



# Villager

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## The blueprint

*University master plan shapes Georgia State's future*

*By Greg Jones and Leah Harris*

While the building blocks of Georgia State University will always be world-class faculty, groundbreaking research, and high-achieving students, the most recent evolution of the university master plan shows an ever-expanding campus to accommodate that foundation.

In the last decade, the Rialto Theater restoration, Student Center, Student Recreation Center, University Lofts and Helen M. Aderhold classroom building have transformed the cityscape at Atlanta's core.

And more new buildings are on the horizon: a science park with teaching and research laboratories, a humanities building, a business and law professional education center and more on-campus student housing.

"The master plan is in sync with our overall strategic (academic) plan. We need significant space to become the nation's leading urban research university with a student-focused, learning-oriented culture. We'll require more offices for faculty and staff and more classrooms to serve the students. The buildings in the master plan will enable us to meet those needs," said Georgia State Provost Ron Henry.

### From vision to reality

"We're moving into Phase II of our campus master plan," said Georgia State President Carl Patton. "We spent a half-billion dollars on construction in Phase I, and now we're planning to spend \$1 billion in new construction during the next 10 years."



Student Center and the Student Recreation Center, there are more opportunities for students to connect with each other and just hang out."

Projections for enrollment show 10,000 more students by 2015, and an overall goal is to have at least 20 percent of the resulting 36,000 students live on campus.

In late summer, Georgia State completed construction of the \$168 million University Commons, which opened its doors this semester to almost 2,000 students. Located on a 4.2-acre site at Piedmont Avenue and Ellis Street, the state-of-the-art housing complex consists of four buildings with 1,984 beds, 17,982 square feet of retail space and 786 parking spaces.

The university also recently acquired a 12-story office building at 75 Piedmont Ave., formerly the Citizens Trust Bank building, to meet long-term academic and administrative space needs. That 2.2-acre tract also includes 438 parking spaces on four levels.

Last November, university officials announced the purchase of the SunTrust Bank property for \$52 million. This area includes the 26-story office tower at 25 Park Place. The eastern portion of the two-block site will be developed as a Professional Education Center for the College of Law and the J. Mack Robinson College of Business. It will include new homes for the two colleges, a classroom building and an auditorium.

### A strategic focus, a profound influence

All this growth has gotten the attention of a lot of people outside the campus, especially downtown boosters, real estate developers and area business owners.

Georgia State progress has a profound influence on the changing landscape of downtown, said A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), a group of business leaders that works to promote a positive economic and social climate downtown.

"Every time the university builds, we all benefit," said Robinson.

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**"We need significant space to become the nation's leading urban research university with a student-focused, learning-oriented culture."**

*Georgia State Provost Ron Henry*

The plan details building and renovation projects to accommodate campus growth, part of an overall plan to meet the school's space needs in the future, Patton said.

"Our goal is to have 7,500 students live on campus. We're now at 2,400. That means we still have an opportunity to add 5,000 more units of housing," said Patton, an urban planner who has led Georgia State since 1992. "The next step is to have fraternity and sorority housing and a freshman residence hall on campus."

Studies show that students perform better academically when campus life is more engaging.

"There's more excitement in the day-to-day life at Georgia State than I've ever seen before," said Deborah Rupp, who graduated from the university in 1978. Now associate director of recreational programs, she has worked at the university for more than 20 years.

"Twenty years ago, there was an overwhelming sense of people coming here to take classes and leaving," Rupp said. "With the

### Master plan to strategic plan

The master plan relates to the overall academic strategic plan, which includes the following highlights:

- 2010 student enrollment of 32,000
- 2015 student enrollment of 36,000
- Improve retention and graduation rates
- Expand student engagement in university activities
- Attract more highly qualified graduate students
- Increase the number of tenure-track faculty
- Increase the amount of student housing
- Encourage interdisciplinary research
- Increase grant and contract support from \$60 million to \$100 million by fiscal year 2010



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*The newly opened University Commons houses 2000 students and is the largest privately financed student residence complex in the country.*

