
VSG FutureVU Proposal

Community | Connectivity | Accessibility

Endorsed by the Vanderbilt Student Government Senate on April 19th, 2017



Executive Summary

Founded in 1873, Vanderbilt University started as a campus of 75 acres and grew to today comprise over 330 acres of land. This agglomeration has led to fragmented development, in contrast to the careful comprehensive plans that characterize many universities that largely occupy their original footprints. Because of Vanderbilt's system of land accretion, the campus feels more like a series of neighborhoods instead of being one, consistent campus. While these various neighborhoods exemplify the character of Vanderbilt University, the history of Vanderbilt's growth has created problems that we can still sense today—a disjointed character to the school.

At Vanderbilt University, students often talk about the "Vandy Bubble;" however in reality, it is more of a series of different bubbles all centered on campus. Students, faculty, and staff each have their own independent communities that co-exist on campus. As an institution, we should strive to break down barriers both between each other and between the campus and the surrounding city.

After talking to various groups of undergraduate students, three themes consistently emerged: community, connectivity, and accessibility. This proposal focuses on 45 different recommendations grouped into these three broad categories.

Community. Every undergraduate enters into Vanderbilt University looking for their own place they can call "home". This home looks different for each and every person. It could be performing arts or Greek life or multicultural organizations or academic organizations or in the research lab or in the classroom. It looks different for everyone, and in numerous focus groups, undergraduates speak to finding ownership of some place on campus. While looking at land use on campus, it is crucial to make sure that everyone not only finds their own community on campus but feels included

in the greater Vanderbilt community. Community spaces should be inclusive and welcoming to all people, so special care should be taken to ensure that psychological barriers are broken down to ensure that everyone can feel an ownership on campus.

Connectivity. Undergraduates often complain about how the various areas, or "neighborhoods", of campus feel disconnected and often isolated from each other. Phrases like the "Highland Island" or how the Blair School of Music feels like it's own world often pop up when speaking about areas that feel disconnected. Part of this lack of connectivity can be explained by physical barriers created by buildings or roads. Another part of this disconnect is created by the obstacles faced by pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and public transportation riders.

Accessibility. In conversations with undergraduates two different types of accessibility came up: mental accessibility and physical accessibility. Generally, undergraduates focused on areas that lacked one or both of these forms of accessibility. Mental accessibility is the perception that one is allowed to be in a certain area of campus. Students often highlighted areas like the West End Neighborhood, Bishops Commons, and the Curb and Seigenthaler Centers as being mentally inaccessible. However, many students also spoke about physical inaccessibility around campus. This physical inaccessibility manifests itself as buildings that lack direct ADA compliant entrances or a lack of separation between pedestrians and cyclists on pathways or cyclists and vehicles on roadways.

While this executive summary lightly touches on the themes that appear throughout this proposal, this proposal will dive much deeper into the the numerous observations that underlay the recommendations of this proposal.

History of VSG's Role in FutureVU

The Vanderbilt Student Government (VSG) Land Use Task Force was created after Ariana Fowler, Student Body President, and Taylor Gutierrez, Executive Vice President, met with Vice Chancellor Eric Kopstain in September of 2016. Vice Chancellor Kopstain tasked VSG to create a proposal focusing around the idea of a central spine that acts as a greenway creating a unified canopy across Vanderbilt's Campus. The three major themes in which VSG was to focus on were the movement of students across campus, accessibility to all community members, and the features of this spine.

Tackling a project of this size is no easy task. There are numerous stakeholders when it comes to a land use project. For Vanderbilt University in particular, there are undergraduate students, graduate students, professional students, faculty, staff, Nashville community members, family, alumni, etc. In order to best create and plan a campus that is spatially inclusive to all people, it is important to get a wide variety of perspectives. As VSG serves Vanderbilt's undergraduate population, almost all people brought into this project were undergraduates.

This project was spearheaded by Vice President Gutierrez. Vice President Gutierrez first gathered names of a variety of undergraduate students who are interested in the various aspects of Land Use at Vanderbilt. This first group provided important and valuable information and feedback on how they interact with space at Vanderbilt and what they value in the current configuration of campus. After these initial meetings held throughout October, Vice President Gutierrez held a series of "drop-in hours" open to the whole undergraduate population for people to provide input and suggestions on the plan. Three of these drop-in hours were held between November 3, 2016 to November 16, 2016. Through the feedback gathered in these groups and through the ideas and recommendations

generated by those who have written this proposal, this proposal was brought together.

After presenting a draft to Vice Chancellor Kopstain, Dean of Students Mark Bandas, and Clayton Arrington, Vice President Gutierrez held a series of seven focus groups with undergraduate students from a variety of grades and organizations in order to gather their input and feedback on the ideas held in this report. These focus groups were held between February 14, 2017 and March 1, 2017. Feedback from these seven focus groups was then integrated. The finalized draft of this report was presented to the Vanderbilt Student Government Senators who then provided feedback before having the report presented in full to Senate on April 19th, 2017. In Senate Resolution 16-17-55, the Vanderbilt Student Government Senate endorsed the recommendations listed in this document to be taken into consideration in the FutureVU plan.

Connectivity through Transportation

The topic of transportation is one of the utmost concern to the future of Vanderbilt and its relation to greater Nashville. The ability for Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff, and visitors to easily access the amenities of campus, to greater Nashville, and beyond, is a driver of productivity for all those who are associated with Vanderbilt. Incentivizing methods of transportation that reduce cost to individuals, the university, and the environment, as well as methods that maximize mobility, should be prioritized. Some proposals to achieve these goals are highlighted below. But first, a few comments on how transportation currently stands on campus and beyond.

Current State of Transportation

Walking

When people think about walking through Vanderbilt's campus, they often think about the picturesque, park-like stroll through the university's Historic Core of campus. The reality of walking through campus is remarkably inconsistent across the university. One of the strengths of the Historic Core is its its pleasantly meandering and effective network of walkways acting like a web to connect pedestrians to various points of interest across campus. However, not all of these walkways are equally used, and certain highly-trafficked walkways are becoming crowded due to their narrow width. Most walkways can only accommodate two to three people across.

On the Peabody area of campus, there are relatively few walkways connecting points together on campus, and each pathway is carefully laid out to connect the different areas of the neighborhood together. This area of campus reflects the same picturesque and park-like aspects of the Historic Core of campus. The pathways are on average wider in this area of campus than other parts of campus and do not face the same amount of congestion as other parts of campus; however, at certain "pinch points" such as between the Payne and Mayborn Buildings, congestion develops as

walkers and bikers try to move through these areas.

Despite the walking experiences of the Historic Core and Peabody feeling very similar, there is a perceived vast spatial gap between the two neighborhoods of campus. 21st Avenue bisecting the two areas is the main contributor to this gap. 21st Avenue lies in a low point with campus elevated on either side of the road. The valley-like nature of the topography along with the high-speed of vehicular traffic passing through the area makes a pedestrian feel like they are leaving campus in order to reenter campus. The pedestrian bridge across 21st Avenue at Edgehill Avenue installed in 2002 has vastly improved the connection between the two neighborhoods, but this pedestrian bridge is now over-crowded by walkers and bikers alike trying to get between the two areas of campus¹. The pedestrian bridge farther south across 21st Avenue is drastically underutilized by undergraduates due to its entering the Central Garage instead of connecting directly to campus and an inconveniently placed ramp on the Peabody side. This Garage is not used by undergraduates due to it belonging to the Medical Center and this unfamiliarity causes students to feel wary entering it. Students often now cross from Main Campus to Peabody by crossing 21st Avenue at Medical Center Drive,

¹ http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Register/dec09_02/20021209bridge.html

but this crossway requires students to wait at the crosswalk to safely cross 21st Avenue.

The pedestrian experience changes drastically as one enters into the remaining areas of campus. The West End Neighborhood with its streets and focus on vehicular traffic creates a nightmare for people walking through the area. Often students, in place of crossing at designated crosswalks, will cross at any point across both 24th and 25th Avenues, creating unsafe situations for walkers, bikers, and drivers. Also, the presence of stairs and the lack of ADA compliant ramps and curbs make the area uninviting for those with physical disabilities.

In Central Campus, the university again feels disjointed due to the priority given to vehicular traffic with the current layout of 24th Avenue and Vanderbilt Place. The University Club in particular creates a challenge for those walking through campus. Students walking to Olin Hall and the Engineering and Science Building often walk through the University Club parking lot and then cross Garland Avenue. A common complaint voiced by undergraduates is the lack of a clear pathway to Olin Hall and the Engineering and Science Building caused by the placement of the University Club.

