

# PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

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## Overview

This document summarizes the findings of the Plymouth State University ("PSU") campus master planning team in its development of a rational framework for the future physical growth of the campus. The plan provides a blueprint for capital growth while striving to be flexible and adaptable to future institutional and pedagogical developments, economic and demographic realities and potential real estate opportunities.

The master plan report, entitled “A Framework for Future Decision Making” proposes 259,530 GSF of academic, administrative and athletic construction and 195,000 GSF of residential construction, is conceived as a framework for short and long-term decision making over the next 10 to 20 years.

The report is divided into four chapters, each organized to respond to PSU’s core goals and objectives for the campus environment, including its physical facilities, buildings, parking, circulation, landscape, natural environment and infrastructure.

Chapter 1: Introduction, provides background and context for the report while briefly describing the master planning process and resulting planning recommendations. Here we also summarize some of the key assumptions underlying the master plan report, including the quantifiable academic, residential, and athletic space needs. Chapter 1 also briefly summarizes the master plan project recommendations.

Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities, looks more deeply at PSU’s goals and objectives for the physical campus in light of certain constraints and opportunities that emerged from the master plan process. This chapter sets the stage for future recommendations and master plan strategies.

Chapter 3: Master Plan Strategies, details specific master plan building and site recommendations that, over time, should allow PSU to achieve its existing and future physical goals for the campus environment.

Chapter 4: Tracks and Phasing, details phasing strategies according to specific goals or “tracks”, i.e. more or less independent development projects that can occur simultaneously as money becomes available for desired uses.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 PSU BACKGROUND**

PSU is located within the picturesque New England town of Plymouth, NH (population 6,000, including the university) at the foot of the White Mountains, a region renowned for its outstanding natural environment and wilderness activities. The university has an established reputation as a comprehensive residential institution for students seeking baccalaureate and/or graduate degrees for both liberal arts and professional studies as well as extended-delivery instruction for graduate students. Founded in 1871 as the Plymouth Normal School, PSU has developed a strong institutional mission to provide academic and practical resources for the surrounding North Country and Lakes Region of New Hampshire and hopes also to expand its appeal for prospective students across state and regional boundaries.

The institution’s transformation in 2003 from a four-year college to a regional university that offers a variety of advanced degrees and certificates, has precipitated a renewed effort by the university to improve upon the physical and social environment necessary to support its expanded institutional mission.

While PSU does not intend to increase its traditional student enrollment beyond 4,000 full-time equivalent undergraduate students, a number of physical issues are currently impeding its ability to fulfill its mission to its current, much less future, students. This master plan report, “A Framework for Future Decision Making” is an attempt to identify and begin solving these issues so critical to the future environment of PSU.

For purposes of developing a campus master plan, several points were considered based on trends in enrollment at the university.

- While some of the university’s facilities have been upgraded and augmented over the past ten years, many current facilities have substantial deferred maintenance issues (See Chapter 2, page15), other needs to be improved to account for future growth and changing trends in higher education.
- There is a small but growing population of older, non-traditional students who are returning to campus for continued educational opportunities. These students require different types of access service and support.
- A shift in the male to female ratio of undergraduate students signals a need to respond to a slightly different set of student expectations and Title IX requirements.
- The growing importance of places for informal student exchange.
- There is a strong desire for alternative living environments on campus
- Other issues that may have a positive impact on enrollment include new master’s degrees, increased outreach research and other forms of education programs, and the possibility of conversion to four-credit courses

## **1.2 SCOPE**

In 2003, PSU commissioned the Perkins Eastman Team, a team of campus master planners, academic planners, architects, landscape architects and engineers to update its 1994 Campus Master Plan.

While the university felt that the 1994 Plan produced by Wallace, Roberts & Todd was an invaluable tool in guiding campus growth and development over the preceding ten years, it felt that a number of key aspects of the plan needed further consideration or reevaluation. Moreover, a number of projects recommended in the plan have since been successfully implemented, including:

- Renovation and addition to Lamson Library;
- Renovation and addition to Boyd Hall natural science building;
- Adaptive re-use of the Draper Maynard building;
- Renovation and addition to Prospect Dining Hall;
- Renovation and addition to Hartman College Union Building (The “HUB”)

At the outset of the master planning effort, the university articulated a number of its current issues including:

- Improving the regional and local image and identity of the campus, including its relationship with the towns of Plymouth and Holderness;
- Improving the arrival experience and gateway to the campus and town of Plymouth;

- Alleviating local transportation and parking conflicts;
- Reevaluating the campus' housing environments;
- Using the campus' existing natural resources;
- Maximizing the potential of PSU's Holderness and Langdon Park properties;
- Improving the campus landscape features; and
- Creating a campus-wide sustainability approach for future building projects and maintenance.

