



T e c h n i c a l M e m o r a n d u m

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Project Tennessee State University Campus Master Plan

Subject 5. Preliminary Physical Master Plan
5.1 Alternative Concepts

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To Tennessee State University

The objective of the work element is to test future programmatic requirements for accommodating land and building use and to test conceptual alternative configurations for the campus plan which address the goals and issues identified in previous Sections.

1. CAMPUS CHARACTER

The overall TSU campus character may be defined as those physical elements, both building and landscape, which make the University special or unique, and those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and/or belonging. Defining these place-making characteristics and documenting them so that beneficial patterns can be re-used and negative design impacts avoided acts to solidify the University's location, history, culture, and physical form. The master planning process identifies many of these important physical features, but it is highly recommended that TSU also develop additional design standards for campus land use, landscape, building aesthetics and/or furnishings and way-finding systems. Future campus growth should build upon these characteristics using them as guides to accentuate the "sense of place" and "belonging" on campus.

2. GENERAL PLANNING CONCEPTS

Over the years, a diagrammatic model has emerged which assists the planning team in identifying an overall campus character and aids the campus in understanding broad planning principals. The model contains four (4) broad characteristics which by themselves define opposite ends of the planning spectrum. These four qualities can be conceptualized as follows: Compact vs. Dispersed and Urban vs. Suburban. Simply put, these two sets of opposite characteristics can be described as forming:

Compact Campus

A compact campus is defined as one tending to be urban in nature, similar to downtown Nashville, demonstrating a high degree of close physical association between buildings, thereby limiting the scale of surrounding open spaces. Forms, spaces and objects within a compact campus are usually clearly defined, accentuating formal relationships and a sense of hierarchy. Open spaces often become a valued asset or amenity because much of the land is devoted to buildings. The central TSU campus core contains some of these

attributes. The von Williams campus embodies most of these principals which would be accentuated if TSU were to expand the Avon Williams campus by constructing another building within the public realm using city streets as defining real estate edges.

Dispersed Campus

A dispersed campus tends to be rural in nature, the spatial relationships, between buildings and open space are characteristically visual with long sweeping views across vast areas. Outdoor spaces are often ill-defined, appearing to be random with no real boundaries or edges; characterized by gradual transitions from one place to the next. Buildings may also be spread apart, responding more to the site than to each other. The vast abundance of open space makes it, by default, the common denominator and predominant design characteristic. There are few spaces which contain these properties or qualities on the TSU main campus.

Urban

The urban nature of campus planning is derived from the American urban landscape which is characterized by highly co-existent vehicular and pedestrian uses overlapping one another in a very structured and energized physical environment. At TSU, the environment draws its inspiration through a deliberate integration of people and vehicles within a common space that characterizes the campus plan as a city within a city. This scheme connects the entire campus, via multi-modal corridors, creating a consistent geometric typology across the campus landscape. The overall configuration establishes a rational building pattern along the corridors throughout campus. The main campus exhibits many of these characteristics especially in the arrival at the parking circle on John Merritt Boulevard. Avon Williams, as a single building, epitomizes the dense urban fabric of New York, Chicago or any other American city where buildings exist at the street level, are served by publicly owned and maintained vehicular systems and which also have limited or no outdoor spaces for use by the campus community other than those owned and supported by the city or park system.

Suburban Campus

The suburban campus model is based on the planning concepts embodied in most retail centers; small and large. In this model, emphasis is placed on providing customers with easy vehicular access, reasonably short walking distances between facilities and a general design focus that is functional rather than institutional. TSU's Main campus is quite large, expansive and organized around less orthogonal open spaces. By accentuating the landscape, not only as a geologic element, but also as the center of the social fabric and circulation system of the campus plan, TSU embraces open space making it a major focal point for campus, centering and guiding all new development. The campus core is used exclusively by pedestrians with vehicular activity being relegated to the periphery. Buildings respond to the site characteristics of campus creating a free flowing (non-geometric) pastoral form; highly responsive to the immediate surroundings. The form creates an organic pattern across the entire campus physically connecting the various precincts while preserving the natural landscape.

3. ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

The planning team developed a number of alternative schemes that demonstrated various options in organizing the overall campus, its open spaces and building locations. Although it is possible to address the compact/dispersed and urban/suburban philosophies in various optional plans, it was immediately obvious that TSU's main campus would never become a

highly compact urban plan as characterized, for example, by NYU. As a result, we developed a series of 4 alternative schemes that illustrate how the Main campus can become more effective by concentrating new construction within the current “quadrangle” plan thereby increasing the density, without eliminating the landscaped organization of exterior spaces.

