



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ALABAMA  
IN HUNTSVILLE  
MIXED-USE  
DISTRICT  
MASTER PLAN**





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## Talent. Energy. Excitement. Enthusiasm. Spirit.

These are all elements of a center of development like no other in Huntsville, a city that is always focused on tomorrow and the future. On these 58 acres of undefined yet strategically located property adjacent to the campus of The University of Alabama in Huntsville—one of the premier research universities in America—more than 10,000 students and another 2,000 highly educated members of the University's faculty and staff now have a place to gather.

This development will be the University's center of activity, drawing together its intellectually talented individuals around a common aim—advancing their quality of life through higher education while enjoying their college experience. This district will be home to dynamic spaces for these ambitious and energetic individuals to assemble or find their own special spot. Here new generations of students will have a walkable urban environment to live, learn, shop, interact, and search out venues where they can relax, express their artistic side, be entertained, and celebrate.

*UAH students and faculty as well as the Huntsville community can look forward to a college-town experience all their own.*

### Plan developed by

Perkins&Will, JLL, Nelson\Nygaard, Fuqua & Partners Architects, Bostick Landscape Architects, Pugh Wright McAnally

## THE CAMPUS

Since its inception in 1950, The University of Alabama in Huntsville has transformed from a modest commuter university into one of the nation's premier research universities. Now it's time for the physical spaces to catch up.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) has acquired approximately 58 flexible acres of property directly across from the western edge of campus along Sparkman Drive. It is the University's intention and the goal of this Master Plan to transition this property into a new district oriented toward the life of students and faculty outside the classroom. This district will expand the core campus with housing for juniors and seniors and student lifestyle amenities—such as dining, entertainment, events, performances, and outdoor recreation—in an active, walkable, urban environment. This property presents the opportunity to host a signature “college town” experience for UAH students, faculty, staff, and alumni for years to come.

<b>STUDENT HOUSING</b> <b>800</b> BEDS	<b>INSTITUTIONAL/ RESEARCH SPACE</b> <b>385,000</b> SQUARE FEET	<b>OFFICE SPACE</b> <b>450,000</b> SQUARE FEET
<b>RETAIL SPACE</b> <b>170,000</b> SQUARE FEET	<b>HOTEL SPACE</b> <b>80,000</b> SQUARE FEET	<b>CONFERENCE CENTER</b> <b>165,000</b> SQUARE FEET
<b>PARKS &amp; OPEN SPACE</b> <b>3.5</b> ACRES	<b>UAH CONNECTION</b> <b>1</b> BRIDGE TO CAMPUS	





Section 01

# THE OPPORTUNITY

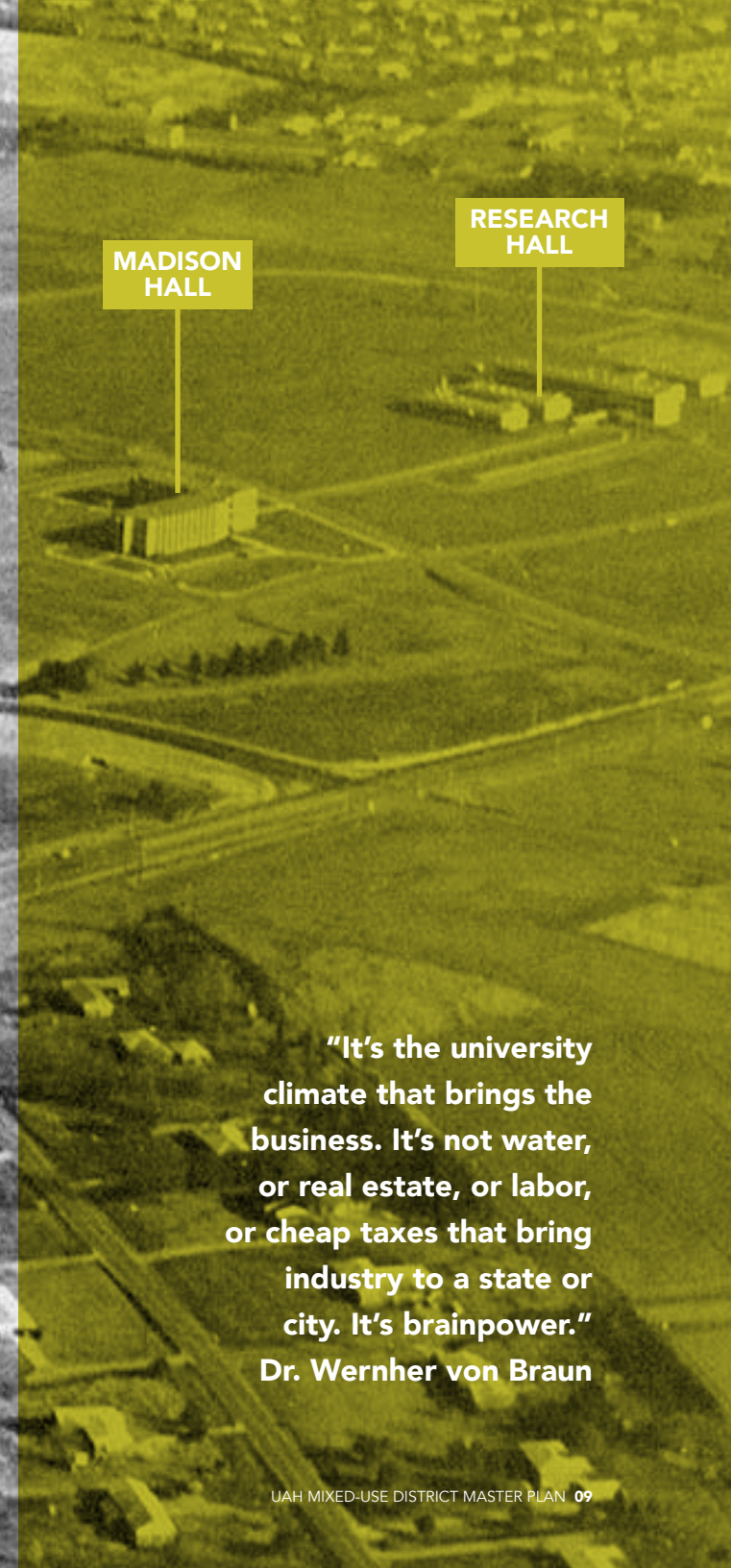
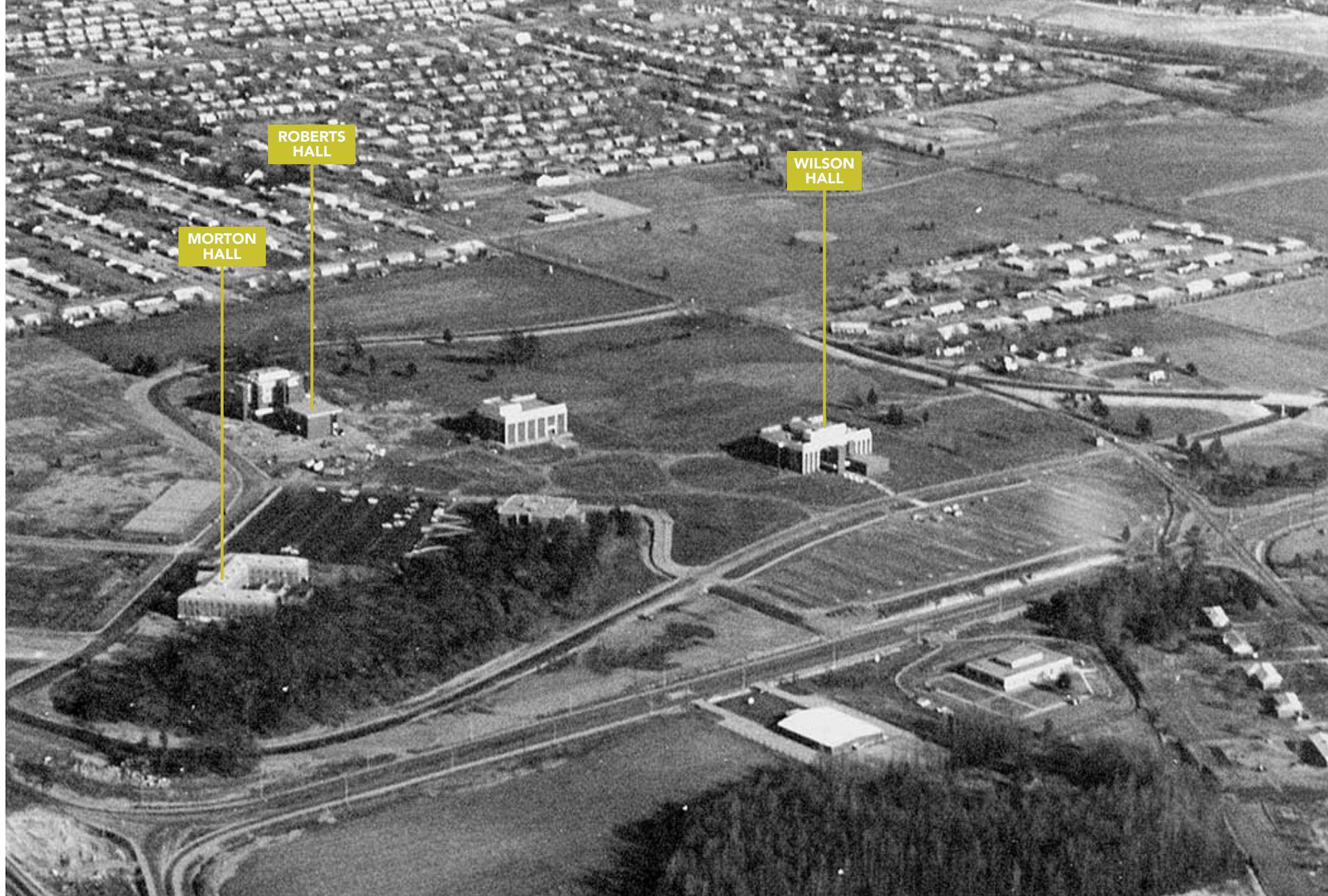
Harnessing the strengths of the University and the assets of Huntsville, UAH has an unmatched opportunity to host a district for both the gowns of UAH and the town of Huntsville.