The prevalence of roadways only worsens a pedestrian's experience as they head farther south down 24th and 25th Avenues. In order to get to Highland Quad (often referred to as the "Highland Island" by undergraduates) and the Blair School of Music, a pedestrian has to traverse long, uneventful swaths of concrete parking lots and tedious stretches of sidewalk. For those who chose to make the trek along 24th Avenue, pedestrians have to pass by the Veterans Affairs Hospital. With the Veterans Affairs Hospital not being owned by Vanderbilt University or the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, undergraduates often site the area as one that feels unsafe due to the high traffic of "strangers" or those not involved with the Vanderbilt Community. For those who chose to

walk along 25th Avenue, pedestrians are not protected by parked cars as on 24th, which exposes pedestrians to high-speed car traffic only a few feet away. Because 25th Avenue acts as shortcut for many Nashville drivers and the high-volume of traffic entering and leaving the 25th Avenue Parking Garage, drivers often speed through area at velocities significantly higher than the posted speed limit. Pedestrians also lack protection from the elements as a result of a lack of tree cover. Pedestrians heading to the Athletic Areas of campus also suffer from the same issues either along 25th Avenue or Natchez Trace, which also provides very little protection to pedestrians from cars and the elements.

The conditions that pedestrians face vary widely depending on which neighborhood of campus the pedestrian is. The park-like areas of Peabody and the Historic Core heavily contrast with the walking conditions of the areas around the West End Neighborhood, Central Campus, the Highland Block, and the Athletic Area. Pedestrians also find difficulty traversing between neighborhoods of campus, leaving walkers with a sense of disconnectedness and an exaggerated perception of the distance between areas of campus.

Biking

Currently, Vanderbilt University reflects the vehicle-centered culture that exists in the Nashville metropolitan area. Like the city that surrounds it, Vanderbilt lacks any significant, dedicated bike infrastructure. While one can generally safely traverse campus on bike, it often proves difficult for students. VanderBIKES, a student-run business on campus, annually rents out its 60 bikes out to undergraduate students. According to Ben Vallimarescu, the VanderBIKES's president for the 2016-2017 academic year, interest in renting bikes decline after a student's first year because of the difficulty students have with transversing campus via bicycle. However, bicycles remain

the most efficient way to get from one area of campus to another with students often biking between extreme neighborhoods of campus such as from the Blair School of Music to Wilson Hall or Blakemore House to Peabody. A large part of the difficulty students have with biking is the lack of dedicated bike lanes on campus, placing pedestrians and bikers into direct conflict with each other. These narrow walkways do not allow pedestrians and cyclists to equally use the space. Students will often give up on biking part way through the semester out of frustration with getting around despite biking being the fastest way to get around campus.

Another issue that bikers face on campus is a lack of appropriate, long-term storage for bicycles on campus. According to Vallimarescu, most maintenance issues that VanderBIKES sees are caused by bicycles exposure to the elements. Almost none of the existing bicycle racks on campus protect bicycles from the elements, and most bicycles are then exposed to the outdoors nearly 24/7.

Another common complaint from students around biking is the campus's lack of connection to Nashville's biking infrastructure. While getting around campus can be discouraging, commuting to and from campus by bike feels dangerous as many roads around Vanderbilt are high traffic and lack proper safety infrastructure. Nashville has improved cycling conditions in a few spots near to campus. Along Edgehill Avenue and 16th and 17th Avenues, Nashville has installed bike lanes to ease cyclists commute along those streets. Natchez Trace beyond the edge of campus also has dedicated bike lanes. However, many of the other arterial roads which border campus like 21st Avenue, Blakemore Avenue, and West End Avenue lack any sort of dedicated bicycle infrastructure. With cars dominating these roads, bikers are often forced onto the sidewalks, again causing conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

On campus itself, the trend of drivers and walkers dominating the existing infrastructure makes biking much more difficult. Natchez Trace, 24th Avenue by the Veterans Affairs Hospital, and Jess Neely Drive employ "sharrows". While these "sharrows" encourage bikers, they do not actually provide space for cyclists to safely ride on the streets within campus. The sidewalks along these roads offer little space for bikers. In the Historic Core and Peabody where pedestrian walkways are ample but increasingly crowded, little space is afforded for cyclists to ride safely without potentially hitting pedestrians creating conflict between walkers and cyclists. The fragmented biking infrastructure creates a frustrating and uninviting environment for cyclists.



A typical "sharrow" in action.

Driving

Like most Nashvillians, many students chose to bring their cars to school in order to get off campus. In Nashville, cars prove to be most reliable and convenient mode of transportation. With Juniors and Seniors being guaranteed parking spots and limited parking for Sophomores, many students chose to bring their

own cars to campus. Those who can afford to have a car, parking permits create another financial barrier for students with the price of F and G permits increasing to keep up with the price of parking lot and garage maintenance. Parking also creates a further financial disparity between students with some students choosing to park in reserved lots like the Kensington Garage or the Kissam Center Garage which cost significantly more than F and G permits. Sadly, in terms of land use, the automobile is a costly venture for developers, city governments, and universities. Construction of parking lots necessitates giving up prime real estate for a single use, often taking years to see any return on investment. Construction of parking lots necessitates trading prime real estate for a single use, often taking years to see any return on investment.

These parking lots and garages form barriers, adding to the disconnected feeling between campus neighborhoods. For students walking to and from Highland Quad and the Blair School of Music, the 25th Avenue Garage and the Veterans Affairs Hospital parking lot make the journey feel impersonal and often unsettling. These parking structures make important buildings like the Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center, Blakemore House, Highland Quad, and the Blair School of Music feel removed from the rest of campus.

For many students, having a personal vehicle is imperative with certain, existing academic programs such as the internship required for the Human and Organizational Development major or student teaching for the Special Education major. Students that have off-campus jobs also need cars to get to and from work. For some students, having a car on campus is a necessity while for others having a vehicle is merely a luxury.

Recent emergence of popular ride-sharing services such as Uber and Lyft have drastically changed how students get on and off campus.

These services are convenient and can take students off campus in a fairly cost-effective manner. With the addition of students being able to pay for Uber using their Commodore Cards, using the ride-sharing services is more popular than ever before.

Current trends in driving point toward an evolution in the relationship between Americans and their automobiles. Vanderbilt University needs to adapt by seeking a balance between parking capacity while ensuring a continued feeling of campus community. While in a perfect world, one could ideally wish for the elimination of single-occupancy vehicles entirely, the current state of Nashville will continue to require some dependency on cars.

Public Transit

The city is currently experiencing a massive population boom, causing an influx of commuters that use single-occupancy vehicles, and struggling to provide attractive public transit alternatives that service residential areas. To make matters worse, 88% of regional roadways in the greater Nashville area score a D or worse for pedestrian safety, with 90% of public transit riders walking to their stop². This shortcoming further reduces the attractiveness of existing public transit. Despite having free access to the MTA bus system, Vanderbilt students rarely use this service. For many students, the system proves unreliable and inconvenient with long wait times and awkward schedules incongruent with times when students are most likely to get off campus.

Vanderbilt University currently administers its own, limited public transportation option that focuses on the interior of campus. This service, known as Vandy Vans, currently runs from 6pm to 3:30am. Common complaints by undergraduates about the Vandy Van service are that it is currently unreliable and does not seem like an efficient

² http://www.nashvillempo.org/regional_plan/walk_bike/

mode of travel across campus. Often, students will decide to walk instead of riding the Vandy Vans at night, thereby defeating the safety aspect of the service. The current limitation of having only three routes also adds to students' frustration of the system.

Connection to Nashville

One frustration often cited by both Nashvillians and Vanderbilt students about Vanderbilt University is the existence of the "Vandy Bubble". The term refers to the fact that there is a widely held belief that a physical and psychological disconnect exists between the

Vanderbilt Campus and the surrounding Nashville area. This is one of the unfortunate consequences of having a almost universally residential campus. Students often spend almost all of their time on campus, and even after four years, some undergraduates will have never had a Nashville experience. Part of this is due to the immense amount of social activity and on-campus events happening every day. Another aspect that plays into this is students' relative difficulty in getting off campus to engage with the surrounding Nashville Community. Having a limited ability to take advantage of all that Nashville has to offer perpetuates this concept of the "Vandy Bubble".

Immediate Transportation Recommendations

In assessing the various strengths and weaknesses of the multi-modal transportation systems that exist at Vanderbilt University, there are many recommendations that can be implemented in the relative short-term in order to make Vanderbilt a more livable and welcoming campus. This section of the proposal will address the various recommendations gathered from the undergraduate perspective that can be implemented as more immediate steps to improve how students move about campus.

Walking

When asking students, faculty, and staff what they most enjoy about Vanderbilt University's campus, they most often cite the peaceful, sanctuary-like areas of campus namely the Historic Core and Peabody. Vanderbilt University needs to engender this same sentiment across all neighborhoods of campus, and the key to this focus is to prioritize pedestrians on campus when and wherever possible.

Recommendation: Focus on transitioning campus away from being car-dominated and create areas that are clearly walking- and biking-centric zones in all future plans made on all areas of campus. A good, existing example of a zone that prioritizes walking and biking over cars is between Kirkland and Alumni Halls. The area between the two buildings is a drivable area; however to those walking and

biking, the area does not feel like a roadway or parking lot, allowing it to blend in effortlessly with the historic core of campus.