### **1.3 THE PROCESS**

The final master plan builds on past reports and was developed by a consensus driven approach – listening, learning, and addressing the concerns of the campus and surrounding community. It is also the result of a purposefully iterative process and involved upwards of a hundred meetings, interviews, workshops public community forums, site visits, and extensive data review and analysis that all helped inform and redefine previous assumptions.

The overall framework for the master plan process followed five overall stages: 1) Organization and Procedures 2) Data Gathering and Analysis 3) Objectives and Goals 4) Concepts, and finally 5) Master Planning. A Master Plan Steering Committee made up of 28 university administrators, faculty, and students, as well as the Town of Plymouth's community planner, guided the project at every significant stage, moving the project forward and providing needed insight and information at important project milestones.

Throughout the master plan process, the team published their findings in a series of interim “Needs Reports” which were subsequently reviewed by the university and updated as more information and findings came to light. These needs reports, presented to the Steering Committee, as well as to the larger campus and community constituents via PSU's Web-CT, formed the basic assumptions for the future master planning efforts.

The Needs Report outlined issues related to: 1) the quantitative space program 2) PSU's residential needs; 3) physical building conditions; 4) utility and infrastructure; 5) parking and traffic; 6) landscape issues; and 7) athletics, fitness and HPER. The findings reflect qualitative and quantitative information and data obtained in over seventy-five meetings and interviews with key PSU staff and community stakeholders.

Building on these Needs Reports, three separate campus master plan options were developed to address different visions for future growth: the Core Campus Option, which located all needed programs within the campus core; the Holderness Option, which expanded the athletic program eastward to the Holderness Campus while locating all new housing within the campus core; and finally the North Campus Option, which expands physical education uses across the river while focusing residential development within the campus' northern precinct adjacent to the White Mountain Apartments.

In December 2003, PSU and the Perkins Eastman Team presented the three plans to three groups: the campus community (students, faculty & administration), members of the surrounding towns of Plymouth and Holderness, and the Master Plan Steering Committee. Each constituency was given the opportunity to weigh in with suggestions and/or alternatives that were then

incorporated into three revised plans. In February 2004 the Master Plan Steering Committee unanimously voted to select the North Campus Option as the preferred alternative for further development by Perkins Eastman.

## **1.4 SUMMARY OF SPACE NEEDS**

### **1.4.1 Academic / Administrative / Athletic**

The master plan builds on a detailed quantitative assessment of campus needs, the ‘Needs Report’, which analyzes needs for today as well as over the next ten years. The ‘Space Needs’ chapter of the report, prepared by Rickes Associates, determined that PSU would have to increase its academic / administrative inventory by 107,291 net assignable square feet (NSF) and its athletic inventory by 50,000 NSF athletic, bringing the existing 532,168 NSF to a total “Non-Residential” space of 689,459 NSF.

The basis of this academic / administrative / athletic need results from a number of guidelines for improving the academic and student environment including 1) right-sizing classrooms; 2) balancing room use, 3) increasing student station size; 4) impact of modest enrollment; 5) expanding informal student meeting space; and 6) expanding space for physical education. Future academic need is predicated on the assumption that there will only be a modest increase in traditional undergraduate student enrollment with primary growth occurring as a result of ‘non-traditional’ and graduate student enrollment.

#### **1. Need for right-sizing classrooms**

- There is somewhat of a mismatch between course sizes and classroom sizes, based on this exercise. While 73 percent of the classrooms have a current capacity of 40 or fewer seats, 96 percent of the courses fall into this enrollment range.
- There are no smaller seminar spaces to accommodate the 12 percent of all courses enrolling 10 or fewer students.

#### **2. Need to balance room use rate**

- Accepted guidelines suggest that classrooms should be scheduled for 67 percent of the scheduling window to allow for maximum flexibility.
- There are 13 classrooms that are scheduled for more than 67 percent of the available hours. If the scheduling window is modestly reduced to increase flexibility in accordance with guidelines, the need for classrooms increases from 44 to 49.

#### **3. Need to increase student station size**

- A suggested average of 20 to 25 square feet per seat is recommended. This average includes the area to accommodate flexible student seating, the area within the classroom used for the instructor, room for technology /multimedia equipment and other teaching aids. The average sf per student at Plymouth is 17 sf for all classrooms. If rooms with movable seating were configured to accommodate a standard 25 square feet per student, 425 seats would be physically displaced.

#### 4. Impact of Modest Enrollment Increases

- With a modest enrollment growth, right-sized classrooms, and adjusted square feet per student, nine additional classrooms would be required.

#### 5. Need for expanded informal student meeting space (34,368 NSF)

- The existing HUB facility provides for large meeting areas within the same area as student fitness. In order to eliminate this conflict in use, this space would need to be replicated.
- Because of the small number of extracurricular choices available in the rural town of Plymouth, the Master Plan recommends that PSU provide more student gathering places across campus; the plan thus suggests an increase to the amount of dedicated student activity space by approximately 8.5nsf/FTE to a total of 34,368 NSF additional student services space.