## THE UNIVERSITY

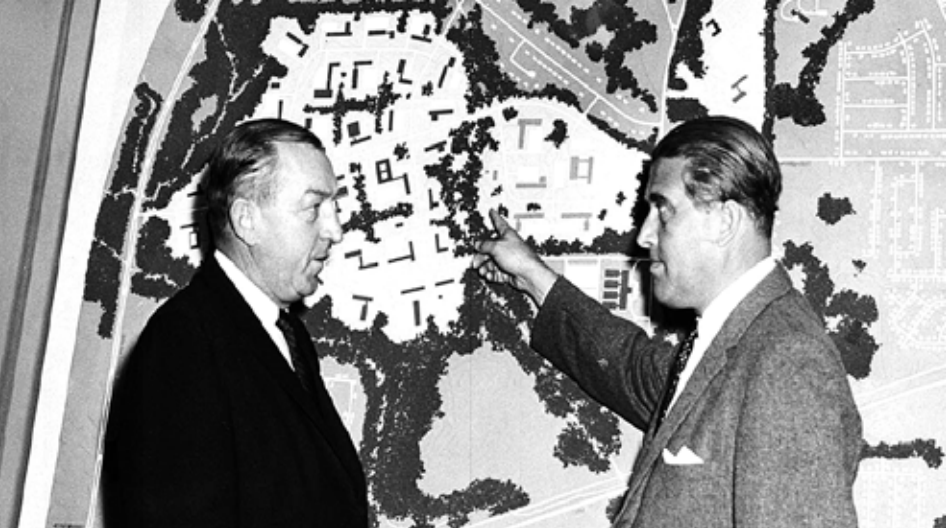
UAH began in 1949 as the academic institution sustaining the city's defense and aerospace ecosystem. Today that mission endures in the University's testbed research.

In November 1949, Huntsville's leaders learned that their lengthy campaign to open an extension center in the city had been approved by The University of Alabama. Three months later, in what became Stone Middle School, the new University of Alabama Huntsville Center began offering ten freshman-level classes. Enrollment was 137 students, many of them World War II veterans whose G.I. Bill benefits covered the tuition of \$4 per credit hour.

The Center was an instant success. Within a few months, enrollment almost doubled. Within a few years, city officials procured an 83-acre parcel of property on the south side of U.S. 72 and approved the construction of a new building, Morton Hall, to accommodate the Center's growth. By the time the new hall was completed, in 1961, the demand for a highly trained workforce to sustain the city's aerospace and defense industries had again exceeded the Center's rate of growth.



**"It's the university climate that brings the business. It's not water, or real estate, or labor, or cheap taxes that bring industry to a state or city. It's brainpower."**  
Dr. Wernher von Braun



Dr. von Braun presenting his plan for the University



Morton Hall, the University's first building, in its infancy



First graduation, outside Morton Hall in 1970

**After years of growth, President Frank Franz redoubled efforts to enhance the UAH student experience in 1991, leading to 14 new buildings and open spaces since 2003.**

Seeking a more permanent solution, a committee headed by renowned rocket scientist Dr. Wernher von Braun traveled to the state capital that summer to request a \$3 million bond for the establishment of a research institute. "It's the university climate that brings the business," said Dr. von Braun in a presentation to the Alabama legislature. "It's not water, or real estate, or labor, or cheap taxes that bring industry to a state or city. It's brainpower."

Both houses of the Alabama legislature passed the bill, which enabled Huntsville and Madison County to purchase an additional 200 acres of land and build the proposed research institute. Spragins Hall and Madison Hall followed in quick succession, earning the Center a promotion to "branch campus." It wasn't until 1969, with the addition of Wilson Hall, University Center, and the Salmon Library, that UAH was made an autonomous campus by The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama.

In March 1970, Dr. Benjamin Graves was appointed UAH's first president, and a few months later the new university celebrated its first official graduation. With few extracurricular amenities, the school catered to local commuting students and focused on core competencies.

For the next twenty years, various university presidents grew the academic base of the institution. Dr. John Wright spent time capitalizing on its ties to Huntsville's business and technology communities. He was able to establish research centers in optics, microgravity, robotics, and space plasma, introducing specialized