Recommendation: Reevaluate and analyze accessibility on all parts of campus through the implementation of either a working committee or through an outside contractor. While the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted in 1990, a large portion of the buildings on campus had already been built. Because ADA requirements were only applicable to new construction after its passage, a large portion of pre-existing Vanderbilt buildings were grandfathered in to the new building codes. Many of these buildings still need to be retrofitted to meet and exceed ADA requirements to improve accessibility for all students, faculty, and staff. A full analysis of the university should be conducted to identify all areas that need improvement to meet and exceed ADA requirements.

Recommendation: replace all crosswalks on Campus with *raised crosswalks* or *continuous sidewalks*. As stated by Lior Steinberg in his blog LVBLCity, current and traditional crosswalks inform pedestrians that they are entering into a vehicles' zone; however, continuous sidewalks instead inform drivers that they are entering into a pedestrians' zone³. In staying aligned with priority on pedestrians, these continuous sidewalks will improve the pedestrian experience as well as make crossing existing roads more accessible. Some areas identified that could benefit these crosswalks are across roads such as West Side Row, 24th Avenue, 25th Avenue, Kensington Avenue, and Magnolia Circle.

Recommendation: Rebrand and publicize the Vanderbilt University Police Department (VUPD) Safety Escort System. Similar to the Vandy Van System, this transportation system is designed to keep students safe by providing an escort to help move the student from one point of campus to another. Currently students feel a stigma in using the program. Some students' hesitance is due to not wanting to "inconvenience a VUPD officer" or due to being stubborn and not admitting that they need an escort. Both of these excuses create a danger for students, especially at night when Vandy Vans do not run between 3:30am and sunrise. The VUPD Safety Escort System should be renamed and rebranded with a focus on approachability to lessen the stigma and increase use.

Recommendation: Replace 2-3 step stairs with ramps to improve accessibility. Certain areas, especially on the perimeters of campus, use steps to change elevation. These steps create inaccessibility on campus, especially for those who cannot use stairs such as cyclists and those with physical disabilities. These steps should be regraded to allow for ADA compliant ramps to be installed to increase accessibility.

Recommendation: Improve ADA accessibility around Sarratt | Rand. Sarratt |

Rand is notorious for the amount of steps that it has. Even for students trying to get around the building, they often need to use stairs to circumnavigate it. The design of the building and surrounding pathways incorporates an unnecessary amount of separate staircases in lieu of ramps. In order to get in and out of the building and move between different areas of the building, students need to circle Sarratt | Rand in order to find an ADA accessible route.

Recommendation: Work with the City of Nashville to improve the experience of crossing 21st Avenue, specifically at Grand Avenue and Scarritt Place. Pedestrians often need to wait for an extended amount of time at these crossings in order to safely cross the street. Crossings at these areas will become increasingly more important in the coming years as more undergraduate students live off campus while Vanderbilt University continues to rollout its residential college system. Many students live in apartments on the other side of 21st.

Biking

Interestingly, the biking experience will improve on campus as the university prioritizes accessibility and the pedestrian experience. As pathways get wider and steps are eliminated, cyclists' experience on campus will drastically improve.

Recommendation: Eliminate curbs on nonessential roadways, like Stevenson Center Lane, to allow cyclists to more easily transition between pathways and roadways. A good, existing example of this is along 24th Avenue between Branscomb Quad and the Power House; cyclists can easily maneuver between the street and sidewalk, improving the experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

Recommendation: Remove bollards whenever possible. Currently, the university has many different bollards strewn across campus. The narrow passage between bollards

³ <https://www.lvblcity.com/blog/2014/9/sidewalks-instead-of-crosswalks>

makes it difficult for cyclists to maneuver, increasing risk of collision with either the bollards, pedestrians, or other cyclists. Bollards should only be preserved where car traffic is an actual concern and only to the extent they block cars.

Recommendation: The university should expand the bicycle sharing infrastructure in a purposeful way that connects the far-flung neighborhoods of campus. This should be done either as a partnership with the existing B-cycle program or through a Vanderbilt-run service. Students, faculty, and staff should be able to use the bicycles free-of-charge for a short period of time. These bicycle sharing stations must be placed at key and convenient areas to form a network across campus. Areas identified as potentially viable locations include but are not limited to the Commons Center, Sarratt | Rand, Stevenson Center, Kissam Center, Blair School of Music, and Blakemore House.

Recommendation: Vanderbilt University should work with the City of Nashville and State of Tennessee to improve the biking experience along 21st Avenue. For many students commuting between Peabody and Wilson Hall, 21st Avenue is the most efficient route; however, biking along this street is difficult and dangerous. While cyclists are discouraged from biking on the sidewalk, cyclists are left exposed on 21st Avenue and feel unsafe. This forces most cyclists on to the sidewalk, placing them in direct conflict with pedestrians. The University should work to improve the cyclist experience by working with the local government to create designated biking lanes along 21st Avenue.

Driving

It is the norm in the United States to design so people have enough space, as evidenced by large parking lots at Wal-Mart or urban sprawl in large cities like Los Angeles. The opposite philosophy, curtly described by the Danish landscape architect Sven-Ingvar

Andersson, suggests to “make sure there’s never quite enough room.” Spaces built to the human scale, where a person can see buildings, details and the people around them at close range gain a sense of warmth, personality, and openness. This is in sharp contrast to the experiences in cities and urban complexes where distances, urban space and buildings are huge, details are lacking and there are few people. In the scope of Vanderbilt, Andersson’s approach can be applied to automobiles. The experience of driving a car on campus should be not a wholly comfortable experience. This philosophy has worked in many European cities like Copenhagen and Amsterdam, where cars must navigate narrow streets at low speeds and where pedestrians and cyclists have the right of way.

Recommendation: Reduce the speed limits on campus to 15 or 20 mph. This reduction in speed will encourage drivers to drive safely and cautiously through campus and may disincentive those using a shortcut through campus to find alternative routes that go around campus.

Recommendation: Utilize traffic-calming measures such as narrowing streets, planting trees, and introducing rumble strips to slow drivers and increase pedestrian and cyclist safety. These measures would be particularly effective on streets like 25th Avenue. Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, similar to Vanderbilt University, has taken such measures on Eagle Row, a road comparable to 25th Avenue in that it sees the majority of car traffic on campus. Note the raised crosswalk, rumble strips, bike lane, and greenery lining the street.

Recommendation: Install a roundabout at the intersection between Jess Neely Drive, Natchez Trace, 28th Avenue, and Vanderbilt Place. The inclusion of a roundabout would slow down traffic as well make the intersection more attractive and feel more connected to the rest of campus, especially for undergraduate students who live in Blakemore House.



An image of Eagle Road in Atlanta, Georgia. Note the raised crosswalk, rumble strips, bike lane, and greenery lining the street.

Recommendation: Move all surface lots past the athletic complexes. All Greek and student parking on campus should gradually be removed. This may be a point of contention, however, it is important that they are removed to transition campus away from a car-centric focus. Shuttle service like those offered by the Medical Center should be provided 24/7 for students, faculty, and staff to access the surface lots at the edge of campus. This shuttle service is imperative to support students who need to access their cars for internships, student teaching, or off-campus jobs.

Public Transit

Vanderbilt University should be a key partner with the City of Nashville to promote public transportation and improve MTA ridership. It should take an active role in local government to improve the public transit system in the Middle Tennessee area. University support can take many forms, but the University should strive to provide a better experience for not only its students, faculty, and staff but for all those who live and work in the communities around it.

Recommendation: Transition the Parking Services office into a transportation office. Many other universities similar to Vanderbilt

University have dedicated transportation offices. Rice University's transportation department dedicates itself to providing safe & convenient transportation services and commuting information to the Rice community⁴. Through these offices, Rice University, Emory University, Brown University, and many other similarly sized, top-20 universities offer daytime shuttles for students, faculty, and staff alike that link parts of campus with one another. Even our medical center has shuttles that provide an invaluable service to its employees. In addition, the transportation office can work with the city of Nashville and the MTA to advance Vanderbilt's transportation interests. This office will have a larger role on campus covering multi-modal forms of transportation like walking, cycling, driving, and public transportation.

Recommendation: Improve the Vandy Van System to be an efficient method of travel that operates 24/7 for students, faculty, and staff. Increase the number of routes in order to increase efficiency. Also, include off-campus locations such as a grocery store and popular off-campus housing to decrease the number of rides needed to campus.

Recommendation: Improve the accessibility and quality of public transit to campus. The bus routes that connect to campus offer few destinations that are of service to undergraduate students. This can be in form of additional bus stops or working with the city to create new, more effective routes.

Recommendation: Construct MTA and Vandy Van shelters wherever there are stops to protect riders from the elements and advertise resources to community members.