# Georgia State University Master Plan

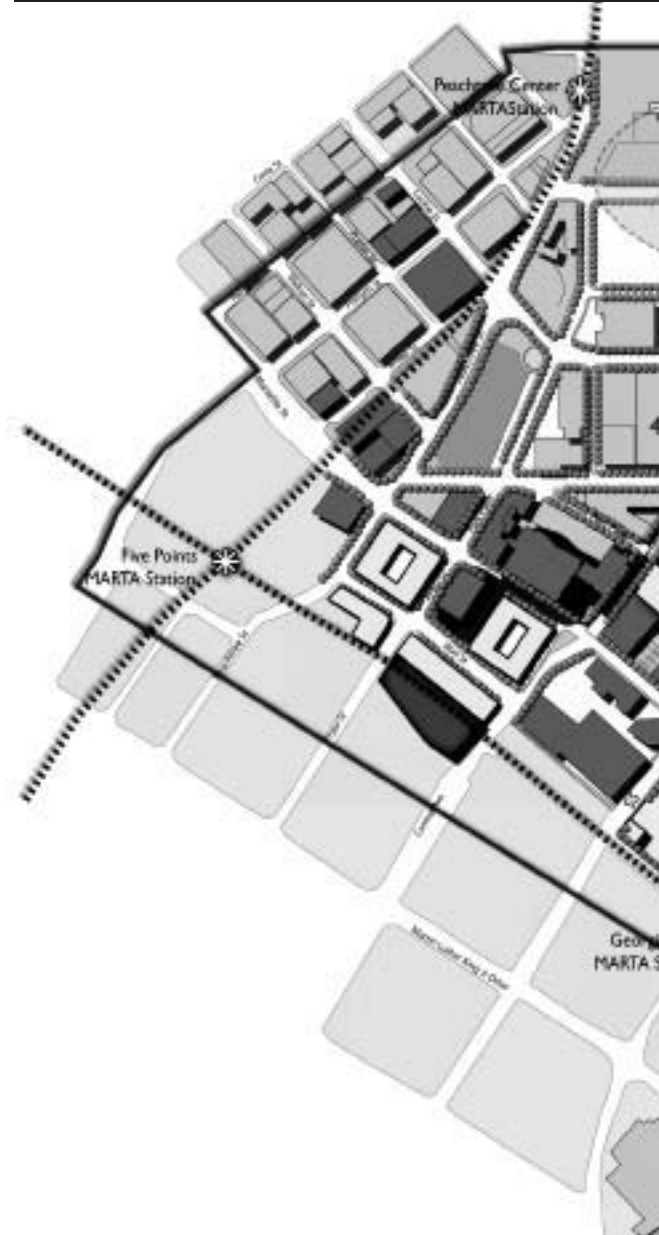
## University Science Park

Southwest corner of Piedmont Avenue and Decatur Street  
Projected opening: 2010

This site will feature four buildings that will include the Parker H. Petit Science Teaching Laboratory and the Science Research Laboratory. The \$250 million science complex will be the home of departments such as biology, chemistry, computer science, geosciences, nursing, and psychology as well as the Institute of Public Health. Plans include creating a business incubator and a center for advanced collaboration.



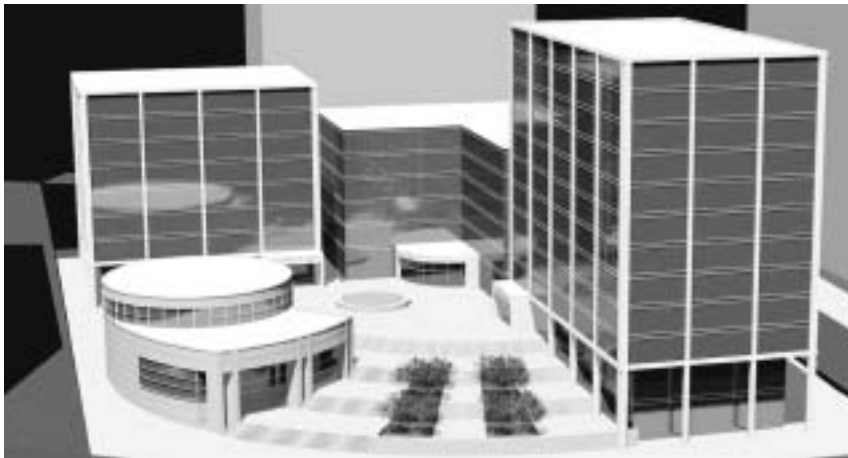
## UNIVERSITY CAMPUS



## Business and Law Professional Education Center

Corner of Edgewood Avenue and One Park Place

This site will be the home of Georgia State's J. Mack Robinson College of Business and the College of Law, featuring new buildings for law and business, a classroom building and an auditorium. The new complex will face Peachtree Center Avenue across from Hurt Park. The site also includes the recently acquired 26-story SunTrust tower at Woodruff Park, which will be used to provide much-needed office space.



