

# 02

## Introduction - University of Houston in 2019



*Academic Quadrangle, ca. 1950*



*Commencement in Quadrangle*

The mission of the University of Houston is to offer nationally competitive and internationally recognized opportunities for learning, discovery and engagement to a diverse population of students in a real-world setting. The University has established six goals to fulfill this mission; national competitiveness, student success, community advancement, athletic competitiveness, local and national recognition, and competitive resources.

These goals guided the development of the University of Houston Campus Master Plan and its underlying principles; 1/ assessment of resources in view of growth, 2/ alignment of Tier One research activity with student attainment goals, 3/ creation of a destination campus, and 4/ engagement with the community of its immediate neighbors, its larger city setting, and the nation and world beyond.

Since joining the State of Texas system in 1963, the University of Houston has pragmatically responded to changing circumstances, rapid enrollment growth, and the pressures of accommodating private automobiles through ubiquitous and convenient surface parking lots. Nonetheless, from the beginning of campus construction along unpaved St. Bernard Street (later to become Cullen Boulevard), there was an evident commitment to establishing intentional outdoor gathering spaces. The Reflecting Pool, the construction of which began in advance of the first building, anchored the 1937 plan for the campus and provided a model going forward for constructing planned, defined exterior places. Over time the Reflecting Pool was replaced by the Cullen Family Plaza Fountain but the shaped outdoor space and its central water element continues to serve as the ceremonial heart of the university campus. With the future demolition of Stephen P. Farish Hall, the full Academic Quadrangle will be revealed again and re-envisioned as Centennial Court.



*Reflecting Pool, Hare & Hare, 1938*



*Reflecting Pool and Science Building, Lamar Q. Cato, 1939*



*Cullen Family Plaza Fountain, Cornell, Bridgers and Troller with Fred Buxton & Associates, 1970*



*Centennial Court, designLAB, 2019*

*Cullen Family Plaza Fountain, Cornell, Bridgers and Troller with Fred Buxton & Associates, with Stephen P. Farish Hall bisecting the 1938 Academic Quadrangle, 1970*

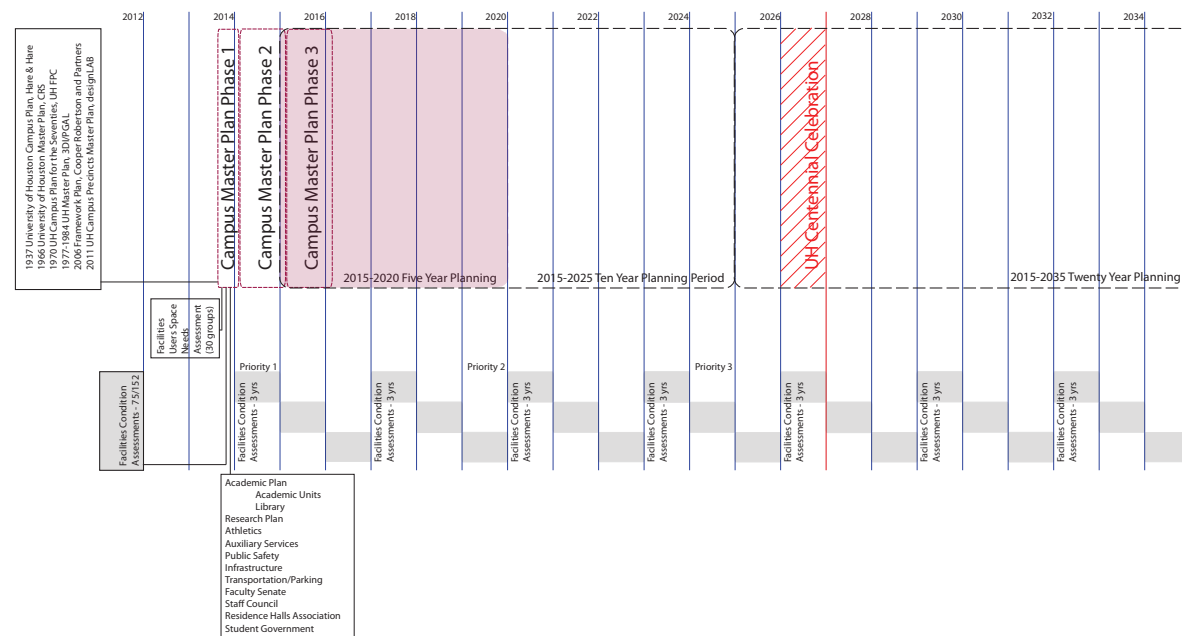


SMITH FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM



Cougars, R. T. "Skip" Wallen, 2003, site of pre- and post-game "rub the paw" rituals for students and alumni

Shasta I, Daniel Glanz, 2017, site of pre-game "rub the paw" ritual for players



# Planning Methodology

This plan is the result of a three-phase campus planning process, which began with listening meetings among a diverse group of university stakeholders including students, staff, faculty, and administration. Initial findings from an examination of the 2006 Framework Plan and other historic University of Houston master plan documents formed the basis for early feedback and input as to current planning efforts underway, areas of needed improvement, and important physical or financial constraints. Annual updates to the UHS Board of Regents has offered the opportunity to regularly evaluate and monitor master planning proposals through an active feedback loop.

