

# 2025 CAMPUS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

December 2025



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Campus Master Plan is a fluid document and proposed progress is dependent on a number of factors including availability of funding and philanthropy, future space use studies, and the ongoing needs of campus development.



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

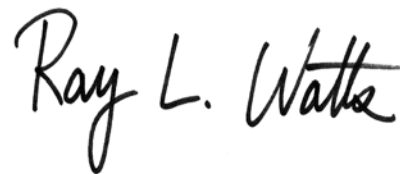
UAB continues to build upon the strong foundation laid by our Campus Master Plan, which has guided thoughtful development of one of the most beautiful, sustainable, state-of-the-art urban campuses in the nation. This 2025 update reflects the evolving needs of our institution and the enduring values that shape our mission. It was developed through broad campus collaboration and is closely aligned with our Strategic Plan, Forging Ahead.

Over the next five years, we will undertake a series of capital projects designed to advance our core pillars of education, research, patient care, and community engagement. This includes the construction of new facilities, renovations that modernize and extend the life of existing buildings, and expansion of our central utilities systems to advance efficiency, optimize resource use, and improve resiliency. Each investment has been carefully prioritized to strengthen our capabilities and enhance the experience of those who learn, work, and heal on our campus.

In addition to expanding capacity, we are focused on creating an environment that is more walkable, connected, and distinctive. By adding green space, improving safe and accessible pathways, and creating inviting gathering

areas, we aim to enrich campus life and strengthen the sense of place that defines UAB. With more than sixty acres of usable green space and several LEED-certified buildings already established, we remain committed to a campus that supports accessibility, well-being, and multimodal transit. These proposed enhancements will not only improve daily experience but also reinforce our role as a responsible steward of public resources and an engaged partner in the city of Birmingham.

We are grateful to our University of Alabama System Board of Trustees and the many supporters – students, faculty, staff, elected officials, alumni, donors, and community partners – who help bring this vision to life. Together, we are creating a campus that reflects the strength and ambition of UAB: a destination for opportunity, innovation, and excellence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray L. Watts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ray L. Watts, M.D.  
UAB President

# PURPOSE

**The University of Alabama at Birmingham's 2025 Master Plan serves as a guiding document for how the university will shape and enhance its physical campus over the next five years.**

The Master Plan provides a clear framework for making strategic decisions about new facilities, renovations, land use, and infrastructure investments on UAB's campus. It reflects UAB's ongoing commitment to using its physical environment to support its vision of being a world-class research university and academic health system.

The Master Plan reinforces UAB's position as a national leader among comprehensive public urban research universities with academic medical centers. It aligns closely with Forging Ahead, UAB's strategic plan, and supports the themes of serving students, patients, the city, and the broader global community through innovation, discovery, and the application of knowledge to solve real-world challenges.

As the university continues to expand its programs and impact, the Master Plan helps ensure the management of the physical campus is thoughtful, well-coordinated, and consistent with UAB's values. It encourages development that enhances campus identity, optimizes resource management, and improves the experience of all who utilize and spend time on the campus.

The process for the UAB Master Plan follows the requirements established by the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees' policy for Planning and Management of Facilities and Other Capital Assets, as well as the review process set forth by the City of Birmingham Planning Commission.



# PROCESS

## INFORMATION GATHERING

The Campus Master Plan was created using input from multiple Deans and administrative leaders and several studies for UAB and the City of Birmingham. This information focused on current facility utilization, departmental space needs criteria, projected growth, existing and future facility needs, and opportunities for alignment with City projects.

## SYNTHESIS

This task involved a systematic evaluation of all essential studies and metrics shaping the Campus Master Plan. Key considerations included future growth projections, building and space utilization, community impact, vehicular road patterns, pedestrian circulation, natural features, and central utilities demand. This resulted in a comprehensive foundation for informed strategies and decision-making tactics to ensure the plan supports both the current needs and long-term campus development.

## DEVELOPMENT

The Campus Master Plan was carefully developed and curated to clearly and transparently communicate the vision for the university's future. This stage focused on organizing data, refining content, and preparing a cohesive document that translates complex planning concepts into an accessible and actionable plan.

## ENGAGEMENT

This task focused on evaluating and refining the Campus Master Plan through a structured public input strategy. Engagement efforts included outreach to UAB students, faculty, staff, departments, city leadership, surrounding neighborhoods, and the general public. Feedback was documented, analyzed, and reviewed with university administration and the Campus Planning and Facilities Advisory Committee (CPFAC) to ensure that identified potential projects reflected both institutional priorities and future space needs.

## ADOPTION

This task established the framework for formally adopting and implementing the Campus Master Plan. Approval from the Board of Trustees and UAB Administration confirmed the plan as the guiding reference for future decision-making. As a living document, the Campus Master Plan will continue to evolve through follow-up presentations, outreach, and ongoing dialogue with the campus and community, ensuring transparency, accountability, and adaptability over time.





UNIVERSITY HALL  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**2.0 CAMPUS CONTEXT**

# BACKGROUND

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has deep roots in Birmingham's history, beginning with the founding of the Medical College of Alabama in 1859 and the opening of the Birmingham Extension Center in 1936. In 1944, the University entered into a long-term agreement with Jefferson County to use the Jefferson and Hillman Hospitals, acquiring the land on which they stood. The following year, the Medical College relocated from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham, officially establishing what would become the University's academic medical center.

By 1954, the Extension Center had moved to a new building next to the Medical Center, bringing UAB's academic and clinical components together for the first time. A decade later, the Alabama Legislature called for an expansion of medical education across the state, leading to the formal administrative merger of the Extension Center and Medical Center in 1966. This newly unified institution became known as the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

In 1968, UAB received federal approval and funding for a major expansion adding 45 city blocks to its footprint. One year later, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

became an autonomous institution within the newly created University of Alabama System. The University broke ground on its first westward expansion in 1970 with new academic buildings for the College of General Studies. In 1977, the formation of UAB's Athletics Department added momentum to the development of the western side of campus, a pattern that continues today.

UAB's 2001 Campus Master Plan established the need for meaningful open space and shaped what would become the Campus Green, a central organizing feature completed in 2008. In 2006, the University acquired the former HealthSouth Medical Center, further expanding its presence along the southern edge of campus.

Between 2020 and 2024, UAB navigated the global pandemic with resilience and purpose, serving as a key leader in Alabama's public health response while continuing to grow. The University advanced major capital projects, added new research and academic facilities, and expanded its national reputation across healthcare, innovation, and higher education. Investments during this period also deepened UAB's role in Birmingham's economic and community development.