Recommendation: Advertise students' free access to the MTA bus service. Despite having this free access, undergraduates seldom use the service. With improvements to public transportation, Vanderbilt should promote the

⁴ <https://transportation.rice.edu/>

use of public transit as a viable mode of transportation for students to access Nashville.

Recommendation: Vanderbilt University and the Vanderbilt University Medical Center should work with the City of Nashville to improve access to public transit or high occupancy vehicles for staff and faculty to

decrease dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.

Recommendation: Provide transportation to students with internships and student teaching to increase opportunity for those who cannot afford a car, and to decrease their reliance on a personal, single-occupancy vehicle.

Transitional Transportation Goals

The Greenway



What Vanderbilt's Greenway can look like.

As Vanderbilt continues to improve over the next decade, we envision the Greenway truly beginning to take shape connecting campus together. In the next decade, we hope to see the University truly take an intermodal view of transportation, and because of this, the following section relation to transportation are no longer divided between different forms of transportation. We predict that through implementing the previous recommendations and due to changes in transportation infrastructure in both Nashville and the United States, a majority, if not all, faculty, staff, and students will be using two or more modes of transportation in their daily interaction with campus.

Recommendation: Convert 25th Avenue into a *complete street*. The term *complete street* is often used by urban planners, traffic and highway engineers, public health practitioners, and community members to refer to a street that is designed, planned, and operated to maintain a safe, convenient and comfortable trip for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. Not only can 25th Avenue be

converted into a complete street but also can be incorporated into the Greenway. 25th Avenue, a city-controlled road, bisects campus, significantly contributing to the feelings of disconnect that exist on campus. Creating a complete street on 25th Avenue reinforces the concept of Vanderbilt University's campus being a sanctuary that prioritizes pedestrians.

Complete streets have many safety benefits. The addition of traffic calming measures such as raised medians, tree cover, speed bumps, and narrower traffic lanes all have been shown to substantially improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) by slowing car traffic down⁵. Rates of pedestrian injuries and fatalities decrease 88% when sidewalks are added, 69% when hybrid beacon signals are added, and 39% when medians are added, and generally decrease when improvements for pedestrians and cyclists are added.

The implementation of the Greenway can also improve public health. Several studies highlight that promotion of active transportation modes (walking and biking) also improves health. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended physical activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough⁶. Another study showed over one third of regular public transit users meet the minimum daily requirement for physical activity. Increased



Raised median - a viable traffic calming measure.

access to public transit may help promote and

⁵ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/03042/03042.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448003/>

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16242589>

maintain active lifestyles⁷. If an MTA bus stop were placed along the Greenway, students, faculty, and staff alike could all become more active by walking to the bus stop.

The Greenway's name implies environmental friendliness, and this aspect is one of the benefits of a complete street. Communities with strong complete streets policies and implementation, including Boulder, CO, saw a reduction in their emissions. Over the last several years, fewer people in Boulder drove alone, and bicycle and transit trips increased. As a result, the city cut annual carbon dioxide emissions by half a million pounds. While the Greenway at Vanderbilt will not have such sweeping effects as in Boulder, it can be a model for more complete streets in Nashville and beyond.

Complete streets inherently foster inclusivity by considering the needs of students, faculty, and staff. The town hall meetings by the administration on this matter have been critical to hear all the voices present on campus, and it established a context sensitive approach in design and implementation of transportation improvements. The Greenway will be the culmination of this type of design, and can continue to foster community on and off campus.

Recommendation: Make buildings more directly accessible for those with disabilities. Often students, faculty, staff, and visitors need to walk through other entrances in order to get into a building. Able-bodied people often do not see the outdated infrastructure that exists in many buildings, particular older buildings on campus. While a full, extensive review of campus will need to be conducted to identify all the buildings that do not currently meet ADA requirements, buildings that are often brought up by undergraduate students as being

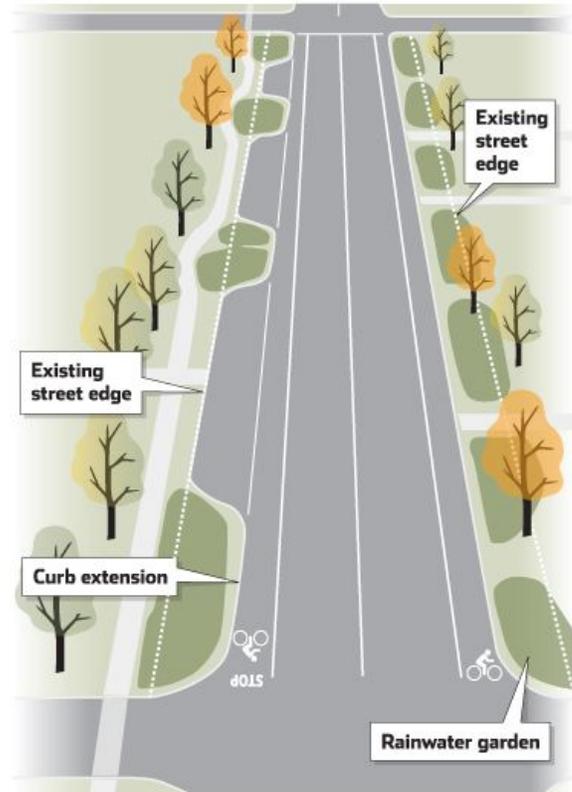
inaccessible are Furman Hall, many buildings on the Peabody Campus, and Sarratt | Rand.

Recommendation: Work with the city of Nashville to improve the University's connection to Centennial Park. Vanderbilt University's 330+ acres of park-like space is set right next to one of the most popular parks in Nashville: Centennial Park. With attractions like a running path, outdoor theater, and a replica of the Parthenon, Centennial Park is a hot destination for many students on campus; however, it is relatively difficult to get to Centennial Park. Currently at the intersection of 25th Avenue and West End Avenue, one has to cross a minimum of three streets to access the park. Vanderbilt should work with the city of Nashville to either create a simpler pedestrian-crossing method or create a bridge to connect campus with Centennial.

Recommendation: Create ride-share pick-up zones dispersed throughout campus. The advent of services such as Uber and Lyft has revolutionized how students get around Nashville. With the addition of the Commodore Card as a payment method for Uber, students have dramatically shifted away from traditional taxis participating in the Commodore Cab program to Uber. Uber and Lyft have a level of convenience and efficiency that traditional cab companies lack. As more and more students using ride-share services and relying less on their own vehicles, the University should scatter pick-up and drop-off zones along the perimeter of campus. These zones should be small, circular driveways to allow for easy access for vehicles but not disturb the prioritization of pedestrians on campus.

Narrower, but better

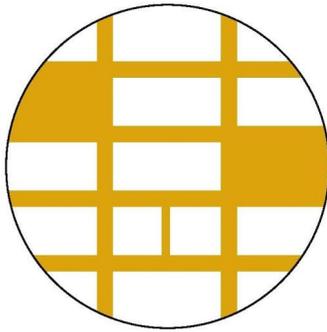
A growing number of cities, and the state, are adopting policies changing the way streets are designed. Often the Complete Streets policies mean narrower lanes to slow traffic, plus walking and biking lanes, landscaping and more limited on-street parking.



Source: Complete Streets Coalition

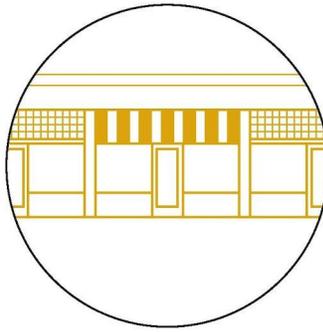
PIONEER PRESS

Recommendation: Work with the city of Nashville to improve public transportation. Vanderbilt University has a responsibility to the community around it and should use its influence to improve public transportation in the city. Not only would improvements to public transportation in Nashville enhance the faculty, staff, and student experience but would also have an immense impact on the city around it.



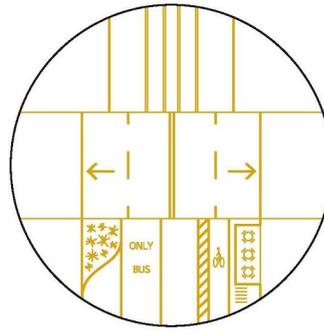
Streets Are Public Spaces

Streets are often the most vital yet underutilized public spaces in cities. In addition to providing space for travel, streets play a big role in the public life of cities and communities and should be designed as public spaces as well as channels for movement.



