

MTSU Master Plan Update
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Communities know that universities bring vitality and economic stability through employment, retail sales, commercial and residential uses and their support of cultural and social events. College towns attract employers and a diverse workforce.

According to a study conducted by the Business and Economic Research Center at MTSU during fiscal year 2003, the university contributed more than \$680 million in business revenue, provided 9,176 jobs and generated \$343 million in personal income to the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area.

No doubt those numbers have increased over the last few years, and with a current fall enrollment surpassing 23,000 students, the benefits of all that a vibrant university offers trickle down into every aspect of living.

With nearly 2 percent growth every year, however, there comes the need for the campus to expand. Neighborhood residents are sometimes distrustful, even fearful, of an ever-growing institution like MTSU because of its need to add new buildings and parking lots.

Likewise, MTSU faces the challenge of planning that growth and being sensitive to neighbors' concerns and quality of life. While not every plan for campus expansion pleases everyone, campus planning staff and university administrators are making every effort to respond to residents' concerns.

In addition to open forums on campus that welcome neighbors to discuss the issues, *The Record*, the official publication of the university, signifies our intention of keeping the lines of communication open with our friends and neighbors.

The Feb. 11 issue (available at www.mtsunews.com) was the first of three in 2008 that we will send to university neighbors. In each, we will provide up-to-date information on campus construction and expansion. We hope you'll enjoy the other stories as well; our students provide several *Record* stories throughout the year, a fact of which we are quite proud.

The Campus Master Plan, which was presented to the State Building Commission Feb. 14, is a response to the university's Academic Master Plan. The physical plan, as reflected in the future-oriented map of campus seen below, supports the academic goals of the university and provides a framework for future additions and modifications to accommodate the enrollment growth and the educational needs of our students. In particular, the Campus Master Plan helped to define the requirements for a new science building and a new education building for the College of Education and Behavioral Science. Along with buildings, the plan summarizes utility and infrastructure work needed to keep pace with campus development.

While these two buildings are essential for MTSU's growth, they will not solve all of the university's shortage of space. Right now, MTSU has significantly less space per student than all other institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents. There currently are 84.54 net square feet per student at MTSU; other TBR schools average 114.53 net square feet per student. With a target total headcount of 27,000 students, MTSU will still need to construct 1.6 million gross square feet of nonresidential space to accommodate enrollment growth and be on par with its sister TBR schools. Rather than growing for growth's sake, however, MTSU's current and future physical expansion is the result of a carefully designed plan to catch up to current and future demands.

New buildings, additional parking lots, upgraded and expanding infrastructure—all are necessities to accommodate the educational needs of our students so that they will graduate and become contributing, successful citizens.

MTSU, which has the largest undergraduate enrollment in the state, continues to attract many of the best and brightest students from Tennessee and around the nation. We must provide them with the finest learning environment and facilities possible.