*Jefferson Hospital (1940s)*



*Mervyn H. Sterne Library (1975)*



*Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences (1997)*



# URBAN CONTEXT

The University of Alabama at Birmingham occupies a 100-block footprint within the southwest quadrant of Birmingham's City Center and serves as Alabama's largest single employer and a nationally recognized urban research institution. Since its formal establishment as an autonomous university in 1969, UAB has grown from a four-block academic and medical complex along 20th Street South into an integrated urban campus encompassing more than 250 buildings across 100+ city blocks.

UAB's campus is bordered by a mix of historic neighborhoods with Five Points South to the southeast, Glen Iris to the southwest, and Southside to the east. This setting provides UAB with access to a diverse urban context, while also allowing the university to contribute to Birmingham's economic development, innovation system, and quality of life.

The city's original street grid is largely unchanged since Birmingham's founding in 1871 and it continues to guide campus expansion and support multimodal circulation.

This network supports a high level of connectivity whether by foot, bike, car, or transit. UAB currently maintains more than 20 miles of pedestrian corridors, 1.7 miles of dedicated bike lanes, and proximity to multiple Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) routes, including MAX Transit service. Wayfinding, lighting, and intersection upgrades have been installed in high-traffic zones to improve safety and connectivity.

The Campus Master Plan prioritizes redevelopment of underutilized or inefficient parcels with a focus on increasing density, reinforcing architectural cohesion, and enhancing the public realm. Sites identified for transformation will accommodate new academic, clinical, research, and residential development or be converted into flexible open spaces that support outdoor learning, collaboration, and wellness. Future development will align with UAB's Strategic Plan by advancing knowledge-driven research, education, and patient care, while promoting a campus environment that is accessible, high-performing, and deeply integrated into the city it serves.

# CAMPUS GROWTH



1945



1959



2001



2011



**1971**



**1982**



**2020**

Over the past 75 years, UAB has evolved from a small cluster of buildings into an integrated urban campus spanning more than 100 city blocks. As the campus footprint has matured, future growth will emphasize space optimization and strategic reinvestment within the existing footprint rather than outward expansion.

This approach prioritizes efficient use of land and infrastructure, promotes connectivity across districts, and supports a more walkable, sustainable, and cohesive campus.

**HOSPITAL  
ADMIN**

Birmingham's  
Railroad  
Park

**SUPPORT**

**ATHLETICS &  
RECREATION**

**HOSPITAL**

**ACADEMIC  
HOSPITAL  
RESEARCH**

**ACADEMIC**

**SOUTHERN  
RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH**

**CULTURAL**

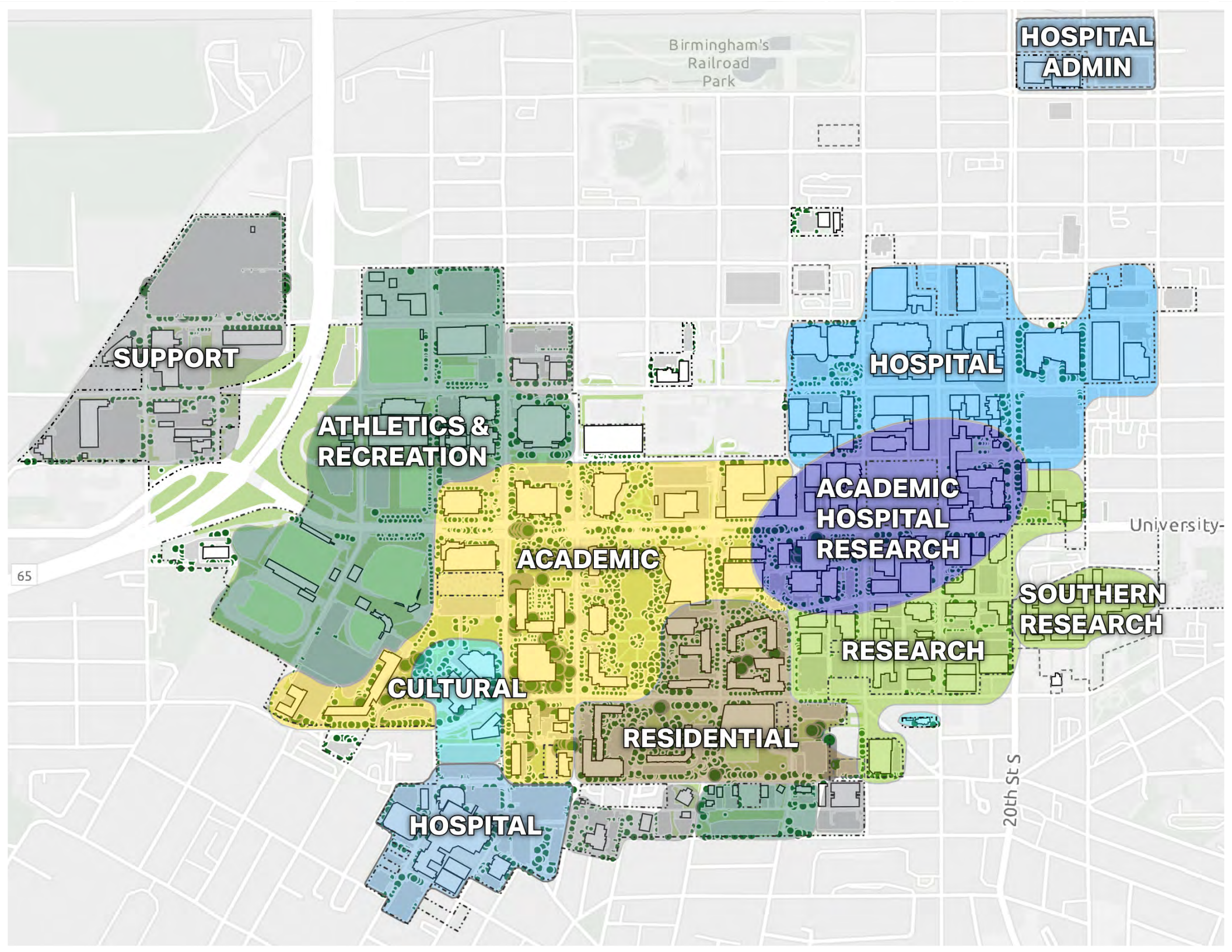
**RESIDENTIAL**

**HOSPITAL**

University-

20th St S

65



# FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

At over 100 city blocks, UAB's campus is intentionally organized into functional zones with areas of overlap that encourage collaboration. This approach responds to existing physical conditions while ensuring a cohesive and organized university environment in the heart of Birmingham. The functional organization is an important consideration when siting new capital facilities to maintain this sense of order and connectivity.

