THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Campus Master Plan comes at an auspicious moment in the development of The University of Texas at San Antonio. The University began only 40 years ago, in 1969. It now serves nearly 30,000 students and has three campuses: the Main Campus, the HemisFair Park Campus, and the Downtown Campus.

The original permanent campus, now known as the Main Campus, is well along in a transition from a purely commuter campus to a traditional residential campus. The Institute of Texan Cultures, a landmark institution in HemisFair Park on the eastern edge of downtown San Antonio, became part of the University in the 1980s, and now constitutes the HemisFair Park Campus. The Downtown Campus was added in the 1990s and is now an established presence on the western edge of downtown San Antonio.

Although the three campuses are interconnected institutionally and academically, they are quite different in their characteristics and histories, and so this Master Plan addresses them as articulate entities. Particularly on the Main Campus and the Downtown Campus, the University’s increased emphasis on research, larger enrollment, and campus life combine to put immense pressure on the physical environment. UTSA has the highest space utilization rate in the state, but it has only about half the space per student recommended by state standards.

Master plans typically address two primary issues: growth management and the quality of the physical environment. A plan must provide for the immediate needs of capital projects, but perhaps more importantly, it must provide a long-range strategic framework for development directed toward improving the quality of life on the campus. Growth and the quality of the physical environment both affect academic quality. Addressing them are central imperatives in this plan.

This Campus Master Plan is the physical reflection of UTSA’s academic mission. To help the campus better serve this mission, the plan focuses on the public realm. The plan emphasizes the following aspects of the three campuses:

- **Public space**—strengthening, clarifying, and expanding the public realm of the campus
- **Connectivity**—creating linkages and encouraging interaction between spaces, people, and disciplines
- **Amenity and convenience**—facilitating the activities of students, faculty, staff, and visitors
- **Symbolic presence**—strengthening the role of UTSA as a major academic institution within the City of San Antonio, enhancing the sense of place within UTSA’s three campuses, and reinforcing their connections to their surroundings

A campus master plan must convey a vision: a plan, and a process. It should not attempt to solve all problems for all times, but rather must be flexible and able to accommodate shifts in priorities and academic mission. This Campus Master Plan is a strategic guide for additions and improvements to the University’s physical environment over at least the next 30-50 years.

At the heart of the plan is the proposed campus civic structure—the interconnected arrangement of the campus’s primary open spaces. It is these open spaces—the quadrangles, courtyards, plazas, streets, and walkways—that provide the most memorable components of the campus and provide the framework to guide the placement and design of its buildings. The proposed civic structure gives the campus the flexibility to accommodate growth, while improving and strengthening the campus’s public realm.

The plan recognizes that improvements will occur incrementally. It therefore includes suggested short-term, midterm, and long-term phasing plans. These phasing plans provide a logical approach to invigorating and extending existing civic structure of each campus. Adherence to the proposed pattern of open spaces will sustain the plan in the future.

Goals for UTSA’s campuses were developed in concert with representatives from each campus, and became the basis for the recommendations contained in this plan. Because of the unique nature of both the Main Campus and the Downtown Campus, distinct goals were developed for each. These are outlined in the chapters devoted to each campus. Goals for the HemisFair Park Campus will be developed as part of a separate study for the campus.

COMMON UTSA CAMPUS GOALS

1. Implement a long-term strategy to accommodate more academic and research space.
2. Define campus open space through architectural and landscape design.
3. Provide a substantive structure for and variety of open spaces.
4. Provide for more on-campus amenities.
5. Improve campus circulation and clarify campus entrances.
6. Improve campus wayfinding.
7. Enhance the identity of the individual campuses, and the shared identity between them.
8. Enhance transit and communication capabilities between campuses.
9. Promote relationships with the surrounding context.
10. Implement a planning component and process.
CAMPUS PLANNING

In our time there is no easy answer to producing a high-quality campus environment, but minimally, three things are required: a vision, a plan, and a process.

A Vision
A vision for the University is the basis of any master plan. Two important ideas underlie any vision of campus planning. One is that the physical environment matters; the other is that there is a relationship between academic ideals and physical reality.

A campus is neither a resort nor a city. Rather, it is quasi-urban. Like a model for the city, it is at once ideal and practical—a textbook example of civitas. An intellectual vision must have a relation to society as a whole, and the campus should reflect that idea. In other words, there needs to be a balance between the public interests of larger environment and the private interests of users and donors. To achieve this, both a plan and a process are required. A Shared Vision UTSA 2010 provides the vision that the Campus Master Plan is intended to support.

A Plan
To be an effective instrument over time, a campus master plan must be flexible. This Campus Master Plan contains the Long Range Plan, Phasing Plans, and System Plans for the Main Campus, the Downtown Campus, and an abbreviated section on the UTSA HemisFair Park Campus. Three levels of plans and guidelines are useful: a Long Range Plan, a series of District Plans, and a series of Site Development Plans.

The Long Range Plan establishes the overall intent of university development. It defines the primary spatial anatomy—the hierarchical pattern of public
spaces, or civic structure—of the campus as well as the relationship of the campus to its surroundings. It should be a design plan that suggests the quality of buildings and spaces, not a generic plan such as a use and circulation diagram. Principles should accompany the Long Range Plan in order to provide the authority that underpins the plan.

**District Plans** are neighborhood, or area, plans that bridge the gap between the Campus Plan and the siting and design of individual buildings. The District Plan adds flexibility and precision to the Long Range Plan, and saves it from having to be specific about everything. District Plans should be accompanied by landscape and architectural design principles regarding the form of public open space and the architectural character of buildings. Although not included in this Campus Master Plan, it is recommended that the University develop District Plans in areas where significant growth is anticipated.

**Site Development Plans** are usually program-specific feasibility studies that develop more particular requirements not covered by the District Plan. Site Development Plans should be accompanied by architectural and landscape guidelines specific to the project. Together, these three types of plans provide the flexibility and precision required for campus development and are indispensable to the process.

**A Process**

Process may be more important than the plan, because a good process can produce a plan, but no plan can produce a process. In other words, the plan must be implemented, monitored, and used on a daily basis. Therefore, the University must be vested in the plan.

To be effective, the process needs to address both public and private interests. In the recent past this balance has been difficult to achieve. Great attention has been given to private concerns such as assignable square footage, and almost none has been spent on public concerns such as open space. To maintain a balance, understanding, active participation, and cooperation are required among four entities: users, facilities, design authority, and the architect.

**THE PLANNING PROCESS**

In fall 2007, Barnes Gromatzy Kosarek Architects and Michael Dennis & Associates were selected to develop a Campus Master Plan for the UTSA campuses. The campus planning process began in January 2008 with an Observation Phase, during which the planning team conducted a reconnaissance of all three campuses, gathered basic data, and held briefings with University administration, faculty, staff, and students. Upon completion of this phase, the planning team presented an evaluation of different aspects of all campuses as well as results from the briefings, which were outlined as goals for each campus.

Beginning in May 2008, the team began to develop alternative solutions for each campus. Through a series of monthly workshops with University administration, faculty, staff, and students, alternatives were reviewed and refined, culminating in selected alternatives in October 2008 to be developed for the final plan in spring 2009.