3.1 OPTION – MASTERPLAN CONCEPT “A”

Refer to the following Campus Character 5.1 Figure 1.

General Summary: This option accepts the basic planning principals found in the current TSU main campus as a basis for new development. In the broadest sense, Plan A emphasizes finding new building sites around the existing academic “quads” which stretch between Hankel Hall to the north and Hale Residence Hall to the south; that space which is now referred to as the “academic core”. Plan A continues the campus process of migrating all parking to the perimeter which supports the continued growth of a pedestrian-friendly inner core. Service to this core would be maintained to all buildings from an emergency basis (fire and life safety) as well as from a materials and systems point of view. Plan A maintains John Merritt Boulevard as the primary vehicular access point to the campus core, thereby locating the formal “gateway” to campus at the intersection of 28th Avenue North, Ed Temple Boulevard and John Merritt. This intersection is currently less than attractive, and presents an undesirable first impression of the TSU campus. It is unlikely that TSU will be able to purchase the commercial property to the east of John Merritt Boulevard at 28th Avenue North, so alternate means of improving the “gateway” intersection must be developed. A possible solution rests with the Jefferson corridor development plan (JUMP).

To improve the arrival sequence to campus, the planning team suggests a full upgrade of John Merritt Boulevard to include

- removal and relocation of the power poles and communication cables,
- the planting of seasonal landscaping and overhanging trees,
- the introduction of new lighting standards which support banners celebrating TSU alumni or faculty who have contributed to the campus history
- as well as defining the location of wayfinding systems directing visitors to their immediate destination.

The terminus of John Merritt Boulevard would be at a newly constructed arrival court, just east of the current parking circle in the center of the visitor and student services precinct of campus. This area would include Floyd Payne, McWherter, Kean Hall, a new addition to Kean Hall and a new Alumni/Visitors’ center which would be constructed on the site of the rebuilt Hale Stadium. Visitors to any of these locations would be directed to a new 400 space parking garage located beneath the Alumni/Visitor’s Center. In addition to the new entry sequence along John Merritt, Plan A suggests construction of new entries at the intersection of Walter Davis Boulevard and 39th Avenue North (the triangular site of an objectionable commercial business) as well as at the entrance to the parking lots on the north side of campus.

New buildings or additions to existing buildings would include expanding Kean Hall for student functions, an addition to the existing library, new apartment style and suite style housing, new academic buildings along the main campus “quad”, new engineering buildings on the site of Torrence Hall (which would be demolished), new parking to the west of the

new engineering complex (either structured or surface) new agricultural facilities north of John Merritt, and new housing on the site of the current president's house which would be demolished or relocated.

Development zones are proposed alongside the corridors as a means to frame the space, accentuate campus attributes, provide easy accessibility, and establish a sense of connectivity. The location of the development zones are derived from the configuration of the corridors, creating a hierarchy of spaces and sense of campus uniformity. The development zones are physical reserves for future building sites of new student housing, academic, support, or parking facilities. The patterning of existing and future campus facilities creates a sense of cohesion and character inherent with reinforcing a "sense of place" on campus.

The design of the central core proposed to become open space that is exclusively used by pedestrians, with virtually no public vehicular access, as the current parking circle east of Floyd Payne is made pedestrian only. The core is also within a ten (10) minute walk to most portions of the newly expanded campus, thereby functioning as the hub from which corridors radiate out to the campus periphery. Spaces within the corridors are uniform and continuous, establishing clear routes and wayfinding for pedestrians and vehicles. There is high value placed on the aesthetic imagery of the corridors since they serve as the threshold or front door to campus and academic buildings.

General Affects:

- *Affect on Existing External Roads* – The existing roadway network is largely unchanged. Roadway improvements include extensions of existing roadways to create a contiguous matrix and streetscaping enhancements to accommodate pedestrian and vehicles. The improvements lessen confusion and frustration on and off campus and establish campus unity.
- *Affect on Existing Parking* – Unifying the smaller individual parking lots in and around the campus core reduces confusion and increases parking capacity. Providing parking along the periphery and/or roadway corridors permits easy access to all portions of campus.
- *Roadway Closure* – No existing roads are proposed to be closed, other than that served by a new drop off at the student center. The campus core will still accommodate access for maintenance, shipment, and safety related vehicles.
- *Impact on Pedestrian / Vehicular Conflicts* – The central core reduces the potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, as they are separated. Conflicts along the corridors should be minimized with careful attention given to the design and layout.
- *Access to High Use Facilities* – The proposed new corridors in addition to the enhanced existing corridors along with the distribution of parking lots throughout campus provides easy access to all the major high use facilities.