## Master Plan Projects

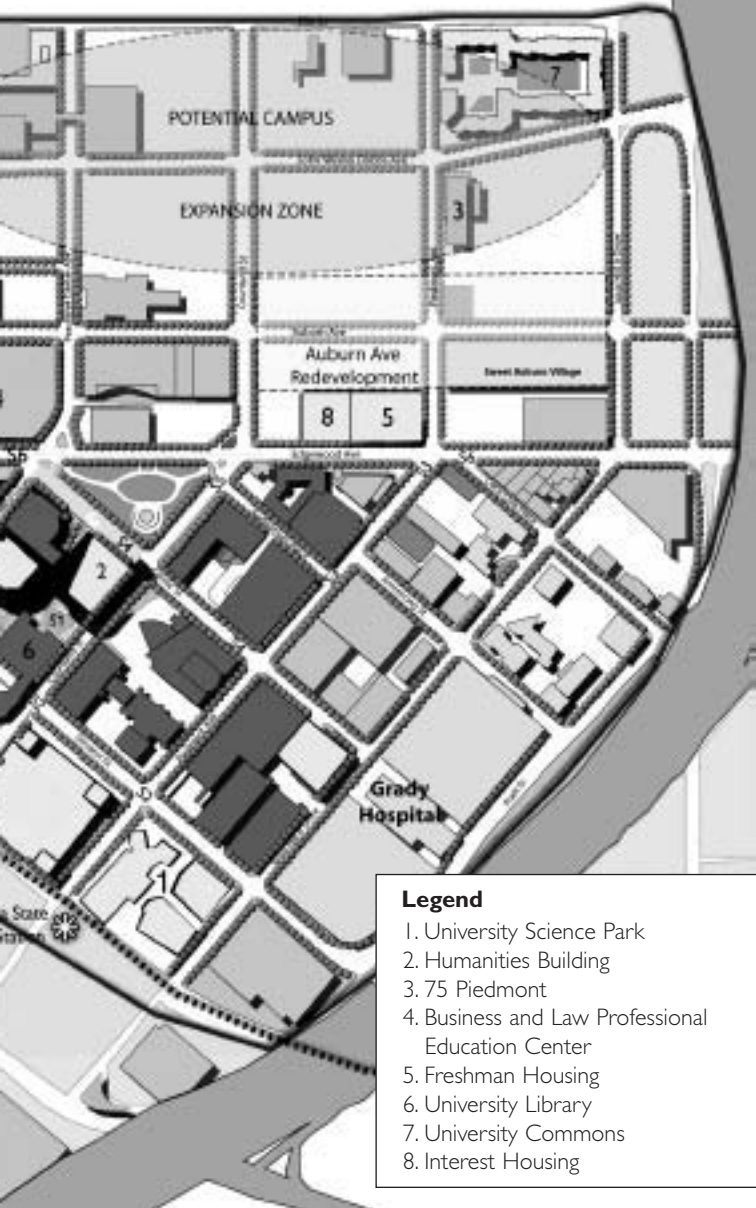
- 75 Piedmont (Citizens Trust Bank Building)\*
- Andrew Young School of Policy Studies\*
- Business and Law Professional Education Center
- Florence Kopleff Recital Hall\*
- Helen M. Aderhold Learning Center\*
- Humanities Building
- Interest Housing
- North Metro Center in Alpharetta expansion

## Humanities Building

Corner of Courtland and Gilmer Streets

Considered a new front door for the campus at Hurt Park, this building will replace Sparks Hall and house academic departments such as English, history, communication and philosophy. There also will be student services functions, such as registration, admissions and financial aid.





- Legend**
- 1. University Science Park
  - 2. Humanities Building
  - 3. 75 Piedmont
  - 4. Business and Law Professional Education Center
  - 5. Freshman Housing
  - 6. University Library
  - 7. University Commons
  - 8. Interest Housing

# University Commons

141 Piedmont Ave.  
 Opened Aug. 10, 2007

Occupying a 4.2-acre site located on the corner of Piedmont Avenue and Ellis Street, University Commons includes four buildings ranging from eight to 15 stories, nearly 2,000 beds, 17,982 sq. ft. of retail space that includes Landmark Diner and Jittery Joe's Coffee, 786 parking spaces and the University Health Clinic.



# Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue

Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue will be broadened to make them more pedestrian-friendly. These streetscapes are being financed through university and federal funding sources.



- Panthersville Sports Complex expansion
- Rialto Center for the Arts\*
- Student Center\*
- Student Recreation Center\*
- University Commons\*
- University Library transformation\*
- University Science Park

\*Completed

# University Library

100 Decatur St.  
 Transformation completed: Fall 2007

A \$20 million renovation of Library North, Library South and the links connecting them allows easier access to resources and features the Learning Commons and the Information Commons in Library North as well as the Quiet Study Room in Library South.



## 5 minutes with:

### Carl Patton

A conversation about the master plan with Georgia State's president



#### *Why is it important to have a master plan?*

In all aspects of life, you have to have an idea of where you're going. If a university really cares where it's going, then it needs to have a master plan. Without a master plan, how would you organize not only your facility needs, but also your budget? How are you going to finance these facilities and over what period of time? Where is the money coming from? A master plan addresses all of those considerations.

#### *When you arrived in 1992, what was your first impression of the Georgia State campus?*

There was a tremendous backlog of physical needs. The campus hadn't built a new building in perhaps a decade. There was clearly a need for academic space, both classrooms and faculty offices. There were few student services. We didn't have an adequate student center. We didn't have a recreation center. We didn't have any housing. There hadn't been a new classroom building in years. All were critical needs. You can't have a great university without places for teaching, space for research and places where students can enjoy meeting and recreating.