#### 6. Need for expanded Physical Education space (50,000 NSF)

- The existing PE facility was originally designed to maintain programs in its lower level, which is below the 10 year flood plain, as 'non-assignable space'. But over the years, this area has been recaptured to provide critical program space. As part of PSU's Needs Report, the flood-prone condition of this space was clearly documented. In addition, the deferred maintenance report clearly indicated that the pool is in need of substantial remedial work. As a result of this analysis, the Master Plan recommended relocating a number of the existing uses (the swimming pool, public lobby/toilets, team lockers) into new facilities instead of trying to "fix" items that are both beyond their useful life and that no longer serve the program's requirements. Based on Plymouth's profile, the need for additional athletic and physical education spaces that support the growing Health, Physical Education and Recreation programs were a clear priority. Lastly, the lack of adequate facilities to support team sports was identified as a real obstacle to attracting students to Plymouth.
- It was determined that approximately 50,000 NSF would be required to keep pace with the growing demand for swim and ice facilities by constructing a new natatorium and ice rink.

*\*A recently conducted SCUP benchmarking survey showed 315 asf / FTE for public institutions in the 2,500 to 4,999 student range, excluding residential space. Although this initial survey involved a small sample, it is consistent with the upper ranges of the last national survey conducted 30 years ago, which did include a significant sample of public institutions of this size. Over the intervening years, it has been observed that the asf/FTE figures have been growing away from the median and toward the upper range. The next SCUP survey, currently underway with an expanded sample size, should shed additional light on the benchmarking figures and establish a new range. It should be kept in mind that these figures reflect national averages that encompass all regions as well as old and new campuses. When benchmarking, a determination will need to be made whether to use national data or regionally generated figures. This will depend, in part, on the institution's intended service region as well as its broader market.*

### **1.4.2 Residential Need (650 new beds / 195,000 GSF)**

In recent efforts to provide more on-campus housing, occupancy in existing residence halls has gradually increased, in the worst case, to 110% of the original design occupancy. Consequently, the average area per bed for all facilities is approximately 225 square feet, which is well below the 310 square foot national average for new construction. The facilities are based on an institutional model that lacks many of the amenities that are now commonly found in new residence halls, particularly those geared to upperclassmen. In order to begin to alleviate the overcrowding, we recommend at a minimum that all existing residence halls be returned to their original design occupancy – 2,004 beds total; 1,946 for undergraduates.

Because the current inventory of housing is predominately ‘traditional’ style – single and double bedrooms along a double-loaded corridor, with ‘gang’ bathrooms – there was a general consensus that all new beds be designed in a suite or apartment configuration based on the desire to attract upperclassmen. To reach its goal of housing 65% of its students on-campus, PSU would have to build 650 new beds. At 300 GSF/ bed, new residential need would total approximately 195,000 sf.

### **1.4.3 Non-Contributing Buildings**

To achieve some of its goals for expansion, the university will need to demolish or sell some buildings (approximately 81,287 gsf) that do not contribute to the overall campus character or meet desired efficiencies and/or code. These non-contributing buildings include Holmes House, the Bulk Mail Building, the Counseling Center, and the Baker Infirmary. To account for the space lost due to demolition and/or sale, the university will require approximately 36,564 GSF of additional academic / administrative space.

## **1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Master Plan outlines a number of recommendations for future building and infrastructure projects. While these are laid out in detail in Chapter Four of the report, the summary below provides a quick snapshot:

#### **Academic:**

- Renovation and addition of new athletic facilities at Holderness Campus, including renovated Field House, Natatorium, HPER facilities, and Ice Rink
- New Hyde Hall extension
- New academic building on the site of existing Holmes House
- Miscellaneous renovations / upgrades

#### **Administrative**

- Rounds Hall changes use to function as ceremonial administration building
- Spere Hall converts to accommodate new uses
- President’s House changes use to accommodate administrative functions
- Welcome Center at Holderness Campus
- Re-locate campus bookstore and/or art gallery to Main Street in town

## Residential

- 650 new suite-style beds in North Campus precinct
- Renovation of various existing resident halls to include mix of room types and upgraded amenities and furnishings, including Mary Lyon Hall, Smith & Grafton Halls, Pemi, Blair and Belknap Halls.

## Student Services:

- HUB addition and renovation
- 'Mini hubs' at Russell, PE Center, and Center Lodge
- Speare Hall converts to student services and learning support center

## Infrastructure / Landscape

- TEA-21 Bridge Realignment project and related streetscape improvements
- Campus arrival/entry streetscape improvements
- Signage Plan
- Co-Generation plant expansion and related landscape improvements
- Various utility infrastructure projects

## Sustainability

- Design guidelines for new site and building systems that include life cycle criteria, deferred maintenance priorities, and ongoing custodial concerns.