3.2 OPTION – MASTER PLAN CONCEPT "B"

Refer to the following Campus Character 5.1 Figure 2.

General Summary: This option accepts that John Merritt Boulevard is an important arterial connector and vehicular drive on the TSU campus and needs to be maintained but suggests that it may become a secondary roadway; replaced by a new arrival roadway along the

Heiman Street axes. This new roadway would become the ceremonial drive which all visitors would use to access the campus core. It would run east-west in direction, start at a new campus entrance located at Ed Temple and Heiman. Its design would be in the manner of a true boulevard with trees and landscape plantings growing in the center divider as well as along the road in general. The Heiman Boulevard would come together at the intersection near the Olympic Sculpture. Additional roads would be improved between the north entrance along Walter Davis Boulevard and continuing through campus to the existing turn-around on John Merritt Boulevard at McWherter Hall. This axial design for intercampus vehicular traffic would promote easy vehicular access to the eastern TSU hemisphere; blending vehicular access and pedestrian circulations systems.

To support this axial road system, Hale Stadium would be demolished and reconstructed north of the Olympic Sculpture where a pedestrian space for pre-game functions could take place. Both the Heiman Boulevard and north-south boulevard from Walter Davis to John Merritt would be upgraded to including new wayfinding systems, historical artifacts telling the TSU story and new lighting systems that support banners announcing TSU's accomplishments as an institution of higher learning.. The site of the existing Hale Stadium would become a large urban greenspace; a kind of town-center which could be the site for major outdoor functions like graduation, pep rallies and recreational activities. New academic buildings would be constructed around the perimeter of this green space further defining the edges and creating another major quadrangle on campus.

The new building sites and landscape suggestions made in Plan A are embodied in Plan B as well. A new housing quad would be constructed between Heiman Boulevard and John Merritt at Ed Temple Boulevard. This suite or apartment style housing would be closer to the apartment style housing across Ed Temple, making a more pleasant pedestrian connection from the existing apartment complex through campus to the academic core. The new campus entrance at Heiman and Ed Temple would increase the safe crossing of residents from the apartments east of Ed Temple.

General Affects:

- *Circulation and Parking:* An entirely new roadway would be constructed along the Heiman axis requiring demolition of Hale Stadium and the president's house. The existing road from Walter Davis to the Olympic Sculpture would be extended to John Merritt. Pedestrian routes would follow these new roadways, sharing the right-of-way with vehicular traffic. The major pedestrian routes in the academic precinct also serve as limited access for maintenance, shipment, and safety related vehicles. Pedestrian routes may also serve as recreational trails, providing continuous routes through campus. New parking structures are placed adjacent to highly active zones to meet the anticipate parking demands, reduce confusion, and improve parking conditions.
- *Affect on Existing External Roads* – The existing roadway network is largely unchanged, with the exception of the campus core as described above. Roadways are constructed at the campus core to create a contiguous pedestrian environment and vehicular environment, adding to the “urban” quality on campus.
- *Affect on Existing Parking* – Unifying the smaller individual parking lots in and around the campus core reduces confusion and increases parking capacity. Providing parking along the periphery and/or roadway corridors permits easy access to all portions of campus.

- *Roadway Closure* – None are proposed to be closed, removing public vehicular activity within the campus core. The campus core will still accommodate access for maintenance and safety related vehicles as well as visitors.
- *Impact on Pedestrian / Vehicular Conflicts* – The coexistence of major vehicular streets and pedestrian sidewalks is classically urban in nature. It does have the potential for increasing pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the central core.
- *Access to High Use Facilities* – The proposed new open space corridors, in addition to the distribution of parking lots, provides easy access to all the major high use facilities throughout campus.

3.3 OPTION – MASTER PLAN CONCEPT "C"

Refer to the following Campus Character 5.1 Figure 3.