Foremost among early findings is the existence of vigorous, decentralized and often uncoordinated planning at the University of Houston. Listening meetings uncovered the presence and independent work of 26 task forces, committees, stakeholders, and focus groups that were developing plans and shaping decisions for campus improvements, often without the knowledge of efforts duplicated among other planning groups. By daylighting the presence of these task forces and documenting the outcomes of their efforts and initiatives, this master plan serves to coordinate and link them toward greater efficiency and integration.

In 2011, a comprehensive program of triennial facilities assessment set a baseline for deferred maintenance for each building and infrastructural asset. Setting this baseline for maintenance and capital renewal contributed to prioritizing infrastructure expenditures, both short- and long-term planning, and strategies for accommodating continued growth and program innovation. In recognition of finite resources, an opportunistic strategy to achieve 3 benefits from each shovel turn of dirt underlies this plan, so that necessary and costly infrastructure expenditures may help initiate an improved pedestrian network, enhanced outdoor gathering places, improved wayfinding and orientation, and incrementally shape a destination campus from what had formerly been an automobile-dominant, commuter-oriented environment.

Further, the planning process revealed that just beyond the original ten-year project horizon is the 100-year anniversary of the University of Houston. It is with this significant milestone in view that the proposals herein provide a guide for development with aspirations for excellence.

## TRAFFIC/CIRCULATION/PARKING

- 01 Parking and Transportation Plan
- 02 Circulation Road/Traffic Study
- 03 Arts Initiative
- 04 METRO Light Rail Plans
- 05 Campus Traffic Study
- 06 Campus Street Maintenance Master Plan
- 07 Street Circulation Master Plan
- 08 Landscape Plan

## RESEARCH

- 09 Research Master Plan
- 10 A-21 Research Assessment
- 11 ERP Master Plan
- 12 Classroom Utilization
- 13 CLASS Master Plan Research Component

## GENERAL MASTER PLANNING ISSUES

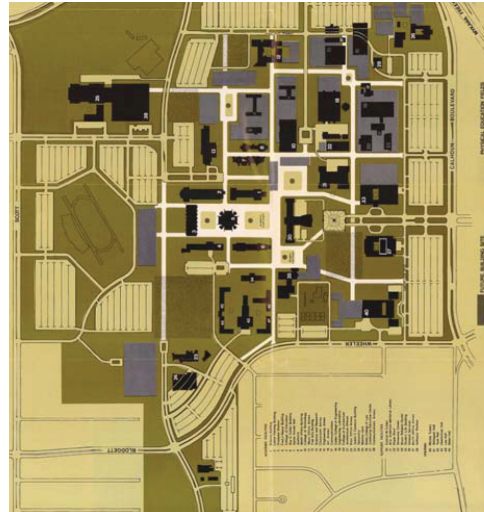
- 14 Housing Master Plan
- 15 Childcare Task Force
- 16 Dining Facilities Plan
- 17 University Center Expansion
- 18 Arts Sculpture/Technology Building
- 19 Landscape Plan
- 20 Signage/Wayfinding Plan
- 21 Infrastructure and Utilities Master Plan
- 22 Security Task Force
- 23 Facilities Condition Audit
- 24 Sustainability Task Force
- 25 Classroom Management
- 26 Strategic Plan for Sugar Land



A Prospectus, Hare & Hare, 1936-37

# Historic Plans

The origin of the existing character of the University of Houston campus lies within the 1936-37 *General Plan Plan for Campus Development* for the University of Houston by highly esteemed landscape architects Hare & Hare of Kansas City, Missouri. Hare & Hare, influenced by Fredrich Law Olmstead, promoted the defining principles of the City Beautiful movement throughout the United States, and, in Houston, left a rich legacy in the plans of many of the city's most endearing outdoor environments, including Hermann Park, the Houston Zoological Gardens, the Museum of Fine Arts, City Hall Plaza, Memorial Park, the South Main Live Oak alleé, and Texas Southern University, in addition to the University of Houston. Despite the less-than-ideal "L"-shaped property configuration of the original 110-acre gift, the General Plan and an accompanying aerial rendering titled *The University of Houston, A Prospectus* sets out the key features of the plan: buildings framing outdoor rooms or quadrangles, axial ordering underlying building placement, trees shading paths to enhance pedestrian experience, quadrangles creating like-use districts, and the maintenance and propogation of existing native tree groves. Further, the *Prospectus* provided direction for future buildings by establishing a vocabulary of simple linear massing, planar buff stone surfaces sans overt classical ornamentation, and red-tile hipped roofs.



