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Former Bryce Hospital property is key to University of Alabama's new growth plan

Green space, traditional buildings, walking campus emphasized

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TUSCALOOSA | The addition of the old Bryce Hospital property is a key aspect of the University of Alabama's 2012 campus master plan, UA's president said Thursday.

"That is a massive addition to our campus footprint and it gives us an opportunity to grow and develop as a campus in ways we couldn't have if it wasn't for that (acquisition)," Guy Bailey said. "How we integrate that in is very important to our future."

Officially presented to the board of trustees during the physical properties committee meeting Thursday, the 2012 master plan continues with its goals of offering open green space, traditional buildings and a walkable campus. The plan also factors in the 168-acre Bryce property with ideas on how to best utilize and integrate its buildings and space. University planner and designer Dan Wolfe emphasized the university's intent to create a unified campus with the additional property.

After examining and evaluating all of the hospital property facilities and reviewing the costs of bringing each facility up to current building codes and potential use, university officials have several ideas on how some of the Bryce buildings can be reused for campus expansion. The main building could potentially be a university welcome center, a cultural center with museums and collections and a major reception area. A performing arts center could be added onto the back of that building. A few other Bryce buildings might be used for academic space, general use and research support.

Wolfe said the highest concentration of new housing will be in the north part of campus; the property also has potential for additional intramural fields and softball fields.

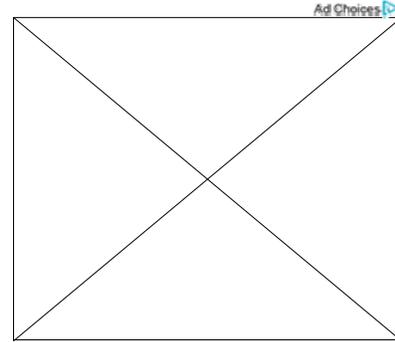
The university now has access to the Alice M. Kidd building on the Bryce campus, and Wolfe anticipates UA to have full access to the property in about a year.

Every five years, the university either updates or replaces its campus master plan. In 2007, a new comprehensive master plan was made. While the property addition is a focus of the 2012 updated plan, it also addresses new parking opportunities including parking decks and surface lots; transit system improvements; and other areas of potential expansion and growth, to accommodate the expanding student population.

"We look at trends and we've certainly been in (an enrollment) growth period, so that is certainly reflected in the master plan," Wolfe said. "Master plans are important on campus when you do have growth. If there's nothing going on, there's not a lot of growth, not a lot of construction then a master plan becomes somewhat irrelevant."



Dusty Compton | Tuscaloosa News
University of Alabama trustee chairman Paul Bryant Jr., left, greets incoming UA President Guy Bailey during the UA System board of trustees meeting at Bryant Conference Center in Tuscaloosa on Thursday.



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The 2007 master plan was very critical to us because it did occur in a time of rapid growth.”

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In other business:

- It was reported that a record number of degrees — more than 12,100 systemwide, including 6,531 from the Tuscaloosa campus — were confirmed for the 2011-12 academic year.

- Several UA construction projects, most of which involved budget revisions or contract approval, were also brought before the physical properties committee. Those receiving positive recommendations from the committee will be heard by the board of trustees today when it convenes at 10:30 a.m. in the Sellers Auditorium of the Bryant Conference Center.

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