General Summary. Master Plan Concept C is much the same as Plan B but deviates in the manner of vehicular arrival sequence. In this plan, John Merritt Boulevard continues to serve as an access point to campus, but a new, preferred entry “gateway” is proposed at Walter Davis Boulevard, passing through the Olympic Sculpture node and connecting to John Merritt at the current turn-around. To allow this alignment to take place, the existing Hale Stadium would be relocated north, being reconstructed on the site of the existing north parking lot. Additional parking lots would be constructed north of the new stadium to serve everyday classroom functions as well as special recreational, athletic or cultural events on campus. This new roadway would be designed in the style of a grand boulevard and would be landscaped accordingly. In addition, the same wayfinding system and TSU history elements would be integrated into the design. New buildings would be located on the eastern side of the current Hale Stadium site, along the face of the new roadway. A series of green spaces would be created on the west side of the new roadway and would promote an upgraded walking experience for students, staff, faculty, administrators and visitors. The terminus of this new roadway and John Merritt would be the major node on campus where vehicular traffic and foot traffic would come to a mall extent. A major greenspace would be constructed at this location allowing for rallies and other public gatherings to take place. The main academic core of campus would be built out as in Plans A and B where spaces between existing buildings, or new sites created by demolition of an existing building would support the construction of new or renovated academic facilities.

General Affects:

- *Circulation and Parking:* An entirely new roadway would be constructed along the Walter Davis-Olympic Sculpture axis requiring demolition of Hale Stadium. The existing road from Walter Davis to the Olympic Sculpture would be extended to John Merritt. Pedestrian routes would follow these new roadways, sharing the right-of-way with vehicular traffic. The major pedestrian routes in the academic precinct also serve as limited access for maintenance, shipment, and safety related vehicles. New parking structures are placed adjacent to highly active zones to meet the anticipate parking demands, reduce confusion, and improve parking conditions.
- *Affect on Existing External Roads* – The existing roadway network is largely unchanged, with the exception of the campus core as described above. Roadways are constructed at the campus core to create a contiguous pedestrian environment and vehicular environment, adding to the “urban quality” of campus.

- *Affect on Existing Parking* – Unifying the smaller individual parking lots in and around the campus core reduces confusion and increases parking capacity. Providing parking along the periphery and/or roadway corridors permits easy access to all portions of campus.
- *Roadway Closure* – None are proposed to be closed, removing public vehicular activity within the campus core. The campus core will still accommodate access for maintenance and safety related vehicles as well as visitors.
- *Impact on Pedestrian / Vehicular Conflicts* – The coexistence of major vehicular streets and pedestrian sidewalks is classically urban in nature. It does have the potential for increasing pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the central core.
- *Access to High Use Facilities* – The proposed new open space corridors, in addition to the distribution of parking lots, provides easy access to all the major high use facilities throughout campus.

3.4 OPTION – MASTER PLAN CONCEPT "D"

Refer to the following Campus Character 5.1 Figure 2.

General Summary: This option recognizes John Merritt as the primary entrance “gateway” and the most important arterial for visitors to campus. Like scheme A, John Merritt would be upgraded from 28th Avenue North to its terminus with new wayfinding systems, lighting standards with banners, more landscaping materials, etc in order to promote a professional and pleasing entry sequence. In Scheme D, Hale Stadium is reconstructed but only by moving 50 yards or less to the north from its current location. This position allows for the construction of an Alumni/Visitors Center at the terminus of John Merritt in, or adjacent to, the new football stadium as well as significant below grade parking for visitors. A major walking path between the Olympic Sculpture and John Merritt Boulevard’s terminus would provide opportunity for an “Athletic Walk of Fame” to be constructed. New building for the Alumni Center, Visitor’s Center, Faculty Club and Women’s Study Center could be constructed at this intersection as well. A pedestrian gathering space could be constructed between these new buildings and the new stadium to provide space for per-game functions, rallies, etc. The academic core remains largely unchanged in Plan D from the others presented.

General Affects:

- *Circulation and Parking:* No new roadways would be constructed in this scheme. Pedestrian routes would follow existing paths, sharing the right-of-way with vehicular traffic to a very limited degree; mostly along John Merritt. The major pedestrian routes in the academic precinct serve as limited access for maintenance, shipment, and safety related vehicles. New parking structures are placed adjacent to highly active zones to meet the anticipate parking demands, reduce confusion, and improve parking conditions.
- *Affect on Existing External Roads* – The existing roadway network is largely unchanged, with the exception of the campus core as described above. Roadways are constructed at the campus core to create a contiguous pedestrian environment and vehicular environment, adding to the “urban quality” of campus.
- *Affect on Existing Parking* – Unifying the smaller individual parking lots in and around the campus core reduces confusion and increases parking capacity. Providing parking

along the periphery and/or roadway corridors permits easy access to all portions of campus.

- *Impact on Pedestrian / Vehicular Conflicts* – The coexistence of major vehicular streets and pedestrian sidewalks is classically urban in nature. It does have the potential for increasing pedestrian/vehicular conflict at the central core.
- *Access to High Use Facilities* – The proposed new open space corridors, in addition to the distribution of parking lots, provides easy access to all the major high use facilities throughout campus.