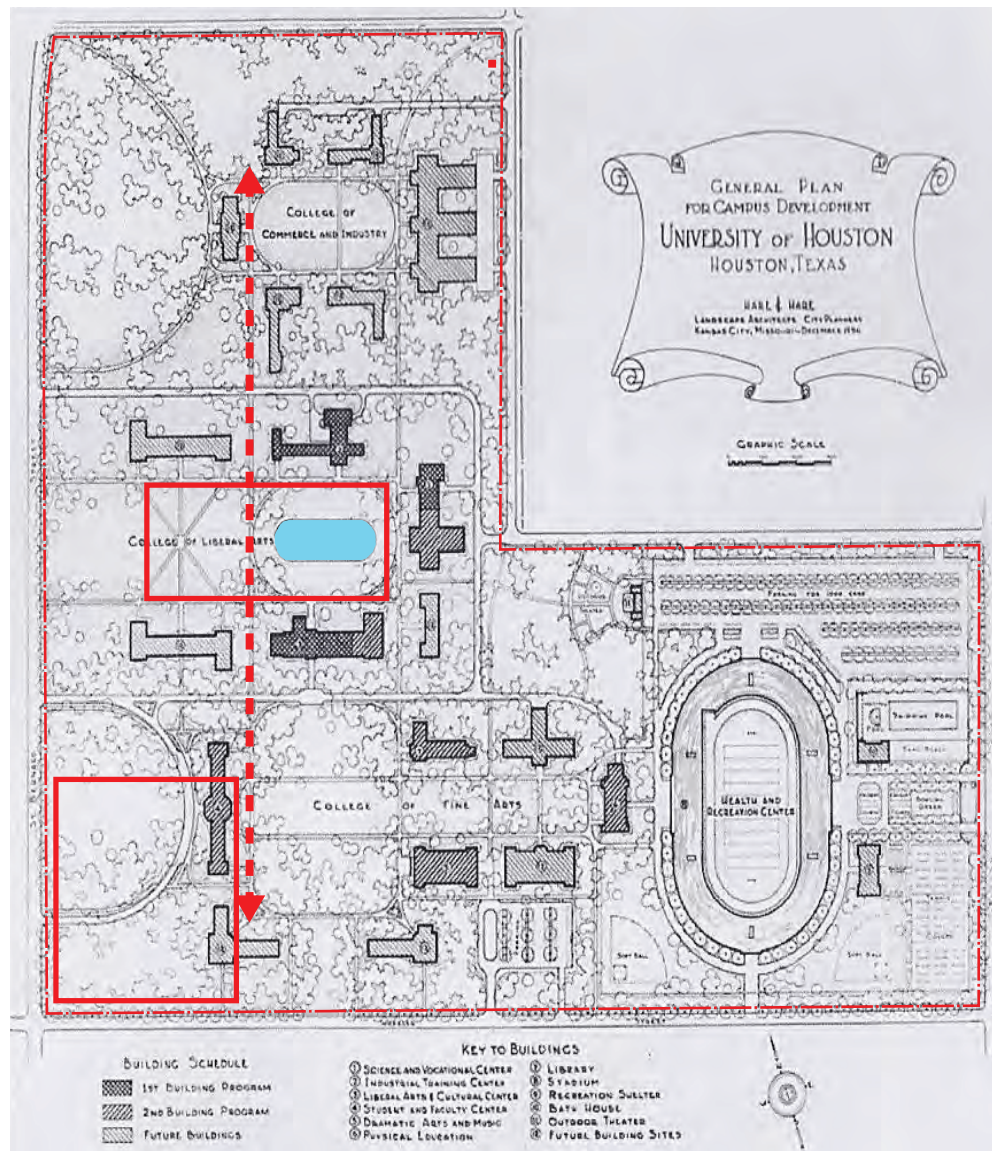
Plan for the Seventies, UH FPC, 1970

A review of the subsequent planning documents created for the University reveals that the Hare & Hare planning principles were largely adhered to within the 110 acres through the 1966 CRS *Comprehensive Campus Plan*. However, as accommodating the ever-increasing number of automobiles became more pressing and larger parcels were added to the campus perimeter, the 1970 *Campus Plan for Seventies* authored by the University of Houston Facilities Planning and Construction group demonstrates a dramatic departure from the Hare & Hare principles and toward a full embrace of automobile parking as the key determinant of the campus character. This direction would continue to dominate the development decisions going forward as illustrated in the PGAL UH campus plan of 1977.