Academic and research areas span across the campus core, fostering close connections between classrooms and laboratories in a pedestrian-friendly setting. Most classrooms are within a 15-minute walk of a research facility. A central collaboration zone links the academic, research, and hospital districts, reinforcing UAB's strategic objective of enhancing its institutional culture of collaboration and innovation.

The hospital district in the northeastern corner of campus now spans 12 city blocks and remains closely integrated with UAB's research zone and partner institutions such as Children's of Alabama, Southern Research, and the Veterans Administration Hospital.

UAB Hospital–Highlands on the southwestern side of campus extends the university's clinical reach. Future development in and around the hospital district will be sensitive to the scale and character of surrounding communities.

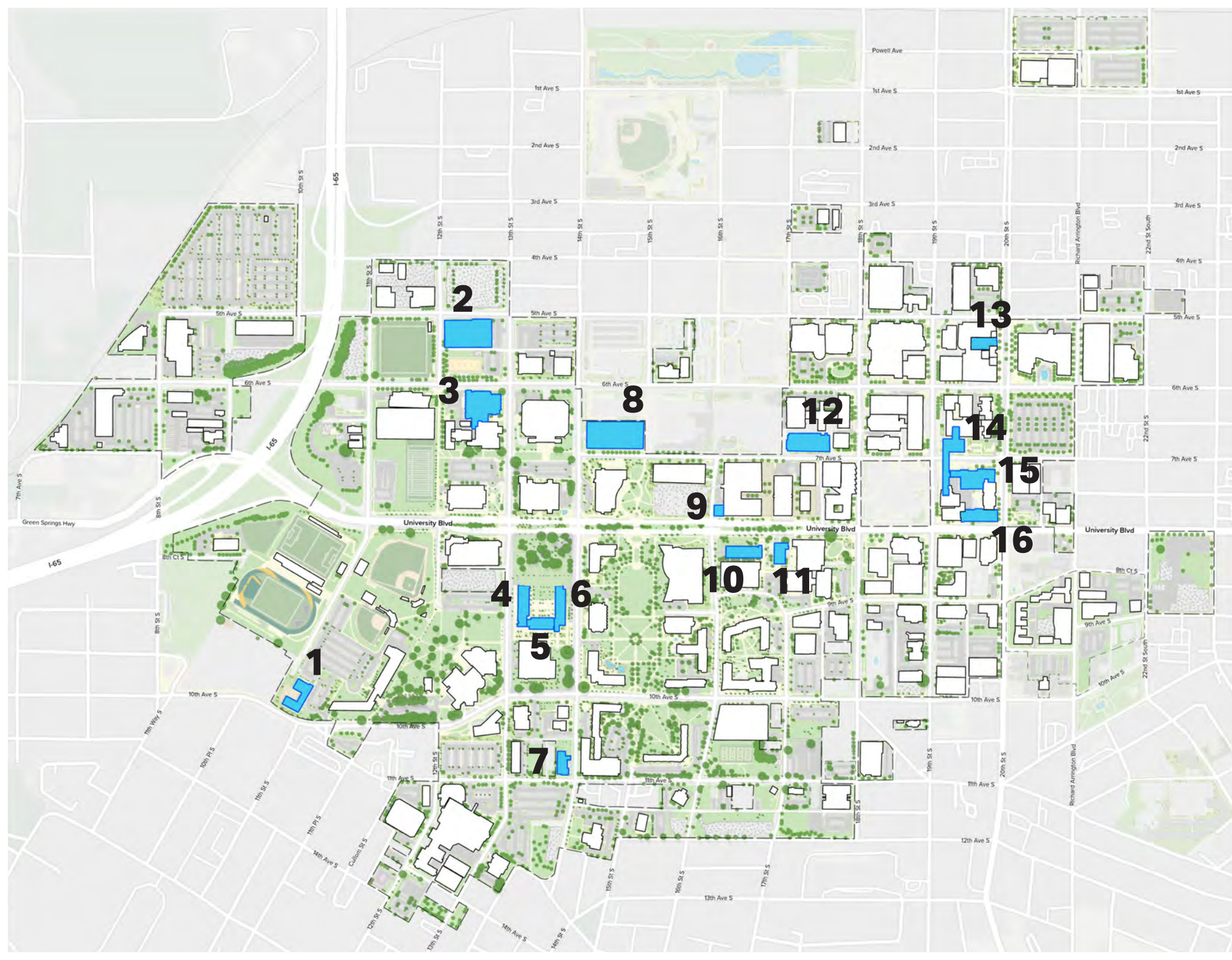
Student housing lines the southern edge of campus along 10th Avenue South near the Five Points South business district, fostering interaction between students and the surrounding community. Outdoor athletic and recreational facilities are located toward the western edge of campus, creating a green buffer along the interstate. The Cultural district, anchored by the Alys Stephens Performing Arts Center and Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts (AEIVA), houses arts-related departments and performance venues.

Campus support services and express parking continue to shift west of Interstate 65 to the Support district, freeing up central campus space for academic, research, and clinical uses.

# CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT 2020-2025



- 1)** UAB Early Learning Center
- 2)** 501 Building Renovation
- 3)** UAB Basketball Practice Facility Renovation
- 4)** Gorrie Hall: Science & Engineering Complex Phase II
- 5)** South Science Hall: Science & Engineering Complex Phase I
- 6)** East Science Hall: Science & Engineering Complex Phase I
- 7)** Student Assembly Building
- 8)** 14th Street Parking Deck
- 9)** Volker Hall Atrium
- 10)** Ryals Public Health Building Renovation
- 11)** Webb Building Renovation
- 12)** Rehabilitation Pavilion
- 13)** Lyons-Harrison Faculty Office Tower Renovation
- 14)** Altec-Styslinger Genomic Medicine & Data Sciences Building
- 15)** School of Dentistry Building Renovation
- 16)** McCallum Basic Health Sciences Building Renovation