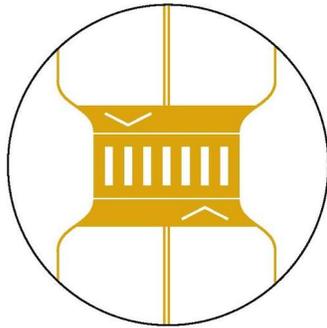
Great Streets are Great for Businesses

Cities have realized that streets are an economic asset as much as a functional element. Well-designed streets generate higher revenues for businesses and higher values for homeowners.¹



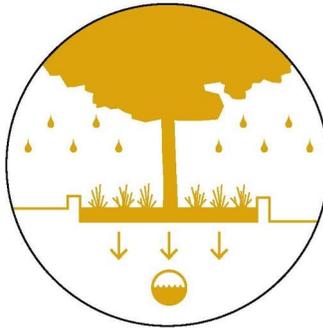
Streets Can Be Changed

Transportation engineers can work flexibly within the building envelope of a street. This includes moving curbs, changing alignments, daylighting corners, and redirecting traffic where necessary. Many city streets were built or altered in a different era and need to be reconfigured to meet new needs. Street space can also be reused for different purposes, such as parklets, bike share, and traffic calming.



Design for Safety

In 2012 in the U.S., over 34,000 people were killed in traffic crashes, which were also the leading cause of death among children aged 5–14. These deaths and hundreds of thousands of injuries are avoidable. Traffic engineers can and should do better, by designing streets where people walking, parking, shopping, bicycling, working, and driving can cross paths safely.



Streets Are Ecosystems

Streets should be designed as ecosystems where man-made systems interface with natural systems. From pervious pavements and bioswales that manage storm-water run-off to street trees that provide shade and are critical to the health of cities, ecology has the potential to act as a driver for long-term, sustainable design.



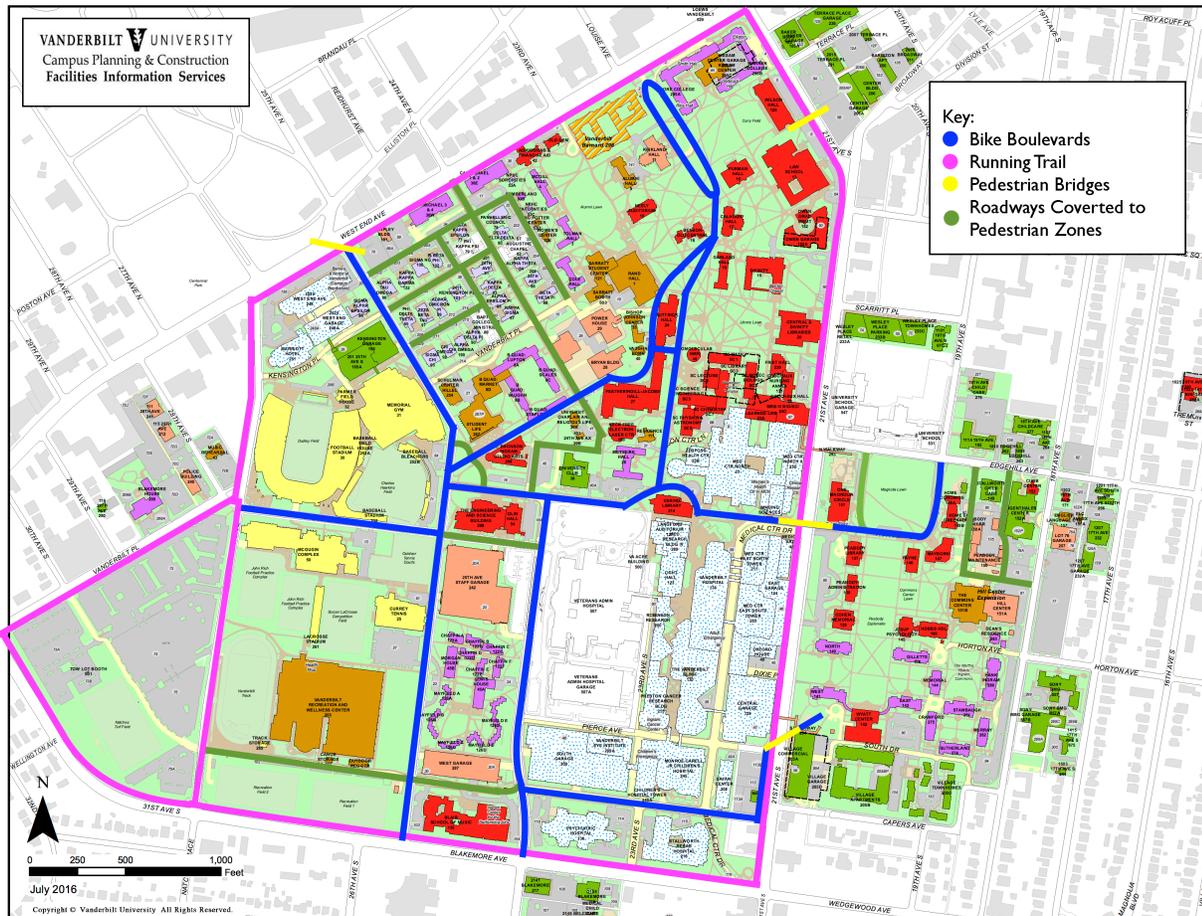
Act Now!

Implementing projects quickly and using low-cost materials helps inform public decision making. Cities across the U.S. have begun using a phased approach to major redesigns, where interim materials are used in the short term and later replaced by permanent materials once funding is available and the public has tested the design thoroughly.

This page shows some guiding principles that should be considered when improving a street on Vanderbilt's campus, from the "Urban Street Design Guide," published by the National Association of City Transportation Officials. It can be found on their website, www.nacto.org

Ultimate Transportation Goals

Continuing from the previous section, all forms of travel are considered with equal weight. The heart of campus will be a place with the highest priority on those who chose to walk around campus while also being more friendly towards bikers on campus.



Recommendation: Create a “Bike Boulevard” system, incorporating elements of the Greenway into it. The ultimate vision of transportation across campus working is through the implementation of “highway” system of sorts, highlighted on the map above in blue. These boulevards will focus primarily on cycling and will encourage students to get across campus by bike instead of driving from one side of campus to another. More complete streets within Vanderbilt’s property will encourage public transport, walking, biking, while maintaining accessibility for motor vehicles. This will reduce the environmental impact associated with driving, ease the land-

use burden of parking lots, all while improving Vanderbilt’s connectivity to Nashville.

The rationale behind the bike boulevards is to alleviate the conflict between walkers and bikers on campus. As the campus has grown larger, undergraduate students use bicycles to get from one corner of campus to another for example from places like Blair to Wilson or Wyatt to Blakemore. In the Historic Core of campus in order to not disrupt the park-like nature of the area, the bike highway should be built on just a few pathways as highlighted in the graphic above in blue. A key to maintaining the existing aesthetic of campus is continuing to use the concrete pea gravel

pathways while widening paths to accommodate comfortable space for bikers to commute without fear of colliding with walkers. By not providing a safe way for bikers to commute across campus, Vanderbilt will unknowingly encourage conflicts between bikers and walkers.

Recommendation: Avoid the use of “dismount and walk” zones. The idea has been suggested to create a “dismount and walk” zone through the Historic Core of campus; however, this is logistically impractical and difficult to enforce. The existing pedestrian bridge across 21st Avenue, at Edgehill Avenue, provides an example of undergraduates’ mentality towards “dismount and walk” zones; they ignore them. Students still bike across the bridge despite signs instructing bikers to dismount and walk when pedestrians are present.

Recommendation: Utilizing the newly-formed Transportation Office, work to improve the efficiency of biking on campus. The typical undergraduate student does not bike between building to building but instead bikes from the various “neighborhoods” of campus. It is less common to bike short distances due to the lost time involved when locking a bicycle. Addressing these internal commuters, it would be valuable to conduct a bike census to determine exactly where bikes spend most of their time and locate areas in need of improved bike storage. This can be achieved through increasing rack capacity and constructing bike lockers for longer term storage, while ensuring these amenities blend seamlessly into the aesthetic of campus.

Recommendation: Create a running trail around the periphery of campus that is also capable of accommodating bikes. The fuchsia path is proposed route for the running path around campus. This path is primarily inspired by Rice University’s running trail around its campus. Vanderbilt has a fairly large population of runners; however, there are few places to safely run around campus without interference from vehicular traffic. However,

unlike Rice University’s running trail, this trail should also include separated

Recommendation: Improve pedestrian crossing across major roads around campus. The yellow paths across roadways indicate areas where pedestrian bridges should be build or easier access should be implemented.

Recommendation: Remove public access to all non-essential roadways that cut through campus. These areas are indicated by green markings on the preceding map. These roadways should be removed and replaced with green areas with pedestrian-only pathways. For certain areas where vehicle access is still needed either for emergency vehicles, maintenance access or deliveries, create pathways that are primarily geared towards pedestrians but are still capable of handling limited amounts of vehicular traffic.

Recommendation: In all future plans for the university, separate pedestrian and cyclists. Not only does this improve both pedestrian and cyclist experiences on campus, it also drastically improves physical accessibility to all areas of campus. Separating people walking and people cycling creates safer environments for those with disabilities by eliminating their need to compete with bikers that often travel faster along pathways.