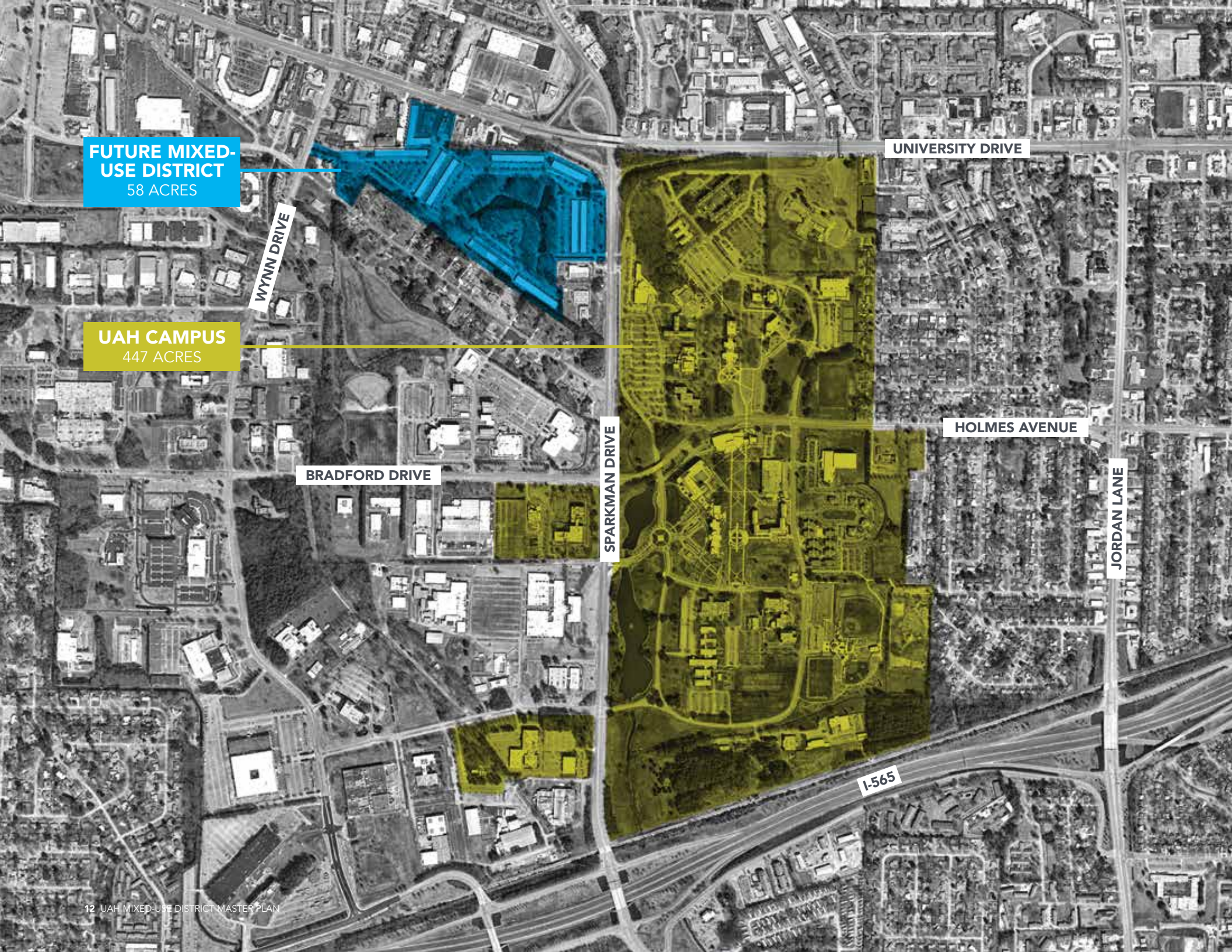


Graduation in 2015

Charger Union, opened in 2014

Campus today





**FUTURE MIXED-USE DISTRICT**  
58 ACRES

**UAH CAMPUS**  
447 ACRES

UNIVERSITY DRIVE

WYNN DRIVE

BRADFORD DRIVE

SPARKMAN DRIVE

HOLMES AVENUE

JORDAN LANE

I-565

**UAH now comprises nine colleges and more than 100 areas of study. The Carnegie Foundation has ranked it among “high” research institutions in the US. The Brookings Institution has recognized UAH as the state’s best university based on the economic outcomes of its graduates.**

**10,000**  
STUDENTS IN  
2020/21 YEAR

**\$130 million**  
NEW CONSTRUCTION  
COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY

**17**  
HIGH-TECH  
RESEARCH CENTERS

**\$132 million**  
ANNUAL RESEARCH  
EXPENDITURES

**41%**  
SHARE OF REVENUE  
FROM FEDERAL  
GRANTS AND  
CONTRACTS

**TOP 20**  
NSF RANKING IN  
6 FEDERAL RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT FIELDS

degrees that advanced knowledge at the national level. In the eighties Dr. Louis Padulo added the Material Science Building, Optics Building, and a second residence hall. Then in 1991 Dr. Frank Franz was appointed and redoubled efforts to enhance the student experience at the University. With this new energy, the University began its evolution from a commuter school to a complete university.

Dr. Robert Altenkirch, who was named president in 2011, built upon these efforts to strength UAH’s position as a research pioneer in a number of key fields that elevated the reputation of the University as a national research institution. In addition to academic excellence, he also pushed for extracurricular amenities, seeking a more well-rounded student experience in fulfillment of UAH’s educational mission. These endeavors led to record growth in student enrollment, prompting Dr. Altenkirch to purchase the 58-acre Executive Plaza office park, which he envisioned as a mixed-use district that could address some of the needs of the institution’s rapid growth while also delivering a distinct experience for students, faculty, and the city at large.

Dr. Darren Dawson was appointed as UAH’s ninth president in 2019. He has continued to advance the University’s growth, both increasing the overall student enrollment and raising the standards of academic performance across numerous key metrics. He has an eye to student life as well, pursuing the bold goals of the mixed-use district, as he recognizes the potential for this site to anchor experiences that are unmatched in the dynamic history of The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

**AN ACADEMIC ANCHOR FOR AN ECONOMIC ENGINE**

Huntsville. Rocket City. The town that got us to the moon has an international reputation for its research-and-innovation economy. UAH is the academic anchor of that vanguard.

**CUMMINGS RESEARCH PARK**

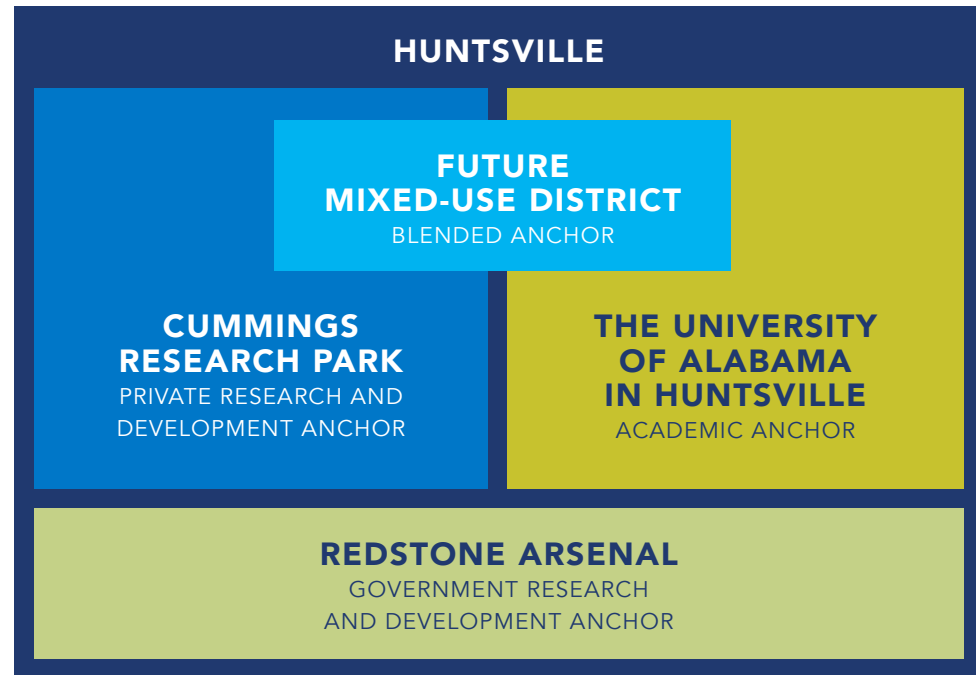
The second-largest university-related research park in the United States is home to approximately 300 companies, including many of the nation's top aerospace and defense and engineering-related enterprises. UAH is the anchor tenant of the Park.

**REDSTONE ARSENAL**

Redstone Arsenal is the United States Army post for a number of tenants, including the U.S. Army Materiel Command, the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, the Missile Defense Agency, and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, which leads the government's propulsion analysis and development.

**HUNTSVILLE**

Its metropolitan-area population is over 490,000 and growing. In 2016 the *Wall Street Journal* named it one of the nation's New Silicon Cities, and it often finds a place on national "best of" lists. *U.S. News & World Report* puts it at No. 11, above Nashville, Dallas, and D.C., on its 2019 list of Best Places to Live. MoneyGeek ranks it No. 3 on its 2019 list of Best Mid-Sized Cities to Make a Living.







Section 02

# THE VISION

Institute ambition, the needs of UAH students and faculty, national case studies, and an understanding of the site together inform the vision of a signature college-town experience in Huntsville.

## THE UNIVERSITY'S VISION

To ignite relationships among students, faculty, industries, and the community to expand the reach of UAH's academic innovation and recruit new talent.

### AMBITIONS FOR THE DISTRICT

#### A NEW CAMPUS HEART

The district's diverse amenities should serve as the center of student life and campus traditions.

#### COLLEGE-TOWN EXPERIENCE

The district should form a lively cluster of student-focused retail, food, and beverage options that meet daily needs.

#### WALKABLE HOUSING

The district should offer a robust selection of student housing that provides safe campus-adjacent living and reduces reliance on automobiles.

#### COLLABORATION-READY OFFICES

The district should increase collaboration and world-class job opportunities for students through private-sector office space.

#### ACTIVITY NEXUS

The district should anchor its appeal in a conference center and hotel that houses UAH and civic events, regularly bringing activity to the site.

#### TALENT RECRUITMENT

The district should broaden its palette of extracurricular amenities to recruit and retain the most talented students and faculty from across the globe.



### FAST CASUAL DINING

Students want fast casual restaurants and fresh, healthy options. There is an aversion to basic fast-food establishments.