## 3.0 PROGRESS AND GOALS

# Goal 1: Vibrant Student Learning Environment

**To deliver a richly supportive setting for student learning, research, and living that is a hub for innovation, research, medicine, and creativity**

| STRATEGIES                                                                   | OUTCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Continue to locate academic services within the academic core                | Constructed a new Student Assembly Building in the academic core near residence halls to create a central, collaborative space where students can gather, study, and host events. Identified the site and programming for a new Student Services & Administration Building, which will bring core academic and administrative services closer to the Hill Student Center to streamline access and support for students.      |
| Modernize existing facilities to improve functionality and appearance        | Renovated multiple academic classrooms, study spaces, and libraries to modernize the student experience. Major renovations of research and laboratory spaces improve research efficiency and faculty recruitment. Improved restrooms, elevator lobbies, and public spaces to revitalize the on-campus experience.                                                                                                            |
| Provide new classrooms and innovative labs to serve student-focused learning | Completed Phase I of the new Science and Engineering complex and began construction on Phase II, providing new, modern, and state-of-the-art facilities for UAB's academic science programs. Began construction on a new Biomedical Science and Psychology Building to expand access to cutting edge research and academic facilities.                                                                                       |
| Strengthen the on-campus living and dining experience                        | Constructed McMahon Residence Hall, adding 720 new beds and over 230,000 square feet of new space for student life, including a new dining hall. Additional dining vendors brought to campus to expand student choices. Outdoor space improvements across campus expanded recreational and relaxation opportunities, including at Unity and Limbaugh Parks, Campus Green, and the new Science and Engineering Complex plaza. |
| Develop athletics facilities that meets the needs of each group              | Constructed new basketball practice facility as well as locker rooms and storage facilities for baseball and softball programs. Improved baseball field and seating made to enhance player and fan experience. Additional renovations or new facilities identified for Bartow Arena, tennis courts, intramural fields football fields, and baseball and softball stands.                                                     |

# PROGRESS TO 2020 MASTER PLAN GOALS

## Goal 2: Quality Patient Experience

**To continue to provide a world class environment for patient care for the city of Birmingham, and the state of Alabama**

| STRATEGIES                                                                          | OUTCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improve inpatient and outpatient experience from arrival to departure               | Expanded inpatient and outpatient facilities, including integration of St. Vincent's facilities, and planned a North Pavilion Emergency Department expansion. Parking improvements at Highlands and the launch of a wayfinding app have further improved accessibility and the overall patient experience. Facility adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened UAB's ability to deliver safe, efficient care during future emergencies. |
| Construct new and renovate existing facilities to deliver the best in care services | Invested over \$60 million in major construction projects and over \$125 million in renovations over the past 5 years to ensure the best in patient care services. 3 major construction projects added 101,400 GSF of new space, and 17 major renovations renewed 465,000 GSF of existing space, allowing for addition of new labs with imaging equipment, over 80 new patient beds, and a new virtual ICU service.                                |
| Enhance wayfinding throughout for vehicular and pedestrian circulation              | Installed new signage along 3rd and 4th Avenues to guide patients from highways to the hospital, along with intersection upgrades to improve pedestrian safety and movement. Launched the development of a comprehensive signage and circulation master plan, delayed briefly by COVID but now moving forward through the 2025 Master Plan Update.                                                                                                 |
| Provide facilities with capability for state-of-the-art technology and innovation   | Invested in over \$185 million in medical technology such as surgical robots, MRI and CT machines, ventilators, linear accelerators, angio imaging systems, and anesthesia machines. Opened the Technology Innovation Center which made UAB one of the Top 500 most powerful IT systems in the world supporting a growing research profile.                                                                                                        |

## Goal 3: Enhanced Research Setting

**To continue to modernize facilities that will drive research and innovation to meet the needs of the global community**

| STRATEGIES                                                                                          | OUTCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop facilities that will foster collaboration and innovation                                    | Renovated or constructed 6 facilities, such as the new Science and Engineering Complex Phase 1, to offer collaboration-focused features including project rooms, research labs allowing student shadowing, team learning environments, and state-of-the-art technology. |
| Renovate existing facilities with increased efficiency and diversity to grow research opportunities | Completed a full interior renovation of the McCallum Building along with multiple others to provide additional state-of-the-art wet and dry lab space, additional office space for new recruits, and specialized equipment to support high level research               |
| Integrate within the campus community through better connectivity and transparency                  | Improved interior facility interaction with the public realm through projects such as the new McCallum lobby entrance and Genomics conference center                                                                                                                    |

## Goal 4: Embrace Urban Context

**To provide a vibrant, lively environment that supports the safety, mobility, and sustainability of the campus and community**

| STRATEGIES                                                                            | OUTCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Create network of vibrant open spaces for active learning, gathering, and recreation  | Renovated existing green spaces and constructed new plazas and seating areas, providing a campuswide network of green spaces connected by pedestrian paths to support on campus alternative transit, recreation, and outdoor relaxation                                     |
| Implement cost effective utility system with low carbon footprint and energy index    | Expanded central utility systems to improve resiliency and ensure continuity of operations in the event of potential emergencies, with future expansions planned                                                                                                            |
| Refine parking and multimodal transportation systems that improve access and movement | Expanded bike lanes and sidewalks, streamlined shuttle routes, and modernized parking with virtual permits and license plate recognition; making daily travel more efficient and accessible, most notably at Highlands, where patient spaces are now consistently available |
| Integrate on-going campus safety efforts across campus                                | Strengthened campus safety by expanding and mapping HELP phones, integrating UAB Police communications with the City of Birmingham for faster response, and coordinating campuswide lighting and vegetation management to improve visibility and security                   |

# PROGRESS TO 2020 MASTER PLAN GOALS

## Goal 5: Community Engagement

**To form a harmonious and purposeful partnership across campus and with neighboring communities**

| STRATEGIES                                                             | OUTCOME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Embrace the city as a living and learning laboratory                   | Offer a variety of programs and studies through the School of Public Health, including postpartum awareness bracelet pilot to reduce maternal complications, training in global health implementation research, and long-running population studies such as CARDIA, REGARDS, and RURAL. Provide student and faculty fellowships and initiatives promoting wellness                                                    |
| Create a seamless transition between campus and city                   | Strengthened the connection between campus and community by partnering with the City of Birmingham and ALDOT on projects like the Gateways initiative to improve and beautify key entry points. Creating a more integrated environment that reflects our urban setting by applying Public Realm Guidelines, engaging regularly with neighborhood and business associations, and softening campus edges                |
| Consider city aspirations in planning and developing stages            | Facilities staff attend local neighborhood meetings adjacent to campus to communicate upcoming projects and receive feedback, and follow the City of Birmingham's development design and construction process through participation in Birmingham Planning Commission. Coordinate closely with the City of Birmingham Transportation to stay aware of upcoming City projects and identify opportunities for alignment |
| Provide transparent communication for development strategies and plans | Presented the Campus Master Plan to three adjacent Neighborhood Planning Groups for input and continue to meet with them ahead of individual project starts. A Construction Map on the UAB Facilities website now gives the public easy access to project locations, timelines, and potential impacts to sidewalks, roads, and the public realm                                                                       |

# 2025 MASTER PLAN GOALS

## 1

### Enhance the on-campus experience

***Cultivating a campus that is walkable, service oriented, and safe***

Develop exterior signage and wayfinding standards to help visitors and the campus community navigate more effectively