Recommendation: Create a pedestrian and cyclist bridge across 21st Avenue at Medical Center Drive, again incorporating elements of the Greenway into it. Because of the existing pedestrian bridges across 21st Avenue cannot keep up with the number of people walking across them, many people chose to instead walk across 21st Avenue at Medical Center Drive. By creating another, wider bridge across 21st Avenue with designated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, Vanderbilt can better connect the Peabody neighborhood with the rest of campus. This bridge should also incorporate aspects of the greenway along it with vegetation and areas for seating in order to prevent feelings of leaving campus when existing one neighborhood and entering another. An

existing example of a bridge in an urban area is the Highline found in New York City. These elevated bridges act as an oasis to allow for

people to effortlessly pass through an urban environment.

Community through Landscaping

Current State of Landscaping and Architecture

Thanks to those that came in the past of Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University's campus is an oasis amidst a hustling, bustling city. Vanderbilt's canopy of trees serves as a reprieve to the city that surrounds it, and having this arboretum only two miles away from downtown Nashville is a major selling point for prospective students looking into attending Vanderbilt. As the school has expanded from the original 75 acres of Main Campus to the current 330 acres, the growth of the canopy of trees has not extended to the "newer" portions of campus.

The trees of Vanderbilt are intertwined with the history of this campus and tell the growth of the campus. Vanderbilt University was founded on 75 acres of farmland that was very different than the campus one can see today. According to the Vanderbilt Arboretum webpage, "except along roadways, there were very few trees"⁸. Bishop McTyeire, Vanderbilt's first President of the Board of Trust, oversaw "all around Old Main...the planting of hundreds of small trees"⁹. The University saw another boom of planting during Harvie Branscomb's term as Chancellor. Margaret Branscomb, the wife of Chancellor Branscomb, revitalized the Vanderbilt Garden Club and led a campaign to create a "magnolia screen on the campus perimeter during the 1950's...and plantings around the new Branscomb Quadrangle during the late 1960s"¹⁰. While these periods have been significant in the establishment of the campus as an arboretum, these periods are far and few between.



Image provided by the Office of Vice Chancellor Kopstain

The preceding figure reveals the massive disparity in the concentration of trees across campus. A large majority of trees, especially the larger trees on campus, are concentrated on Main Campus, and this canopy does not extend southwest towards the rest of campus. Part of this is due to the configuration of the streets that run through campus. Main Campus has the advantage of having very few publicly accessible streets cutting through the campus; however, the remainder of campus is cut off by either 21st Avenue, in the case of the Peabody Campus added to Vanderbilt in 1979, and 24th and 25th Avenues¹¹. For all intents and purposes, the oasis previously described in this proposal effectively ends at 24th Avenue and north of the Medical Center, and the Peabody

⁸ <http://vanderbilt.edu/trees/history>

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ ¹¹ <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/chancellor/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/VU-Land-Use-History.pdf>

Campus is an island of its own. There is no continuous canopy of trees across campus.

In conjunction with the ideas of creating bike boulevards and complete streets to traverse campus, the flow for people across the campus must also tie into the flow of the canopy of campus. The concept of Vanderbilt being this arboretum to provide a sanctuary of learning is not a new one, and this concept must be at the core of the university's land evolution.

Another large portion of the division in the canopy of campus is the area past West Side

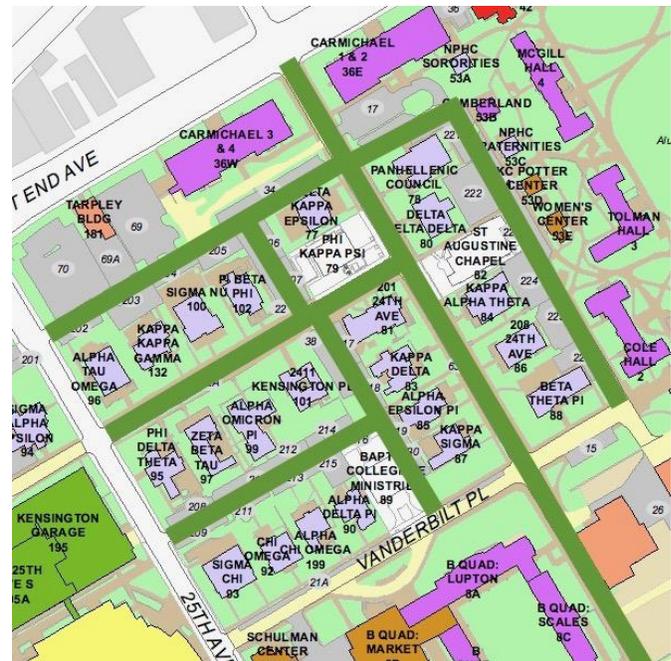
Immediate Landscaping and Architecture Goals

Recommendation: Completely integrate the West End Neighborhood into the rest of campus. The most immediate undertaking that the school should take is to better integrate the West End Neighborhood into the rest of Main Campus that lies only yards away. The first steps that should be taken is for the parking situation to be addressed in the area. With the eventual development of a residential hall on the site of the Tarpley Building, parking in the area will drastically change. Leading up to the preparation of the site of the Tarpley Building, the current parking needs to be drastically altered. The first step is to remove all Greek Life parking and all street parking. There are several hurdles to this plan. The first, and most glaring, is that Vanderbilt does not have complete control of all the land in the West End Neighborhood. Phi Kappa Psi, Baptist College Ministries, and St. Augustine Chapel each have their own separate agreements with the university that prevent the school from unilaterally altering the parking for these areas.

At the beginning of one summer, Vanderbilt needs to remove all the surface lots used for Greek Life parking and the street parking and convert those into green areas. These two steps need to be done simultaneously. If people are barred from parking in these areas but the parking spots still remain, students will continue to park in these areas despite it being unauthorized. In the

Row. This neighborhood of houses, also known as the West End Neighborhood, does not fit into the canopy of trees on campus. A majority of the surface area of the West End Neighborhood is currently covered in surface parking or streets. Due to the stark difference of the West End Neighborhood compared to the Historic Core, the West End Neighborhood is not well integrated into the rest of the campus but instead feels like something different and foreign.

vision of unifying the West End Neighborhood into the rest of campus, both West Side Row and 24th Avenue need to be removed and converted into green spaces. In the event car access is still needed in these areas, these areas should be paved in a manner similar to the paving behind Kirkland. At the intersection of 24th and West End, motorized bollards should be installed to prevent unauthorized traffic to drive through the area. West End Neighborhood should be converted into a primarily pedestrian area.



While this plan seems highly ambitious, this plan is instrumental in incorporating West End Neighborhood into the broader campus. At

a campus where approximately 44% of all undergraduates are involved in Greek Life, there is a sense of contention between organizations that are a part of Greek Life and are not a part of Greek Life¹². By truly incorporating West End Neighborhood into campus by extending the canopy into the area, making it completely pedestrian, and

establishing green areas which other organizations can use, we can bridge the gap between Greek Life and non-Greek Life. To truly make this campus inclusive, you must give all students a place to call home. Providing wider access to the West End Neighborhood and integrating it into the rest of campus will provide opportunities for more students to connect with the area.

Intermediate Landscaping and Architecture Goals

Recommendation: Incorporate landscaping elements into the main bike boulevards to create a connected campus. With the inclusion of the West End Neighborhood into campus, the university should continue to extend out the canopy of trees primarily along the bike boulevards as mentioned earlier in this proposal. This canopy serves two purposes: 1) it creates a more unified feel to campus as a sanctuary of academia and 2) it will continue to move the campus towards being less of a car-centric university.

Recommendation: Evaluate and create a sustainability plan in regards to vegetation. When looking at future landscaping and architecture, sustainability should be at the forefront of future development. Many of the trees on campus are not necessarily local to Middle Tennessee. The inclusion of non-local vegetation creates a larger strain on Vanderbilt's infrastructure to sustain this vegetation.

Recommendation: Implement services and features to encourage students to spend more time outdoors. Another thought to consider when looking at the park-like nature of Vanderbilt is encouraging students to spend more time to engage with the outdoors. Hot areas of campus where students currently spend the most time are outside Alumni Hall, Rand Hall, the Commons Center, the Schulman Center, Central Library on the Library Lawn side, and on Alumni, Commons, and Peabody Lawns. All of these spaces fit into either one of

two categories: they are spaces that are outside of areas that serve food (in the case of Alumni, Rand, the Commons Center, Schulman Center, and Central Library) or are wide-open lawns (in the case of Alumni, Commons, and Peabody Lawns). With widespread use of laptops, students seem to spend time outdoors as if they are either at a coffee shop with their laptops or spend time in the sun in direct opposition to using their laptops. As Vanderbilt Dining continues to decentralize, the university should consider how to place food options to encourage more students to spend time sitting outdoors. This also includes having adequate and comfortable seating outdoors.

