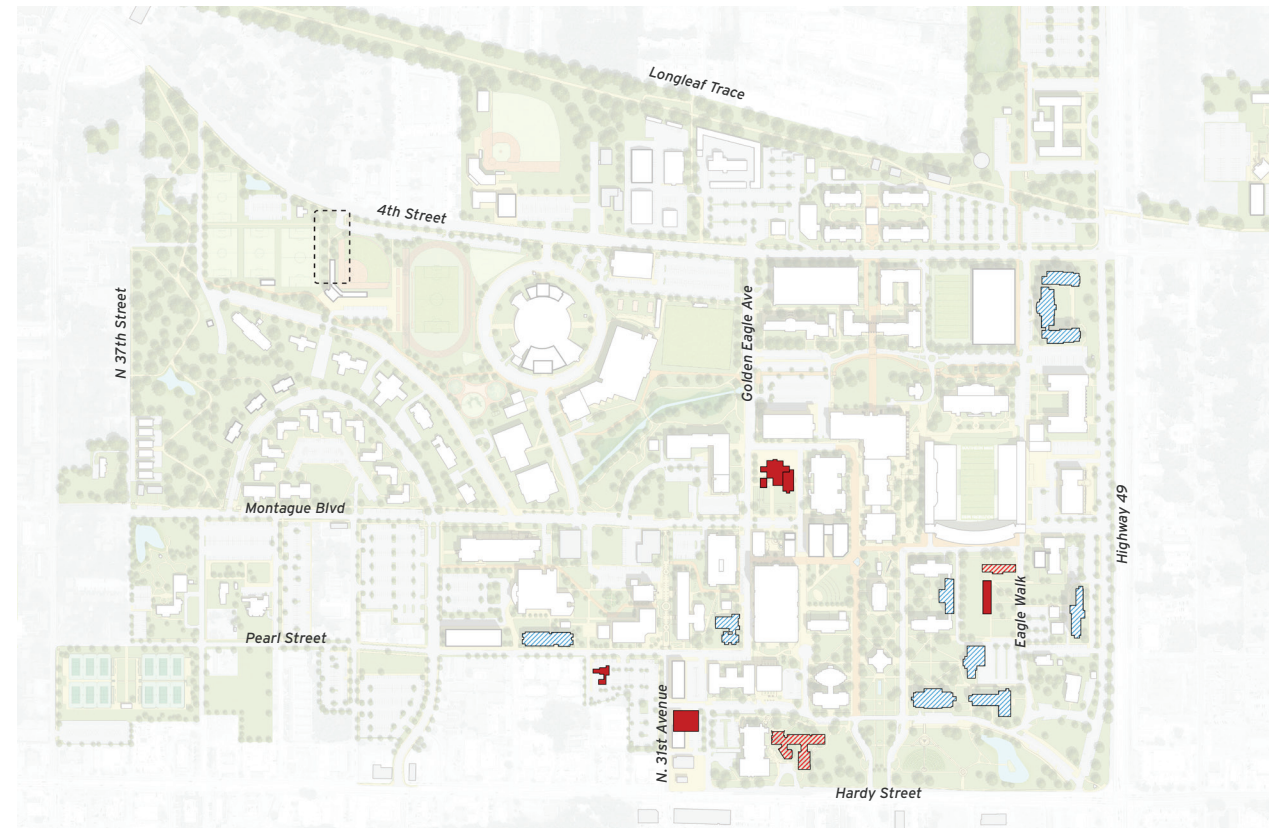
Long-Term Investments




Beyond the initial five years, the plan outlines a series of long-term projects that position USM for continued renewal and growth. These initiatives focus on modernizing core facilities, enhancing the arts, and reducing the burden of aging infrastructure.

A Performing Arts Facility Optimization Study will guide improvements to the Mannoni Performing Arts Center, Marsh Hall, and the Theater and Dance Building. Together, these facilities anchor the arts on campus, and their renewal will provide high-quality venues for instruction, rehearsal, and performance while strengthening USM’s cultural identity.

Significant renovations are also envisioned for key academic and administrative facilities and residential halls, including Hickman Hall, Hattiesburg Hall, Southern Hall, Harkins Hall, J.B. George Building, Bond Hall, Hillcrest Hall, and Wilber Hall. These investments will extend the life of heavily used and historically important buildings, modernize building systems, improve accessibility, and create more functional and adaptable learning and support spaces.