### A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Students see the district as a place that they would live during multiple years of their college experience.

### EARLY MORNINGS AND LATE NIGHTS

Students, faculty, and staff all want a coffee shop that feels like their own. Students see an immense need for 24-hour food service.

### A DENSE COMMUNITY

Students want to live in stacked apartments with a sense of community. They seem to welcome the idea of the district as a home for Huntsville's young professional crowd.

## THE UNIVERSITY'S NEEDS

A 19-question survey was conducted over 8 days, leading to 13 key themes regarding the activities and needs of the students and faculty.

### TABLE-SERVICE DINING

The faculty and staff want a sit-down restaurant that feels like part of the campus culture and where they can take peers, guests, clients, and job candidates.

### SMALL, FLEXIBLE UNITS

Students would prefer small, inexpensive units where they can live alone or with one roommate. There is a need for other nontraditional housing (married, family, pet-friendly).

### UNIVERSITY FUNCTIONS

The faculty and staff sense that a number of university services might be more welcoming or better utilized if located within the district.

#### FEEDBACK STATS

**2,278**  
SURVEY RESPONSES

**1,742**  
STUDENT RESPONSES

**536**  
FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSES

### AN URBAN SETTING

Everyone wants to spend time in a lively, walkable area with a "downtown vibe" and a "college-town energy."

### A GREAT PUBLIC REALM

Everyone wants a vibrant public park and wide, inviting sidewalks.

### MIXED RESIDENTIAL

44 percent of faculty and staff say they would consider living in the district if their housing standards were met. They would value a walkable community near campus.

### GOING GREEN

Students, faculty, and staff all see environmental responsibility as extremely important for UAH.

### EVENT SPACE

Students, faculty, and staff all speak of an unmet need for on-campus event space to host get-togethers large and small, formal and informal.

### ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Students, faculty, and staff are seeking essential products and services, such as a health clinic, grocery, pharmacy, and post office, rather than trendy lifestyle options like a clothing store, salon, or bike shop.

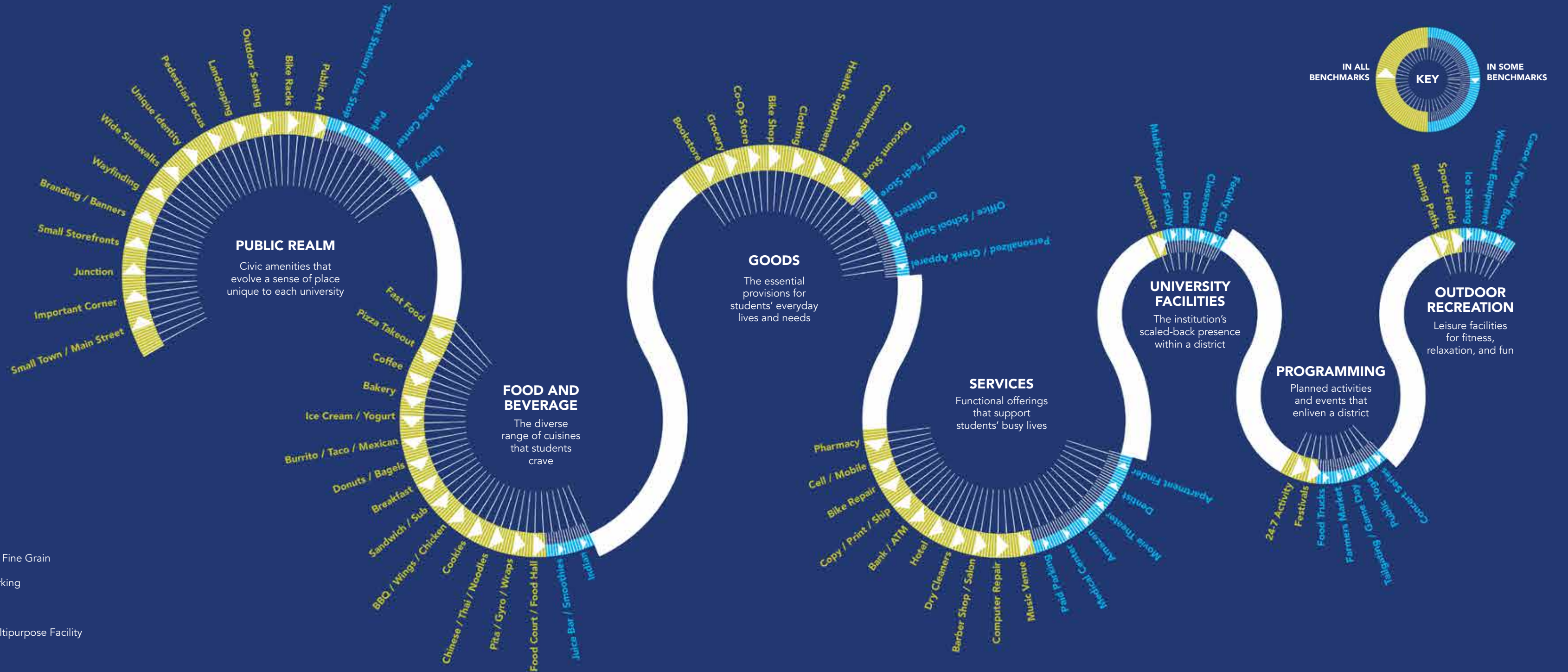


## THE CASE STUDIES

The backbone of UAH's vision is the mixed-use DNA captured in a study of 12 signature university districts.

### CASE STUDIES INCLUDED

- (1) **Kendall Square**, MIT, Metropolitan & Dense
- (2) **The Drag**, University of Texas, Shopping & Funky
- (3) **The Strip**, Alabama, Main Street & One Story
- (4) **Downtown Athens**, UGA, Downtown & Streetscape
- (5) **University City**, Penn, Big City & Active
- (6) **The Hill**, CU Boulder, Entertainment & Creative
- (7) **Toomer's Corner**, Auburn, Historic & Small Town
- (8) **Tech Square**, Georgia Tech, Urban & Contemporary
- (9) **Campus Corner**, University of Oklahoma, Storefronts & Fine Grain
- (10) **South Campus Gateway**, Ohio State, Shopping & Parking
- (11) **Nicholson Gateway**, LSU, Residential & Mixed-Use
- (12) **College Park District**, UT Arlington, Commuter & Multipurpose Facility