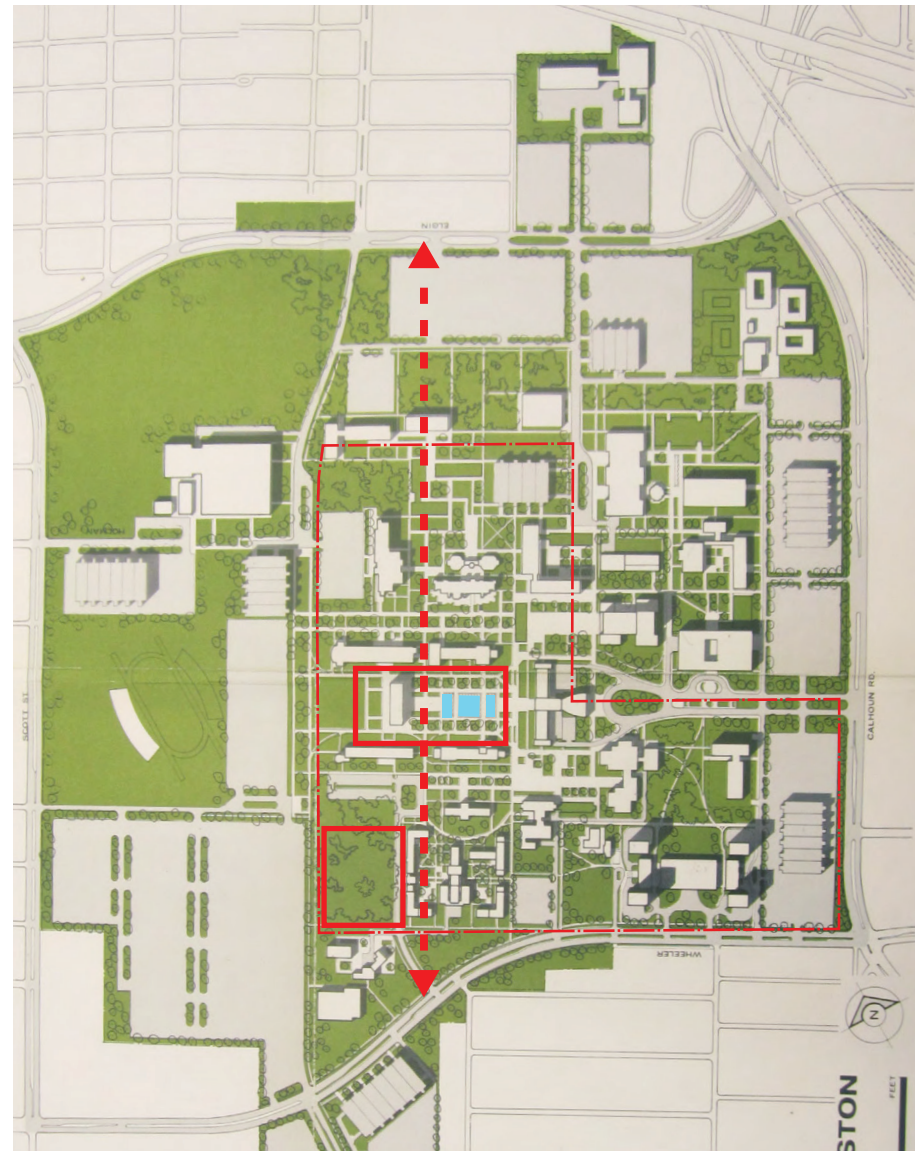


UH, PGAL, 1977

In 2006, *The Framework Plan* by Cooper Robertson & Partners questioned the dominance of these automobile environments and proposed to reinforce what remained of the network of outdoor spaces by linking them across the campus through a series of intentional pathways. While *The Framework Plan* set out the notion of these paths without a means of accomplishing them, the *Centennial Plan* builds on those initial efforts through an analysis of existing infrastructure and the recognition for the need of multi-use paths to carry larger numbers of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the now ubiquitous service carts.



General Plan for Campus Development, Hare & Hare, 1936-37



Comprehensive Campus Plan, CRS, 1966



The Centennial Plan 2027, conceptual diagram, designLAB, 2015