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Blueprint for the future

The University of Dayton taps Burt Hill to develop a master plan to guide future campus development.

The University of Dayton has selected Burt Hill to develop a new master plan that will guide future development on a campus that now stretches to the Great Miami River after the recent acquisition of land from NCR Corp.

The plan will encompass all 259 acres of UD's campus, including the new 49-acre parcel.

Burt Hill is a large international architecture, design and engineering firm with offices in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Butler, Pa., and Dubai. The firm, which employs nearly 600 planners, engineers, landscape architects and architects, was selected from among 20 national firms. College campuses comprise more than half of its clients. Its team for this project includes Woolpert Inc., which will provide civil engineering and traffic recommendations.

"Burt Hill has developed strong master plans for universities across the nation and has experience in both academic and mixed-use development projects," said Daniel J. Curran, president of the University of Dayton. "As we begin planning this major expansion of the University of Dayton's campus, we wanted an experienced partner with a solid track record who could engage both the campus and Dayton communities in the process. This will be a very collaborative process. We have an opportunity to create a landmark entrance, continue to develop an infrastructure that supports academic excellence and spur development that complements and is an addition to other efforts in the city."

Faculty, staff, students, alumni, neighbors and community and government leaders will be invited to offer input into the new campus master plan, last revised in 2000.

"The University of Dayton is an important asset for the city of Dayton," said Daniel Sadlier, chair of UD's board of trustees. "This master plan will create a blueprint for UD's future and drive development in the region."

The plan will include:

- * a land use plan for the entire campus, including recommendations for renovations and new construction and a development plan for the newly acquired 49 acres that fits academic priorities and complements development near UD Arena, on Brown Street and downtown;
- * strategy and design concepts for landscape, parking, pedestrian and vehicular paths, as well as campus edges and connections to the community and neighborhoods;
- * strategy and design concepts for housing, including the student neighborhoods with approximately 400 UD-owned houses;
- * strategy and design concepts for athletic facilities; and

* strategy and design concepts for dining services.

UD officials are partnering with government officials and community leaders to remediate the former NCR manufacturing site and spur academic and mixed-use development on land that has stood vacant for decades. It's not the first major private/public initiative for UD, which worked with the city of Dayton, Miami Valley Hospital and CityWide Development Corp. on the Genesis Project -- a \$15 million revitalization of the Fairgrounds neighborhood.

"We want to complement development in the region," said Michael Reagan, a principal with Burt Hill. "The University's designation as one of the country's most entrepreneurial campuses suggests to us a portion of the additional property should be considered for business and research innovation opportunities that involve interactions between the University and the local community."

Ironically, Reagan started thinking about how to redevelop the NCR property three decades ago. "When I was a student at Miami University in the 1970s, one of our class projects was to come to Dayton and study that site," said Reagan, who earned a bachelor's degree in environmental design.

Burt Hill has completed master plans for such diverse campuses as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, St. Joseph's University, Drexel University and Thomas Jefferson University. It is currently working with the city of Harrisburg, Pa., to plan and develop what Reagan calls "a dynamic new campus integrated with the business community." The Harrisburg University of Science and Technology is the first new, private, not-for-profit university approved by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 100 years.

In the past five years, UD has completed \$168 million in campus construction projects. UD's campus currently spans 259 acres, with 3 million square feet of facilities including 53 buildings and more than 400 student houses. UD officials have asked Burt Hill to complete the new master plan within 12 to 14 months, with a development plan for the 49 acres as one of the top priorities.

Founded in 1850 by the Society of Mary (Marianists), a Roman Catholic teaching order, the University of Dayton has grown into the largest private university in the state and ranks in the top tier of national, doctoral-level universities.