The wetlands when wet



The wetlands when dry



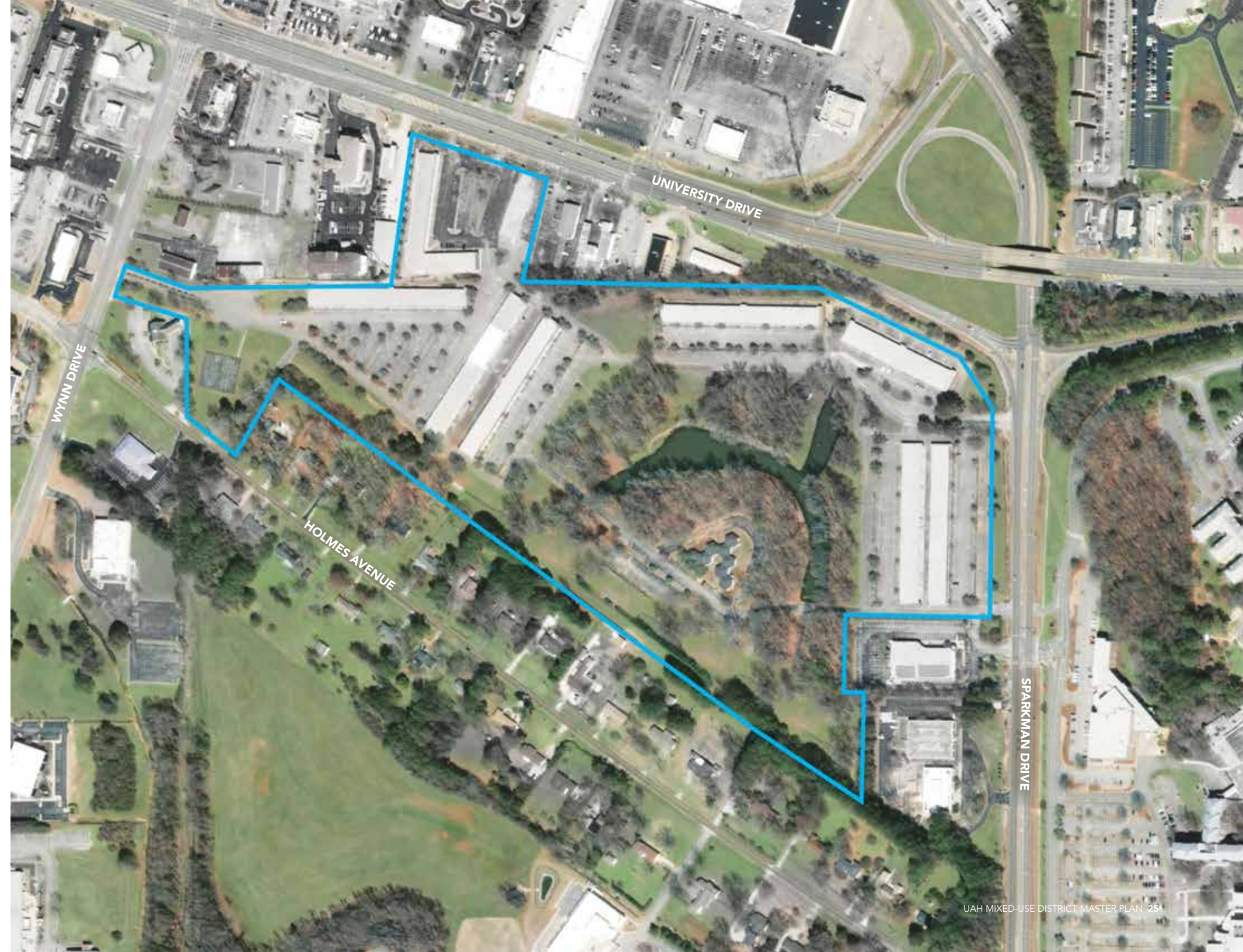
The potential for lakeside amenities

## THE PLACE

The 58-acre site was studied in terms of its existing buildings and infrastructure, as well as natural features like its dramatic and ever-changing wetlands.

Beyond its immediate proximity to UAH's core campus, the site shows enormous potential as a comprehensive mixed-use district. The pristine conditions of the landscape are the clearest evidence of unrealized value. A singular serpentine lake, framed by a canopy of lush, mature trees, defines the center of the site. These designated wetlands hold fertile natural ecosystems. Their active, picturesque landscapes can be curated into the green spaces that will serve as the social and civic heart of the neighborhood. At the same time they will invite students to engage with nature in thought-provoking ways.

Unique topography promises a distinctive district design. The lake sits on a considerably low portion of the property, in something of a small valley, at the bottom of large grade changes to the east and west. To the east the transition is dramatic as Morton Hall peers from a rock outcrop over the district site. The grade change to the west is more gradual, climbing slowly toward Wynn Drive. The new district can elegantly span the topography, such that a walk from the core campus will offer a grand vista when visitors top the hill.



## THE VISION

A walkable, mixed-use college-town experience unified around the University's identity as a science and industry pioneer and guided by these eight principles.

### 01 Connection

An accessible place that is open and safe, unifying the UAH properties and promoting comfortable multimodal transit options throughout.

### 02 Innovation

A forward-thinking place that advances intrepid research and new technologies, supporting both academic sciences and advanced industries.

### 03 Community

A welcoming place that encourages human interaction, fostering a sense of family and home as well as lifelong friendships.

### 04 Education

A stimulating place that offers out-of-the-classroom learning experiences in spaces that encourage personal and group study.

### 05 Identity

A unique place that celebrates the culture and values of UAH in creative, playful, and one-of-a-kind ways, boosting UAH spirit and pride.

### 06 Adventure

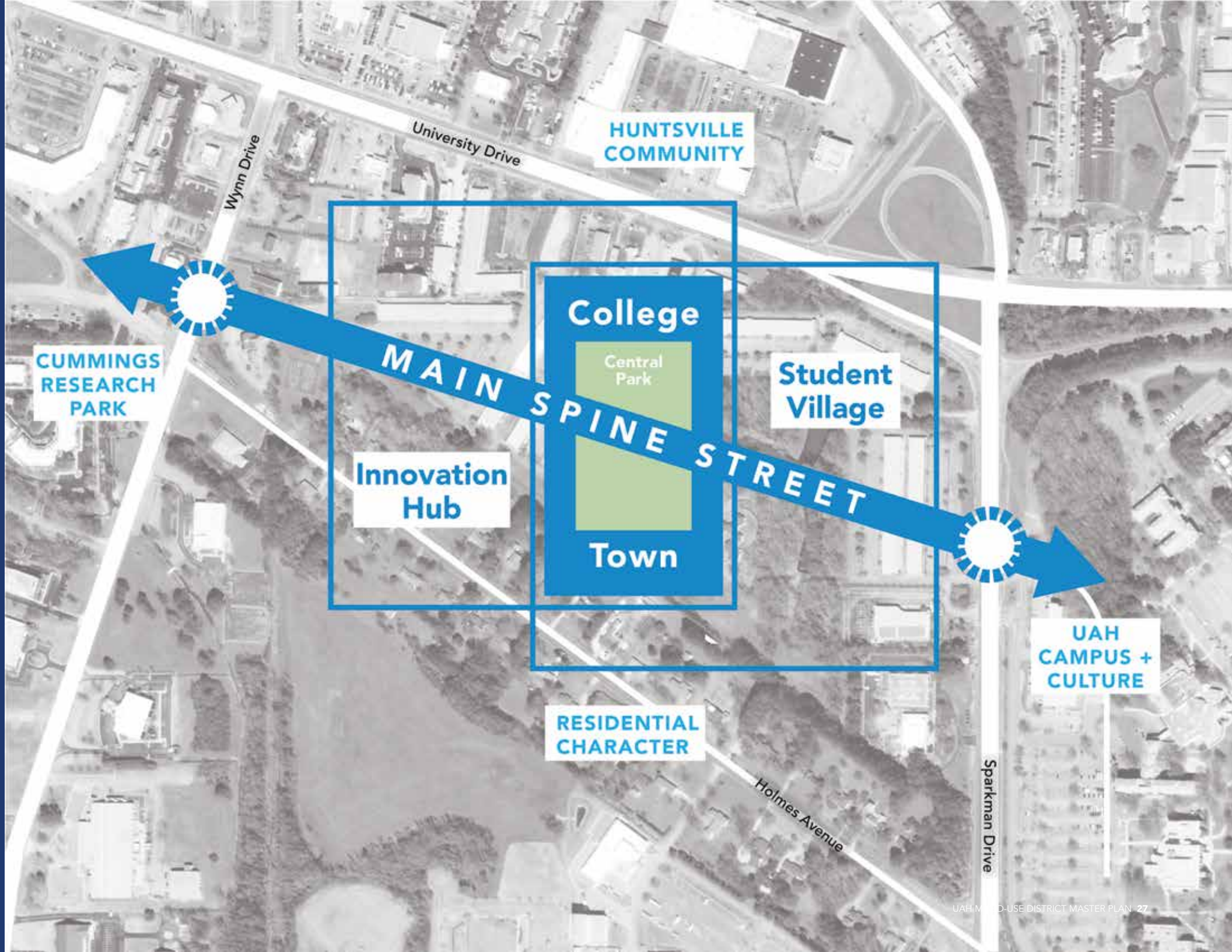
A dynamic place, bursting with activity and fun in the form of varied programming, entertainment, and recreation throughout the year.

### 07 Nature

A resilient place that protects ecologies, champions sustainability, and invites interaction with nature in public parks and green spaces.

### 08 Wellness

A healthy place that supports physical and mental well-being in facilities that prioritize fitness, nutrition, relaxation, and rest.