At the same time, divestment planning will continue for Johnson Science Tower and Jones Hall, two outdated facilities no longer suited to current needs. Their removal will lower long-term maintenance costs and free sites for future opportunities.



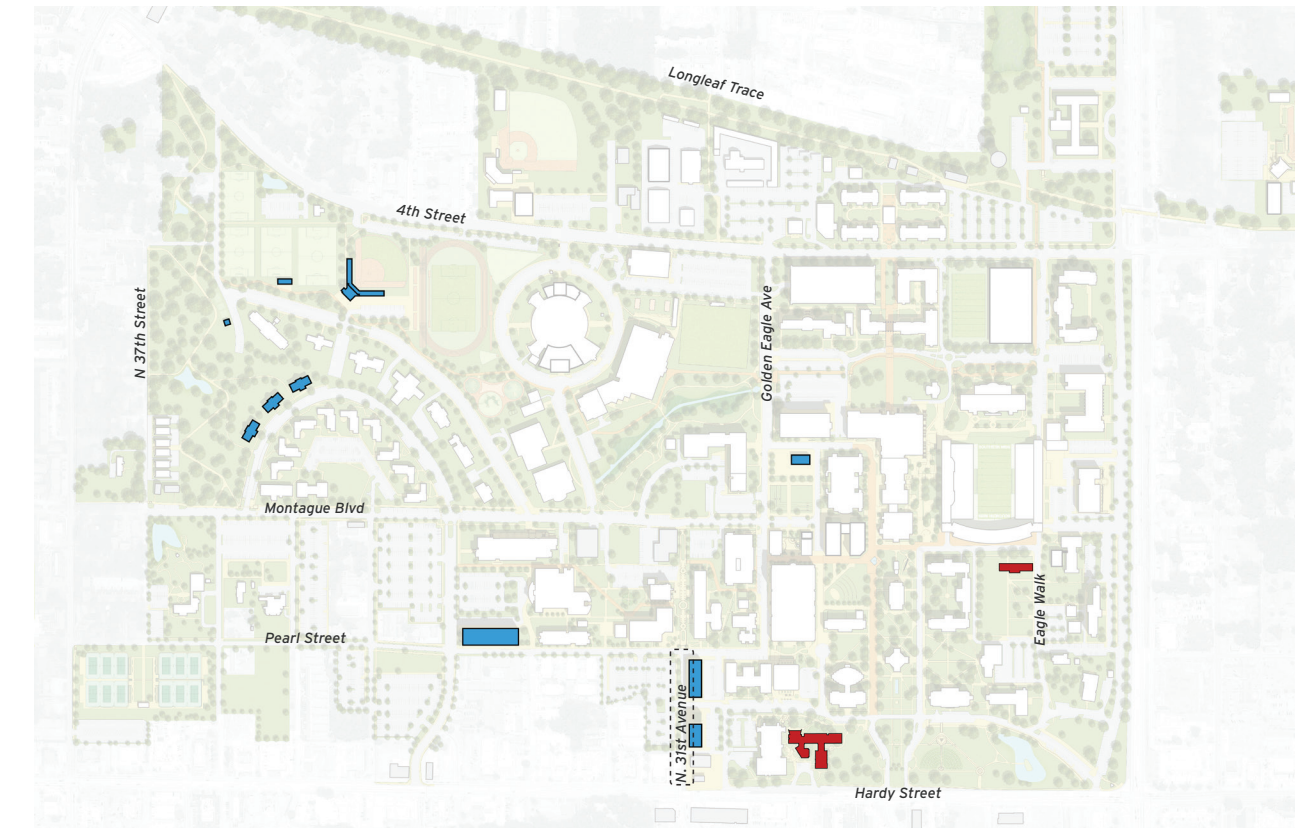
-  **Renovation**
-  **Divestment**
*Bolton Hall subject to consultation with MDAH
-  **Divestment Planning**
*Subject to consultation with MDAH




Funding-Dependent Investments

The plan identifies a set of funding-dependent projects that are not tied to a specific timeline but could advance whenever resources become available through private philanthropy, partnerships, or other external opportunities.

