

Student Housing & Residence Life

Critical to the mission of Salisbury University is the goal to improve the quality of the student life and residence life experience on the campus. The University recognizes its strengths in the high satisfaction of our resident students, but it also acknowledges that increased student success is tied to further improvements in all areas of student life. Serving a predominately traditional-aged student population dominated by students who are living away from home, the responsibilities of and opportunities for providing high-quality programs in a small-scaled academic environment will strengthen the University's niche and student profile. In addition, because of the University's relatively rural location, SU has even greater responsibility to serve the out-of-class needs of students than would an institution located in a more urban environment.

Salisbury's existing student housing includes a range of unit types. Four residence halls are traditional style, with double occupancy rooms off corridors and community bathrooms. These buildings range from 80 to 160 occupants each and are low-scale structures that form a small residential quad. Three high rises provide cluster-style housing, with groups of 10 to 12 students sharing a community bathroom. At six stories and 220 to 230 students, these buildings have less visual appeal. Dogwood Village is a series of factory-built, one-story structures with 140 single-occupancy bedrooms. Chesapeake Hall is a three-story, apartment-style building with 175 students in units of four double bedrooms each, while St. Martin Hall is arranged as semi-suites (two double-occupancy bedrooms share a bathroom) for about 290 students. The units in both of these buildings are entered from exterior corridors (hotel style).

Though current housing stock is dated and offers limited aesthetic appeal, campus housing is over-subscribed and demand for on-campus student housing has resulted in wait lists. Lounges have been converted to student rooms, and facilities within the buildings are intensely used. Wait lists for on-campus housing have ranged from 100 to 400 students in recent years; many students must find housing off campus.



Chester Hall



Chesapeake & St. Martin Halls



Manokin Hall

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Nanticoke Hall



Choptank Hall



Dogwood Village

⁸ *In the seven years since the market study was completed, demands for housing, especially on campus, have increased dramatically.*

The off-campus market provides a range of housing options. Popular, student-focused complexes offer single-occupancy bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, and full kitchens. Most are within a relatively short distance to campus and are reported to be very social. Other apartment complexes mix student and non-student populations, which appeals to students looking for a more studios environment, but also increases distances back to campus. Single-family residences fill in the rest of the off-campus stock. Older students equate these units with transitioning to the “real world.” Neighbors often find living adjacent to students to be problematic, however, placing stress on town-gown relations.

A 2002 housing market study by Anderson Strickler, LLC identified a demand for an additional 1,191 beds by fall 2011 if enrollments increased as projected by Salisbury University.⁸ Almost 900 were provided through the construction of University Park, a public/private partnership. Another 588 beds were constructed in an unaffiliated private project approximately one mile from the main campus in 2005. The 2005 Comprehensive Housing Renovation Plan (CHRP) proposed additions to add program space and link the corners of Choptank and Chester halls, and St. Martin and Chesapeake halls. Bathroom renovations, additional common spaces, and suite reconfigurations were proposed as part of the upgrades. In 2005, however, major reconfiguration of units was financially infeasible.

Those recommendations were reconsidered, and some adopted, as part of the current CHRP process, which was undertaken as part of this Facilities Master Plan update. The University has obtained approximately \$50,025,000 from the State to fund renovations to existing halls recommended by the current CHRP.

In 2007, a Student and Residential Life Needs Assessment (SRLNA) also was conducted in conjunction with a follow-up housing market study. The studies were designed to integrate student life facilities into larger campus planning efforts. Like residence halls, student life facilities are overused. Students and administrators report a lack of gathering and meeting space, limited non-board food options, and severe overcrowding in athletic facilities. Commuters complain of isolation and inconvenience in their daily lives when on campus.

The CHRP and SRLNA were accomplished through meetings, focus groups, workshop sessions, and tours of campus and neighborhood facilities. Two Web-based student survey instruments were developed, allowing the planning team to get a view of student opinions beyond

meetings and focus groups. In all, more than 1,000 students provided feedback to the planning process. Enrollment patterns and growth projections were used to create models of campus residency, providing the University and the team another tool to plan for future projects. The data and impressions collected through these efforts led to a series of proposals for renovations to existing housing and student life facilities and construction of additional student housing.