Section 03

# THE PLAN

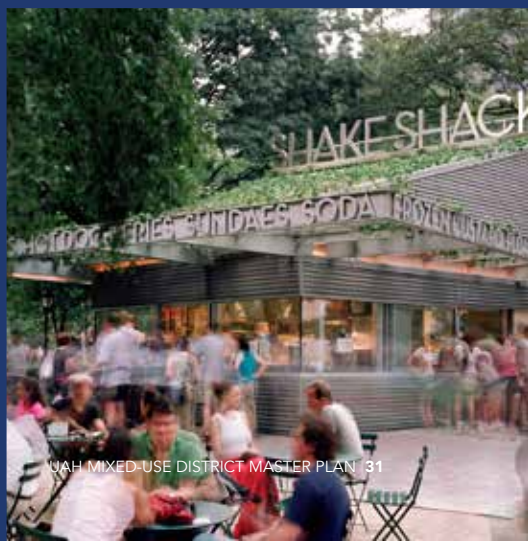
Key connections, open spaces, and development opportunities establish a walkable, mixed-use district that embraces the uniqueness of the site and the University's reputation in science and technology.

## THE PLAN

Devise an urban node for the University, with a key linkage to the core campus, main street, a commercial hub, and a multidimensional open-space network.

As the heart and soul of student life on the UAH campus, the mixed-used district will have a spirit and sense of place like nowhere else. It will be ground zero for creation of university traditions and lifelong memories. Brimming with culture, curiosity, and excitement, the district will be an engaging community that students enthusiastically call home.

The streets will be lined with funky small businesses catering to students. Bright and colorful storefronts will offer unique products and services, while hip cafes will enliven the sidewalks with sunny outdoor seating. Public art and creative expressions of the University's colors and emblems will call out the identity in which students take pride. Entertainment and recreation options will assure that the district feels active and safe at all hours. Small, intimate places will exist throughout the district to allow for studying, relaxing, and hanging out. The outdoor landscape will offer clusters of comfortable furniture for socializing, peaceful courtyards for relaxing, and lush shade trees under which everyone can enjoy a good read.







## THE PLAN

A thoughtful series of experiential moments crafted with students in mind.

- 01** Research and Innovation Hub
- 02** University Drive Retail
- 03** Conference Center and Hotel
- 04** Parkside Townhouses
- 05** Central Park (for Active Recreation)
- 06** Commercial Node
- 07** Wetlands Park (for Passive Recreation)
- 08** Canyon Pedestrian Spine
- 09** District Gateway Institutional Building
- 10** Pedestrian Bridge to Campus Core



## THE PLAN

### Parcel Framework

Gross Land Area	<b>58.25</b> ACRES
Net Development Parcels	<b>33.54</b> ACRES
Net to Gross	<b>58</b> %
Open Space	<b>9.33</b> ACRES
Open Space to Gross Land	<b>16</b> %

Parcel A	<b>2.22</b> ACRES
Parcel B	<b>2.70</b> ACRES
Parcel C	<b>3.55</b> ACRES
Parcel D	<b>2.41</b> ACRES
Parcel E	<b>0.48</b> ACRES
Parcel F	<b>0.62</b> ACRES
Parcel G	<b>1.46</b> ACRES
Parcel H	<b>0.11</b> ACRES
Parcel I	<b>1.58</b> ACRES
Parcel J	<b>0.62</b> ACRES

Parcel K	<b>1.46</b> ACRES
Parcel L	<b>0.72</b> ACRES
Parcel M	<b>0.62</b> ACRES
Parcel N	<b>5.63</b> ACRES
Parcel O	<b>3.01</b> ACRES
Parcel P	<b>3.10</b> ACRES
Parcel Q	<b>1.62</b> ACRES
Parcel R	<b>0.44</b> ACRES
Parcel S	<b>1.21</b> ACRES



**THE PLAN**  
Land-Use Framework

DEVELOPMENT TOTAL  
**2,050,000**  
SQUARE FEET

STUDENT HOUSING  
**800**  
BEDS

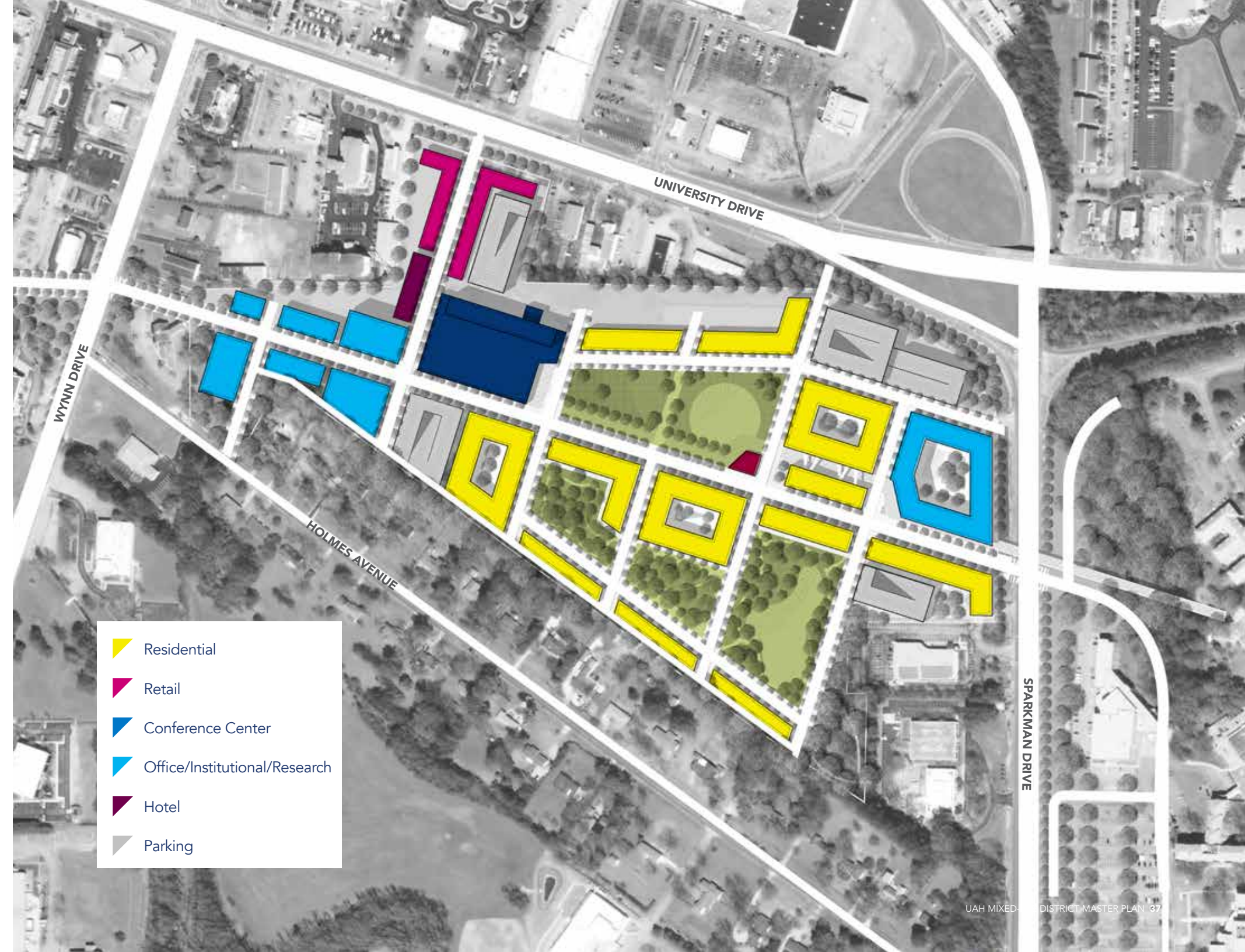
OFFICE SPACE  
**450,000**  
SQUARE FEET

INSTITUTIONAL/  
RESEARCH SPACE  
**385,000**  
SQUARE FEET

RETAIL SPACE  
**170,000**  
SQUARE FEET

CONFERENCE CENTER  
**165,000**  
SQUARE FEET

HOTEL SPACE  
**80,000**  
SQUARE FEET





## Main Street Crossing

The vibrant social and commercial heart of the mixed-use district abounds with shops and restaurants, where buzzing sidewalks always spark warm encounters.