#### *How do you respond when people ask about other university priorities, such as endowed professorships and scholarships?*

We've had a successful \$127 million comprehensive campaign where we funded some of those needs. But without facilities, where are you going to put your endowed professors? Where are you going to teach your Presidential Scholars? Students had been going to high schools where their science classrooms were better than the ones here. So building facilities was a very critical need right off the bat if we were going to improve the institution's quality.

#### *With our campus growth, have other people's perceptions of downtown caused a rise in land values and prices?*

Yes, but I don't see that necessarily as a bad thing. We've had to pay a little more, but it also means that this is a part of town to invest in, and that helps to protect

our property values. What we've done is push up the value of the property so people want to develop around us. That points to the rising vitality of this community, and that speaks well of us.

#### *What are other areas to look at for exploring campus growth?*

We're always looking for land ... no matter where it's available. If you look at the map, you can see that there isn't much available. You've got Grady Hospital on one side and hotels on the other side. So it's pretty clear that we'll be developing along Piedmont Avenue right now because of University Commons and the Science Park.

#### *What do your ideas about campus openness – like lowering the plazas and removing the gates – mean to overall campus planning?*

I always thought you should be a part of the city, not apart from it. Here it's a fairly easy choice. You either spend millions of dollars repairing the crumbling catwalks and platforms or spend millions of dollars taking them down. When you take them down, you only spend that money once.

#### *Part of the master plan covers financial considerations. How will \$1 billion in new construction be financed?*

We'll fund it the same way as most of the past projects. The Rialto was built through a bond issue and private fundraising. The Recreation Center is supported by user fees. The University Commons was paid for by a bond issue that students will pay back through their rents. So we'll use those same mechanisms of various public/private partnerships to build in the future.

We've already begun to raise quite a bit of money for the Business and Law Professional Education Center. We have a gift for the auditorium, and we'll continue to raise private dollars. There also will be a facilities fee for the complex that will be paid by business and law students.

When facility fees were passed, they were strongly supported by students. Students saw, for example, what the library could become for \$35 a semester. You can look at fees as a cost, but I think you still have to look at the total cost of education, and we're still so very low. Our students realize this, and that's why they support these dedicated fees.



Students inside the Helen M. Aderhold Learning Center

#### **The blueprint**

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"Georgia State really is anchoring the southern part of the whole downtown community. And when Carl Patton says he's planning to spend \$1 billion in construction, you'd better pay attention. You can't argue with the track record that he has produced over the last 15 years."

Ken Bernhardt, Regents' Professor of marketing and assistant dean for corporate relations in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, said Atlanta's political and corporate leadership understand well that the health of downtown and the university are connected.

A university's master plan is no different than a strategic plan for a major company, said Bernhardt, who advises many major companies in Atlanta.

"It provides direction, and it prevents decisions from being made in an ad hoc manner. And, when fully implemented, it maximizes the impact of each individual part of the plan," said Bernhardt, who has been at Georgia State more than 35 years.

Strategic planning not only enhances Georgia State's impact in downtown, it also strengthens relationships already in bloom within the university.

"The Professional Education Center is very special because of the synergy it will create between law and business. We believe it will be very unique and a marker in legal education," said Steven Kaminshine, dean of Georgia State's College of Law. "The building will allow us to develop a greater sense of community, which improves the life of the schools. A sense of community also translates substantially into more successful development efforts."

One key aspect of the master plan is that modern buildings enable Georgia State to attract top

students, scholars, faculty and staff. The plan mirrors the academic strategic plan's goals for increases in the number of tenured faculty and researchers, and the space needed to house their offices, centers and laboratories.

"You have to have those facilities before you can start attracting top-ranked faculty and scholars," Patton said. "And if you're going to attract top students you have to have facilities that are top-rated."

Many think that businesses, too, will like what they see around campus.

"What Georgia State provides more than anything to downtown is pedestrian traffic at all hours of the day," said CAP's Robinson. "And students as well as faculty and staff are helping improve the spiritual makeup of the community. They're on the street; they have buying power; they make a huge impact."

Bernhardt also sees how the steady spread of Georgia State's footprint will make people notice the footsteps.

"What Georgia State has planned makes a seamless pocket from Underground Atlanta all the way over to University Commons," he said. "It helps fill in that whole area with vibrant development and puts people on the streets."

University officials are already hearing excited comments from members of the university community.

"Our alumni and people in the downtown community are very vocal in sharing their excitement about the university's growth and our plans for the future," said Tom Lewis, Georgia State's vice president for external affairs. "Our master plan shows that we're a growing and viable institution with a vision of where we want to be in the next 20 years."

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