Strengthen site planning to ensure projects integrate with their surroundings, enhance connectivity and safety, and reinforce UAB's distinctive character

Centralize student services and administrative functions in the academic core of campus

## 2

### Steward resources and support growth

***Manage UAB's physical footprint and infrastructure efficiently and responsibly to promote long-term resilience, fiscal health, and innovation***

Advance space optimization, utility upgrades, and adaptive reuse to maintain flexible, efficient, and future-ready laboratory, clinical, and academic spaces

Implement water, energy, and materials management strategies and regional partnerships that balance performance, resilience, and cost-effectiveness

Continue implementing cutting edge technologies and data tools for tracking space utilization, physical assets, and infrastructure performance

**The 2025 Master Plan goals establish a framework for how UAB will guide development, investment, and stewardship of its physical campus. These goals reflect the University's commitment to enhancing daily experiences, supporting strategic growth, strengthening connections, and fostering health and wellbeing.**

# 3

## **Strengthen identity and connectivity**

***Reinforce UAB's identity as a cohesive urban campus integrated with its surrounding community***

Establish and/or update architectural, landscape, and signage standards across all districts to create a unified campus character

Improve multimodal access for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit users

Enhance sense of place and visual connections between academic, research, medical, and cultural areas

# 4

## **Advance a healthier, more active campus**

***Support the goals of a health promoting university by shaping a built environment that promotes physical activity, wellness, and connection to nature***

Expand pedestrian and bicycle corridors to encourage safe and active transportation

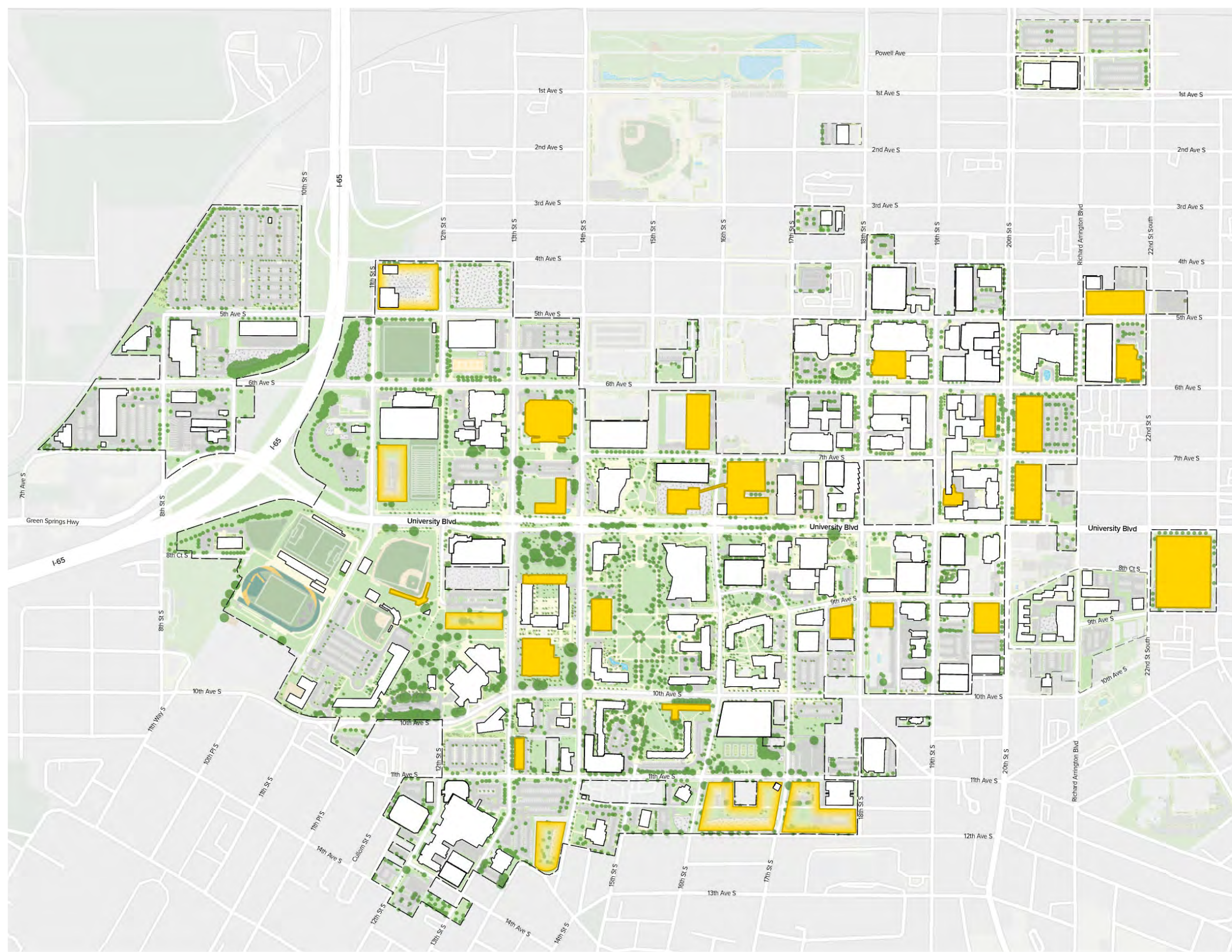
Improve existing and build new green spaces to support relaxation, recreation, and outdoor learning

Integrate wellbeing and activity into the daily campus experience to support recreation and healthy eating





**4.0 2030 VISION**



# LOOKING AHEAD: UAB IN 2030

The 2030 Vision Plan is central to the Master Plan's role as a living document that is flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances while remaining grounded in clear, goal-oriented priorities. It provides a framework for adapting to evolving academic, research, and clinical needs while guiding capital investments toward projects that strengthen UAB's long-term mission and campus environment.



Proposed Locations for Future  
Major Capital Projects



Proposed Locations for Future  
Open Space Major Capital Projects

The vision emphasizes strategic use of the existing campus footprint by promoting appropriate density, purposeful design, and efficient use of land and infrastructure. As new facilities are introduced, underperforming or outdated buildings may be removed or repositioned to reduce energy demands, reassess maintenance needs, and create opportunities for higher-performing academic, laboratory, and clinical environments. Organizing related uses and improving physical connections between them further supports collaboration and a stronger sense of campus cohesiveness.

Parking and transportation remain integral to this strategy to ensure that campus growth is supported by thoughtful access, circulation, and multimodal options. Together, these elements enhance quality of life, strengthen environments for teaching, research and patient care, expand pedestrian connections and green space, and align physical development with UAB's Strategic Plan goals.