The Student Life Planning Committee and the Steering Committee considered several factors in setting the planning goal that is represented in this 2007 study:

- The Market Study shows a demand for up to 960 new beds, with approximately 600 of those on the main campus.
- Today's demand for main campus beds is 2,340, housing 34 percent of all undergraduates.
- Today's demand for all campus beds is 2,600, housing 39 percent of all undergraduates.
- The current on- and off-campus student housing market is at 97 percent capacity.
- The committees felt comfortable in planning for a total inventory of 2,300 to 2,600 beds, which represents a net gain of 600 to 900 beds. The predicted model is based on a goal to house 34 percent of undergraduates using near-term and mid-term enrollment, with sufficient numbers of students from each class year to establish critical mass.
- The University does not provide housing to graduate students, and this planning model assumes that the background market will continue to fill this need.

Research and the experiences of residential life professionals indicate that younger students are more successful when housed in more communal facilities and that upperclass students tend to remain on campus and are more satisfied when offered more independent living units. The balancing act for every institution is to determine where they need to place themselves between market desires and developmental ideals. The recommended program model includes a mix of units tied to the class year of students. The model factors in existing units by predicting the best future match for those beds. Comparing a unit mix to the existing inventory produces a gap analysis, showing what types of units should be added to the campus mix.



Severn Hall



Wait lists for on-campus housing have ranged from 100-400 students over the past few years.



Student life needs are a primary concern when considering housing.

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Based on these findings, the following recommendations were formulated for phased new housing construction. (Map references following each phase description refer to Exhibit ES-2: Opportunity Sites⁹ on page 20.):

Phase I Housing: 1,000 Beds/Proposed Sites 1 & 2, Allenwood:

The starting point is 600 new apartment-style units with single occupancy bedrooms. A later phase can be planned for an additional 400 beds. By adding apartment-style single beds, the University will be able to meet market demand to provide a new unit type for older students and create swing space to allow for renovations to existing housing. ① ②

Phase 2 Housing Program: 300-400 Beds/Proposed Site 3, Dogwood:

The suggested program would continue to emphasize single occupancy bedrooms in suite or apartment-style units. ③

Phase 3 Housing Program: 350 Beds/ Site 4, Devilbiss Lot:

The suggested program would potentially create new housing for younger students on the sites adjacent to Allenwood or on the Devilbiss parking lot. Preliminary site studies suggest that 340 to 390 beds could be accommodated. For this site the recommended program could include hybrids of more traditional unit types. ④

Future Housing Program: 750-1,000 Beds/ Site 5, East Campus:

Future campus expansion and east campus development would support housing on east campus. ⑤

The planning team devised several alternative strategies to address student life needs including a consolidated amenity facility approach and a distributed approach. (A consolidated approach favors larger facilities in central locations to accommodate student life functions, while a distributed approach utilizes pockets of activities in new or existing facilities.) The ultimate solution may be a hybrid of both, but in the near term it seems more feasible to place campus life functions within existing buildings or as part of other new construction projects. The recommendation of this study is to take advantage of every opportunity available, within existing facilities or in projects planned, as part of the expanded housing program. Opportunities for student life program space within student housing projects include smaller-scaled lounges, meeting spaces, and recreational facilities. New construction will offer better options for larger-scaled, multi-purpose spaces.



SU's newest residence facility is planned to open in summer 2011.

