



# UAB campus plan includes \$12.5 million arts center

## New stadium, housing in works

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The University of Alabama at Birmingham plans to build a \$12.5 million visual arts center that will house gallery space, classrooms and

the university's art and art history departments, university officials said Thursday.

The sweeping, metal-clad building across the street from the Alys Stephens Center is the first of several projects proposed by UAB's

new campus master plan, including a new football stadium, a \$200 million research complex and student housing near the Railroad Park.

"It's a very ambitious plan," said Richard Margison, UAB's vice president for financial affairs and administration, who presented an amended version of the master plan to the University of Alabama Board

of Trustees on Thursday. A board committee gave preliminary approval Thursday to the plans and budget for the arts center project, which goes before the full board today.

The campus plan was first unveiled in October, but this new

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## ART: Arts center to be built

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version provides more details. It shows a tree-lined pedestrian spine running from the campus green to Railroad Park along a closed 15th Street. A swath of green runs through the middle of a new student housing village to a new football stadium. And Margison said the university is working closely with state and city transportation officials to get new frontage roads built along Interstate 65 to move highway traffic off campus.

Mayor William Bell, who stopped into the meeting to show his support, said UAB has been working closely with the city on developing the plan.

"It's exciting," he said. "UAB has in the past been an island within the city of Birmingham, but now we are embracing its efforts to really incorporate the life of the city."

The 20-year plan also calls for many of the backstage functions, such as storage, to move to the western side of the interstate. Over time, much of the street parking would be phased out to cut down on traffic; more parking decks would be built along the edges of the campus and, eventually, an expanded



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The new visual arts center will be at 10th Avenue South and 13th Street South, across from the Alys Stephens Center.

campus transit system would be necessary, Margison said.

Overall, he said, the plan determines what the campus' new boundaries should be as the university grows. There are plans for four new gateways to campus, including a main one from I-65 at the site of the current Medical Center Inn, which the board gave preliminary approval for UAB to purchase for \$2 million and likely demolish. And while the new arts center, which could be built by the end of 2012, is on the south end of campus, much of the growth is actually to the north toward downtown.

Some of the projects — including a proposed housing village near Railroad Park that might also include some first-floor retail — require that UAB buy property; Margison said negotiations with property owners are ongoing.

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