## **5.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS**

# GETTING AROUND CAMPUS

UAB is committed to creating a campus that is easy to navigate, safe for all travelers, and supportive of a healthy lifestyle. At the heart of this effort is the pedestrian experience. A connected network of walkways and open spaces forms the backbone of campus mobility, linking academic, residential, research, hospital, and recreational zones. These pathways are designed to be comfortable, accessible, and intuitive, encouraging walking as the primary way of moving around campus while also strengthening connections to surrounding Birmingham neighborhoods.

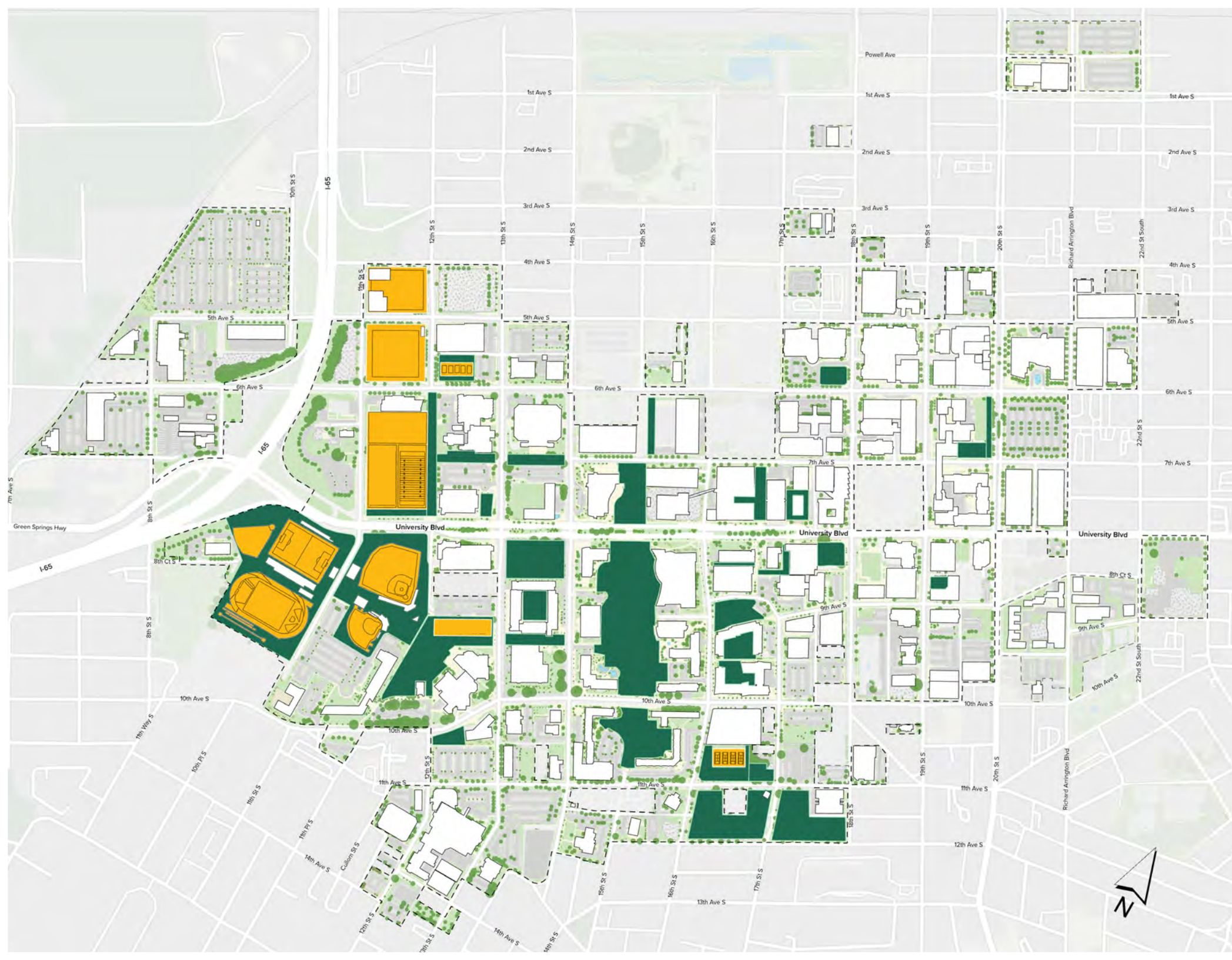
Complementing this walkable environment is a robust system of public and shared transportation. UAB Transit buses and on-demand shuttles provide convenient options for traveling across campus and to nearby destinations, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. These services are designed with flexibility in mind, offering reliable connections between major academic, residential, and clinical areas to ensure that mobility across campus is efficient, accessible, and responsive to student, employee, and patient needs.

UAB also supports transportation options that promote healthy, sustainable travel choices. Bike lanes, racks, and storage facilities make cycling a viable and secure option, while designated scooter areas and pedestrian friendly corridors support micromobility. These programs expand travel options while helping to reduce congestion and the environmental impact of campus transportation.

Parking at UAB is planned and managed to support this multi-modal system. Rather than being a final destination, parking facilities are strategically located to serve as gateways, connecting drivers to the broader network of walkways, shuttles, and bike routes. By dispersing parking across campus and integrating it with pedestrian and transit networks, UAB ensures that parking supports efficient access rather than competing with the campus environment.









Proposed Athletic and  
Recreation Open Spaces  
by 2030



Proposed Green Spaces  
by 2030



# OPEN AND GREEN SPACES

UAB's open space framework weaves together a network of green and open spaces that enhance the campus experience while integrating seamlessly with Birmingham's urban fabric. Green spaces, such as the Campus Green and landscaped courtyards, serve as the signature gathering areas and focal points of the academic and residential cores while offering smaller-scale areas for informal interaction, study, and reflection across campus. Athletic and recreation spaces, such as the sports and intramural fields, are designed to support active play and athletic pursuits.

These spaces are linked through a thoughtfully planned system of pedestrian pathways and corridors connecting major campus zones while preserving key sightlines. The primary north-south pedestrian axis along former 15th Street South corridor connects student housing to recreation, dining, and student center facilities through the Campus Green. The east-west axis along the former 9th Avenue South corridor provides continuous pedestrian route across campus, linking the research, residential, academic, and athletic cores together.

Future campus open and green space projects will focus on strengthening this network, enhancing walkability, and defining the edges of open spaces through intentional building placement and landscape design. New projects contribute to a cohesive, vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly campus through this connected approach that supports daily movement, recreation, and relaxation.