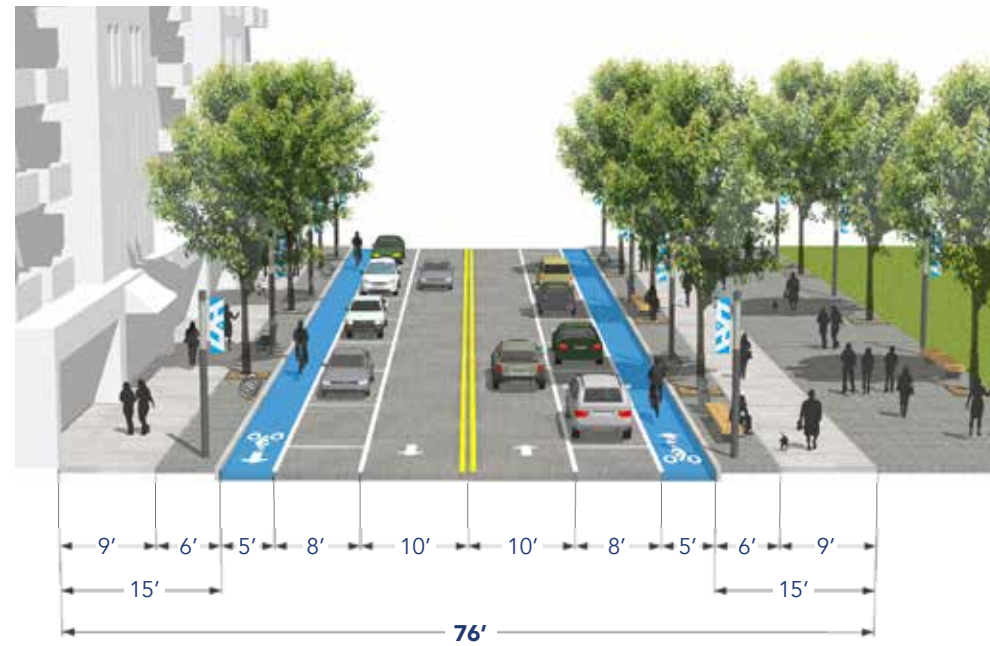
## THE PLAN

### Circulation Framework

#### THE MAIN STREET

Connects the UAH Campus from Sparkman Drive to Wynn Drive (to Cummings Research Park) and beyond (to MidCity Redevelopment)

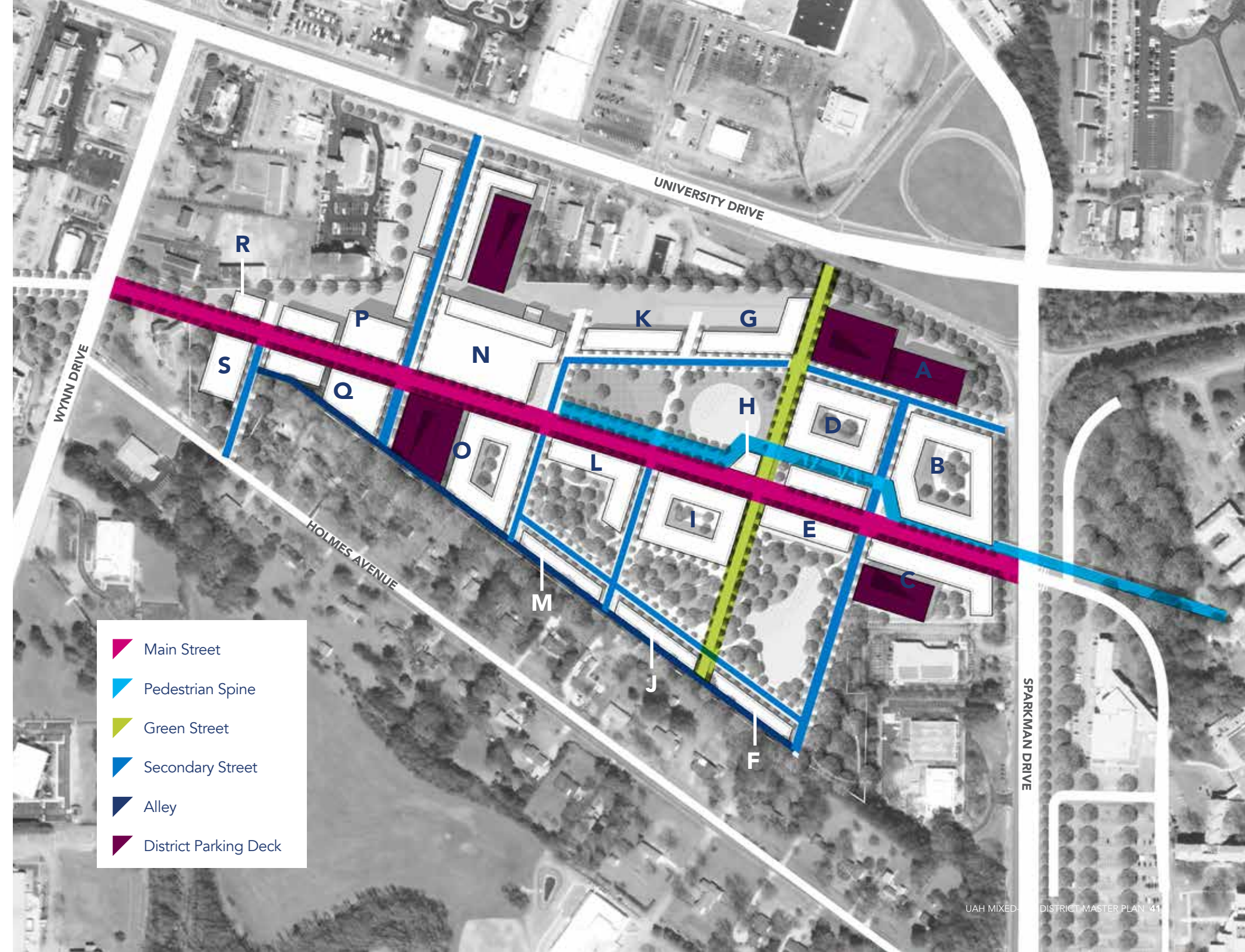
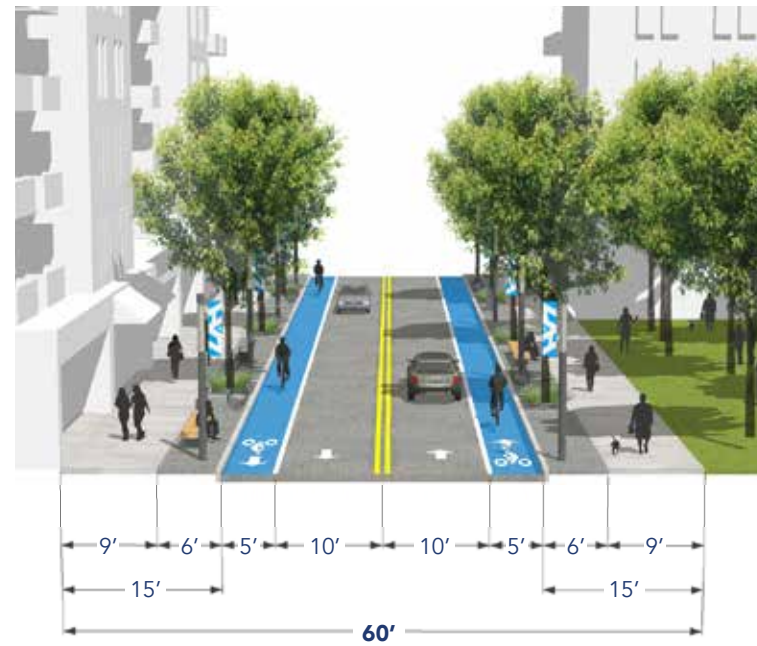
The functional spine of the mixed-use district is a wide main street capable of moving large numbers of vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Generous sidewalks are fronted by buildings with active ground-floor uses promoting lively street-level character throughout the day.



#### THE GREEN STREET

Connects the mixed uses internally, creating the commercial node of the district and providing space for water to move from the Central Park to the Wetlands Park

Green infrastructure is built into the sidewalks, offering both functional and aesthetic benefits. Linking the stormwater system of the central park to the natural filtration and storage functions of the wetlands park, the green street plays a vital role in the district's environmental sustainability.



▀  
Bustling Bridge at  
Sparkman Drive

A ceremonial gateway  
welcomes students and  
visitors alike into the district.  
The elegant pedestrian  
bridge makes a seamless  
connection between  
campuses old and new.