One area in which one can see adequate seating but lack of students sitting outdoors in on the patio of Buttrick Hall. This patio has plenty of comfortable seating comparable to the seating at Alumni Hall and also sits at a highly trafficked area of campus also similar to Alumni Hall; however, students spend very little time on the Buttrick Patio. The large difference between these two locations: Alumni Hall has a popular Vanderbilt Dining location Bamboo Bistro while Buttrick Hall lacks any sort of dining or food options.

There are other underserved outdoor spaces on campus. Few students spend anytime in the historic center of campus. There are a variety of reasons and factors that could explain this. First, the historic center of campus feels crowded. There are many crisscrossing

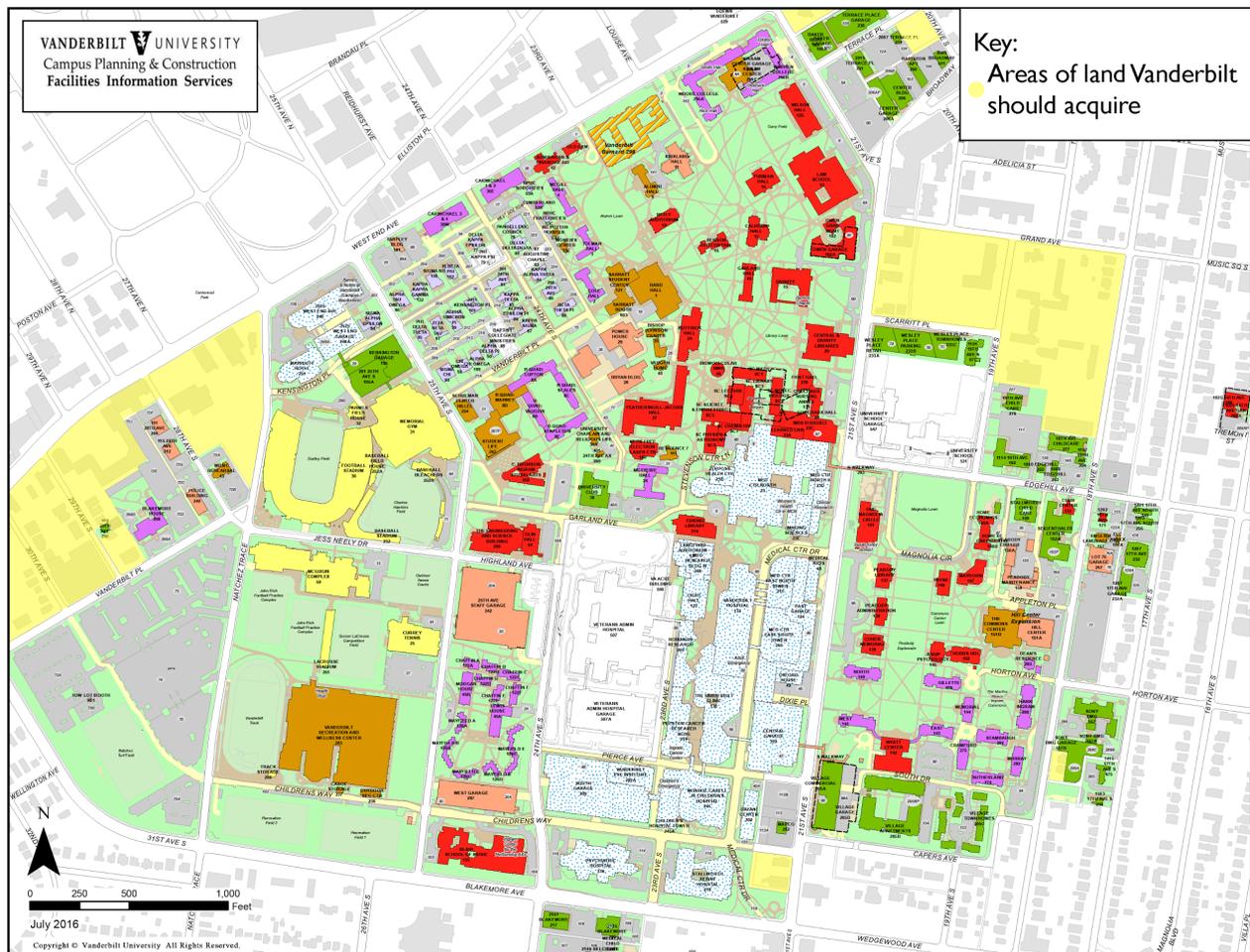
¹² http://www.vanderbilt.edu/greek_life/about/VUGreekCommunityHighlights20152106final.pdf

walkways and vegetation everywhere that prevents students from laying out in the green spaces. Students view this space as merely an area to pass through instead of an area to stop and rest. Another factor that could affect the amount of time that students spend in the area is the comparably fewer residential areas centered in the historic center of campus compared to areas like Alumni Lawn. Proportionally fewer students spend time in the area except to go to class. To improve the use of the historic center of campus, the university should create more grassy areas free of walkways and other vegetation for students to be able to spend time and relax. Another suggestion would be to revitalize Bishops Common between Calhoun and the Law School. This would encourage both undergraduates and

graduates to better utilize this space in between their classes.

In many talks with undergraduate students, they suggested the use of lighter, movable furniture in outdoor spaces. Again, Alumni Hall is a good example of good furniture that is able to be moved in the area. Other universities, such as Harvard University, and cities such as New York City have had initiatives utilizing moveable furniture with great success. This furniture would encourage both socializing and academic collaboration outdoors. Another feature students recommended for outdoor spaces is good, consistent wifi access due to most academic resources now being found online.

Ultimate Landscaping and Architecture Goals



The ultimate goal of the landscaping and architecture on campus is to extend the park-like aesthetic past Main Campus to all corners of campus. Vanderbilt is viewed primarily as a collection of neighborhoods where one has to leave one neighborhood to enter into another. The primary reason that pedestrians have to cross areas that remove them from the “sanctuary” aspect of campus.

While the campus should be connected via a unified campus, it is important to consider the history of the school and its expansion over the university’s history. Looking at the Greenway as a connector across campus, this green way should naturally evolve to reflect the neighborhoods that it is running through. One idea that arose in a feedback meeting was to place landmarks along the greenway to remember the history of Vanderbilt University.

Recommendation: As the university continues to evolve and develop, define the edges of campus. Many universities have a very clear border around their campus to show where the city ends and the campus begins; however, Vanderbilt lacks clearly defined edges on all sides of campus. While these edges should be defined, they should also be permeable and welcoming to those in the greater Nashville area.

Community Spaces through Buildings

One of the greatest beauties of our campus is how organically the architecture and campus planning has evolved in the university's 143-year history; however, the school is also fairly consistent in its style. When focusing on outdoor spaces, it is equally important to also consider how the outdoors interfaces with the indoors. With this in mind, it is important to look at the current existing buildings on campus and to evaluate where future buildings will be built on campus.

Existing Buildings

Looking at campus, there are several buildings that do not align with the future aesthetic of campus. These buildings do not currently align with the future vision of the university from an aesthetic standpoint and detract from the collegiate and academic atmosphere that the school is trying to convey.

Bryan Building - This space currently houses Plant Ops and Campus Planning. With the movement to dedicate the center of campus to academic and learning. The Bryan Building and the substation next to it detracts from the central greenway spine. Both of these spaces need to be removed to make way for the Greenway.

Peabody Maintenance Buildings - Similar to the Bryan Building, the Peabody Maintenance Buildings do not provide any academic benefit to the students and would be better consolidated with the rest of Plant Ops. In addition, the Peabody Maintenance Buildings make the Curb Center seem farther than it actually is. Better integrating the Curb Center into the rest of Peabody will reduce many students' complaints about the perceived distance of the building.

Stallworth Child Care Building - Similar to buildings mentioned before, this building does not provide direct academic benefit to

students on campus and could be better suited to a location on the periphery of campus.

The Kennedy Center - The Kennedy Center currently sits as a gateway to the Peabody Campus. It is the first building visitors see when pulling into the driveway around Magnolia Lawn. This building is incongruous with the aesthetic of the campus and also acts as a barrier for those coming from Main Campus.

Hobbs Building - Similar to the Kennedy Center, the aesthetic of this building is incongruous with the Peabody Campus and its ultra-modern design is a stark contrast to the historic buildings on one side of it and the very manicured buildings that lie on the other side of it.

Highland Quad - With the addition of the garages on the north and south sides of Highland Quad, both Highland Quad and Blair School of Music feel far removed from the rest of the school. This whole area needs to be reworked to better integrate the area and the Blair School of Music. The garage to the south of Blair should be capped with a park to allow for people to still park for performances at Blair. The garage to the north of Highland should be completely removed. This would end many complaints that students have of the perceived distance Highland and Blair are from the rest of the school.