# CAMPUS UTILITIES

Over the past two decades, UAB has expanded its central utility system to provide reliable chilled water and steam service across the campus and the medical center. By consolidating aging, stand-alone units into centrally managed utilities, the university has reduced costs associated with maintenance and equipment replacement while improving efficiency and service reliability. The 2020 Industrial Water Project further strengthened this system by supplying non-potable water to central utility plants, lowering demand for treated potable water.

Since the last Master Plan Update, UAB has completed a major expansion of the system through the Athletic District, closing a loop that now provides full campus redundancy. This configuration allows for reverse flow during outages or emergencies, ensuring continuity of service across academic, research, and medical facilities.

Looking ahead, UAB plans to extend central utilities to UAB Hospital Highlands to replace its aging independent system, and to complete a smaller loop to serve the hospital district. These projects will further strengthen system resiliency and support future growth while maintaining reliable, cost-effective utility service.



Steam provides building heating and humidity control, and supports critical sterilization services for hospital and research facilities



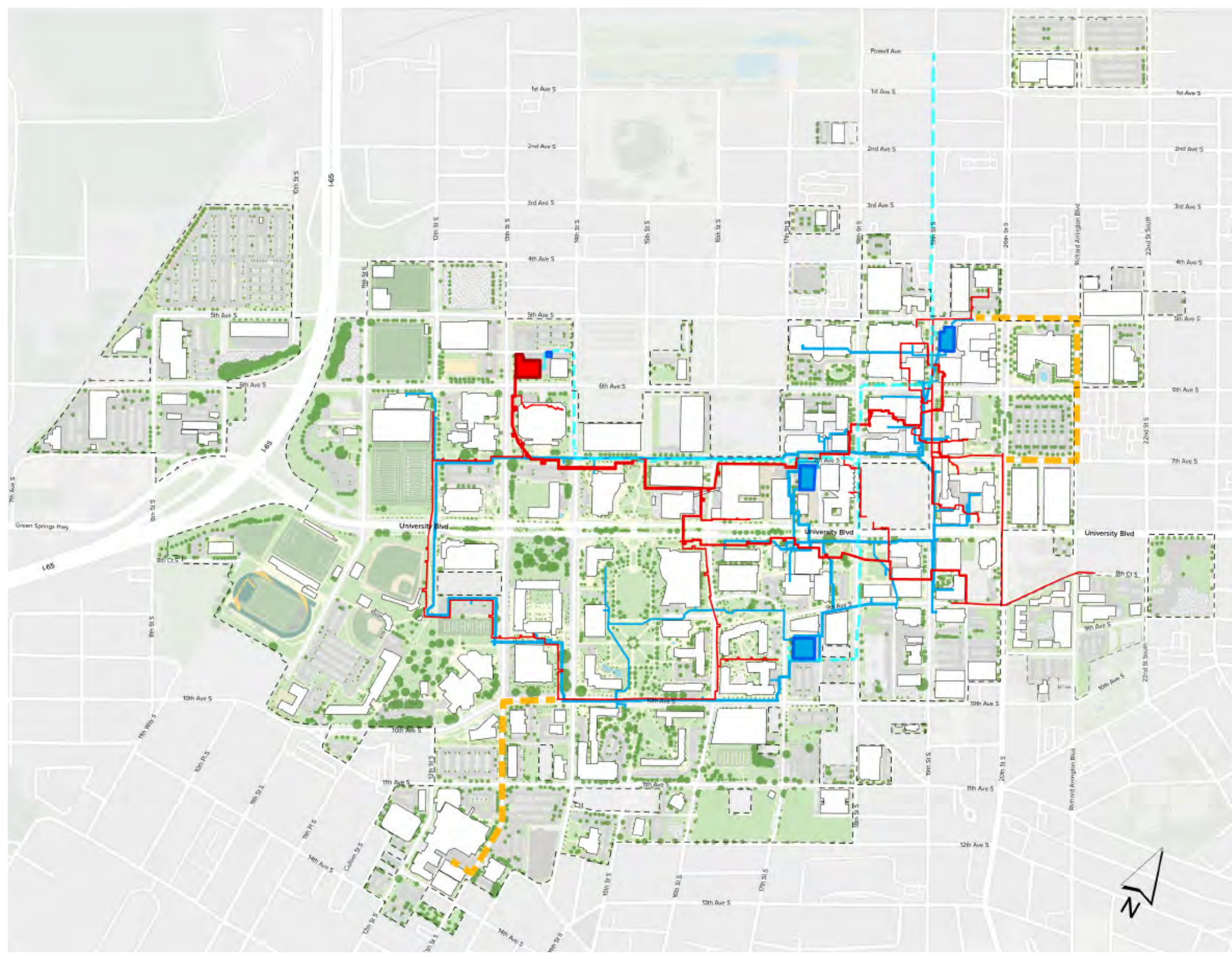
Chilled water supplies cooling for academic, hospital, and laboratory buildings, and supports campus refrigeration systems



Industrial water delivers a cost-effective, non-potable water source to meet campus utility and operational needs



Proposed expansions will improve utility service to hospital sectors



# PUBLIC REALM

UAB maintains a set of Public Realm Guidelines that establish a framework for all pedestrian-focused elements across campus, including streetscapes, urban design treatments, parking edges, deliberate landscaping, site furnishings, and lighting. The goal of these guidelines is to ensure new projects complement both the pedestrian experience and broader campus identity. These guidelines are flexible yet prescriptive, allowing design applications across varied contexts while maintaining visual and functional cohesion across campus.

**Campus is organized into four public realm zones: campus, medical, operational services, and Highlands. Each is governed by tailored urban design standards ensuring context appropriate building placement, street hierarchy, and pedestrian priority.**

## Zone-Based Strategy



UAB's Public Realm Guidelines can be accessed here: [uab.edu/facilities/pdc](http://uab.edu/facilities/pdc)

## Urban Design Elements



**UAB's approach prioritizes walkability and place-making, shaping pedestrian corridors with strong sidewalk zones, active edges, and clear entrances. Streetscapes are tailored to traffic and use, with coordinated treatments, lighting, and landscaping that support a safe, welcoming public realm.**

**Site furnishings and pedestrian lighting are coordinated to enhance safety, comfort, and visual consistency. Parking facilities are held to the same public realm standards as the rest of campus, incorporating elements like landscaped edges and shade trees to reduce visual impact.**



## Landscaping, Parking and Amenities

# CAMPUS LIFE

UAB continues to invest in facilities that meet needs identified by its students, faculty, staff, and long-term patients to create a well-rounded campus experience.

**Across academic, residential, and clinical settings, new, renovated, and green spaces incorporate areas for study, collaboration, recreation, & rest**



Together, these investments strengthen campus life by balancing academic and clinical demands with spaces that promote comfort, belonging, and overall well-being.