## THE PLAN

### Open-Space Framework

Wetlands trails



Central-park lake and lawn



Elevated pedestrian spine



Central-park food kiosk



Areas for sitting and studying



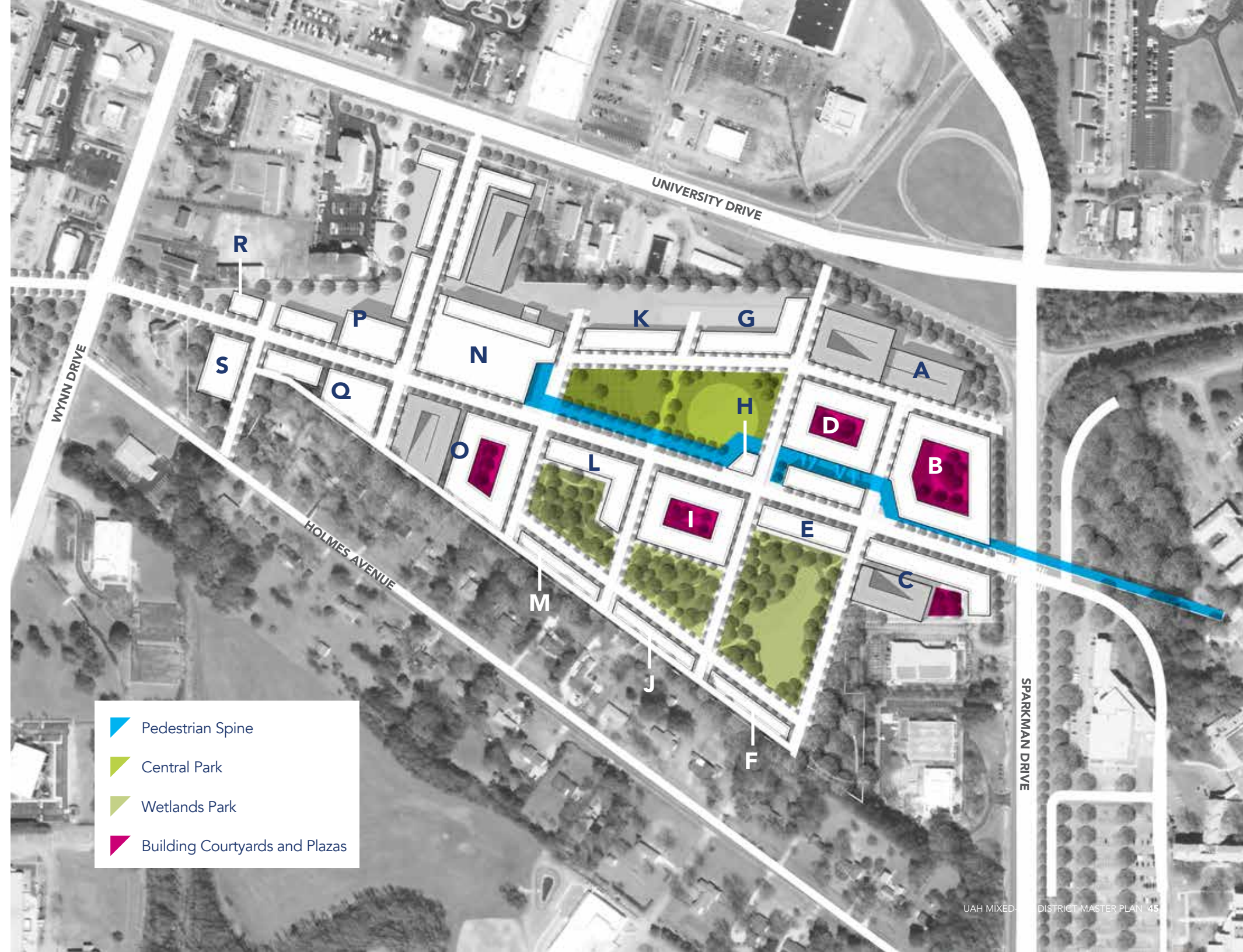
Interactions with nature



Intimate courtyard plazas



Fitness equipment along trails



## THE PLAN

### Phasing Framework

PHASE 01	PHASE 02	PHASE 03	PHASE 04	PHASE 05
DISTRICT GATEWAY	PARKSIDE LIVING	WETLANDS PARK	EVENTS QUARTER	INNOVATION HUB
<p>The grand pedestrian-bridge landing, opening up to early residential and retail options, creating two dynamic blocks along the main street.</p> <p>A stand-alone office complex begins engagement with the research community.</p> <p><b>RESIDENTIAL</b> 200,000 square feet</p> <p><b>RETAIL</b> 40,000 square feet</p> <p><b>OFFICE &amp; INSTITUTIONAL</b> 150,000 square feet</p> <p><b>BRIDGE TO CAMPUS &amp; OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p>	<p>New apartments frame and engage the central park, furthering the green space's identity as the district's key civic space.</p>	<p>A residential area centered around more-secluded experiences on the back side of the wetlands park provides a greater variety of living options.</p>	<p>The conference center and hotel that include Huntsville-facing retail options—all with associated parking facilities—support large-scale events.</p>	<p>A cluster of new office buildings allows the university to secure its vital role within the Huntsville research and innovation ecosystem.</p>

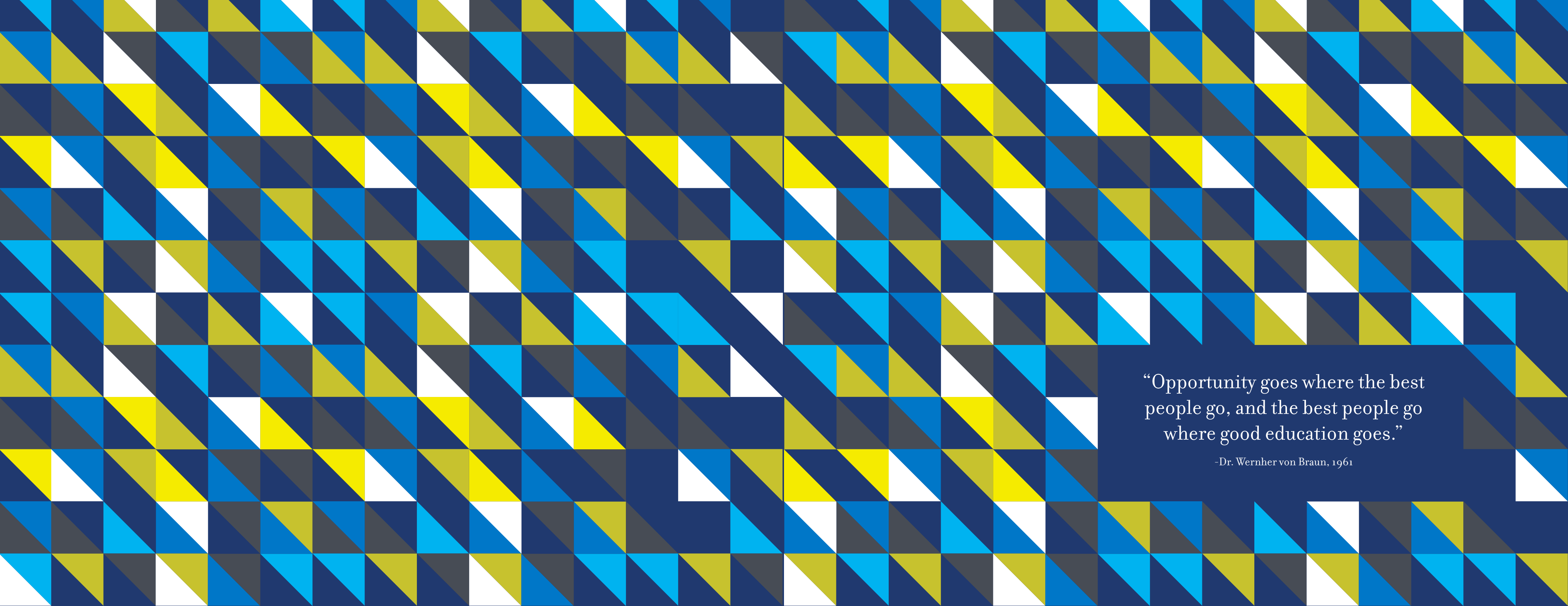






Conference Center  
and Hotel on the  
Central Park

**A glowing beacon of the new district, the welcoming conference facility will bring together the larger UAH community around the celebration of milestone events in an iconic space.**



“Opportunity goes where the best  
people go, and the best people go  
where good education goes.”

-Dr. Wernher von Braun, 1961



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