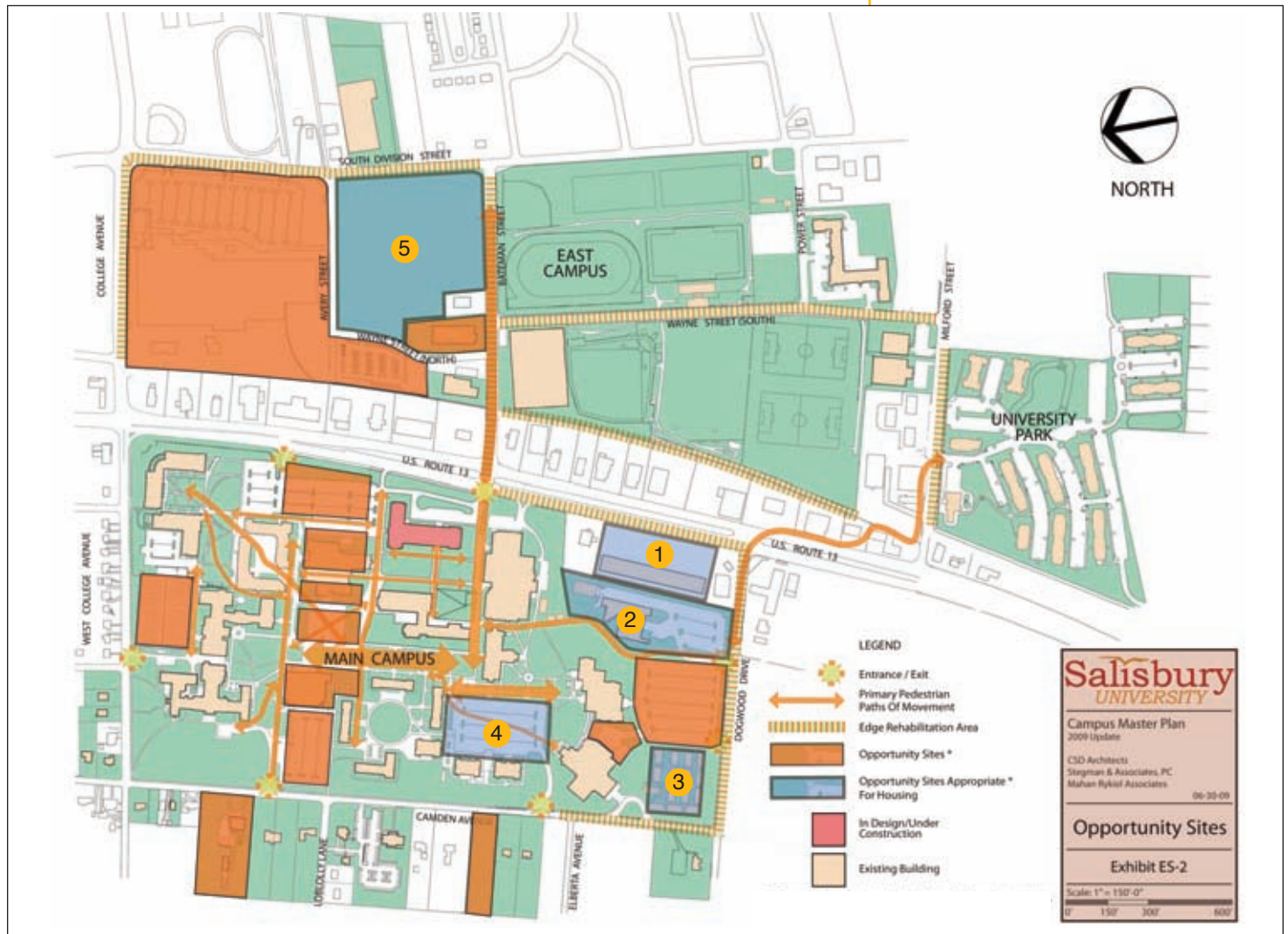
⁹ More detailed information regarding Opportunity Sites is in Chapter 4 of the Facilities Master Plan, "Site Analysis."

As currently configured, the Guerrieri University Center serves many campus life needs. However, based on the planning team’s evaluation of the building, relatively modest renovations could greatly improve the building’s functionality. The team recommends that, wherever possible, masonry walls should be removed to allow for visual interconnections between spaces.

The Commons is designed with conference-style, high-quality finishes. Meeting space on the second floor of the Commons should be more widely available for campus-wide meetings without current catering requirements. In the long term, the University may want to consider creating a second-story addition over the existing connector to the Guerrieri Center and over the loading dock area.

**EXHIBIT ES-2
Opportunity Sites**

Note: Number designations on the map refer to specific opportunity sites as discussed in Chapter 7 of the Facilities Master Plan.



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