**Outdoor sitting  
areas, green spaces,  
and wellness-focused  
amenities extend  
opportunities for  
relaxation & community  
beyond the clinic  
and classroom**

**Student lounges,  
quiet study zones, and  
flexible gathering spaces  
are thoughtfully located  
to support both social  
connection & academic  
success**



# HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITY



## UAB Facilities as a Foundation for Well-being

UAB's designation as the first Health Promoting University in the United States shapes the way campus facilities are planned, designed, and maintained. Campus facilities intentionally embed health and well-being into the academic, residential, research, clinical, and public realms, creating environments that foster physical activity, social connection, mental restoration, and fair access to the campus community.

## Designing for Connection and Belonging

New construction and renovations detailed in this Master Plan update will emphasize natural light, indoor-outdoor linkages, active transportation infrastructure, and collaborative spaces. Outdoor green spaces will continue to be thoughtfully designed to offer respite and recreation while providing interconnected pedestrian pathways across campus. Strategic placement of buildings and amenities enhances walkability between the academic core, research zones, and healthcare facilities, making healthy choices the easy choices for the campus community.

## Integrated Planning for a Thriving Campus

As part of UAB's long-range planning, facilities investments will continue to be aligned with the principles of the Okanagan Charter, ensuring well-being is embedded from concept through operation. Landscapes, streetscapes, and public spaces are designed to encourage active use, reduce environmental stressors, and support social interaction, reinforcing a culture of health and innovation across campus.

To learn more about UAB as a Health Promoting University, visit: <https://www.uab.edu/health-promoting-university/>









## **6.0 OTHER CAMPUS INITIATIVES**

# SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

UAB's strategic plan, Forging Ahead, recognizes environmental stewardship as part of the University's broader commitment to responsible growth and long-term resilience. The plan emphasizes resource management, education, and operational practices that enhance safety, health, and fiscal responsibility across campus.

In facilities planning and management, UAB prioritizes building materials and systems that balance performance, durability, and cost-effectiveness while supporting healthy indoor and outdoor environments. Construction standards are designed to minimize impacts to the community and environment through the reduction of construction waste, diversion of recyclable materials from landfills, implementation of an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management Plan, and use of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) to prevent runoff from affecting local waterways. Future updates to these standards will continue to reflect advances in building technology and best practices across higher education and healthcare institutions.

Water management initiatives further support these goals by reducing reliance on potable water to serve irrigation, industrial, and utility uses. Smart technologies and water conserving plumbing fixtures improve water use efficiency throughout campus, while ongoing assessments help identify opportunities for system upgrades and expanded use of non-potable water sources across facilities.

Demonstration projects such as the UAB Solar House and pollinator gardens reflect the University's ongoing commitment to practical, research-informed approaches that strengthen the campus ecosystem and community wellbeing. These projects also provide educational opportunities for students and serve as testing grounds for future campus-scale initiatives in building performance, resource efficiency, and resilient landscape design.





A tall, dark grey, rectangular sign stands in a landscaped area. The sign has white text and a green vertical stripe on its right side. It is surrounded by green trees, purple and yellow flowers, and a brick wall. In the background, a large red brick building with white accents is visible under a clear blue sky.

UAB

CAMPBELL  
HALL

Biology  
Computer and  
Information Sciences  
Mathematics  
Physics  
Psychology

# SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

UAB is undertaking a comprehensive effort to develop exterior signage and wayfinding guidelines that bring greater clarity, consistency, and cohesion to campus navigation. As the University has grown to include more than 250 buildings across roughly 100 city blocks its signage has evolved through multiple design eras, resulting in a mix of styles and systems. The new standards will establish a unified visual language and approach to campus signage to ensure that all building identification, directional, and parking signs are appropriately scaled, legible, and aligned with UAB's overall identity. The guidelines will also prioritize accessibility for all modes of travel to help drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users navigate the campus safely and efficiently.

The initiative will begin with a detailed inventory and analysis of existing signage, followed by the development of design concepts, construction standards, and cost models for all sign types. The resulting framework will address primary and secondary building signage, free-standing campus markers, wayfinding elements,

and parking facility signs to create a comprehensive system that supports both daily users and first-time visitors.

A key focus of the project is coordinating signage across UAB's diverse districts, including academic, residential, hospital, research, and cultural areas. By establishing consistent standards that unify these distinct zones, the guidelines will enhance connectivity, strengthen campus identity, and support a safer, more intuitive environment for everyone navigating the UAB campus.



# URBAN FORESTRY

UAB manages a nationally recognized urban forest of more than 4,400 trees across campus and has maintained Tree Campus Higher Education and Tree Campus Healthcare designations for over a decade. The Facilities Division, in collaboration with student research programs, maintains a detailed inventory of trees by genus and species and has implemented GIS technology to map and monitor over 3,800 trees to date. UAB's arborists use the technology to record attributes such as tree size, age, health, and maintenance record, so they have a full history of each tree's unique characteristics to aid in management decisions. The comprehensive GIS inventory will continue to expand through the next Campus Master Plan and provide an increasingly complete picture of UAB's urban forest.

This data-driven approach enables UAB to manage tree health individually and as a whole urban forest over time. This also enables UAB to plan targeted treatments and measure the value of the economic and ecosystem services of its tree canopy. As part of construction permitting and site development, UAB evaluates the value of affected trees and requires replacement plantings or equivalent investment when removals are unavoidable.

These ongoing efforts support UAB's strategic commitments to campus resilience and environmental stewardship while enhancing comfort, shade, and livability for students, staff, patients, and the surrounding community.





# CAMPUS DESIGNATIONS & RECOGNITION

## Tree Campus Higher Education

UAB has earned Tree Campus Higher Education (formerly Tree Campus USA) recognition for over a decade, honoring its commitment to maintaining a healthy, sustainable urban forest through professional tree care, community engagement, and student involvement.



## Tree Campus Healthcare

This designation celebrates UAB's integration of green infrastructure into its healthcare environment, recognizing how trees and green spaces contribute to patient recovery, staff well-being, and environmental health.

## Bee Campus USA

As a Bee Campus USA affiliate, UAB supports pollinator conservation through native plantings, habitat creation, and public education initiatives that sustain healthy ecosystems across campus.



## DarkSky International Alignment

UAB is updating its campus design standards to align with the 5 Principles of Responsible Outdoor Lighting issued by the Illuminating Engineering Society and DarkSky International. These principles are aimed at reducing light pollution, improving nighttime visibility and safety, and protecting human and environmental health.

**Prepared by UAB Facilities  
Planning, Design & Construction**

**[uab.edu/facilities](http://uab.edu/facilities)**