Foremost among these are new facilities that unlock key program relocations and provide transformative opportunities. A new Music Building is essential to relocate programs currently housed in Marsh Hall, enabling its eventual divestment. The proposed Sciences Pavilion would follow the divestment of Johnson Science Tower, introducing a shared campus-wide resource, a collaborative and multi-use space for STEM engagement, makerspace activity, and displayed research. Expanded athletic and recreation facilities are envisioned to strengthen competitiveness and student experience, but will require relocation of Greek houses to open appropriate development sites. A potential mixed-use development along North 31st Avenue would further activate the campus edge and strengthen community connections. As funding allows, the university will also evaluate opportunities to acquire adjacent parcels in both the Arts District and West Campus to strengthen USM’s presence along Hardy Street and West 4th Street and support future academic, residential, and mixed-use growth.

As these facilities come online, they will allow for the divestment of Marsh Hall and Jones Hall, reducing long-term liabilities and repurposing central sites. Complementing these investments, streetscape improvements along North 31st Avenue would enhance arrival, mobility, and campus identity.



-  **New Facility**
-  **Divestment**
*Subject to consultation with MDAH
-  **Streetscape Improvements**

Site Improvements

In addition to facility investments, the campus plan recommends a series of site improvements that will enhance the campus experience, strengthen identity, and improve day-to-day functionality. Because these projects are not tied to a single building, they offer flexible opportunities for implementation and can be phased alongside facility projects as early initiatives, priority capital investments, or next-tier efforts. From mobility and circulation upgrades to open space and streetscape enhancements, these improvements have the potential to deliver a visible and lasting impact on campus character, safety, and usability while supporting the broader goals of the five-year capital strategies and long-term planning framework.



Early Initiatives

Several site improvement projects are positioned as early initiatives because they provide visible enhancements to campus character and connectivity while requiring modest investment.

The Library Plaza, now under renovation, will soon emerge as a more welcoming hub for daily campus life. Upgrades to paving, landscaping, lighting, and seating will reinforce its role as a central gathering and circulation point.

In the Arts District, recently completed bike paths have already strengthened multimodal connections. Building on this progress, the network could be expanded to improve safety and convenience for cyclists traveling between academic, residential, and cultural destinations.

Northwood Drive could be redesigned to transform one of USM's most visible edges. Street trees and landscaping will soften the highway frontage, reduce the visual impact of angled parking, and provide an opportunity to brand this prominent corridor with a stronger Southern Miss identity.

Championship Lane could be reimagined as a more urban street in the historic campus core. Replacing angled parking with parallel parking will create a safer, pedestrian-oriented design that improves circulation, enhances walkability, and better connects key destinations.

Together, these projects will deliver immediate, high-impact improvements while laying the groundwork for larger long-term investments.



Priority Capital Investments

Priority site improvements focus on highly visible areas that can transform the campus experience and strengthen USM's identity. These projects align with major facility investments and ensure that open spaces and circulation systems evolve alongside academic and student life growth.

The activation of Centennial Green is tied to the planned Science Research Building, which will bring new activity to the historic space. Enhancements such as landscaping, lighting, seating, and event infrastructure will help revitalize the Green as a vibrant hub of campus life.

West 4th Street is one of the busiest pedestrian corridors, connecting residence halls, physical plant facilities, and Pete Taylor Park. Streetscape and traffic-calming improvements will create safer crossings and improve comfort for the many students and visitors who use this street daily.

Montague and Pearl Streets, key east-west corridors, will be upgraded as complete streets. Improvements will include safer on-street parking, bike facilities, street trees, and USM branding to create a stronger sense of place and a more balanced multimodal environment.

The Arboretum offers an opportunity to establish a new western campus edge that manages stormwater, connects into proposed green corridors, and provides a community destination that complements future recreation and athletics.



Next Tier Capital Investments

Next-tier site improvements focus on transformative projects that require significant coordination and resources but offer lasting impact on campus organization and identity. The most prominent initiative is the closure of North 34th Avenue to accommodate the consolidation of athletic facilities on the west side of campus.

This investment would relocate the softball and track and field complexes from their current sites east of campus to new facilities adjacent to Reed Green Coliseum and Pete Taylor Park. Bringing athletics together in this district creates a visible, branded edge along West 4th Street, showcasing Southern Miss pride while strengthening connections between competition venues. To achieve this vision, the current recreation fields would be relocated and expanded, ensuring that intramural and recreational needs continue to be met with improved facilities.

As a whole, this next-tier investment redefines the west edge of campus and establishes a bold, unified identity for athletics and student life.





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