Branscomb Quad - Branscomb Quad is one of the most dated buildings on campus, and it does not architecturally align with the rest of the school. The back part of Branscomb also interferes with the proposed route of the Greenway. In the place of Branscomb, we propose the building of a student union. While the school has many student centers, there are no real real places for student organizations to gather and meet. It is close to the rest of the West End Neighborhood, where many student organizations already meet.

McTyeire International House - This residential building is removed from other

residential areas of campus. McTyeire is sided by the University Club, the Medical Center, Stevenson, and Featheringill. While the program is well supported by the language programs at the university, the physical location of the building is not ideal.

The University Club - This building seems extremely dated and does not mesh with the aesthetic of the surrounding buildings. It sits near the geographic center of campus, but does not provide any function for students. As stated earlier, students often cross through the parking lot of this building to access the Olin Building and the Engineering and Science Building

The Tarpley Building - This building and the area surrounding it can be better utilized. This building does not provide any direct function for students.

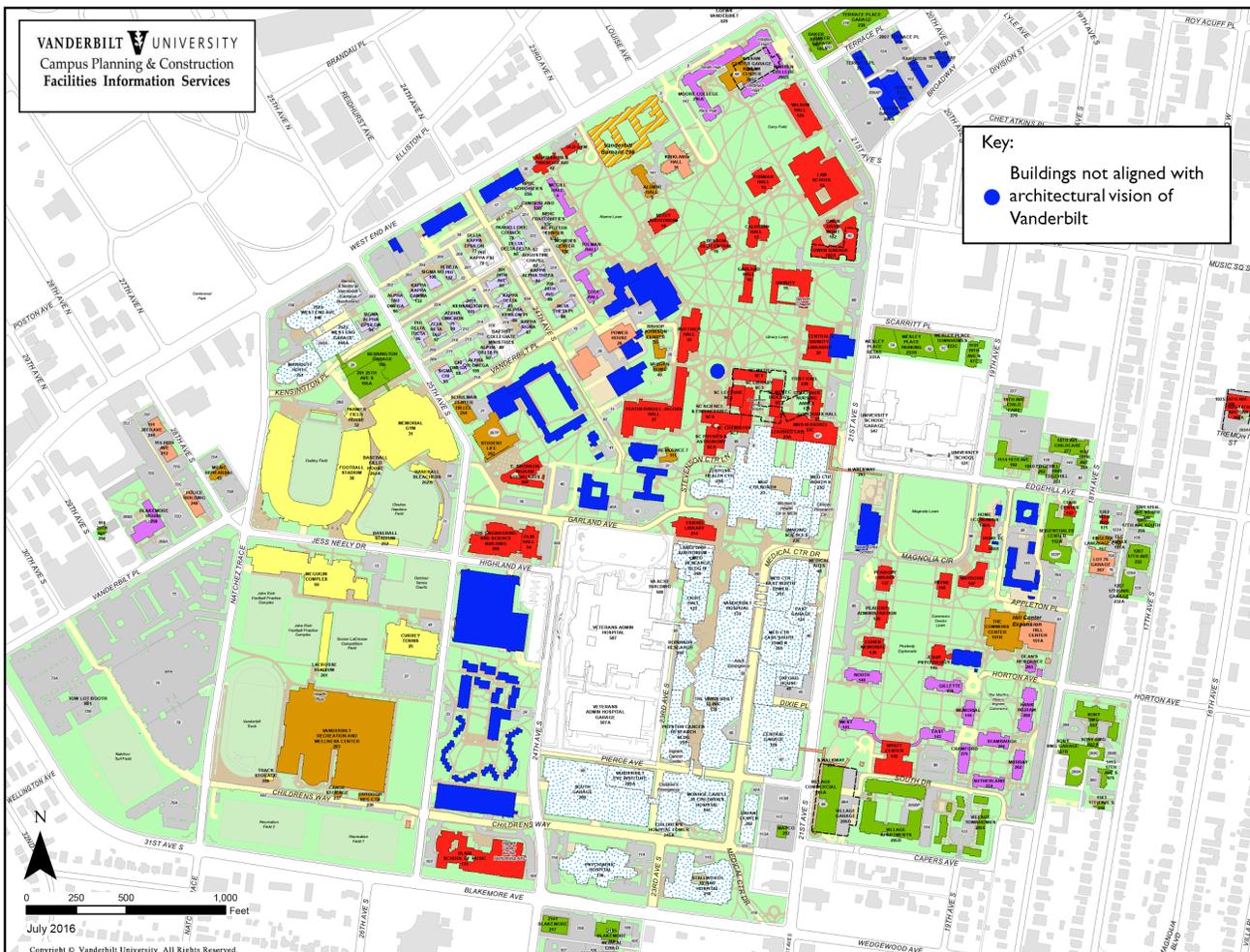
Carmichael Towers - While this building is highly efficient and is a very popular and coveted residential area to live in, the building remains one of the most iconic “ugly buildings”

of campus. Students often cite the area’s lack of community even on single floors. With approximately 1200 undergraduates living in the building, Carmichael Towers fails to support the residential college halls system concept for almost one out of five students.

Sarratt | Rand - This building currently serves as the center of student life, but the building currently serves too many functions as a dining area, office space, and student center. The building is currently working over capacity, and does not really fill any position well. This building should be replaced to a more aesthetically pleasing building to act as a terminus to Alumni Lawn.

Central Library Annex - the Central Library Annex drastically contrasts the aesthetic of the rest of Central Library Annex and also creates a barrier between campus and 21st Avenue.

University Chaplain and Religious Life Building and Annex - this building could be



consolidated into other spaces, including other student center spaces.

Keck Free Electron Laser Center - This building at the center of campus does not serve any direct function to students.

Biomolecular Building - This building seems odd and out-of-place compared to rest of Stevenson. The Biomolecular Building also sits at a very important pathway and axis of student movement across campus and often acts as a barrier to those trying to get around it.

The block of 21st Avenue and Broadway - While these buildings are owned by Vanderbilt University, can be better consolidated to better connected with campus.

Non-existing Buildings

When evaluating the use of building space, it is equally important to evaluate which spaces the university does not have. While combing through feedback received from the undergraduate student body, there are several spaces that do not exist that would be highly beneficial to the university at large. These spaces also align with Vanderbilt's academic focus on Immersion Vanderbilt, broadening students' learning experience past just the classroom.

Recommendation: Create a centralized Student Union on Vanderbilt Place between 24th Avenue and 25th Avenue. Vanderbilt currently lacks any centralized Student Union on campus, but instead has student centers that are pocketed around campus. A student union located on Vanderbilt Place between 24th and 25th Avenues would help create a centralized place at the heart

Recommendation: Create a performing arts center dedicated to extracurricular, nonacademic arts. In the last two decades, Vanderbilt University has seen a massive increase in the number of performing arts organizations and students involved in

extracurricular performing arts. In a report from the Vanderbilt Performing Arts Community (VPAC) Executive Board in January 2016, "At Vanderbilt, over 900 students are involved in these 30 organizations. Virtually all of these students are undergraduates; however, graduate students are involved these organizations as well. Approximately, 1 in 7 undergraduates are involved in performing arts in some capacity." VPAC includes some of the oldest organizations on campus, including Vanderbilt University Concert Choir which was founded in 1895, and some of the newest performing arts organizations, including VUpointe founded in 2016¹³. With the boom of extracurricular performing arts organizations, groups are constrained by the lack of rehearsal, performance, and storage space. A performing arts center with performance, rehearsal, storage, and shop space under the purview of the Dean of Students Office geared primarily towards extracurricular performing arts organizations would overall improve the Vanderbilt student experience.

Recommendation: Move the Psychological & Counseling Center (PCC) to a more central location closer to the Center for Student Wellbeing (CSW). With the creation of the CSW, mental health care services for students are now primarily split between two spaces: the CSW and the PCC. In conversations with both members of the CSW and the PCC, both expressed concern about the physical distance between the two centers, an approximately 11-minute walk. One of the concerns of both centers is that students advised to go to the CSW instead of the PCC will feel like their issues are not being considered important. By relocating the PCC to a location next to the CSW, the psychological distance between the two institutions can be greatly reduced, and communication between the two centers could greatly improve. The current distance of the PCC from the center of campus

¹³ <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ConcertChoir/>

perpetuates the idea of there being a taboo around mental health.

Recommendation: Move the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department to a more accessible and center area of campus. With the university embracing diversity and inclusion, we should not place the office that provides assistance and support to students on the edge of campus. It creates an unneeded element of taboo.

Recommendation: Create an improved and dedicated space for the Office of Religious Life. This space should not be consolidated into other spaces. The current Office of Religious Life Building is not up to par with

Recommendation: Disperse prayer spaces across campus. It is currently difficult for students to pray between Campus with the limited options available. These prayer spaces should be approximately the size of the music practice rooms to fit approximately 10 people. These should be spaces with windows to help orient students in the space. These spaces should be focused in spaces like Student Centers, dining areas, Stevenson Center, and the libraries.